



CENSUS OF INDIA 1961

VOLUME XIV

RAJASTHAN

PART VII-B

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

*With best compliments from
The Superintendent of Census Operations, Rajasthan*

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OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE
Superintendent of Census Operations, Rajasthan
1966



FOREWORD

Although since the beginning of history, foreign travellers and historians have recorded the principal marts and entrepôts of commerce in India and have even mentioned important festivals and fairs and articles of special excellence available in them, no systematic regional inventory was attempted until the time of Dr. Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in the beginning of the nineteenth century. One of the tasks set before him by a resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council in 1807 was "to examine with as much accuracy as local circumstances will admit": "an account of the various kinds and amount of goods manufactured in each district.....the ability of the country to produce the raw materials used in them.....how the necessary capital is procured, the situation of the artists and manufacturers, the mode of providing their goods.....commerce: the quantity of goods exported and imported in each district; the manner of conducting sales, especially at fairs and markets."

That he discharged his duty very thoroughly will appear from his statistical accounts of Mysore and the northern districts of Bengal and Bihar.

The great Revenue Surveys of the middle of the nineteenth century made no attempt in this direction, and accounts of fairs and festivals in districts were neglected until W. W. Hunter took up the compilation of statistical accounts again in the last quarter of last century. For the purpose of notifying holidays in the East India Company's offices the Board in Calcutta had since 1799 been in the habit of "procuring an accurate Bengalee almanac properly authenticated by brahmanical astronomy" from the Nabadwip Court (letter from Secretary of Board of Collector of Nidhiya, 5 July 1799, No. 8217, W. W. Hunter's Unpublished Bengalee MSS Records). Satis Chandra Vidya-bhusan in his *History of Indian Logic* wrote that "almanacs were prepared by the Pundit Samaj of Nabadwip which were supplied to the Nawab'

Court of Murshidabad as well as to the East India Company, the Supreme Court, etc.....the *Nabadwip Panjika* under the imprimatur of *Nabadwipadhipateranugya* was accepted by all the landlords of Bengal." This *Nabadwip Panjika* which remained the standard almanac for Bengal continued in use throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and each issue contained a list of important fairs and festivals in every district. A valuable almanac was that published by the Vernacular Literature Committee's Almanac published in 1855-56 (1262 B.S.). It gave an account of 309 famous fairs of Bengal in its second part. The *Gupta Press Panjika* or almanac which virtually replaced *Nabadwip Panjika* made its first appearance in 1869 and continued to publish a useful list of important fairs and festivals in the country. But this list was by no means exhaustive nor were W. W. Hunter's which he published with each Statistical Account.

Meanwhile native crafts, industries and objects of artistry decayed rapidly and thoroughly as a result of the East India Company's policy of extinguishing them, and official interest in fairs and festivals declined, although these occasions, divested of much of their glory, still continued to attract livestock, grain merchandise and handicrafts from far and near. The *Imperial Gazetteers* published between 1880 and 1910 gave a minor place to these important seasonal markets or temporary inland ports. Even the District Gazetteers, which still are the fullest and most compact accounts of districts, make but casual mention of fairs and festivals in the country and attach little economic importance to them.

For, indeed, the importance of fairs and festivals—as the meeting ground of livestock and agricultural commodities of many religions and many cultures, crafts and motifs from far and near, of ideas and design, workmanship, excellence and finish, of tools and appliances, of trends of the future and vanishing practices of the past, of

adaptability and local variation, of skill and imagination—declined with the punitive export policy of the East India Company and the unrestricted import of machine-made goods, so much so that at the close of the last century fairs and festivals were reduced to a matter of concern only for the Public Health Department. They were no longer regarded as important centres of trade and commerce, but were now from the Government point of view merely a collection of human beings among whom epidemics were to be prevented from breaking out. Fairs and festivals continued to be a matter of law and order and the Police Department and the District Board continued to maintain full lists of them in their local offices, a source which has so far remained unquarried.

Following the census operations of West Bengal in 1951, a slim volume, containing a list of fairs and festivals arranged according to districts and their Police Stations, was brought out as part of the West Bengal scheme of Census Publications. This list was mainly made up of information supplied by District Boards and Superintendents of Police of districts. The two lists were collated to make up a comprehensive list containing several columns: the name of the village arranged under its district and Police Station, with its Jurisdiction List number, the name of the festival or fair by which it is commonly known in the locality, the English month of the year in which it is held, the duration of the festival or fair, and finally the number of persons attending it. Although merely a list, and not quite complete at that, this volume attracted attention and received the appreciation both of scholars and the general public. Its general value lay in its being a compendium and its particular value lay in presenting a distribution throughout the country of particular festive occasions. The Superintendent of Census Operations for West Bengal, who continued in an honorary capacity, was pried from time to time with requests to undertake an extensive survey of the subject which seemed to accord well with the Superintendent's own personal desire. For one thing, quite a few of the old and traditional fairs and festivals of West Bengal are on their way to extinction on account of

various forces working against them and a record of these rapidly vanishing fairs and festivals could be made only now as never again in the future. In the next place, the Census Office considered it its duty to sustain by a more searching survey the interest that the publication had aroused.

A different approach suggested itself as the new task was viewed in terms of collection of extensive first-hand material on each fair and festival. It was necessary, therefore, in the first place, to approach as many individuals as possible in each locality, and not restrict the enquiry only to Government or semi-Government sources, Departments or organisations. In the second place, a satisfactory questionnaire was considered most essential. A number of aims were kept in view in framing the questionnaire. These were:

(a) The questionnaire should be very simple and precise in language, designed primarily for the understanding of a person of primary education standard. At the same time the question should be suggestive enough to invite ancillary information. Were this objective achieved, it should be possible to obtain exhaustive information without irrelevant detail.

(b) It should succeed in obtaining a clear environmental, social and economic background of the village or place in which a particular fair is held or a festival is observed.

(c) It should emphasise those aspects of a festival or worship which would bring out the details of rituals and religious practices peculiar to the locality.

(d) It should obtain information not only on the more important and better-known festivals or fairs, but also on the less known but otherwise significant fairs and festivals. It was decided to extend the scope of enquiry beyond those fairs and festivals that are approved and licensed by the District authorities, for the latter would be a small number compared to the total.

(e) It should attempt sufficient information

on economic activities and patterns in respect of each fair, however big or small. The information so obtained should suggest the scope for studying the movement of local handiwork and local forms and raw materials. The questionnaire should also give a list of local amusements favoured by the public.

The questionnaire which was several times pre-tested was finally mailed in 1957 to about 10,000 addresses in West Bengal on the Business Reply scheme. One of the devices which seems to have evinced much responsible reporting was the assurance that each piece of information would be fully acknowledged to the correspondent whose address also would be published for the benefit of future investigators.

The information thus collected was sorted district by district and further sub-sorted by Police Stations. The work of compilation, once the preliminary verification and checking of the answers was over, was to be in three sections as follows:—

(a) The first section was to contain systematic information on the village, the villagers, their occupations, communications and other special features, mainly based on Section A of the questionnaire.

(b) The second section was to contain all available information on the festival itself, the worship of deities, particularly rituals and forms of worship. This would be based mainly on Section B of the questionnaire.

(c) The third section, to be based on Section C of the questionnaire, would contain information about the fair and economic activity and amusement connected with the fair.

It will doubtless be a matter of great satisfaction to scholars that the scheme was very enthusiastically received by all my colleagues when its outline together with the West Bengal questionnaire was circulated in February 1960. My colleagues felt that the Census provided a unique opportunity for conducting such a comprehensive survey with the help of the network of staff placed

by the State Government at their disposal. State Superintendents were quick to recognise that such a survey would be of great help to those who might care to investigate the religious centres and festivals, inland trade and commerce, art motifs and designs, circuits of trade, ancient trade routes and special manufactures. It would give the student of toponymy much valuable clue and the student of history much valuable insight into the organisation of markets.

The proposal to conduct this survey was in the Second Conference of Census Superintendents held in August 1960. Various aspects of the survey, then in progress, were discussed again in the regional meetings of Census Superintendents held in Trivandrum, Darjeeling and Srinagar in May and June 1961. My colleagues were able to report further progress at the Census Social Studies Camp held in December 1961, when several elaborations of the original questionnaire and in investigational methodology were also discussed. It was further proposed to undertake more intensive surveys of a small number of very important fairs and festivals in each State. At the third Conference of Census Superintendents in February 1962 my colleagues took the further decision to prepare maps of fairs and festivals on the basis of districts and even of tehsils or taluks, some States having already made much progress in this direction.

The scholar will find in these lists much to excite his curiosity. First, they show what an extensive network of seasonal and perennial markets, village fairs still provide to native craftsmanship and industry. Secondly, they help to connect economic streams with social and religious movements. Thirdly, they suggest how a succession of small fairs in a time series culminate in a very big fair, almost always in the heart of a particular area, and how this big event gradually subsides through another time series of small fairs, so that an endless cycle of trade, social and religious intercourse is kept in motion. Fourthly, they insinuate a great deal about what Buchanan-Hamilton was charged to investigate a century and a half ago: "the situation of the artists and manufacturers, the mode of providing their goods,

the usual rate of their labour, and any particular advantages they may enjoy : their comparative affluence with respect to the cultivators of the land, their domestic usages, the nature of their sales, and the regulations respecting their markets." Fifthly, they can very greatly help in reconstructing ancient and not so ancient trade routes in the country, and, again, what Buchanan-Hamilton was asked to investigate; "the nature of the

conveyance of goods by land and water, and the means by which this may be facilitated, especially by making or repairing roads."

ASOK MITRA
Registrar General, India.

*New Delhi,
September 5, 1964.*

P R E F A C E

Men are by their nature fond of festivals and as social beings they are also fond of congregating, gathering together and celebrating occasions jointly. Festivals thus culminate in fairs. Some fairs and festivals are mythological and are based on ancient traditional stories of gods and goddesses while others commemorate the memories of some illustrious persons of distinguished bravery or persons with super-human powers who are now revered and idealised and who are mentioned in the folk lore, heroic verses, where their exploits are celebrated and in devotional songs sung in their praise. Fairs and festivals have always been important parts of our social fabric and culture. While the orthodox celebrates all or most of them the common man usually cares only for the important ones.

In the pages that follow an attempt is made to present notes on some selected fairs and festivals which are particularly of local importance and are characteristically Rajasthani in their character and content. Some matter which forms the appendices to this book will be found interesting. Lt. Col. Tod's fascinating account of the festivals of Mewar will take the reader to some one hundred fifty years ago. Reproductions of material printed in the old Gazetteers from time to time give an idea about the celebrations of various fairs and festivals in the erstwhile princely States.

Sarva Shri G. D. Agrawal, M. Com., R. C. Bhargava, M. Com., B. R. Gulati M. Sc. (Anth.) and Shamsher Singh, M. Sc. (Anth.), Investigators of this office, have built up the series of notes on the fairs contained in this Volume. The note on the Gangaur festival has been contributed by Shri G. R. Gupta, M.A., LL.B., Senior Supervisor of this office. The line drawings are done by Shri L. R. Pendharker. Photography for this Volume was done by Shri P. C. Acharya and Shri B. R. Gulati which was supplemented by obtaining a few photographs from the State Director of Public Relations. Shri Sri Narain, Music Compiler of this office, prepared the staff notations of songs sung at various occasions.

Dr. U. B. Mathur, Deputy Superintendent of Census Operations has helped me in editing this work while Shri S. R. Luhadia, Tabulation Officer has seen it through the press. I thank them all.

I am grateful to Shri Asok Mitra, Registrar General, India and Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty, who very kindly helped me at various stages of this work.

Ram Bagh Palace Annexe
Jaipur
1st September, 1966.

C. S. GUPTA
*Superintendent,
Census Operations, Rajasthan.*

CENSUS PUBLICATIONS		
<i>for</i>		
Rajasthan State		
The Rajasthan 1961 Census Publications, which will have volume No. XIV in All India Census series, will be published in the following parts :—		
Part I-A	...	General Report.
Part I-B	...	Subsidiary Tables.
Part II-A	...	General Population Tables (A Series) and Primary Census Abstract.
Part II-B (i)	...	Economic Tables (B Series, Tables I-IV).
Part II-B (ii)	...	Economic Tables (B Series, Tables V-IX).
Part II-C (i)	...	Cultural Tables (C Series).
Part II-C (ii)	...	Migration Tables (D Series).
Part III	...	Household Economic Tables (B Series, Tables X-XVII).
Part IV-A	...	Report on Housing and Establishments.
Part IV-B	...	Housing & Establishment Tables (E Series).
Part V-A	...	Tables on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
Part V-B	...	Ethnographic notes on Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes.
Part VI-A to F	...	Survey of Selected Villages.
Part VII-A	...	Survey of Selected Crafts.
Part VII-B	...	Notes on Selected Fairs & Festivals.
Part VIII-A	...	*Census Administration Report (Enumeration).
Part VIII-B	...	*Census Administration Report (Tabulation).
Part IX-A & B	...	Census Atlas.
A separate District Census Handbook prepared by this office will be issued by the Government of Rajasthan for each of the 26 districts.		

*Not for sale

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TYPICAL FAIRS

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GANGAUR FESTIVAL

जय जय जय गिरिराज किशोरी,
जय महेश मुख चंद चकोरी ।
जय गज बदन षडानन माता,
जगत जननि दामिनि द्युति गाता ।
नहि तव आदि मध्य अवसाना,
अमित प्रभाव वेद नहि जाना ।
भव भव विभव पराभव कारिणि,
विश्व विमोहनि स्ववश विहारिणि ।

पति देवता सुतीय मेह, मातु प्रथम तव रेख ।
महिमा तब नहि कह सकहि सहस सारदा शेष ॥

सेवत तोहि सुलभ फल चारी,
वर दायिनि त्रिपुरारि पियारी ।
देवि पूजि पदकमल तुम्हारे,
सुर नर मुनि सब होंहि मुखारे ।

“Hail to thee, the youthful daughter of the Himalayas; thou who art ever gazing as a chakori (proverbial bird) at the moon-like countenance of Mahesh (Shiva).

Hail to the mother of the elephant headed (Ganesh) and the six headed (Kartikeya). Thou who art the creator of the universe, whose person sheds such brilliant lustre as that of lightening.

Thou who art eternal, knowing neither the beginning nor the middle nor the end ; whose boundless power even to the Vedas (the fountain head of all knowledge) is unrevealed.

Thou who creates, sustains and destroys the universe ; fascinator of the entire creation, thou self-willed goddess who regulates the whole world.

Mother, thou occupies the first place amongst the ideal womanhood and thou whose glory is indescribable even by a thousand Sarda (the goddess of learning) and a thousand thousand-tongued Shesh (the divine Snake).

Thy devotees have within their easy reach the four fruits (Dharma, Artha, Kama & Moksha) ; Thou the beloved consort of Tripurari (Shiva).

O divine one, worship at your feet bring bliss to all - the gods, the saints and the mankind.”

5. It is this thought ingrained in the ideology of the women of Rajasthan, which finds expression in the festival of Gangaur.

6. It is, however, significant that the goddess is not an indifferent or disinterested spectator of their actions and affairs but one who is greatly interested in their wellbeing : she is one of them and shares their joys and sorrows as any feeling heart would do. Another significant fact is that the rituals which form a part of the Gangaur festival almost exclusively appertain to women ; and although Isar or Shankar, husband of Gauri, is conjoined with her in those rites, his role is subsidiary.

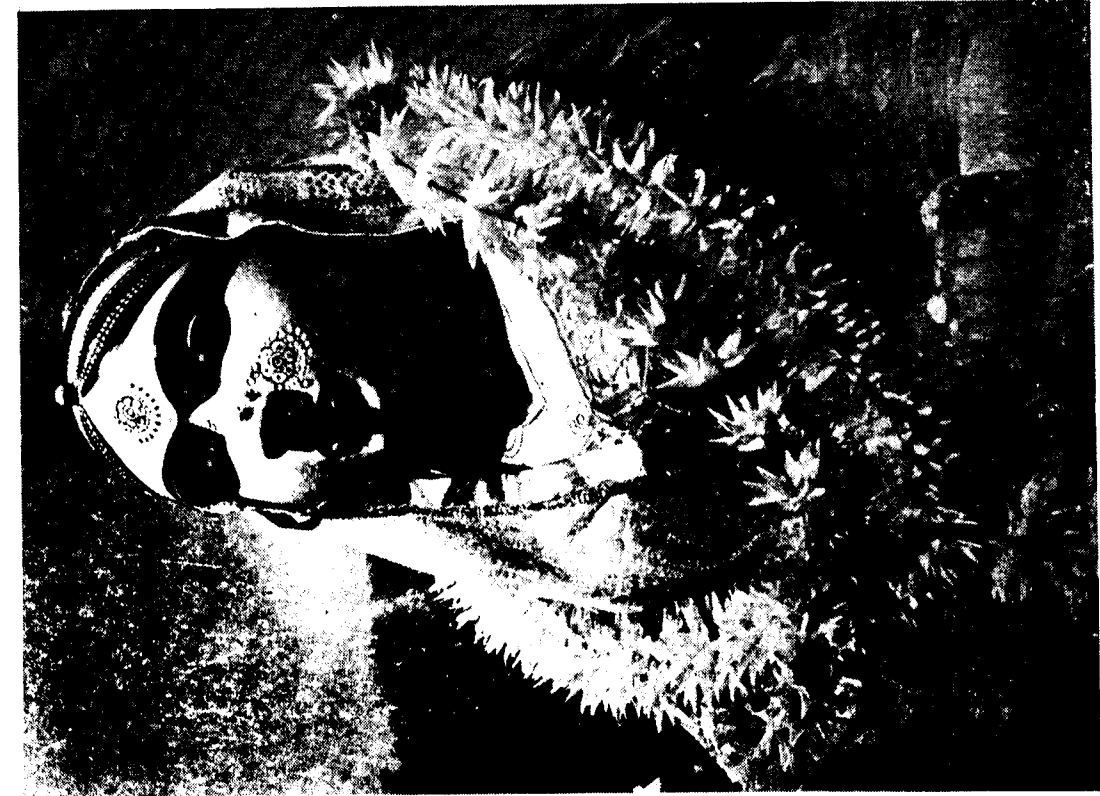
Occasion for celebration

7. Gangaur is the festival of Spring, Ritu-raj, the king of the seasons, as it is depicted in folklore and literature. As winter ends, the earth brightens its face and puts on a new garb. Mists fade away and the sun shines in a clear blue sky. The air is pleasant and has a tonic effect on every living being. Trees put forth new leaves and buds. Bees and butterflies flit from flower to flower. Birds look most colourful in their bright plumage and hop about and sing and dance with joy. Animals are more active than they are in other seasons and men are glad and gay signifying the advent of the festive time for this gayest of the Indian festivals marks the end of winter and the advent of spring.

Origin of the festival

8. Nothing can be said as to when the festival began to be celebrated in its present form in Rajasthan. From times immemorial it has been the custom for the maidens and married women to observe it. The seed of this joyful celebration is perhaps to be found in *Bhavishyottar Purana* where Gauri, soon after her marriage, makes a request to her husband, Shiva :

आन्दोलनं मम कृते कारयेथा स्वलंकृतम् ।
त्वया सहरमे ऽहं यथा चेत्रे विशेषतः ॥



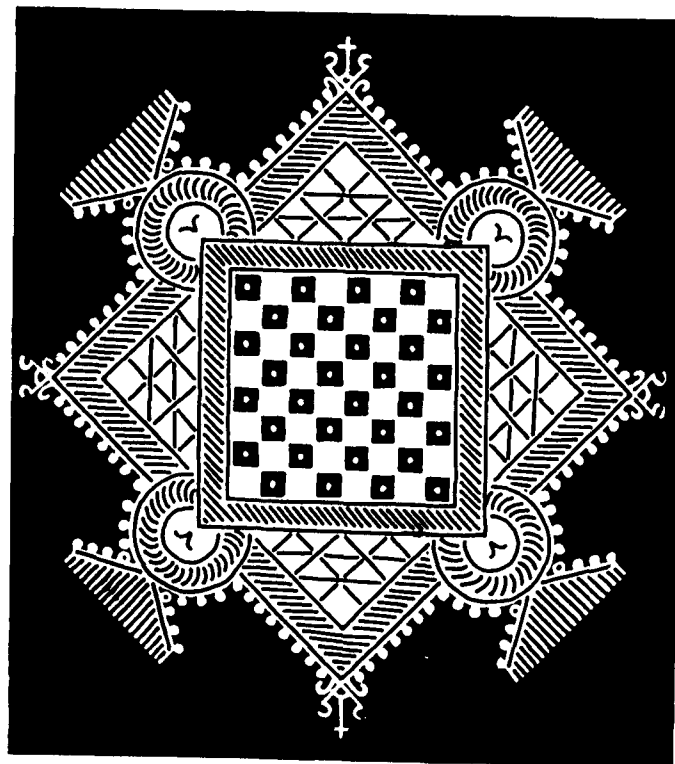
Fine specimens of the wooden images of Isar and Gauri in an aristocratic household



Wooden images in a common family



Applying *mehandi* - myrtle paste to palms



Gauri ka Besana — the seat of the Gauri



The intricate design is called *ghewar* after the name of a sweetmeat prepared on the occasion of Gangaur festival



Maidens returning home singing songs with pots
having water, leaves and flowers



The worship in progress.
Note the Jawaras in the forefront

'My lord, get me a well-decorated swing on which I might have the pleasure of swinging with you in the month of Chaitra.' This explains the ardent desire of a newly married girl to observe the rituals of Gangaur in the first spring after her marriage.

Duration

9. The festival commences on the first day of Chaitra, and continues upto the fourth day of the bright half of the month. Virgins as well as married women dedicate themselves to the worship of goddess. The former offer worship for being blessed with good-natured husband of their choice, the latter for the welfare, health and long life of their husband so that their married life may remain full of happiness. Widows are not entitled to participate in the festival of Gangaur.

10. It is incumbent on a newly wedded girl to observe the full course of 18 days of the festival coming after her marriage. The woman concerned invites six, eight or ten of her unmarried girl friends by sending each of them a *datun*, a twig of *Babul* (Acacia), retention of which by the invitee means acceptance of the invitation.

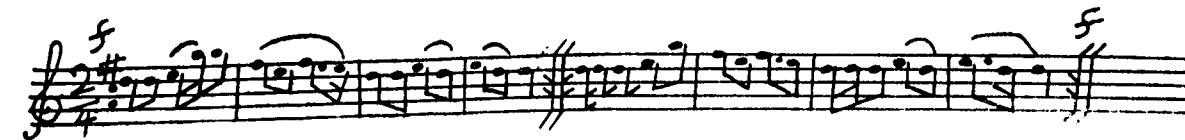
They keep her company while she offers worship to the goddess. The number including the chief worshipper is odd. The offering continues year after year till the series is completed by performance of *ujon* or *ujemno* which comes from the Prakrit *ujjvan*, meaning a banquet or ceremony performed on the successful termination of a *vrat* i.e. fast. Many unmarried girls also keep the fast for the full period of 18 days taking their meals only once a day. The married women who like to attend the full course are welcome to keep the fast, otherwise it is usual for them to observe the shorter term of the *vrat* and to offer worship to Gauri on the eve of Teej which continues till they bid farewell to the goddess on the *bolavni* or *galavni* day, as it is called, and which is fixed with due regard to the favourable aspect of the moon on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th day after the Teej.

Observance

11. The first important ritual relating to the festival starts on the day following the Holi, when women collect some of the ashes that remain after the Holi is burnt and sow wheat or barley seeds therein and water daily. The seeds germinate and grow quickly. The shoots are called *jawara*. While sowing grain the following song is sung :

गणगौर पूजूं गणपति ये
ईसर पूजूं पारबती ये
पारबती का आला गीला
गौर का सोना का टीला
टीला दे टपला दे राणी
बरत करे गौर दे राणी

करतां २ आस आयो, मास आयो, खरा खांड का लाडू लायो
लाडू ले बीर ने दीनो, वो जी ले म्हेने चूदड़ दीवी
चूदड़ ले म्हे गवर ओढ़ाई। गवर ले म्हे सुहाग दियो, भाग दियो
सुहाग भाग मीला सात कचोला बाड़ी में विजोरी
रानी पूजे राज नै म्हे पूजां लोका सुहाग नै
रानी को राज तपतो जाय, म्हा को सुहाग बधतो जाय ।



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

"We offer worship to Gauri and Ganpati and Isar. All the small heaps and particles of matter surrounding Gauri, turn into mounds of gold as if by magic. Gauri takes a vow to keep the *vrat*. On the termination of the fast there are renewed hopes of fulfilment of the aspirations to signify which the worshipper gets sweet balls, offered by her to Gauri in return as *prasad*. The *prasad* is presented by her to her brother, who presents her a *chundri*. The lady makes an offering of *chundri* to Gauri and Gauri blesses the worshipper with *suhag* (marital bliss), good luck and welfare of the entire family. With the blessing of the goddess the worshippers' *suhag* blossoms like *bijora*, a citrus fruit in the garden. The queen of the country offers worship for the prosperity of her kingdom. I offer homage to the goddess for enjoyment of everlasting *suhag*. May the wishes of the queen and the worshipper fructify."

12. Every morning after the Holi groups of unmarried girls go to an orchard or garden for bringing *durba* (green grass, *Agostis linearis*), flowers, and water in small pots. A series of the latter, which number between 4 and 7, are carried by them on their head. While going to the garden they sing :

म्हे काल सवेरी ऊठस्यां ।
म्हे मेस्यां ओ ईसर थारो नाम ।
दामोदर बासदेव ।

'We will rise early in the morning tomorrow and chant your names Isar, Damodar, Vasudeo.'

13. When they arrive at the garden the girls sing :-



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

बाड़ी वाला बाड़ी खोल, बाड़ी की किवाड़ी खोल
छोरियां आई दूब ने, ये कुण जी री बेटी हों ?
ये कुण जी री पोती हों ?, ये कुण जी री भेना हों ?
काई थारो नांव है ?, कुण र आई दूब ने ?
म्हे.....जी री बेटी हों। म्हे.....जी री पोती हों ।
म्हे.....जी री भेना हों,म्हारो नांव है
म्हे बिरमा जी री बेटी हों, ईसर जी री भेना हों
रोबां म्हारो नाम है, आई आई दूब ने

'O gardner, open the gates of the garden. We girls have come to fetch *durba*.' The gardener puts the question : "Whose daughters are you and whose grand-daughter ? Whose sister ? What is your name ? Who else have come along with you ?." The girls reply individually : "I am the daughter of so and so, grand-daughter of so and so, sister of so and so and such is my name." The song continues : 'I am the daughter of Brahamaji, the sister of Isarji. My name is Rovani. I and my friends have come to fetch *durba*.'

14. The girls enter into the garden. They go to the well. All of them offer *kumkum* or vermilion powder and rice grains at a clean spot nearby and sing the following song in her praise :

गौर ए गणगौर माता खोल ए किवाड़
बाहर ऊभी थाने पूजण वाली
पूजो ए पूजन्ता वाली काई वर मांगो ?
मांगां ए म्हे अन धन लाखर लछमी
जलधर जामी बाबल मांगा रातां देई मायड
कान कंवर सो बीरो मांगा, रोबां सी भोजाई
ऊंट चढ्यो बहनोई मांगां चुड़ले वाली बहनड
फूल बिरान्ता फूफो मांगा, मांडा पोवण भूबा
थाने बर पायो जैसो म्हाने बर दी जो
जीं सें होवे सुखी घर बार-माता खोल ए किवाड़

'Venerable mother, open thy gate. Thy daughters are standing outside to offer thee worship.' The goddess opens the door and says : 'You are most welcome, my daughters. What are your desires ?' 'O mother bestow on us *anna* (all kinds of grain), wealth and prosperity. Let our father be as benevolent as a cloud, mother as solicitous of our welfare as Ratan Devi, the wife of the Sun god, brother like Kan Kanwar, brother's wife like Rovani, sister wearing beautiful bangles on her wrists (symbolical of wedded life) sister's husband riding a camel, father's sister like Annapurna

(giver of food), her husband (our *phupa*) one who gathers flowers, and above all, we ask for the fulfilment of our ardent desire viz. give us our life partner such as the one you have been blessed with so that our whole life and our entire household may be full of happiness and prosperity.'

15. The maidens then return home singing melodious songs on the way, with pots on their head filled with water and the top one bearing leaves, *durba* and flowers artistically arranged. They sing the following song :

फली जी फली म्हारी ओढ़नी
म्हारी हरी ए कुसुमल ओढ़नी, बागां में फली जी राज
ससुराजी गढ़ का चौधरी, म्हारा बाप दिल्ली का राजाजी
म्हारी हरी ए कुसुमल ओढ़नी, बागां में फली जी राज ।



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

'My green and red scarf, enchantingly beautiful, is like flowers blossoming in the garden. My father-in-law is the head of the local fort and my father the king of Delhi. How beautiful does my red and green scarf look fluttering in the wind in the garden ?'

16. They arrive near their homes. Isar and Gauri are supposed to be still resting in their bed. The following song is sung to awake them :

म्हे आया ए फसला के बार
दही घमोड़े गुजरी
ये जागो बिरमाजी रा पूत
थाने सूता ना सरे
ये जागो ए ईसर घर नार
आछी गोरीं पातली
दही घमोड़े गुजरी

"We have arrived at the gate of your palace. The milkmaid (Gujari) is churning curds. O Isar, son of Brahamaji, it is time for you to wake up. And you, tall, slender and beautiful Gauri, wife of Isar, you also get up. The milkmaid is churning curds."

17. The married women do not go to bring *durba* and flowers which are meant to be offered to the goddess at the time of worship. The Malin (gardner's wife) brings the same for them. Her services are suitably rewarded at the end of the festival.

18. The worship continues but on the morning of the seventh day after the Holi the women bring clay from the bed of a tank or from the house of the potter, and prepare images of Goran (Gauri), Isar, Kanhiram, Rovani and

the Malin. Goran is the wife of Isar son of Brahma or Birmadatt. Kanhiram is Isar's younger brother. Rovani is Isar's younger sister and Malin is the assistant who helps Goran and Rovani with the flowers offered in worship to Isar.

Wooden images

19. At many places in Rajasthan such as Jodhpur, Bikaner, Udaipur, Kota, Alwar, Kishangarh etc. well-to-do families purchase wooden idols of Gauri and Isar and install them for worship at the commencement of the festival. In some aristocratic families there are permanent wooden images of Isar and Gauri which are painted afresh every year on the eve of the festival. The maximum height of these images is 1.2 m or 4 feet. The smaller ones vary from one to three feet. The splendid images of Gauri and Isar in the palace of the Maharaja of Bikaner are the handwork of the renowned artist, Sutradhar Mohanji. There are many reputed painters called

matherans such as Ramkishan, Bhanwarlal, Meghraj, Kapilchand, Keval Chand, Ilahibux, Hisamuddin, Muradbux etc. who repaint the images.

Mural paintings

20. The wall of the room where the 'puja' is performed is whitewashed and the women paint out the figures of Isar and Gauri. Isar and Gauri are represented sitting face to face playing *chaupar*. Gauri is attended by her friends. They are all supposed to be dressed in regal robes suitable to the occasion. The wooden and clay images are placed at the bottom of the wall beneath the above mentioned paintings.

21. When the rituals relating to the worship begin at about 9 or 10 a.m., the atmosphere is filled with the enchanting music of a series of songs which are accompanied by dance. Invocation to the goddess commences with the following song :

आबो माता इण घर पावणां
ऊभा बिरमाजी बीनवे
आम्रो माता इण घर पावणां
ऊभा सूरज जी बीनवे
रेणादे चांपै थारा पांव
आम्रो गवरां दे इण घर पावणां
ऊभा चंदरमाजी बीनवे
रोहण दे चांपै थारा पांव
आम्रो माता इण घर पावणां



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

'Welcome blessed mother. You are welcome as an honoured guest to this house. Brahmaji is standing at the door awaiting your auspicious arrival. Your visit is being anxiously awaited. The Sun-god joins Brahmaji in inviting you to this place. The wife of Sun-god Renade is longing to touch your feet. The Moon-god is also

awaiting your arrival and his wife, Rohini, is ready to pay her obeisance by touching your feet. Come, O blessed mother to this house.'

22. Great significance is attached by the devotees as to the mood in which they offer worship to the goddess as is evident from the following song :

गवरल पूजण रा दिन चार
गवरल पूजे चित मन सूं
जे तू पूजे रुठी कूठी
तो रुठ्यो आवै जी
जे तू पूजे नंगी धंगी
तो नंग धडंगो आवै जी

devotee is not properly dressed or that the worship is offered in anger or half-heartedly, she will get a husband who may not be very well disposed towards her ; and if she is herself not properly dressed she will get a husband who is naked or without clothes.'

'The time for which the festivities are to last is limited to a few days. The offering should be made most ardently and whole-heartedly. It is believed that, if while offering her worship, the

23. The dialogue in the following song depicts the marvellous beauty of the goddess and the reply of the goddess to her devotees signifies the fact that she too is one like them of flesh and blood born of real father and mother :

किण थाने घड़ी ए सिलावटे किण थाने लाल लुहार ?
नहिं म्हाने घड़ी ए सिलावटे नहिं म्हाने लाल लुहार
जनम दियो म्हारी मावडी रूप दियो करतार
किणजी री गवरल दीकरी किणजी रे घर नार ?
हेमाचल जी री दीकरी पातलिये ईसर घर नार
अचले सिंहासन बैठाणो पळे दोलू बाय
हाथ जोड़ विनती करू लुल लुल लागू पांय



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

"The devotees are bewitched with the beauty of the person of the goddess. They ask her : 'Which mason had dedicated his wonderful art to fashion the figure of your body or was it some skilful *lohar* (smith) who forged your image? Whose daughter are you and whose wife?' The goddess replies : 'Neither any mason has carved my figure nor any smith had any hand in forging it. It was my mother who gave me birth and the almighty creator bestowed on me the beauty of form. I am the daughter of Himachal and the beloved wife of the tall and handsome Isar.'"

Jawaras

24. After offering worship to the images,

the women put sixteen dots of *kumkum* or vermilion powder, *kajal* (soot) and *mehandi* (myrtle) each below the painted figures of Gauri and Isar. They hold the green *durba* blades in their hand and sprinkle water with them from the pots brought by them from the wells. While offering worship to Gauri a married woman must have a *nath* (nose ring). There are numerous other songs, which it is customary to sing while the *puja* is offered to Gauri. There are songs of the *Jawaras*. Songs are sung of the *mehandi* with which hands, toes and feet are decorated. Then there are songs relating to the *chundri*, the ornaments and those relating to the domestic life led by the householders. Some of those typical songs are reproduced below :

म्हारा हरया ए जवारा
सिर से ऊँचा होइ रह्या जी
ये कुण बाया कुण सींचा तो
ये कुण क्यार्यां रा गाय की जी
ईसर बाया बहू गवरल सींचिया
सूरज जी क्यार्यां रा गाय की जी

“Here are my green shoots of *Jawaras* which are growing higher than me. Who has sown the *Jawaras*, who has watered them and who will reap them? The *Jawaras* have been sown by Isar, watered by his wife, Gaural, and would be reaped by the Sun-god.”

25. Married women insert the names of their sisters and sisters' husbands at suitable places in this song. Another song of *Jawaras* is as under :

ऊँचे मंगरे जी म्हारा हरिया जवारा
नोचे मिरगा जब चरे
मिरगा घेरो नी बिरमा जी रा ईसर जी
घेरो नी बन रा मिरगला
म्हे क्यूं घेरां ए गवर सांवडली ?
बाइ म्हारी सोहद्रा सासरें
मिरगा घेरो वसुदेव जी रा श्री किशनजी
घेरो न बन रा मिरगला
म्हे क्यूं घेरां ए म्हारी रुकमण सांवडली
बाई म्हारी गवरल सासरें

“In the field on the high land are growing my green *Jawaras*. At the bottom of the mound, antelopes are grazing in the barley field. You, Isarji, son of Brahmaji, go and drive away the wild antelopes from the field.” Isar replies : ‘Why do you ask me, my beloved, to drive away the wild antelopes? My sister, Sahodra (who could have asked for this service from me), is at her husband's house.’ ‘Come along Shri Krishna, son of Vasudeo, and drive away the wild antelopes.’ “Why should I drive them away, my dear Rukman? My sister Gaural is at her husband's house.”

26. In another song the devotee says :

म्हारा हाथ में जवारा ए
कोरो कूँडो जल भरियो
म्हे तो सात सहेल्यो ए
गवरल माता पूज रही
बाया पूजन पुजास्यां ए
काइ धन मांग रही
म्हे तो लाभ र लिछमी ए
अन धन मांग रही
अन धन देवस्यां ए
ओर कइ धन मांग रही
म्हे तो सासू जसोदा ए
किसन वर मांग रही
थां ने सासू जसोदा ए
किसन वर देवस्यां ए

“With green shoots of barley in my hand and pure water contained in a new earthen bowl, I am offering worship to mother Gaural along with my six other companions. The goddess welcomes them and asks them the object of worship, assuring them that she would bestow on them grain, riches and prosperity. The devotees add that they would ask for a mother-in-law like Jasoda ; and Shri Krishna as their husband. The goddess grants them their heart's desire.”

Mehandi

27. While offering worship to the goddess the ladies occupy themselves in applying myrtle paste to their palms, the backs of palms and fingers. The drawing on the palms consists of flowers, swastika, parrot, mango, chaupar, chundri, orchard, laharla, Sun, Moon, stars, chakra, etc. The back of the palm is decorated with a simple flower or some geometrical designs. The edges of the soles of the feet are decorated with delicate tendrils and ankles with ornaments. The figures on the palm are significant. For example the figure of swastika signifies a yearning for things auspicious; the chundri denotes *saubhagya*; *chaupar* love and frolic; flowers, happiness and delight; and Sun and Moon and stars, everlasting prosperity, tendrils also happiness, growth and prosperity. Delightful songs are sung in praise of *mehandi*. One such song follows :

मेंहदी बावण धरा गई, सोने रो हलियो हाथ
मेंहदी तो सींचण धरा गयी, सोने रो झारो हाथ
मेंहदी चूँटण धरा गई, सोने रो छाबड़ो हाथ
चांदी रे घरट पिसाविया, मेंहदी तो कपड़े जी छाण
रतन कटोरे मेंहदी घोलस्यां, राची छै रंग मजीठ
नरादल री राची चिटली ग्रांगली, धरा रा राच्या दोनू हाथ



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

‘The lady goes to the garden to sow the seeds of *mehandi* with a plough of gold in her hand. She waters the plants of *mehandi* with a pitcher of gold. Then she goes to pick up the leaves with a basket of gold in her hand. *Mehandi* leaves are dried and crushed into powder in a mill made of silver. It is then passed through a piece of muslin. A paste of the powder is prepared in a jewelled bowl. It is applied to the hands of the married girl by the sister of her husband. The latter is satisfied by putting paste to the tip of her small finger.’

28. When the paste dries up, it is removed. It displays the figures of dark red tint like that of *majeeth*. Myrtle is applied to hands and feet by married women and un-married girls on all auspicious occasions of births and marriages in the family, festivals and at the time of the lady's departure from her father's house to that of her father-in-law. The most conspicuous occasions for application of *mehandi* is, however, the celebration of Gangaur in Chaitra and the Teej in Shravan when special efforts are made to paint the figures as delicate, artistic and beautiful as possible.

Chundri

29. *Chundri* is symbolical of the happy wedded life. It is made of superfine silken or muslin cloth and prepared by the Bandharas by tying and dyeing. It is coveted most by married ladies. The following song depicts the women's love of *chundri* :

चूँडली रो बाइ गवरा ने कोइ
लावो नी बिरमा जी रा छावा चूँडली
म्हे तो फिरिया ए गोरी देस ने परदेस
कठइन लागी सवागण चूँडली
लावो २ ए हेमाचल जी री पोल
ईसर जी ने बलमा जी
चूँड ओढ़े हेमाचल जी री धीय
बिरमा जो री कुल बहू जी
लावो नी बिरमा रा छावा चूँडली
चूँड ओढ़े सात भायां री बँन
ईसर दास जी रे लारै आई जी
लावो नी बिरमा जी चूँडली

‘*Chundri* is keenly coveted by Gauran. You Isarji beloved son of Brahmaji, go and bring a *chundri*, for her. Isar replies, “my dear, I had roamed from one country to another but I could not find a *chundri* suitable for you. Ultimately I happened to go to the palace of Himachalji and there fortunately enough I could procure one.” The *chundri* is offered by Isar to Gaura, daughter of Himachal, and daughter-in-law of Brahma. The *chundri* is worn by the lady who is the sister of seven brothers and has come as a wedded wife of Isar.’

30. Another song sings about a married lady who goes to the well dressed in her *chundri* is given below :—

काले भाटे कुवड़ी ए
राते छै पणहार

झिलो म्हारी चून्डी ए
ओ कुरा सींचे कुवडी ए
ओ कुरा काढ़े छे खाम
झिलो म्हारी चून्डी ए
ईसर जी सींचे कुवडी ए
कान्हे जी काढ़े छे खाम
झिलो म्हारी चून्डी ए
किणजी रो धरा ऊछरियो
किण जी रो पी जाय
झिलो म्हारी चून्डी ए
ईसरजी रो धरा उछरियो
कन्ह जी रो पीजाय
झिलो म्हारी चून्डी ए
काले भाटे कुवडी ए
राज छे परिहार
झिलो म्हारी चून्डी ए

'Amidst the black rocks is a well on which the happy dame goes to draw water. She has put on her choicest *chundri* which is vibrating in the breeze. Who is the one drawing water from the well? Who is he that holds the leather-bucket at the well-mouth? My *chundri* is waving briskly with the blasts of the wind. It is Isar who is drawing water from the well while his younger brother, Kanji, holds the leather-bucket. Whose flocks of sheep have gone out for grazing and whose herd has come to quench its thirst at the well? It is the flock of Isar which has gone out for grazing and the herds of Kanji have come to drink water. My *chundri* is wafting with the gust of wind.'

Glimpses of family life

31. On the occasion of Gangaur married women desire to have a free time unencumbered with their household duties so that they may enjoy singing and dancing and meeting as many girl friends as possible. Consequently they desire to be at the father's house where there is comparatively greater freedom of movement and relaxation from household duties. The desire of a married lady for visiting her father's house on the occasion is depicted in the following song :

म्हारे बाबोसारे मांडी गणगौर
बीरो जी लेबा ने आया
म्हाने दिन दस छोरे खिनाय
मारूजी म्हारे मायके ।
दिन दोय आवातां, दिन दोय जावतां
दिन दस लागे ए थारे मायके
कुरा दुहवे म्हारी घोलियां ने
कुरा करसी म्हारे घर रो काम
तीजां ने उठ जावे गौरी धरा माय के ।
देवराणी जिठाणी पिवजी सब गई
म्हारी मां रे लग रह्यो छे चाव
दिन दस खिनाय छो न
मारूजी म्हारे मायके
माय उडीके मारूजी घीय न
बैनड़ नै लग रह्यो उछाव
दिन दस खिना छो
मारूजी म्हारे मायके

"At my father's place the festival of Gangaur is to start in all its solemnity and my brother has come to take me there. Kindly let me go to my father's place for ten days." The husband expresses his reluctance to let her go saying: "It will take you two days to go and two days to return and you will be staying at your father's place for 10 days. Will it not cause me a good deal of inconvenience? Who will milk my cows and who will look after the household duties during your absence if you go to your father's house on the occasion?" The lady pleads: 'Every married girl is going to her father's place to enjoy the festivities. The wives of your elder and younger brothers have already gone. My mother is awaiting my arrival eagerly. My sisters are already there. It is a question of only ten days, and I shall return as expeditiously as possible on the termination of the festivities.'

32. When the festivities take place at the husband's house he is asked to provide all ornaments and jewellery to the wife so that she may put them on while offering worship to the goddess. The request of the wife is depicted in the following song :

पूजण द्यो गणगौर, भंवर म्हाने खेलण द्यो गणगौर
होजी म्हारी सगी नणदरा बीर, भंवर म्हाने पूजण द्यो
गणगौर
माथा ने मेमद ल्याव जो म्हारे माथा मै मे मद ल्याव
होजी म्हारी रखडी रतन जड़ाय भंवर म्हाने पूजण द्यो
गणगौर



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

'Let me go and offer worship to the goddess and spend some time playing with my bosom friends. In order that I may not look small in their company you have to provide me with *rakhri* studded with real jewels, *tika* to adorn my forehead, ornaments for the ears, nose, neck, and arms." The husband expresses his reluctance to let her be away from him even for the duration of the festivities. But she implores him to give her permission to go as her friends are awaiting for her company and ultimately the husband agrees to her request.

33. This song is sung in different tunes in different parts of the State. The notes that are sounded at Jodhpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Kota, Udaipur, Alwar, Dungarpur and Banswara vary in certain aspects at different places although the subject matter of the song is everywhere the same.

34. The explanations rendered by a young maiden who has been out for a long time in connection with Gangaur festivities to her husband who feels a little annoyed due to her long absence is the subject matter of the following song :

काई रे जुआब करूं रसिया सू'
जुआब करूं जी के सवाल करूं

केसरिया रे मामेनि जाता डरूंजी
काई रे जुआब करूं रसिया सू'
जी सहेबा खेलन गई गणगौर
अबोलो म्हां से क्यूं लियो जी म्हारा राज
जी साहिबा छोटी नणद थारी बैन
बाई सा कर मानती जी म्हारा राज
जी साहेबा वाने लगाई इती देर
कसूर म्हारो नहि छे जी म्हारा राज

"What explanation am I to offer for the inordinate delay in returning home? My darling, the fact is that I had gone out to enjoy the Gangaur festivities and there is no reason for you to be angry. Your sister was all along with me, and it was she who kept me busy with herself in singing and dancing which is the real cause of the delay and for which I am not to blame."

35. Not that the husbands are averse to let their wives go and enjoy the festivities, their interest is in no way insignificant as it leads to the happiness of their wives. In the following song the husband encourages his wife to begin the worship of Gangaur. The wife makes it an occasion to get all her wants furnished if she is to be expected to celebrate the function:

अजि ये भल पूजो गणगौर,
अजि ये तो मांडोनी गणगौर
छैल दुपट्टा छोटो,
दुपट्टा री लैस छोटो
पीली पीली मोहरां छोटो
पूजू जी गणगौर
अजी मैं तो मांडू जी गणगौर

"My dear, get me a beautiful *dupatta* and some lace to adorn it with, and the gold *mohurs* if you wish me to celebrate Gangaur."

36. In ancient times men had to go out for long periods to attend to their professions in distant parts of the country. Gangaur was the occasion when the married women expected their husbands to return home for the celebration of the Gangaur. In the following song a lady is anxiously awaiting the arrival of her husband:

घरें आबो नी पधारोनी
म्हारी दिसड़ी रा दिवला
थारा मारगिया बुहारू
बाज बंद री लूँ ब सूँ

"Come home, you the light of my eyes. I am sweeping with the bunch of silken threads hanging from my *bajuband*."

37. Standing on the roof of her house she looks attentively at the horizon blurred by the dust thrown up by the hoofs of the coming horse :

इए जोषाणा रे मारगिये
झीणोड़ी उड़ै छै गुलाल

Her heart throbs with emotion caused by the expectancy of her husband's arrival, and she considers the dust that has been raised to be more precious and beautiful than vermilion powder.

38. Sometimes a dotting husband covered hundreds of miles on horse-back to arrive at his home for the precious occasion and gave a pleasant and agreeable surprise to his sleeping wife :

अलंगा रा खड़िया राजन आज पधारिया
सूतोड़ा ने आय जगाया हो

"What a long distance you have covered my lord. You have come home and have awoke me from my sleep. How delighted and fortunate I am?"

39. The sons-in-law are very much welcome at the place of their fathers-in-law at the time of Gangaur. They are invited and their arrival is anxiously awaited. These feelings have been given expression to in the following dainty song :

हुल जारे रंग रा बिझरियां
चतर जवाईरा महल में
घुल जारे काला काजलिया
म्हारा बाई सा रा नैरा में
रंग जायेली रंग री मेंदइली
म्हारा बाईसारा हाथ में

"O multi-coloured fan, waive and flourish in the palace of the son-in-law. O black antimony, get yourself dissolved in the beautiful eyes of my husband's sister. O dark red coloured myrtle, adorn the palm of my husband's sister."

40. An instance of the woman's capricious nature and her fondness for ornaments are depicted in the following song:

सैया रे तिलक घड़ावो तो म्हारे घड़ावज्यो जी ।
सैयां गोरी, तमे सांवलजी, तिलक नहीं ओपसी जी
ओपे ओपे मोतीदा रो हार, ओपे झलाझल राखड़ी जी
बठासूँ गौरल रुठण चाल्या हेमाचल रे मायका जी
पाछासूँ ईसर निकल्या जटा मेली मोकली जी ।
पाल चढ़ता राजबी गौरल देखिया जी,
नहि ओ सामी हमें नहीं देखिया,
आगेरा पूछज्यो जी
छाणा बिण्ती डोकरी गौरल देखी जी ?
ओ नहि ओ सामी म्हे नहि देखिया
आगेरा पूछज्यो जी ।
पाती पोवन्ता डावइयां, गौरल देखियां जी ?
थारी गौरल कस्यो रे पेरणो जी,
थारी गौरल किसे रे उणियार
सांवलडी म्हारी गौर झलाझल राखड़ी जी —
हां ओ सामी हमें देखिया इए मठ में बैठिया जी ।
जो म्हारा मठ में बैठेला जोई बेला सांवलडी जी
सांवलडा म्हारा बाप तो म्हे ही व्हेस्यां सांवलडी जी
सांवलडी म्हारी माय तो, म्हे भी वेस्यां सांवलडी जी

studded with jewels made out of them for herself and her seven girl companions."

41. There is no end to the number of these delightful songs depicting the various phases of happy domestic life sung by women at the festival of Gangaur. In one such song they celebrate the birth of a son to Gauri. In another an incident from the mythical life of Gauri is depicted. They think of themselves as Gauri's sisters and so privileged; as such they cut jokes with I sar. In the following song they say :

ईसर आयो ए म्हारी गायां रो गुवाल
बोतो आयो ए म्हारी धोली गाय रो गुवाल
म्हे तो राखीए गोरां बाई री काण
नीतर देती ओ धम्मड़ घोसला जी चार

"Here is Isar the cowherd of my calves. He had brought my cows from the pasture land; but due to his carelessness he has lost the white one on the way. He should be thankful to our sister Gauri for whose regard I let him go, otherwise he would have received a sound beating at my hands."

Myths

42. The singing and dancing which accompany the rituals at the worship of the goddess Gauri, are interspersed with interesting mythical stories which are narrated by one of the devotees and heard with rapt attention by others. One such is reproduced below.

43. There was a Raja and there was a Mali. The Raja sowed barley and gram in his fields while the Mali cultivated *durba* on his own. The Raja's barley and gram grew luxuriantly, but the Malis *durba* was wasting away. The Mali inquired of the Raja the cause of his luxuriant growth. The Raja told him that some maidens cut away the turf from his fields everyday. So the next day the Mali came to his meadow before the break of dawn and hid himself under his cart. When the girls came to the meadow and began to gather green blades of the grass, the Mali came forward and snatched away ornaments from some of them and clothes from others as a punishment for their

बलै २ ईसर गौर मनावे, जटा मे ली भो कली जी
बले ईसर गौर मनावे, तिलक घड़ावस्यां जी
लंका गढ़ से सोनो मंगाय तिलक घड़ावस्यां जी
खारा समंद रा मोती मंगाय तिलक पोवा त्यां जी
लालण गढ़ री लालां मंगाय तिलक जड़ावस्यां जी
सात सहेल्यां ने उरी बुलावां, तो तिलक परावस्यांजी

"Gauri requests Isar : 'Dear husband, kindly get a *tilak* (ornament for the forehead) made for me as you are getting for my friends and companions'. To this Isar replies : 'Your friends and companions are of the fair complexion. *Tilak* would not perhaps suit your exquisite complexion. Why not put on your jewelled *rakhdi* and the necklace of pearls?' Gauri is so annoyed at the denial of her request that she decided to go to her father's place. She leaves her home. Soon after Isar follows her with his long hair flowing on his back. He asks a wayfarer riding a horse whether he had seen Gauri going that way. "No, my lord, I did not meet her. Kindly go forward and ask someone else." Isar puts the same question to an old woman collecting cow-dung. She too replies in the negative. Further on Isar meets some maidens stringing garlands of petals. He asks them whether they had met Gauri. The girls enquire the details about Gauri's features and the dress that she is putting on. Isar says that his beautiful wife was wheat-complexioned and was putting on a *rakhdi* studded with diamonds and precious jewels. The girls say : "Yes, good master, we have met her. She is sitting in the temple of Shiva nearby." Isar is convinced that the lady sitting in the temple must be none else than his wife. So he follows her there. (The word *Sanwla* in marwari has two meanings i.e. beautiful and dark). When Isar addressed his wife as *Sanwaldi* he implies the first meaning. Gauri in her simulated offence interprets it in the second, and observes : "My lord, my father is of dark colour and my mother also has a similar complexion. It is, therefore, natural that I should inherit the dark complexion." Isar, however, flatters Gauri by telling her that he did not mean any offence and promises that he would get a *tilak* made for her. He would obtain gold from Lanka, pearls from the deep salt seas, rubies from the ruby mines, and get seven *tilaks* of gold

unauthorised prank. The girls pleaded for his indulgence telling him that they wanted the *durba* for the worship of the goddess for not more than sixteen days; and implored him to return their dresses and ornaments promising to bring for him a present of the offerings of sweet dishes which would be prepared by them on the Teej of Gangaur. The Mali granted their request and returned their belongings to them. On the 16th day of the worship of Gangaur the girls took the *lapsi* and other sweets offered by them to Gauri, to the Mali's house. The Mali had gone out and his old mother was at home. She asked the girls to put what they had brought in a niche in the wall of her hut. This they did and returned to their homes. Sometime after the Mali came to his house and asked his mother to let him have something to eat as he felt hungry. The old woman told him that there was no dearth of food that day as the girls had brought presents of special dishes after offering the same to Gauri, and that he should look for them in the niche. The Mali's surprise knew no bounds when he looked into the niche and found it full of gold and diamonds, pearls and other gems and he felt very happy to find himself so rich. The story concludes with the narrator's wish that everyone of them including the teller of the story, may be blessed by the goddess, Gauri, with good fortune similar to that which befell the Mali.

Ghudlia

44. Thus has the celebration of the festival come down to us. In the evening of the 7th day after the Holi unmarried girls go to the potter's house and bring an earthen pot with numerous holes all around. They put a lighted lamp inside the pot and go round singing songs of Ghudlia collecting presents of small cash, sweets, gur, ghee, oil, etc. This continues for 10 days i.e. upto the conclusion of the Gangaur festival when the girls break the pot and throw the bits into a well or a tank and enjoy a feast with the collections made.

45. The origin of the Ghudlia is to be found in an interesting historical incident. It has been said that in Samvat 1548, on the third day

of the bright half of Chaitra (13th March, 1491), Mallu Khan alias Malik Usuf, Subedar of Ajmer, attacked Pipar City of Marwar, and carried away from outside the town 140 maidens, who were at the time celebrating the festival of Gangaur. He was accompanied by Mir Ghudley Khan of Sindh. When the report reached Rao Santhal, ruler of Jodhpur, he at once pursued the wrongdoers and met them at Kosana about 10 km from Pipar, where Mallu Khan had encamped after ravaging the town of Pipar. In the darkness of the night the Rathors of Marwar, headed by Rao Santhal, fell on Mallu Khan and his party who gave him a stiff battle. Ultimately Ghudley Khan was killed on the spot and Rao Santhal also received fatal injuries in the combat and scummed to them later. Before breathing his last, however, he succeeded in freeing the captive maidens and he earned their eternal blessings and gratitude. Mallu Khan was completely vanquished and he retired towards Ajmer.

46. Col. Tod also refers in his Annals of Marwar to this incident. He is, however, of the view that it was Rao Soojah (Sooraj Mul) who was credited with the rescue of the girls and that the incident happened in the Samvat 1572 (A.D. 1516). According to him Santhal never succeeded to the throne of Jodhpur after Jodha's death, he having been killed in an encounter with muslims while defending his principality of Salurmer. The facts recounted by the later historians however, appear to be more reliable.

47. The incident is celebrated annually on the occasion of Gangaur as a reminder of the fate met by Ghudley Khan in his nefarious attempt to ravish the maidens. The earthen pot with numerous holes carrying the burning lamp is symbolical of the numerous wounds received on his body by Ghudley Khan and the burning lamp signifies the triumph of manly valour and chivalry exhibited by Rao Santhal.

48. Of the numerous songs sung by maidens carrying Ghudlia in the course of their annual round of houses, two are as follows:

घुडल्यो घूमे छै जी घूमे छै

घुडल्या रे बांध्यो सूत । घुडल्यो०
ईसर जी रे जायो पूत । घुडल्यो०
सुवागण बारें आव । घुडल्यो०
तेल बले घी ल्याव । घुडल्यो०
मोत्यां रा अखा ल्याव । घुडल्यो०
पीहर रो पीलो ल्याव । घुडल्यो०
जापा रो लाडू ल्याव । घुडल्यो०
तेल बलै घी ल्याव । घुडल्यो०



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

"Ghudlia, the earthen pot with numerous holes, wound with auspicious thread and an earthen lamp, lighted inside, goes round and round. Isar's wife has given birth to a son and, happy in this delight, we go round with our felicitations from house to house. O Suhagin, (married lady) come out of your house to receive us. For the oil that is being consumed in the lamp, please let us have ghee, let us have auspicious pearls and the *pila* (yellow scarf) received by you as a present from your father and also the sweet ball prepared for you as a dainty dish to be taken during your confinement. Let us have all these while we go round with the Ghudlia on our head."

जालोड़ी जल निपजे रे बीरा पाटण झुकी ज्वार
झगरसिंहजी रा गंगासिंहजी, ओ म्हारे घुडले रे सामा आव
म्हे घुडलारी तीजणियां ओ बीरा ये घुडले रा असवार
घुडलो मांगे रोक रूपैया, दिवलो मांगे तेल
घुडला ने देस्यां रोक रूपैया, रिबलाने देस्यां तेल
घुडलो ए सुपारियां छायो, तारां छाई रात
भावज ए म्हारी पूतां छाई, बहोड़े बीरे घरनार
नगरी ए नारेलां छाई महाराजा— — — रे परताप
कामठड़ी मति बाओ, ओ पात लिया गवरल रा दिन चार
मागे ए म्हारी गवर बडेरी, लारें घुडलो तमार

"The tank is full of water, or in Jalore it is raining while at Patan the *jawaras* are growing luxuriantly. My brother Maharaja Ganga Singhji, son of Maharaja Dungarsinghji, come forth to receive us, we, who are carrying Ghudlia on our head. We are Teejanias celebrating the Gangaur while you are riding the horse. Our Ghudlia asks for presents of money and the lamp inside stands in need of oil." The Maharaja fulfils both their demands. "Our Ghudlia bearing the tiny holes lighted by the lamp inside, appears as bright as the night interspersed with numberless stars twinkling in the sky or the wife of our elder brother (i.e. the Maharani) surrounded by her numerous sons, or the town full of auspicious coconuts and the townsmen happy under your benign rule. O handsome Maharaja, do not lash your horse with the whip. The festival of Gangaur is to last only for four days. Do not be in hurry. Let our Ghudlia go ahead and you, revered sir, follow us on your horse."

The finale

49. As time passes, the feelings of the devotees gradually gather intensity. The climax is

reached during the last three days beginning from the first day of the bright half of Chaitra. All married women and girls dress themselves in their best and colourful attires. They talk of nothing else but how to make the festival interesting to the utmost. The images of Gauri & Isar are dressed in new garments. It requires great experience and skill to do the job which takes hours. An intimate glimpse of Isar's toilet is to be found in the following song:

ईसरजी तो पेचो बांधे
गौरा बाई पेच सवारे हो राज,
म्हे ईसर थारी साली छां।
ईसरजी तो धोती बांधे,
गौरा बाई लांग सवारे हो राज,
म्हे ईसर थारी साली छां।

'Isar is putting on his turban. Gauri helps him to arrange the plaits nicely. We who are witnessing the toilet of Isar, are his sisters-in-law. Isar is dressing himself with his *dhoti* (loin cloth). Gauri is helping him in arranging its folds. We sisters-in-law of Isar are also attending on him.' The idea is that it is time for Isar to go to the place of Gauri and get married to her and fetch her to his own house.

केसरिया उमायो हे लाल बनी रा देस में।

"The gay bridegroom has come fired with great enthusiasm to the country of his beloved bride."

50. A number of ornaments for decorating the images of Isar and Gauri are prepared by the ladies themselves. Gram flour is kneaded and all ornaments are made of the dough thus prepared. They are so cleverly made that they appear to be made of gold. Different colours are prepared by soaking rice in water, preparing a paste thereof by crushing it, and mixing different colours with it which, when applied artistically to the aforesaid ornaments, appear like pearls, rubies, emeralds and other gems. It is hardly necessary to give a detailed list of the items of the dress with which the images are clad and of the ornaments which decorate their forms. It may be sufficient to observe that the two images, after the toilet and decoration, look like living figures. It has again

to be remembered that only unmarried girls and married women are permitted to give a hand in performing this job. When the usual worship, which includes the presentation of special dishes of *dhoklas*, *churma*, *lapsi* and other sweets prepared by them for the occasion, and water and *jawaras* (which afterwards the worshippers offer as present to one another and also to their near and dear male relatives who put them on their turbans) have been offered to Isar and Gauri to the accompaniment of songs and dances, at the auspicious hour in the afternoon they are carried in procession on the heads of married women to some garden, tank or well. The usual song sung on the occasion is significant of the departure of Gauri to her husband's house :

माली का रे थारी बहली जुताय
हाले म्हारी गवरल सासरे
साथीड़ा में गौरा बिरमादत्त जी साथ
हाली म्हारी गवरल सासरे

"You, son of the Mali, please bring your *bahli* (a light covered cart drawn by bullocks). My daughter Gauri is going to her father-in-law's house. She is being accompanied by the brothers and friends of Isar."

51. There are other songs which give a graphic account of the progress of Gauri's journey towards her husband's home. Two of them are given below :

बिरमाजी रा ईसरजी ओ राज, घाटां री मुगत करो।
म्हारी गवर तिसाई ओ राज, घाटां री मुगत करो।

"On her way Gauri is supposed to go by a path through difficult hills and mountains. Gauri feels tired and her companions request Isar to wait a while and allow Gauri to rest so that she may drink water and quench her thirst"

गौरा थोड़ो पाणीड़ो पाओ ए, बोट तिसायो पंथी दूर को जी।
बटाऊ थारा हाथां में मेंहदी जी, दुक पीवोनी कुवा बावडी जी।
गौरा थारे कुण भलो छे: ए, कुण चुलाया कुवा बावडी जी।
बटाऊ म्हारे दादाजी भला छाजी, बारे चुलाया कुवा बावडी जी।

काई तो करूं थारा बाइ सा न ए
म्हे तो ईसर साथ जावस्यां ए

"What shall I do with my sister ? It is incumbent on me now to follow Isar."

And the women folk bidding farewell to Gauri turn their steps homewards wiping their tears with the ends of their scarfs.

Celebrations during princely regimes

54. Prior to the formation of the present State of Rajasthan in 1949 A.D., that is to say during the regime of the princes, the festival of Gangaur was celebrated with characteristic pomp and show in which the entire resources of the State were utilised. The musical band of the State and other paraphernalia consisting of elephants and horses carrying the State flag, Mahi Maratib, elephants decorated with howdahs and other trappings, horses and camels and chariots similarly decorated, artillery, cavalry and infantry detachments, the Jagirdars and the officers of the State marching in regular files, all formed a part of the magnificent procession. The ruler himself came in the rear riding on an elephant. As soon as the images of Gangaur and Isar made their appearance outside the gates of the fort everyone present in the huge assembly paid his homage to the goddess. The band played the State anthem, the army presented a guard of honour and a salvo of guns was fired from the fort. The procession terminated at some prominent place of public resort e.g. a park, a garden or a tank or some celebrated well. There it took the form of a fair in which the people formed themselves in groups and made merry. The images of Gauri and Isar were placed on a throne on a raised platform surrounded by woman attendants of the palace, some of whom waved *chamar* and *morchal* around the faces of the deities. The trained horses from the State stable were made to dance before them by the riders. There were races of horses and camels, and games and sports were organised which were witnessed by all those present. The citizens, men, women and children, enjoyed the items greatly. The function terminated usually with the display of fireworks. The images of Gauri and Isar returned to the

While Gauri is resting, a wayfarer passes by, and he requests her to draw water from the well for him so that he may slake his thirst. Gauri replies: 'Traveller, are your hands painted with *mehandi* that you find it difficult to help yourself ? Why not you draw water from the well and quench your thirst ?' The wayfarer realises his mistake in making the request to Gauri. He presumably makes amends by offering an apology and turning to other topics by asking Gauri: 'Who it was that had shown his munificence by constructing the well and the step-well in the desert area?' Gauri proudly replies: 'O traveller, it was my grand-father who had sunk the well and constructed the step-well.'

52. The people forming the procession enjoy themselves in singing and dancing and, after offering water to the image of Gauri, bring it back to the house. On the first and second day the face of the image of Gauri is kept looking backwards. On the third and the final day she faces in the same direction as Isar. All the images of Isar and Gauri made of clay are consigned to waters in some tank or well on the last day.

53. It is indeed difficult to depict the feeling of pathos which is engendered at the time of Gauri's farewell. All the rites observed at the time of a daughter's farewell are repeated on the occasion. Two women stand erect with the image of Gauri and Isar on their heads. A rupee is presented to Isar as a parting gift usually given to the son-in-law. Gangaur then accompanies Isar. Heart is filled with sadness inevitable at the parting and the women sing :

पाछी तो फिर म्हारी गवरल ए
थने बाईसा साथण देवस्यां ए।

"Turn thy face backwards, my beloved daughter, Gauri. We will send your sister to accompany you."

The maid carrying Gauri's image takes two steps forward and then turns back. Then with tears in their eyes the women take a final departing look at Gauri and reply on her behalf singing:

palace in the same stately procession the route now being magnificently lighted all the way. The images were then placed in the fort. Then the Maharani again offered worship to the goddess and a durbar was held in the zenana in which the wives of State officers, Jagirdars and distinguished citizens took part. Dancing and singing went on for an hour or so thereafter, and sweets, and betels were distributed to all the ladies attending the durbar. The same routine followed during next 2 or 3 days, that is, till the celebrations were brought to an end at an auspicious hour.

At Bikaner

55. In Bikaner married women and maidens celebrate the festival in their homes and keep fast. They prepare sweet dishes, carry them to a well, make an offering thereof to the goddess, and return home distributing *prasad* on the way. The special song which has endeared itself to the heart of the ladies of Bikaner is the one in which the husband of a married woman is compared to the rose flower. The month of Chaitra is the season in which rose is in its full bloom; and it acquires a special significance in the desert region of Bikaner. The presence of roses in abundance in that area during the season naturally gives rise to thoughts of youthful love which defies all analysis. The song of the rose is the call of the amorous lady beckoning her husband home from some distant place like Delhi.

कैरो २ गवरल बाइरो डोलो बालम रसिया
 गैरो जी फूल गुलाब रो
 गैरो २ बिरमा जी रो छोवे बालम रसिया
 गैरो जी फूल गुलाब रो
 गैरो २ नणदल बाई रो बीरो बालम रसिया
 गैरो जी फूल गुलाब रो
 घणोई कमायो अब घर आवो बालम रसिया
 गैरो जी फूल गुलाब रो
 दिल्ली रे दरवाजे नोबत बाजे बालम रसिया
 गैरो जी फूल गुलाब रो
 म्हारे बइयां में बाजूबंद लावो रंग रसिया
 गैरो जी फूल गुलाब रो
 म्हारी आंख फरुके घर आवो रंग रसिया
 गैरो जी फूल गुलाब रो
 गैरो २ जी बाईजी थांरो बीरो रंग रसिया
 गैरो जी फूल गुलाब रो

"My beloved husband is like the son of Brahma and a rose flower in its full bloom. O my darling, the brother of my Nanad Bai, you have earned a lot in a foreign country. It is time for you to return home. I am anxiously awaiting your arrival. Drums of war are sounding at the gates of Delhi, my beloved, you come home at once. Please do not forget to bring the promised *Bajuband* (ornament for the arm), when you come. The pulsation of the upper lid of my left eye signals that your arrival is imminent. Do come at once, my rose flower, and put an end to my anxieties."

At Jaipur

56. In Jaipur only the image of Gauri used to be taken out from the palace gate known as Tripolia with great eclat through the main streets of the city to Chaugan (playground) and thence to Talkatora (a tank). The tradition goes that formerly the image of Isar also used to form an adjunct of the pageant but during one of the excursions, the Ruler of Kishangarh is said to have taken away by force the image of Isar, which was never returned to Jaipur, and since then only the image of Gauri heads the procession. A sweet preparation called *ghewar* is a speciality of Jaipur. In every home *ghewar* is brought from the market and consumed and sent as a present to near relations. In the houses of Rajputs, Darogas, Rawats, Bhils and other communities which are non-vegetarians, condiments are crushed in the early morning and dishes of meat prepared with it and partaken of at night along with copious draughts of wine and liquor.

At Jodhpur

57. The characteristic feature of Gangaur celebration in Jodhpur is the fair of *lotias*. Early in the morning unmarried girls of the town carry on their heads seven silver or brass pots arranged one over the other with the smallest one at the top. Thousands of maidens, clad in their colourful best singing melodious songs, bring water and *durba* and the spacious locality, known as Girdikot, resounds with their music when the fair is witnessed by the citizens who throng the place in vast numbers. When in the after-noon the images of Gauri and Isar are carried in procession



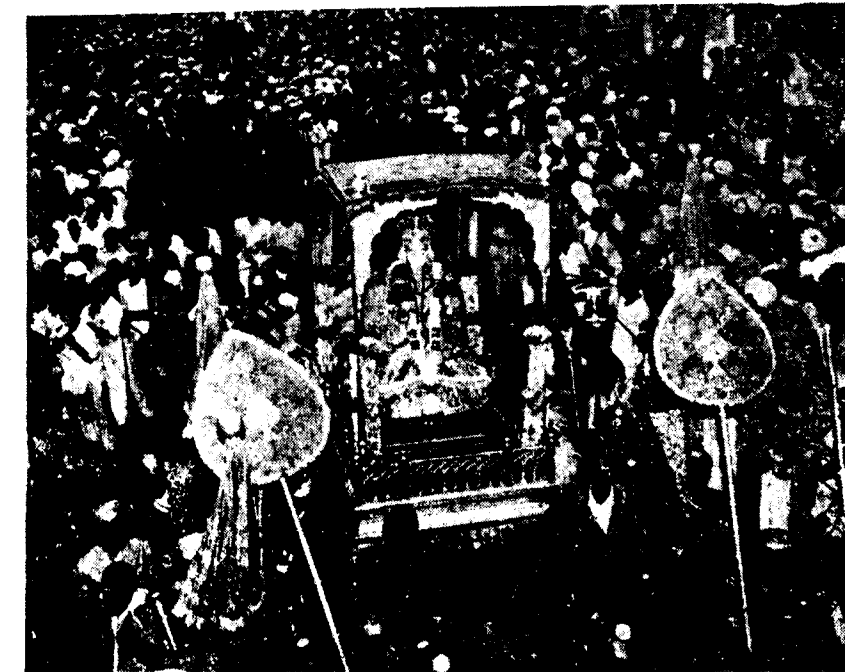
Formation of the Gangaur procession at Jaipur



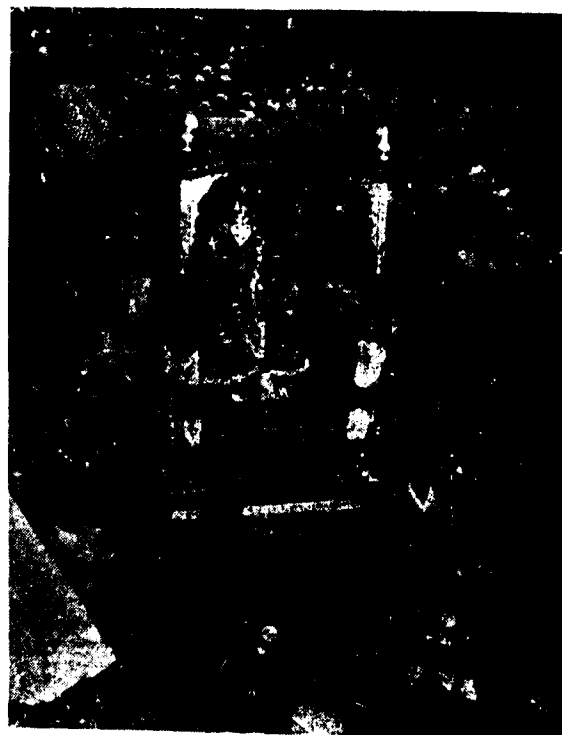
The impressive vanguard of the procession



The main carriage of Gauri led by the Sirdars



A beautiful view of the procession from a vantage point



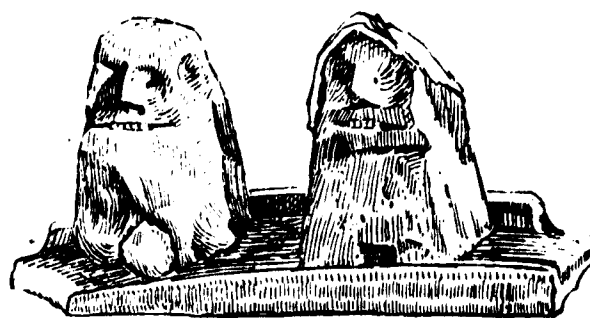
A front view of the carriage being taken over
the shoulders of attendants



A close-up of Gauri



The ceremonial farewell of Gauri

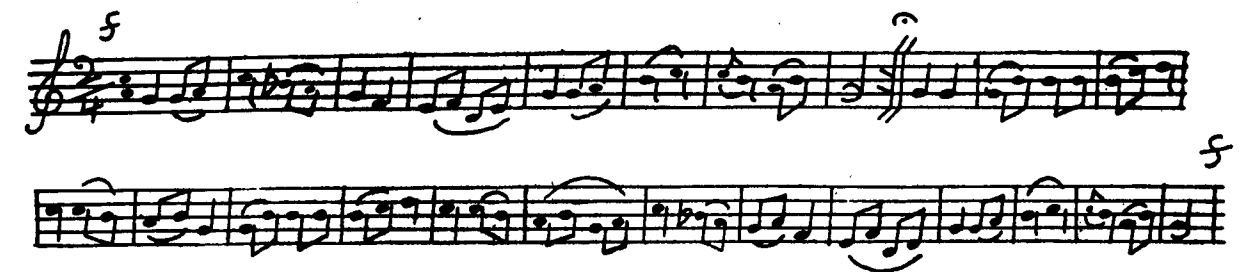


The traditional stone images of Isar and Gauri in a tribal Girasia village

the most popular song which is sung by the women describes the descent of the goddess

from the ramparts of the fortress to the playground:

गढ़ों हे कोटां सों गवरल ऊतरया, हाथ कंवल के रो फूल
सीस नरेलां गवरल सारियो, बेगा छै बासग नाग
आंखइल्यों रतनो जड़ियो, नाक सुवा केरी चोंच
होठ परेवा गवरल रेखिया, जीभ कंवल के रो फूल
मिसरायो चून्यो जड़ियो, दांत दाड़म के रा बीज
हिवडो सांचे गवरल ढालियो, छाती बजर किवाड़
पसवाड़ा बिजल छिदै, पेट पीपल के रो पान
मूंगफली सी गवरल आंगल्यों, बांह चंपा के री डाल
पींडलियां रो मालियां, जांघ देवल रो थाम
एडी चिलके गवरल आरसी, पंजो सठवां सूठ
घेर घुमालो गवरल घाघरो, ओढण दखणी रो चीर
गहराणो हृद रतनो जड़ियो, नख सिख रो सिएगार



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

“Goddess Gauri descending from the palace holds a lotus flower in her hand. Her head is like a round coconut and her plaited hair resemble the serpent god, Vasuki. The vasp mistaking her forehead for a lily moves around it. The eyes of Gauri shine like brilliant gems and her nose is like the beak of a parrot. Her lips resemble a budding rose, tongue as beautiful as a pink lily, and her shining teeth resemble the seeds of pomegranate adorned with gold. The bust of the goddess surpasses the best work of art. Her flanks shine like lightning, her belly as slender as a leaf of Pipal tree, fingers like groundnut and arms like the branches of the Champak tree. Her legs are as beautiful as the pillars in a temple. Her heels have the brilliance of shining mirror and her toes are like bits of ginger. The goddess is clad in a gorgeous *ghagra*. Her scarf is of silk brought from the south, and all parts of her body are suitably adorned with jeweled ornaments.”

In Mewar and Hadoti

58. In Mewar and Hadoti regions (Bundi, Kota & Jhalawar) during the season the entire fields are covered with blossoming poppy flowers. The delightful varying colours and their delicate beauty have their special significance. The gardens look poor when compared to the fields of poppy flowers. When maidens go forth to collect these flowers to make wreaths for the goddess, their mothers ask them to be cautious:

बाई ए आफूरा फूल थोड़ा ही चंटज्यो
जुवाना ने देख मती मुलकज्यो
बूढ़ा ने देख मती हंसज्यो

“My daughters, do not pluck the flowers of *afu* (poppy) more than what are absolutely necessary. Do not smile at the youth who stare at you, nor laugh at those who are aged.”

Tod's account of Gangaur at Udaipur

59. A fascinating account of Gangaur as it was celebrated at Udaipur more than a century ago is given by Col. Tod who was an eye-witness of the function:

"Every wealthy family has its image, or at least every *Poorwa* or sub-division of the city. These and other rites known only to the initiated, having been performed for several days within doors, they decorate the images, and prepare to carry them in procession to the lake. During these days of preparation, nothing is talked of but Gouri's departure from the palace; whether she will be as sumptuously apparelled as in the year gone by; whether an additional boat will be launched on the occasion; though not a few forget the goddess altogether in the recollection of the gazelle eyes (*mirk-naeni*) and serpentine locks (*nagni-zoolf*) of the beauteous handmaids who are selected to attend her. At length the hour arrives, 'the martial nakaras give the signal 'to the cannonier without', and speculation is at rest when the guns on the summit of the castle of Eklinggurh announce that Gouri has commenced her excursion to the lake. The cavalcade assembles on the magnificent terrace, and the Rana, surrounded by his nobles, leads the way to the boats, of a form as primitive as that which conveyed the Argonauts to Colchis. The scenery is admirably adapted for these fetes, the ascent being gradual from the margin of the lake, which here forms a fine bay, and gently rising to the crest of the ridge on which the palace and dwellings of the chiefs are built. Every turret and balcony is crowded with spectators, from the palace to the water's edge; and the simple flight of marble steps which intervene from the *Tripolia*, or triple portal, to the boats, is a dense mass of females in variegated robes, whose scarfs but half conceal their ebon tresses adorned with the rose and the jassamine. A more imposing or more exhilarating sight cannot be imagined than the entire population of a city thus assembled for the purpose of rejoicing; the countenance of every individual, from the prince to the peasant, dressed in smiles. Carry

the eye to heaven, and it rests on "a sky without a cloud": below is a magnificent lake, the even surface of the deep blue waters broken only by palaces of marble, whose arched piazzas are seen through the foliage of orange groves, plaintain, and tamarind; while the vision is bounded by noble mountains, their peaks towering over each other, and composing an immense amphitheatre. Here the deformity of vice intrudes not; no object is degraded by inebriation: no tumultuous disorder or deafening clamour, but all await patiently, with eyes directed to the *Tripolia*, the appearance of GOURI. At length the procession is seen winding down the steep, and in the midst, borne on a pat'h (*Tukht*, *Pat'h*, Persian and Sanscrit, alike meaning board) or throne, gorgeously arrayed in yellow robes, and blazing with "barbaric pearl and gold", the goddess appears; on either side the two beauties wave the silver *chamra* over her head, while the more favoured damsels act as harbingers, preceding her with wands of silver: the whole chanting hymns. On her approach, the Rana, his chiefs and ministers rise and remain standing till the goddess is seated on her throne close to the water's edge, when all bow, and the prince and court take their seats in the boats. The females then form a circle around the goddess, unite hands, and with a measured step and various graceful inclinations of the body, keeping time by beating the palms and particular cadences, move round the image singing hymns, some in honour of the goddess of abundance, others on love and chivalry; and embodying little episodes of national achievements, occasionally sprinkled with *double entendre* which excites a smile and significant nod from the chiefs, and an inclination of the head of the fair choristers. The festival being entirely female, not a single male mixed in the immense groups, and even Iswara himself, the husband of Gouri, attracts no attention, as appears from the ascetic or mendicant form begging his dole from the bounteous and universal *mother*. It is taken for granted that the goddess is occupied in bathing all the time she remains, and ancient tradition says death was the penalty of any male intruding on these solemnities; but the present prince deems them so fitted for amusement, that he has even instituted a second *Gangore*. Some

hours are thus consumed, while easy and good humoured conversation is carried on. At length, the ablutions over, the goddess is taken up, and conveyed to the palace with the same forms and state. The Rana and his chiefs then unmoor their boats, and are rowed round the margin of the lake, to visit in succession the other images of the goddess, around which female groups are chanting and worshipping, as already described, with which ceremonies the evening closes, when the whole terminates with a grand display of fireworks, the finale of each of the 3 days dedicated to Gouri."*

60. In olden days Pakhals (large leather bags carried on back of bullocks) used to be filled with liquor by the State and those who liked helped themselves to it with the palms of their hands fixed to their mouth and liquor flowing from the narrow duct at the end of the bags to their heart's content. *Pakor*s or *baras* prepared by frying in oil a mixture of powdered grain or moong pulse and hemp powder were enjoyed and dishes circulated amongst relations and friends.

At Nathdwara

61. At Nathdwara, a place of great religious significance located at a distance of 50 km from Udaipur, Gangaur used to be (and to a certain extent still is) celebrated in a remarkable manner. There the procession of Gangaur lasts for 7 days and on each day a particular colour is chosen for the attire in which the goddess is clad and the same colour forms the uniform of all the townsmen and the visitors to the place. Dozens of dyers are deputed by the management of the institution who sit at the market place and dye the dress of all including the turbans, the *achkan* or *angarkha* (long coat) and *kamarbanda* (scarf tied around the waist) in the particular colour free of charge, the payment being made by the management. On the last day of the festival, the image of Gauri is clad in a black scarf bearing borders of gold lace, the women who carry the image to the fair are also clad in a similar dress. This is indicative of the final departure of Gauri.

62. Similar festivities used to be held and processions organised under the patronage of the

*Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan Vol.1, pp.455-56.

State in all the States excepting Bundi where from 6th March 1706 the celebration of Gangaur was abandoned due to the fact that Jodhsingh, brother of the then ruler of Bundi, Rao Budhsingh (1695 to 1739) got drowned in the river while he was enjoying a ride in the boat with his wife, Swaroop Kanwar, and his friends in celebration of the Gangaur festival. A rogue-elephant turned the boat upside down and the entire party was drowned. Since then a saying is current all over Rajasthan:

"हाडा ले डूबो गणगौर"

"Hada drowned himself with Gangaur"

63. After the advent of independence and reorganisation and integration of the princely States into the bigger State of Rajasthan, the pageants that used to be organised with the resources of the princes had to be discontinued for want of funds. In Udaipur the images of Gauri and Isar have been entrusted to the Municipal Corporation which organises a modest procession in which the citizens still take part. The images are carried to Pichola lake where they are rowed in a small boat for an hour or so and the function terminates with a display of fireworks. The entire expenditure on the function is limited to Rs. 300 per annum which is provided for in the municipal budget. In Jodhpur the festival is celebrated by a committee known as Gangaur Festival Committee. On behalf of the ruler a sum of Rs. 201 is annually donated to the Committee and the *lawazma* consisting of khasa complete 1, gold charis 2, kirania 1, uniforms for 12 Bhois who carry the palanquins, etc. In Alwar a token procession of Gangaur Mata is taken out as usual. The difference is that the State *lawazma*, band, military guards are not provided. Only the palace *lawazma*, is lent which goes to the Sagar lake, and the procession terminates there. In Jaipur the procession of Gangaur is still colourful as the *lawazma* of His Highness which is almost 20% of what was available during the time of the State is made available at the time of the function. A vast gathering of the citizens of Jaipur and villagers from nearby rural areas congregate to witness the procession. The same is the case in Bikaner where the *lawazma* of the Ruler is lent for the

procession. In Dungarpur the festival is now observed privately at the old palace where the Gangaur is taken out from the Zenana palace to the Nazar Bagh, within the palace precincts and due religious ceremony and Gangaur pooja is observed. In Banswara the procession is taken out from the Zenana Deorhi to Singhvashi Chowk, both within the palace compound, and traditional religious ceremony is performed.

Gangaur amongst the Tribals (Girasias)

64. Amongst the Girasias, an important scheduled tribe of Rajasthan numbering about 62,000, the festival of Gangaur has a special significance. Amongst them Gangaur is a continuation of the festivities which commence with the lighting of Holi and these continue for about a month and a half i.e. upto Akshaya Tritiya (third day of the bright half of Vaisakha (April)). In the entire village the majority of the population of which is formed by the Girasias are in a festive mood, dancing and singing forming the main part of their joyful activities which continue till late in the night. Invitation goes from village to village so that an entire chain of the surrounding villages is visited by the people during the festival. The images of Gangaur are returned to the village from which they start. During this festival the young boys and girls have the opportunity of their life to select their partners. Their mode of life is such as to afford them ample opportunities to meet privately in fields and forests and gradually the secret meetings ripen into intimate friendship. During the festival of Gangaur at a suitable moment they manage to run away with their partners and such an elopement is sufficient to be confirmed as marriage. No further religious ceremony is necessary to make the union accepted

as marriage by the community. Of course, the necessary separation is easy which involves a payment by the boy of a petty amount of Rs. 15 to the parents of the girl. Nevertheless it is the most commonly recognised and popular form of marriage amongst the Girasias for it suits their purses better.

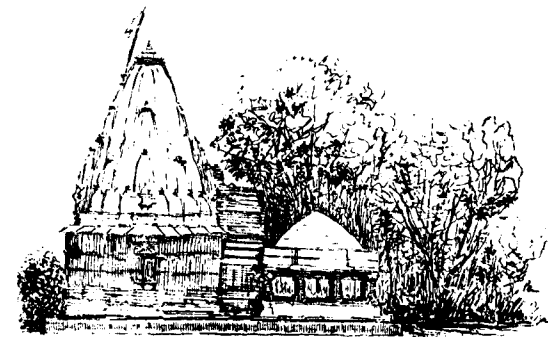
Conclusion

65. From what has been said in the foregoing pages it would be evident that the festival of Gangaur symbolises the cultural, social and religious aspirations of the people of this State, which, besides helping them with diversions, helps them to lead a fuller and better life. Though shorn of its traditional pomp, pageantry and grandeur, which used to be an inseparable adjunct of the festival during the princely regimes, it still has a universal appeal, a common purpose. There is no gainsaying the fact that happiness of the home depends on the contentedness and cheerful outlook of the womenfolk. The festival of Gangaur is unique for it provides them with innocent means of enjoyment and recreation at the same time emphasizing the moral and spiritual values. As a matter of fact Gangaur is an occasion for fasting rather than for feasting, and the traditional austerity and penance coupled with religious observances help bring about the essential frame of mind necessary for introspection and uplift. There is no doubt that the celebration of Gangaur in Rajasthan will continue to command great popularity with the masses, especially the rural folks, even though modern trends in the society run counter to the preservation of old medieval time consuming rites and pageantries.

SOME TYPICAL FAIRS



Images of Isar & Gauri in a Girasia village



BANESHWAR FAIR

BANESHWAR fair is held in village Navatapra of Aspur tehsil in Dungarpur district. The fair is held on a small delta formed by the joining of the river Som with Mahi, one and a half km from the residential area of the village. The fair-site is at a distance of 6.5 km from Sabla, a village on Udaipur-Banswara-Dungarpur bus route, which is at a distance of 123 km from Udaipur, 53 km from Banswara, 45 km from Dungarpur and 22 km from Aspur, the tehsil headquarters. The nearest railway station is Udaipur. There being no regular transport arrangement for going to Baneshwar from Sabla, one has either to cover the distance on foot or to secure some conveyance like camel or cart privately. During the fair, however, the buses go right upto the bank of the river Som. One has then to cross it by wading in knee-deep water. The track remains closed in rainy season for about four months when the rivers and the streams are in spate.

Origin and history of the area

2. The two districts of Dungarpur and Banswara are known as *Wagad* area. The word *Wagad* comes from the Gujarati word *Wagda*, which means a sparsely populated area. The portion of *Wagad* between the two rivers Som

and Jakham, is known as *Katara* area for, in shape, it resembles a *Katar* or a dirk. The fair is held in the *Katara* area of *Wagad*.

3. The name Baneshwar is derived from the name of the most revered Shiva Linga of the area. As has already been mentioned, the temples are situated on the delta of the rivers Som and Mahi. A delta is known as *Ven* in Wagdi language. Thus, the name, *Veneshwar* meaning 'the master of the delta', was given to this Shiva Linga, which became Baneshwar with the passage of time. It is said to be a *Swayambhu* Linga, that is, self-born. It is a small Linga of about 20 cm in height, and its top is broken into five parts. It is said that a cow used to come here daily from the village Lasana and milk used to flow spontaneously from her udders on this Linga. Her master, in his eagerness to find out the person who milked the cow, followed her one day and saw the phenomenon. But when the cow saw her master, she thought of running away from the spot. Before she could do so, one of her hooves struck against the Shiva Linga, and it was broken in five parts. This happened 40 years ago. Usually broken idols are not worshipped. This Shiva Linga being *Swayambhu* is, however, still worshipped.

4. Nothing can be said about the discovery and beginning of the worship of this Shiva Linga. The present temple was constructed by Maharawal Askaran of Dungarpur in Samvat 1510 (1453 A. D.) on Ashadh Krishna Chaturdashi. Some repairs to the sanctum were effected in Samvat 1826 (1769 A. D.)

5. Just near the temple of Baneshwar Mahadeo, is the temple of Lord Vishnu, which was constructed in Samvat 1850 (1793 A. D.) by Jankunwari, daughter-in-law of Mavji, a highly revered saint, who was considered to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This is the most important temple at this place for more than half the congregation at the fair comes to pay homage to Lord Vishnu. The fair in the present form was started after the construction of this temple. Before this also a fair used to be held at this place in honour of Baneshwar Mahadeo (Lord Shiva) which, in turn, was taking place from no less than three centuries i.e. since the construction of the temple of Baneshwar Mahadeo by Maharawal Askaran. When the fair was started in the present form, the two fairs viz. that of Baneshwar Mahadeo and of Lord Vishnu started to be held together and the latter gained importance in due course of time which accounts for the large congregation paying homage to Lord Vishnu. Although the devotees of both the deities come with the aim of paying homage to their respective deities, they pay homage to other deities also.

6. Mavji is considered to be a pre-incarnation of Kalki, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu yet to take place.* The idea of pre-incarnation, unique and discovered for the first time, has made Mavji a very important character.

7. Mavji was born in the village Sabla, in the house of an Audichya Brahmin. The name of the village shows, similarity with Sambhal, the village in which Lord Vishnu will incarnate as Kalki. He declared at the age of 12 that he was a pre-incarnation of the tenth Avatara Kalki. It is said that he was born on Magh Shukla Panchmi in Samvat 1771 (1714 A. D.) while others maintain that it was the date when he left home and announced that he was a pre-

*For details see Appendix I

incarnation of Kalki. The latter view was confirmed by the present *Mathadhish*, abbot, of Baneshwar. Mavji was illiterate. He used to pass most of his time in worshipping Shiva; and when he was twelve, he made the above declaration. He then went to a place, named Dholagarh near village Sejpur in tehsil Salumber of district Udaipur and wrote five books called *Chopras*. It is said that he wrote these books within three and a half days with his hands and feet. These books are in the form of a dialogue with one of his disciples, Jiwandas. These books are of 38 cm x 30 cm x 15 cm size and are written in Devnagri script, although the language is a mixture of Hindi, Wagdi and Gujarati. Two of these books were given by Mavji to his disciples. One of these books is now at village Sejpur and the other at village Poojpur. The other three books remained at Sabla till the advent of the Marathas in the area. While withdrawing from this region they carried two of the volumes with them. It is said when they reached Banswara, one of the wheels of the cart in which the holy books were being borne, broke. The Suthars (carpenters) of the town repaired it only on condition that one of the books would be given to them. This was done, and since then a volume is lying in the temple of Vishwakarma at Banswara. It is a profusely illustrated volume and deals with the life of Lord Krishna. The illustrations are in colour and depict *Raslila* and other episodes in Lord Krishna's life. Some of the illustrations show over hundred persons performing the *Ras* (a dance). The other volume was carried away by the Marathas to Poona or Satara and is said to be still there.

8. It is said that Mavji wrote many forecasts about the future of our country in his books. The original book is read every year on Dewali by the present *Mathadhish* or *Goswami* only after performing some rituals. The present *Mohtaihis* has taken down some important excerpts from the *Chopra*, which he reads to the devotees whenever they so desire after performing the necessary rituals.

9. Devotees often invite the *Mathadhish* to their residences to read the excerpts from the holy book. This invitation is known as *Padhravni*. The expenditure involved is incurred by the

host. At least Rs. 25 are offered in cash as *Bhent* (present) to the *Mathadhish* when he is invited by the devotees for these readings.

10. Mavji used to travel on horseback, as Kalki is supposed to do when it will come later as an incarnation. His effigy on horse is still the main idol of worship.

11. In the past this effigy on horseback was mistaken by many for that of Eklingji. The following excerpt* is an example :

".....There is said to be one called Maoji which is peculiar to the state. It was found about a hundred years ago by a Brahmin of the same name, who lived in the village of Sabla and his effigy on the horseback is worshipped by Brahmins, Rajputs and Balais as an incarnation of Ekling Mahadeo."

Even now many people are found to associate it with Eklingji, Ramdevji and others.

12. Till recently it was the practice of the *Mathadhish* to travel on horseback whenever he went out; but following the resumption of the jagirs by the State, it became difficult for him to maintain the horses required for the purpose; and the present *Mathadhish* disposed off all the eight horses he had. He now uses a jeep which was presented to him by one of his devotees.

13. After Mavji, his son Jankunwar succeeded him. It is said that he had the appearance of a woman, but as soon as he would sit on the *gaddi*, it would become that of a man. It is said that not only his physical appearance but voice, deportment and manners also changed accordingly. Possibly he was a eunuch. The fact is particularly confirmed by the fact that he had no issue. Jankunwar was succeeded by one of his disciples who led the life of an ascetic; and since then the successors to the *gaddi* have been leading ascetic life. It is said that Mavji also wrote in his *Chopra* the name of all his successors along with their father's names and their places of birth. The present *Goswami* states that he used to go to Sabla along with his father to pay homage

*Rajputana Gazetteer 1908.

to the then *Goswami*. Once the *Goswami* or *Mathadhish* asked him to live with him, telling him that he was probably the latter's successor. The young boy did not agree to the request as he desired to follow some trade, and returned home with his father. Within a few days he became afflicted with a disease in the eye. His father gave him the best available treatment but to no effect; and he became almost blind. Finding himself in a helpless and pitiable condition, his father sought the advice of the *Goswami*, who asked him to leave his son at Sabla. Considering the dark future of his son the father brought him to Sabla. After some time the boy regained his sight and later succeeded to the *gaddi*. The name of the present *Mathadhish* is *Goswami* Devanand. He is eighth in succession from Mavji. All the *Goswamis* from Mavji downward came from Brahmin families and a majority of them were Audichya Brahmins.

14. Mavji built a temple at Sabla which is the permanent residence of the *Goswami*. It is a beautifully constructed spacious two-storeyed building. Wood has been freely utilised in its construction and the carving on the doors and pillars is fine.

15. The temple at Baneshwar was constructed by Jankunwar's wife, Jankunwari, in Samvat 1850 (1793 A. D.) at the place where Mavji used to pass most of his time in meditation and devotion.

16. Two disciples of Mavji named Aje and Vaje built the Lakshmi Narain temple. They were brothers and belonged to Salawat (mason) community. The *pran pratishtha* ceremony of the idols was performed on Magh Shukla Ekadashi and since then the fair is held on this day.

17. Though the idols in the temple are those of Lakshmi, Narayana and other gods and goddesses, at present they are indentedified with Mavji, his wife, his son Jankunwar, his son's wife Jankunwari and Mavji's disciple, Jiwandas. The idols are of marble.

18. Besides the temples of Baneshwar Mahadeo and Lakshmi Narayana, there is a

temple of Brahma, the creator. It was erected in Samvat 1988 (1931 A. D.) by some Shrigaur Brahmins of Dungarpur, Banswara and Udaipur.

19. Before joining Mahi, river Som bifurcates in two branches, one of which joins Mahi near the Lakshmi Narayana temple and the other at a distance of about 400 m away. The former is known as Abudara and the latter as new Abudara. New Abudara was formed in the times of Shivanand, one of the successors of Mavji. Abudara is considered as sacred as Pushkar.

20. The fair is held from Magh Shukla Ekadashi to Magh Shukla Purnima. On Magh Shukla Ekadashi the *Mathadhish* comes here from Sabla in a procession. A 16 cm silver image of Mavji on horseback is also brought here. Like other Hindus, Bhils of this area throw the ashes of their dead at Abudara on Magh Shukla Dvadashi. They perform this ceremony after the *Mathadhish* has taken his bath there in the morning, for it is believed that the sacredness of the water is increased on that account. In order to lessen the congestion of the people, Shivanand, one of the previous *Mathadhis* made the new Abudara; and at present people use both the places for the purpose. Many people take bath there along with the *Mathadhish* daily as long as he lives there. About a kilometre distant from this temple but on the other bank of Mahi, is said to be the place where Bali, the glorious king of Asuras, performed his great yajna and donated his kingdom to Lord Vishnu, who was present there in the form of a dwarf (Vaman). On the basis of this legend the place is said to be of Pauranic importance, and the recent belief of the pre-incarnation of Kalki has further strengthened this view. This theory further finds support from Skanda Purana, in which the whole area around Mahi has been described as sacred *guptakshetra* (hidden area) and especially the places where the river is joined by its tributaries and falls in the Gulf of Cambay. The practice of consigning the ashes of the dead at Abudara is not connected with Mavji in any way and is much older.

Devotees

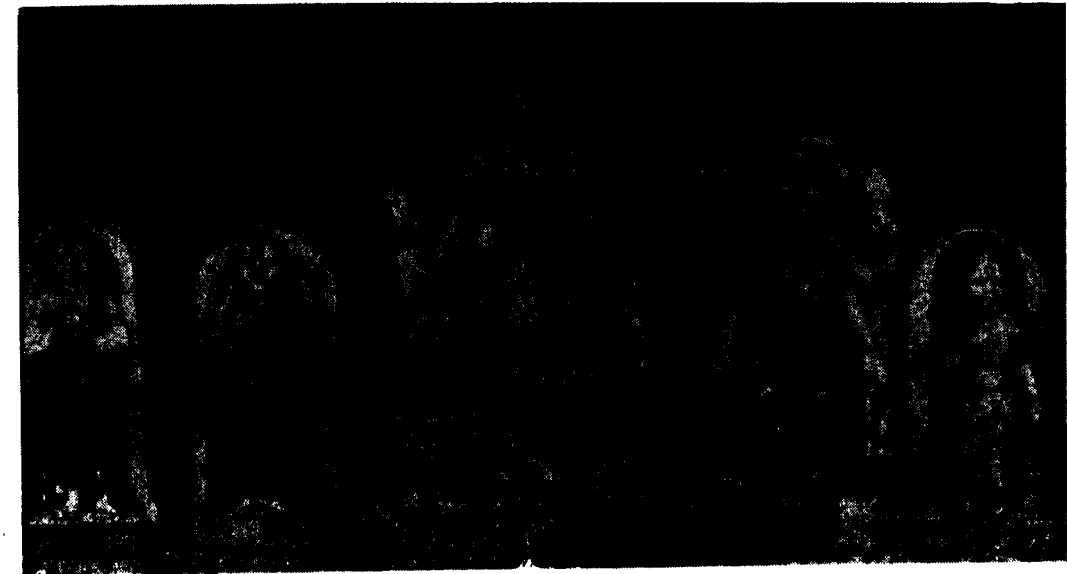
21. • This fair is predominantly a tribal affair. More than half of the congregation is of

the Bhils. They revere Baneshwar Mahadeo as well as Mavji, the latter being mostly revered by so-called low castes such as the Balais and the Chamars, and they assemble here in large numbers. Members of other Hindu castes also go there but their number is comparatively small. The participants come mostly in groups of varying sizes consisting of relatives and friends and stay at the available convenient places; no place being conventionally assigned to any person or group. Meetings of the community Panchayats etc. to settle outstanding disputes or issues are not held at this occasion. Followers of religions other than the Hindus are rarely seen among visitors. They come as traders or visitors only. Majority of the devotees come from the districts of Dungarpur, Udaipur and Banswara and only a small number from other districts. The average number of persons visiting the place at the time of the fair is over 50,000.

Worship and offerings

22. None, except the priest is permitted to touch the idols, though everyone can make offerings in the form of articles or cash. In the temple of Baneshwar Mahadeo, the idol is worshipped twice daily. In the morning at about 7 a. m. saffron is applied to the Linga of Lord Shiva after giving it a bath with water, and then an *arti* of burning incense consisting of *gugal*, sandal and copra is waved before it. In the evening at about 7 p. m. *bhabhut* (ash) is applied to the Linga and an *arti* with a lamp having five wicks is waved before it. On ordinary days the temple opens in the morning at about 6.30 a. m.; and is closed at about 8 p. m. but during the days of the fair it remains open daily from 5 a. m. to 11 p. m. Devotees offer wheat flour, pulses, rice, jaggery, ghee, salt, chillies, coconut, copra, *moli* (coloured yarn) and cash. All offerings are retained by the priest as his earnings.

23. In the temples of Lakshmi Narayana and Brahma, worship is offered five times a day. The first worship takes place early in the morning, the second at about 9 a. m., the third at about 12 noon, the fourth in the evening at about 6 p. m. and the fifth at about 10 p. m. Brass gongs are struck at the time of the *artis*. Devotees offer



Idols in the Brahma temple



Worshipping the river Mahi



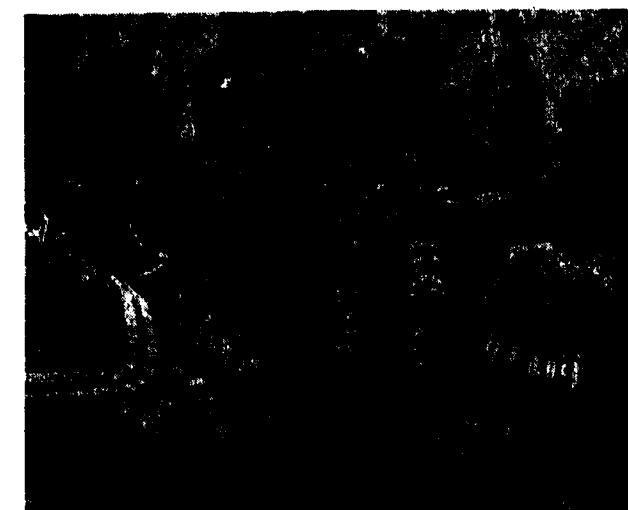
Bhil damsels—the bare breasted is unmarried—on way to the fair



Tribal ornaments for sale



A beautiful tribal bride specially dressed for the occasion



The fair wearers



A Banjara visitor to the fair



Tattooing in progress

articles similar to those at Baneshwar temple. In the temple of Lakshmi Narayana devotees mostly offer cash. Same routine is followed during the days of the fair in both these temples, except that *arti* of *Mathadhish* is also done during those days and *Raslila* is performed at night in the temple of Lakshmi Narayana. Offerings at these temples are kept by the *Mathadhish* and the priest respectively.

Priests

24. The priest of the Baneshwar temple is from Sevak community. Sevaks trace their origin to the Brahmins but are considered lower in status to Brahmins. Sevaks were assistant priests, who with the lapse of time formed a separate community. The priest of this temple is from village Garha-Haring, which is a km away to the east of this temple. The office of the priest is hereditary. The priest depends for his living on the offerings by the devotees. He supplements his income by cultivating 36 bighas (14.4 acres) of *muafi* land granted to the temple.

25. In the temples of Lakshmi Narayana and Brahma, salaried Brahmin priests have been employed by the *Mathadhish* and the Panchayat of Shrigaur Brahmins respectively. There is 40 bighas (16 acres) of *muafi* land with the temple of Lakshmi Narayana in villages Shivpura and Navatapra, in which the delta of Baneshwar is situated. No land is given to the temple of Brahma.

Management of the fair

26. The fair is organised by the Panchayat Samiti, Aspur since 1961, before which it was organised by the Sabla Panchayat for an year, in 1960. Before that time it was organised by the State authorities. The fair is organised by a Mela Officer. One of the extension officers of the Block discharges this duty. The Police post, the allopathic and the ayurvedic dispensaries, and the small post office are set up here. At the time of the fair a Magistrate is also posted to maintain law and order and dispose of cases summarily.

Articles for sale

27. Articles for sale in the fair are foodstuffs, utensils, textile goods, hosiery, ornaments of

silver, nickel-silver, brass and aluminium, pottery, swords, daggers, spearheads, arrows, agricultural implements, general merchandise, cheap beauty aids, etc. Tax is realised from the shopkeepers by the Panchayat Samiti. It differs from article to article. The following table gives the number of shops and the rate at which the taxes are realised:

Type of shop	No. of shops	Rate of tax on each shop Rs.
1. Tailors	80	1.25
2. Utensil shops	6	4.50
3. Restaurents	35	2.00
4. Kirana	100	1.50
5. Hosiery	20	2.50
6. Weapons, agricultural implements, ornaments	40	0.50
7. Pottery	15	1.50
8. Cobbler	35	2.50
9. Swings	4	5.00 Iron 4.00 Wooden
10. Other recreation centres	5	5.00
11. Menagerie	1	8.00
12. Rope sellers	8	1.00
13. Tattooers	6	0.75
14. Comb sellers	15	-
15. Vegetable sellers	20	-
16. Basket sellers	50	-
17. Arrow sellers	20	-

In 1961 Rs. 850.00 were collected as tax from the shops by the Panchayat Samiti.

Amusement and recreation

28. People recreate themselves by enjoying songs, folkdances, magic shows, animal shows, acrobatic feats, merry-go-rounds and joy-rides on swings. The exhibition of improved agricultural techniques and instruments, improved ways of hygienic conditions, family planning, etc. is arranged by the Panchayat Samiti. The cultural shows are arranged by the Bhil boys of the boarding house at Sabla, Sagwara and Vankora, in collaboration with the teachers of the Panchayat Samiti. Different parties of the villagers are also invited to participate in the programme. The Bhils sing in a high pitched voice. A few songs sung on this occasion are given in Appendix II.

APPENDIX-I

The Hindu doctrine of the universal chronology

1. According to the Hindu doctrine of the universal chronology, there are four ages of the world, known as 'yugas'. They are 'krta' or 'satya', 'treta', 'dwapara', and 'kali', named after the sides of a die; 'krta' the lucky one, being the side marked with four dots; 'treta' with three, 'dwapara' with two, and 'kali', the losing one, with one dot. The proportion of virtue in and the length of each yuga conform to the number on the side of a die, after which it is named. In the 'krta yuga' virtue (dharma) was fully present in men, with "all four feet" as it is expressed, but it diminished by one quarter or 'foot' in every succeeding yuga till in the 'kaliyuga' only one foot of dharma remains. The same proportion holds good with regard to the duration of the several ages. The 'krta' yuga lasts 4,000 years, to which a dawn and twilight of 400 years each is added, the duration in 'treta' are 3,000 and 300; 'in dwapara' 2,000 and 200; in 'kali' 1,000 and 100 years. Thus, the period of the four yugas together, technically called 'mahayuga' or 'chaturyuga' is 12,000 years. But these are divine years, each consisting of .60 human years, giving thus a total of 4,320,000 years in each 'mahayuga' one thousand of which form a single 'kalpa'. The 'kalpa' is the length of time from the creation to the destruction of the world.

2. There are fourteen 'manvantara' in a kalpa. Each manvantara contains 71 'mahayugas' and 14 manvantaras are, thus, equivalent to 994 (14×71) mahayugas. The remainder of 6 mahayugas required to make up the kalpa (1,000 Mahayugas) are so distributed that the first manvantra is preceded by a dawn of the length of one krta yuga (0.4 mahayuga) and each manvantara is followed by a twilight of equal length (15×0.4=6 Mahayugas) the twilight of the manvantara is, according to Surya Siddhanta, a deluge (jala-plava).

3. The current yuga is the 457th of the present Varah-kalpa (Kalpa of the Boar), the 28th of the present manvantra (that of Manu Vaivasvat), which itself is the 7th of this kalpa. We are now in the kaliyuga, which began on February 17, 3102 B. C.

4. Lord Vishnu will incarnate a thousand years before the close of kaliyuga. The theory of the incarnation of Vishnu presupposes the recognition of Vishnu or Narayana as he is more appropriately called. He is the supreme God, the creator and ruler of the universe, the upholder not only of the cosmic but of the moral order of the world also. When his enemies endanger the order of the world, the god incarnates himself for the purpose of defending his rule. This is expressed in the following verses of Bhagvatgita :

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानम् धर्मस्य तदात्मानम् सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय च साधूनाम् विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मं संस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥
गीता । ४ । ७-८ ।

"Whenever there is decline of law, O Bharata, and an increase of inequity, I put forth myself (in a new birth) for rescuing the pious, annihilating the evil, upholding the law, I am born in every age."

5. According to the common belief there are ten 'avatars' of Vishnu. These are :

- | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Matsya (Fish) | 2. Sukar (boar) | 3. Kurma (Tortoise) | 4. Narsimha (Man-Lion) | 5. Vaman (Dwarf) |
| 6. Parshurama | 7. Rama | 8. Krishana | 9. Buddha | 10. Kalki. |

Of these first nine incarnations have already taken place and the last 'Kalki' is still to come. It is believed that when the period of 1,000 years of kaliyuga, through which we are passing, will be over, Lord Vishnu will incarnate as 'Kalki' in the house of a Brahmin in village Sambhal. He will revive dharma on its 'four feet' and will punish the offenders.

6. In 'Harivansha Purana' the incarnation of Kalki is described as follows :

कल्किर्विष्णुर्धृष्टा नाम सम्भले ग्रामके द्विजः ।
सर्वलोक हितार्थाय भूयश्चोत्पत्स्यते प्रभुः ॥६४॥
दशमो भाव्य सम्पन्नो
याज्ञवल्क्य पुरः सरः ।
क्षपयित्वा च तान्सर्वान्
भाविना ऽ ध्वनं चोदितान् ॥६५॥
गंगा यमुनयोर्मध्ये निष्ठां प्राप्स्यति सानुगः ।
तत कुले व्यतीते तु सामात्ये सहसैनिके ॥६६॥
नृपेष्वथ प्रनष्टेषु तदा त्वप्रग्रहाः प्रजाः ।
रक्षणे विनिवर्त्त च हत्वा चान्योन्य माहवे ॥६७॥
परस्पर हतस्वाश्च निराश्रिताः सुदुःखिताः ।
एवं कष्टं ममुप्राप्ता कलि संघ्यांशके तदा ॥
प्रजाः क्षयं प्रयास्यन्ति साध्वं कलियुगेन ह ।
क्षीणे कलियुगे तस्मिंस्ततः कृतयुगं पुनः ॥
प्रापत्स्यते यथा न्यायं स्वभावादेवनान्यथा ॥६८॥
॥हरिवंशे १।४।६४-६८॥

"Lord Vishnu will be born, in village Sambhal, in the house of a Brahmin named Tishnuyasha. He will establish dharma on its four feet and after it krtayuga will start."

7. The above belief is contained in the following verse in the Wagdi language :

काय मै लेखो मांगसी निकलंक लेखो मांगसी, गड जम्बदीप माहि रे,
ढोत्यो डमकी वाजसी, ब्रह्मांड डोले वाय रे ।

"Who will ask for the accounts of your deeds? Nishkalank (Kalki) will do it. There will be sound of drums in Jambhdeep and wind will blow in the Universe."

APPENDIX-II

Tribal songs and music at Baneshwar fair

The Bhils attending the Baneshwar fair sing a wide variety of songs sitting around a bonfire every night. The themes refer to incidents in the life of the community, the fair itself and to humorous stories. Some such songs are presented below with their staff notations rendered for a flute. The gist of their subject matter is also provided.

I

बोइड़ा री बकरी छटी, भींडरिया री मार में ।
भींडरिया री बकरी छटी, बोइड़ा री मार में ॥
बोइड़ो धरती रो धरणी, कदी न डरियो जावै रे ।
भींडरियो गोला रो गाँव, बकरी भोलवी लिदी रे ॥
मती करै भींडरिया टकराँ, कालै खबराँ लेऊँ रे ।
केसर सिंह जी बांधे कमराँ, मरै पराया लोक रे ॥
हदराया हदरामा खांडा, खूटी टाँक दीजो रे ।
भागी टूटी खांपली, वे कारीगर रे नाखो रे ॥
राजा पेली राणियाँ, तलवारो पकड़ी रे, लड़बो बोइड़ो ।
लख दीजो येँ कागदिया, भूँ भींडरिया में भेजू रे ॥
भींडरिया रा राजाजी, थूँ कागद देखी लीजै रे ।
कागदिया देखे रे राजा, भाइो डोड़ो जीवै रे ॥
कागदिया देखे रे राजा, मूछाँ हाथ फेरै रे ।
पोले में कागदिया पढ़िया, शेरे होंका फूटो रे ॥
पोले में कागदिया पढ़िया, राणी डल डल रोवै रे ।
मती करै भींडरिया टकराँ, कान तराई रो भगड़ो रे ॥
कान री तराई रो भोग, उदयपुर में भरियो रे ।
हारो रे जीजो जी केसर, दो मस्ती में घाया रे ॥
बोइड़ा री गाड़ियाँ, वी भींडरगढ़ में झलकी रे ।
बोइड़ा री गाड़ियाँ, वी गधूरा उड़ी रे ॥
तोप रे धमूका राजा, बोइड़ा हाजर करजाँ रे ।
भींडरिया रा लोक घाया, काली रे टोपी वाला रे ॥
कूची तो नेवाँ में रेगी, बरछी रेगी बंगला में ।
हारो जी मरायो केसर, धान कणी ने भावे रे ॥
हदरायो खांडो रे केसर, खूटी टाँक दीजो रे ।



The goats of the Boiras and the Bhindarias once crossed the pastures of each other. While the Boiras returned the goats to the Bhindarias, the latter refused to do so. Thus, there arose a dispute and the Bhindarias challenged their opponents to decide the issue through arms. The Boiras accepted the challenge and started preparations. They equipped themselves with arms; and even their women-folk started preparing for the battle. The Boiras were closely related to the Bhindarias for a sister of the Bhindaria chief was married to the head of the Boiras. The Boiras had full rights over the pastures for they had paid the appropriate levy to the Maharana of Udaipur, their common master. At long last the Boiras gave an ultimatum to the Bhindarias that if the goats were not returned the next sunrise, they would suffer serious consequences. And before the time a gunfire announced the sunrise next morning, the Boiras had entered the camps of the Bhindarias and taken them completely by surprise; and the chief of the Bhindarias was killed by the Boira chief himself. And the panic and grief stricken people felt very unhappy over the unfortunate episode.

II

देणेश्वरज्यो मेलो बाणिया धरती राडो लागो हे ।

हे मेरे करताँ मँह बाणिया, धरती० ।
पूरी रे पोनेम नो बाणिया, धरती० ।
तणाराज्योँ धधवीस में बाणिया, धरती० ।
मेलो भरणी भाज्यो बाणिया, धरती० ।
मेलो बाँदे पडज्यो बाणिया, धरती० ।
कोरो बाँदो घाले बाणिया, धरती० ।
वाँ वालो नो राजा बाणिया, धरती० ।
वाँ वालो नो रावजी बाणिया, धरती० ।
तीते बाँदो घाले बाणिया, धरती० ।
मेलो माहें मनसी बाणिया, धरती० ।
मन में बैसार करै बाणिया, धरती० ।
कोराँ हैं कागदिया बाणिया, धरती० ।
कोरे हैं कलमें बाणिया, धरती० ।
कर कर कागद लकै बाणिया, धरती० ।
काहिदई बोलावै बाणिया, धरती० ।
कैया हैं काहिदड़ा बाणिया, धरती० ।
कोटड़े हैं काहिदड़ा बाणिया, धरती० ।
धामतो जूए मुकलावै बाणिया, धरती० ।
काहिद धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।
जायै रे धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।
कतरेक जाह लागो बाणिया, धरती० ।
गियु न ठेठो ठेठ बाणिया, धरती० ।
काहिदड़ा नो बेटो बाणिया, धरती० ।
काहिद रहने बोले बाणिया, धरती० ।
हूए पडज्योँ काम बाणिया, धरती० ।
मेलो बाँदे पडज्यो बाणिया, धरती० ।
काहिद धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।
भावे रे धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।

कतरेक भावी लागू बाणिया, धरती० ।
भावे न ठेठो ठेठ बाणिया, धरती० ।
मनसी खुडसी बैठो बाणिया, धरती० ।
राम रामो नै करै बाणिया, धरती० ।
पड़ि पड़ि मजरो करै बाणिया, धरती० ।
मनसी रहने बोले बाणिया, धरती० ।
बीड़ियाँ हैं कागदियाँ बाणिया, धरती० ।
काहिद भ्रात में लीहे बाणिया, धरती० ।
काहिद धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।
जायै डूंगरपैर हाऊ बाणिया, धरती० ।
जायै रे धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।
कतरेक जाहि लागू बाणिया, धरती० ।
डाला न मादेही बाणिया, धरती० ।
सडके न धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।
कतरेक जाहि लागू बाणिया, धरती० ।
हगवाड़ो बाजि रेज्यु बाणिया, धरती० ।
तैयाँ जाहि लागू बाणिया, धरती० ।
हगवाड़ो नो धाणदार बाणिया, धरती० ।
धाणदार खुडसी बैठो बाणिया, धरती० ।
धाणदार मजरो करै बाणिया, धरती० ।
धाणदार पूछणो पूछै बाणिया, धरती० ।
हुए पडज्योँ काम बाणिया, धरती० ।
मेलो बाँदे पडज्यो बाणिया, धरती० ।
तेहूँ ने ईडियो बाणिया, धरती० ।
जायै रे धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।
भ्रातरी जायै लागू बाणिया, धरती० ।
धरुवाला नै गाँटे बाणिया, धरती० ।
जायै रे धामाँ दीई बाणिया, धरती० ।

मेप सागर नै पालै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 ऊँ नै बाजारै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 लोक ते पूछणो पूछै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 काहिद धामों दीई वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 कतरेक जावाहि लागू वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 फोजवइली जाइ लागू वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 आये रे महलां हारू वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 दमक पोवड़ी सई वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 गियु न ठेठां ठेठ वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 कुण रावल जी बाजै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 राजा वजै हेंग जी वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 राजा खुइसी बैटु वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 काहिद मजरो करै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 पड़ि पड़ि मजरो करै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 मजरो बावसी मजरो वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 राजा पूसणों पूछै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 हुए पड़ियों काम वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 मेलो बांदे पड़ियो वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 खोले कागद ताके वाणिग्या, धरती० ।

राजा कागद खोले वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 टपर टपर बांसे वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 बांदो बांदो बोले वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 मोहेंसे आते घाले वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 मेलो मारा बाप नो वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 फोजे तैयार करै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 आतीइ हम्बाई वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 ऊटेइ हम्बाई वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 घोड़ीला हम्बाई वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 बूकलियां नै हुन्से वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 फोजे तैयार करै वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 घोड़ीला रमाई वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 राजा आवै धामों दीई वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 आवे बेरोबर हारू वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 आवे न धामों दीई वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 आजु न ठेठां ठेठ वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 मेला नो बांदो काढे वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 रइन केनु बोले वाणिग्या, धरती० ।
 मेलो मारा बापनो वाणिग्या, धरती० ।



A merchant once came to put up his shop in the Baneshwar fair held at a site near the trijunction of the princely states. Some persons created trouble over the rights to the site and the merchant could not set up his shop in the fair. He, therefore, sent a special messenger to Banswara to meet the officials concerned and settle the matter; but he was not heard. Thereupon, the merchant himself visited Dungarpur and met the Maharawal who took keen interest in his case, inspected the site and made appropriate arrangements. The merchant then established his shop there. Who could then displace him, he exclaimed.

III

रइन केवो बोले है, रे वावाकग मंगेसो ।

हिम्मी रे करता मै है, रे० ।
 बांदा री उरिया मै है, रे० ।
 तेलवाडिया नो तेल है, रे० ।
 दिवलो नै थारो मेले है, रे० ।
 दीवलिया अजबाले है, रे० ।
 हूतार घड़िया डोल्पो है, रे० ।
 ठेपरे नै डोल्पो डाले है, रे० ।
 डाली रे करी नै है, रे० ।
 रुदेही गोदही है, रे० ।

गूदेही कसावे है, रे० ।
 पातेली बसेडो है, रे० ।
 होड वाली नै हुए है, रे० ।
 गलती रे रातर नो है, रे० ।
 पालियों कूकड बोले है, रे० ।
 भूपक नै बैठो याहै है, रे० ।
 माता नै बोलावे है, रे० ।
 माना नै पूसणा पूसै है, रे० ।
 ककत सपनै आविज्यो है, रे० ।

हूँ ऐं सपने आविज्यो है, रे वावाकग मंगेसो ।

नौकरी नै सपने आविज है, रे० ।
 आपडें हूँ नो टोटो है, रे० ।
 बापना घड़ियां रेट है, रे० ।
 घेर कुआ घेर बावडी है, रे० ।
 जुगि जुगि नी जमी है, रे० ।
 आपड़े हूँ तो टोटो है, रे० ।
 आपड़े तो नई जावो है, रे० ।
 पीली नै परबाते है, रे० ।
 पांस पण्णीती पण्णी है, रे० ।
 फिरी नै परणावों है, रे० ।
 जावो न फिर जावो है, रे० ।
 बिले रे ऊटी नै है, रे० ।
 बाड़ी मै बालोइल्यो है, रे० ।
 बालोइली ऊतार है, रे० ।
 कटका नै बटका रली है, रे० ।
 सूले न साणो दई है, रे० ।
 वड़ि रे करि नै है, रे० ।
 आंडला ने तोड़ों घोबै है, रे० ।
 आदरोली मेलावे है, रे० ।
 एक ऊवालो करै है, रे० ।
 बालोली समकावे है, रे० ।
 रोटला न बाटला करै है, रे० ।
 पैलको रोटो मानी है, रे० ।
 हकनिया बैसार है, रे० ।
 अलगडबाडिया हाका नै है, रे० ।
 हाकनिया धबावे है, रे० ।
 रोटो घरणी बांवे है, रे० ।
 कागदैनो कालाउडो है, रे० ।
 ईतै सालवे लागो है, रे० ।
 मंगला नै घनिबानी है, रे० ।
 मोवटी हाई नै रोबै है, रे० ।

कैम रोबै कैम रजले है, रे० ।
 काली नै पासो आवो है, रे० ।
 सबके नै धामों दीई है, रे० ।
 दुदलो खेहड़ ऊई है, रे० ।
 जेणे घूलाळ ऊई है, रे० ।
 कटलैक जाहि लागो है, रे० ।
 जाय खेरवाडा हारू है, रे० ।
 सेटे जाइ लागू है, रे० ।
 राजा खुइसी बैटो है, रे० ।
 अतजूडी नै ऊबो है, रे० ।
 राजा पूसणा पूसै है, रे० ।
 हों ऐ काम पड़ियो है, रे० ।
 जाजां पड़ियां काम है, रे० ।
 नौकरीनै वास्तै आविज्यो है, रे० ।
 पैलके नामें घाले है, रे० ।
 हूँ ए तनका आली है, रे० ।
 वीस रूपया रोकडा है, रे० ।
 हों होल ल्याणों दाडा है, रे० ।
 घेर सोरों नी दूँडे है, रे० ।
 आगलां नै टोपलां लीये है, रे० ।
 तेयां नों हूँडेलो है, रे० ।
 लइती घेर आवै है, रे० ।
 कतरैक आवी लागू है, रे० ।
 मारगे धामों दीई है, रे० ।
 घुदडो खेहड़ ऊई है, रे० ।
 जैणी घूलाळ ऊई है, रे० ।
 सेटे आवा लागो है, रे० ।
 जांप ले आवी ऊबो है, रे० ।
 हालो नै पुसणा पूसै है, रे० ।
 कोणी आवी ऊबो है, रे० ।
 मंगलो माराई जाई है, रे० ।



Mengeso was ordained by the Goddess that he should serve in the army. Mengeso, therefore, prepared to leave for the Cantonment. Before he did that in the morning, he offered worship to the Goddess by lightening an earthen lamp at the shrine. Certain members of the family and acquaintances tried to dissuade him from his decision by telling him that he was already prosperous, had a persian wheel at his

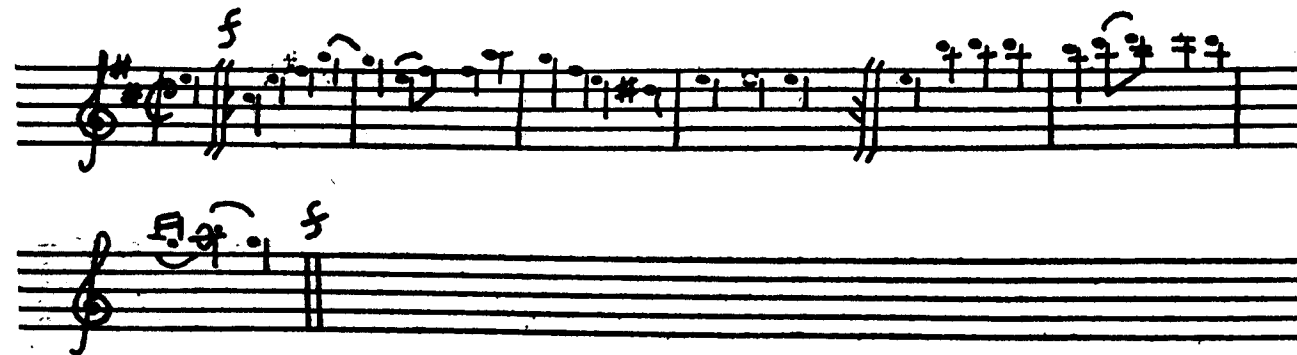
well, had ample lands to cultivate, was a master of bullocks and camels, was a proud father of numerous children and already had five wives and, what is more, if he so desired he might go in for the sixth. Mengeso, however, made up his mind to enlist in the army. His wives packed his luggage and the members of the family bade him farewell with tears. Mengeso quickly left, went to Kherwara Cantonment and became a Jawan.

IV

रहने किव भूलें राजा फौजडली घीमी घीमी आवे ।

आतम न सामियो राजा फौजडली० ।	नानो है कै मोटो राजा फौजडली० ।
मारें तो मेलो जावो राजा फौजडली० ।	नानो नै फिर आवे राजा फौजडली० ।
रोटला न बाटला करो राजा फौजडली० ।	असल है नै दला राजा फौजडली० ।
खोणा वाली कूटी राजा फौजडली० ।	गांठली नै पोटली करो राजा फौजडली० ।
माणो नै गवड़ा काटो राजा फौजडली० ।	मारें तो मेलो जावो राजा फौजडली० ।
हरियाया हूपड़ो राजा फौजडली० ।	कैने हातें जावो राजा फौजडली० ।
आडा डोडी होवे राजा फौजडली० ।	भाई नै हालो सलियो राजा फौजडली० ।
मारवाडी है पाटी राजा फौजडली० ।	एनिन हातें जावो राजा फौजडली० ।
मारा दोड़ावी खेसै राजा फौजडली० ।	हूं पैरी नै जावो राजा फौजडली० ।

भाबी नै बालो घघरो पहरी नै जावो राजा फौजडली० ।
 भाई नै वाली हाडी पहरी नै जावो राजा फौजडली० ।
 भाई नै वाली कापडी पहरी जावो राजा फौजडली० ।
 सलियो न मेलो सलियो राजा फौजडली० ।
 मेला जाही लागो राजा फौजडली० ।
 हूं एं बोरी नै लावहो राजा फौजडली० ।
 एक पइसा ना रुमाल बोरी लावहां राजा फौजडली० ।
 बीजारो हूं बोरी लावहां राजा फौजडली० ।
 एक पइसा नो कांधा बोरी लावहां राजा फौजडली० ।
 सलियो धेने फरहां राजा फौजडली० ।



Must we visit the Baneshwar fair. We shall prepare delicious food and pack up the articles to be taken there. I would like to accompany my brother to wear the skirt given to me by his wife, the necklace and the jacket presented to me by my mother and by your sister. I will buy a handkerchief and a comb at the fair and visit the various shrines there.

V

वेणोस्वर नो मेलो रणजणजू पैजणजू बाजे ।

रहने केवु बोले रणजणजू० ।	धामण मेले जह रणजणजू० ।
हाबलो मारी वातें रणजणजू० ।	थारे मारे बरासे रणजणजू० ।
हाल कटोरी हालजे रणजणजू० ।	वेणोस्वर नो मेलो रणजणजू० ।
थावरा थारे पोगे रणजणजू० ।	हाल कटोरी हालजे रणजणजू० ।
थावरी थारे पोगे रणजणजू० ।	रमते माया लागी रणजणजू० ।
हामे मंगरा डोले रणजणजू० ।	ठमके ठमके रमें रणजणजू० ।
थारे मारे नई वरो रणजणजू० ।	वेणोस्वर नो मेलो रणजणजू० ।

(Staff notations of this song are similar to that of the previous one)

The Baneshwar fair is now in full swing and we can hear the tinkling sound produced by the *Paijanias*. Why, my beloved, should you refuse my request to visit the fair. Our children, Thavra and Thavri, are roaming about, dancing with joy at the thought of going to the fair. Listen, I shall be indeed very unhappy if you do not take us to the fair.

VI

तलवाडा नो नानजी डामर, झमकूडी रे लोल ।
 नानजी नै तो वारे बैभर, झमकूडी रे लोल ॥

बारां में एक काणी बैभर, झमकूडी रे लोल ।
 काणकी कै मारे ससमो लाइवो, झमकूडी रे लोल ॥
 डूंगेरपर जवात्तु न तिससमो तो मुलवात्तो न तिस ।
 ससमो ए लवात्तो न तिस काणकी नै भालात्तो न तिस ॥
 काणकी तै मारो जिवडो लीवो, झमकूडी रे लोल ।
 तलवाडा नो नानजी डामर, झमकूडी रे लोल ॥

बारां में एक खोडी बैभर, झमकूडी रे लोल ।
 खोडकी कै मारे कडला लाईवो, झमकूडी रे लोल ॥
 डूंगेरपर जवात्तो न तिस कडला तो मुलवात्तो न तिस ।
 कडला ए लवात्तो न तिस खोडकी नै भालात्तो न तिस ॥
 खोडकी तै मारो जिवडो लीवो, झमकूडी रे लोल ।
 तलवाडा नो नानजी डामर, झमकूडी रे लोल ॥

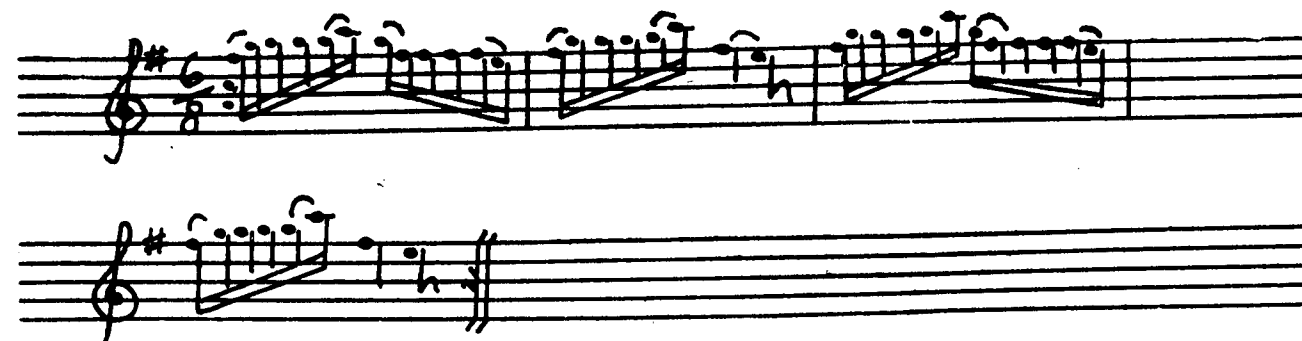
बारां में एक बूसी बैभर झमकूडी रे लोल ।
 बूसी कै मारे नाथडी लाइवो, झमकूडी रे लोल ॥
 डूंगेरपर जवात्तु न तिस नाथडी तो मुलवात्तो न तिस ।
 नाथडी ए लवात्तो न तिस, बूसी नै भालात्तो न तिस ॥
 बूसी तै मारो जिवडो लीवो, झमकूडी रे लोल ।
 तलवाडा नो नानजी डामर, झमकूडी रे लोल ॥

बारां में एक टूटी बैंगर, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ।
 टूटी के मारे सुडलो लाइदो, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ॥
 हूंगेरपर जवात्तु न ति सुडलो तो मुलवात्तो न ति ।
 सुडलो ए लवात्तो न ति, टूटी नै आलात्तो न ति ॥
 टूटी तै मारो जिवडो लीदो, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ।
 तलवाडा तो नानजी डामर, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ॥

बारां में एक खांडी बैंगर, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ।
 खांडी के मारे टोंटी लाइदो, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ॥
 हूंगेरपर जवात्तु न ति टोंटी तो मुलवात्तो न ति ।
 टोंटी ए लवात्तो न ति, खांडी नै आलात्तो न ति ॥
 खांडी तै मारो जिवडो लीदो, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ।
 तलवाडा नो नानजी डामर, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ॥

बारां में एक टांटली बैंगर, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ।
 टांटली के मारे बोरलो लाइदो, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ॥
 हूंगेरपर जवात्तु न ति बोरलो तो मुलवात्तो न ति ।
 बोरलो ए लवात्तो न ति, टांटली नै आलात्तो न ति ॥
 टांटली तै मारो जिवडो लीदो, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ।
 तलवाडा नो नानजी डामर, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ॥

बारां में एक बोकी बैंगर, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ।
 बोकी के मारे नारिल लाइदो, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ॥
 हूंगेरपर जवात्तो न ति, नारिल तो मुलवात्तो न ति ।
 नारिल ए लवात्तो न ति, बोकी नै आलात्तो न ति ॥
 बोकी तै मारो हिवडो लीदो, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ।
 तलवाडा नो नानजी डामर, झमकूड़ी रे लोल ॥



Nanji Damor, the Bhil headman, had a dozen wives. The first was one-eyed but always asked her husband to bring her a pair of glasses ; the second, who was lame, wanted him to present her with a tinkling anklet ; the third, noseless one, desired a nose-ring ; and the fourth, an armless one, persisted in demanding a beautiful ring for the arm. Of the others one was earless though she pined for beautiful earrings and one more longed to eat copra though she had not a tooth in her mouth. And still one more had no hair on her head but was looking forward to wearing a *Borla*. Patel Nanji Damor was however, a wise guy. He dutifully always promised each one of his wives to bring everything they desired so passionately when he would visit the town next.



BANGANGA FAIR

BANGANGA fair is held at a small place near a rivulet about 11 km from the important historical township of Bairath in Jaipur district. Over 60,000 persons assemble there on the full-moon day of Vaishak (April-May) annually to have a dip in the sacred stream which is believed to have been brought into existence by Arjun, the most famous of the Pandavas. Though the day of the fair is intimately connected with Buddhism, being the day on which its founder became the Enlightened, it has no connection with that faith as far as Banganga is concerned.

2. Bairath is said to have been an important town in ancient times. It has been identified with Viratpuri of the epic days. According to the story related in the Virat Parva of Mahabharata, the Pandavas, after spending 12 of the 14 years of their exile, approached Maharshi Veda Vyasa to seek his advice as to where they should live during the 13th year. The learned sage asked them to spend it at the court of king Virat. The Pandavas are supposed to have

hidden away their bows and arrows in a Khejra tree not far from the present fair site.

3. The ground on which the fair is held is situated in a plain in the midst of low hills. It is surrounded by palm trees in abundance. Other trees also are seen in a large number.

4. Bairath is 85 km from the pink Capital of Rajasthan on National Highway No. 8 which connects Jaipur, Alwar and Delhi. Banganga is 11 km from Bairath, the distance being negotiable by a fair-weather road passing through beautiful hilly region strewn with huge boulders ; and consequently no wheeled conveyance is of any use there. Another road is via Bhilwari, a village about 76 km from Jaipur on the same Highway, from where a path, about 10 km long, leads to Banganga. While the former route is used by pedestrians and other poor people, the latter is utilised by those owning carts, cars and by those who go by bus which plies regularly between Jaipur and Maid (from where Banganga is only a

couple of km distant). During the period of the fair, taxies, tongas and bullock-carts on hire are available at Bhilwari as well.

5. Hindus, Muslims and members of other communities congregate at Banganga for different reasons. The Hindus come for the holy dip and for business. The Muslims come for business alone. The members of the Scheduled Caste come for the holy dip even though they are not allowed to enter into the temple. An overwhelming number of those who attend the fair belong to the Jat, the Ahir and the Gujar communities.

6. The origin of the fair is shrouded in mystery. Even though visitors to Banganga apparently come to pay homage to the Mahabharata heroes, we cannot with certainty say that the fair has come down to us from the Mahabharata times. It will, however, be correct to say that the fair began to be held from the time when Radha Krishnaji's temple was built by Shri Nandrami Bakshi of Jaipur about 200 years ago.

7. Like the Buddhists, the Hindus attach great importance to the Purnima (the full-moon-day) coming in the month of Vaishakh. A dip in a river is considered very auspicious, and many rivers and rivulets in India have been called 'Banganga' by the people living in towns on their banks; and, as this rivulet is the only one in the region, it is not surprising that the villagers consider it sacred and named it so. The number of tanks and temples in the vicinity of Shri Radha Krishnaji's temple has made the site doubly sacred and important.

8. No community feasts are arranged in the fair. The visitors generally bring with them their provisions. Some bring with them *pooris*, *Holvo* or other fried articles of food. Some well-to-do people arrange to cook fresh food at Banganga itself. Such people come in large parties. They prepare *churma-dal* or *dal-bati* which they relish immensely.

9. Offerings of food, called *Prasad* to Radha Krishnaji takes place twice daily viz. at

12 a.m. and 7 p.m. The offerings on week days are simple. It is so-called *kutchra Khana* i.e. rice, *chapatis* and *dal*. On festival and fair days, however, *pucka Khana* i.e. *pooris*, pudding, *laddoos* are prepared and offered. The offerings made to the deities are latter distributed among the visitors.

10. The offerings made to the idols consists of barley and gram besides cash. These are placed at the altar in quantities decided by the devotees. The agent to the Manager of the temple of Radha Krishnaji collects the cash. The priests of the Banganga temple are the Brahmin followers of Ramanand Sampradaya and they cater to the wants of all types of pilgrims coming from Alwar, Behror, Kotputli, Jaipur, Deeg, Bharatpur and such other places within a radius of about 80 km.

11. Small traders visit Banganga fair to set up their shops. The articles brought by these traders, who number about 200, are varied, and are usually selected with an eye on the needs of the rural population. Balloons, bangles, mirrors, cheap necklaces, ear-rings, plastic toys, as well as bamboo sticks, axes, knives, are included in the list. Even though the land on which the visiting traders put up their stalls, belongs to the temple of Radha Krishnaji, no rent is collected from them.

12. The *Halwais* or confectioners earn from Rs. 10 to 15 a day. The others earn much more. The bamboo-stick sellers are very popular. The villagers are specially fond of stout sticks which they purchase for Rs. 2 to 4 each. The fruit-sellers, the cloth-dealers, etc. also have brisk sales. The usual grand-wheels and marry-go-rounds (in their rural types) are popular with children and elders alike.

13. Till now no circus, cinema or drama has been seen at Banganga. The colourfully dressed men and women of the Mina community outshine the others in their songs and dances. The songs sung are usually in praise of the sacred Banganga and the five Pandavas. One such song is as follows :



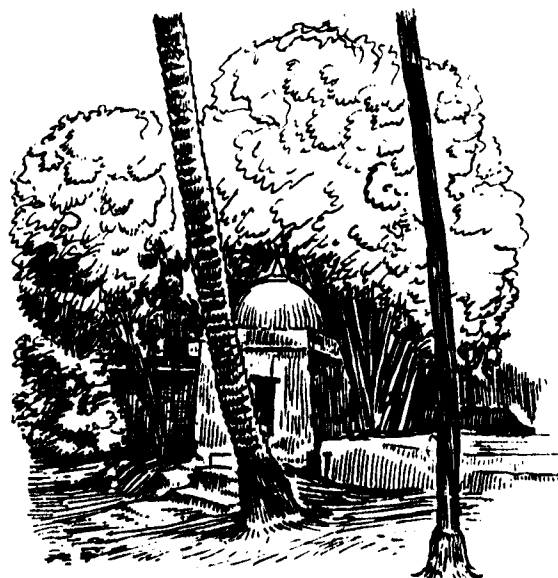
The idol of Shri Radha Krishna



The Panch Mukhi Mahadeo

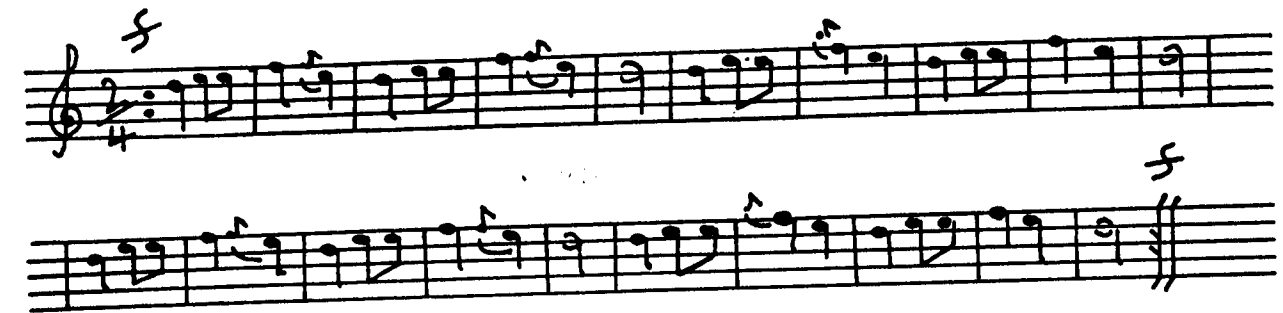


The Har ki Pedi



The shrine of Kupasi Mata

पाप नशावन कलमल नाशन गंगे तेरी धार ।
अजुन बाण दिवा धरणी में ले संग राजकुमार ।
उसी बाण से प्रकटी जननी, जानत सब संसार ।
तट तट मन्दिर बने हुये हैं शोभा देत अपार ।
बीच भगवती निर्मल बहती पाप नशावन हार ।
राधाकान्त बिराजे तट पर मन्दिर गढ़ की डार ।
नन्द कुंड में पवन पुत्र हैं सेवा में तैयार ।
श्री मन्महाराजाधिराज श्री रामसिंह दरबार ।
हरि की पैड़ी बना गये जहं न्हाते नित नर नार ।
पापी पार अनन्त हो गये जननी दया तुम्हार ।
हरिदास पर कृपा करो मां मे हैं तेरे द्वार ।



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

"Mother Ganges, your water is the destroyer of all sins. The whole world knows that you were born from the arrow of Arjun. Each bank of the Banganga is studded with temples; and amidst them flows the purifier, the Bhagwati. One of the temples is that of Radha Krishnaji; and by the side of the Nand Kund is the shrine of Hanuman, the son of wind. The Maharaja among Maharajas, Shri Rama Singh, built *Har-ki-pedi*. Numberless men and women have washed their sins away by bathing at this spot.

14. People begin to gather at the temple a day before the day of the fair. At night they hear *bhajans* i. e. devotional songs, and *kirtans* i. e. sermons, in the main temple. The next morning they have a dip in the sacred waters, after which they visit other places of interest. A visit to Radha Krishnaji's temple is a must.

15. This temple is a two-storeyed impressive building amidst a large number of minor structures of indifferent quality. As one climbs up the flight of ten steps, one comes to the open square, in the centre of which is a small

shrine of Garuda facing the main idols of Krishna and Radha. On all the four sides of this open space are verandahs. The one on the left accommodates six statues of the Pandavas and their wife Draupadi. There is nothing particular about these images. In the right verandah are installed, in a row, several Shiva lingas over which water trickles from a common channel. One of these lingas has five faces carved on it. This is known as Pancha-mukhi Mahadeva or Ekadash Rudra and has become an object of curiosity for all the visitors. A circumambulatory passage runs round the main Radha Krishna shrine.

16. The temple building has only one gate. Its walls are high and stout and its four corners have miniature bastions. The gate is surmounted by a gallery with domes in Jaipur style. Like many other buildings of the period it too is built with a view to ensure protection against marauders.

17. The present Manager of the temple of Radha Krishnaji is Shri Hari Das, who is paid Rs. 40 a month for his services. He is assisted

by a *pujari* who gets Rs. 30 a month. Both are paid by the Devasthan Department. The Manager is said to have written and published some religious books. The Hindi devotional song cited above is composed by him.

18. After a visit to the main temple, the people go to Nand Kund and Ban Kund which are situated to the left of the Radha Krishna temple. On the steps of the Nand Kund is the shrine of Hanuman, and near the Ban Kund is that of Ganga Bihari. Not far away from these are the temple of Mahadeva and the Math of Goswamiji wherein many a visitor spends his nights. On the bank of the Banganga are a couple of *ghats* i. e. flights of steps leading to the water. One of these is the *Har-ki-pedi* referred to in the devotional song above.

19. The temple of Radha Krishnaji held in jagir three villages viz. Tevdi, Sheoriya-ki-

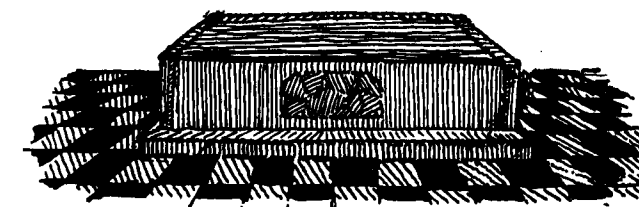
Dhani and Gyanpura. Since the resumption of Jagirs by the State, the management of the temple vests in the Devasthan Department.

20. Though the Government sends a few police constables to the fair, it has not set up any committee or body to look after the arrangements on the day. The Manager of the temple is the key-man who looks after everything. It is he who allots sites to the stall holders and shopkeepers and looks into complaints if there are any. The informally constituted Sewa Samitis from the adjoining villages arrange for lights on the fair ground; and the four wells supply more than enough potable water.

21. The cash offerings amounting to about Rs. 200 collected by the agent of the Manager are deposited with the Devasthan Department; and the offerings in kind become the property of the Manager of the temple.



Temple of Narsinghji



GOGAJI FAIR

GOGAJI fair is held in village Goga Medi in tehsil Nohar of Ganganagar district. The fair is celebrated in memory of Gogaji, a renowned hero of this area. It is celebrated from the 9th day of the dark half of Bhadrapada (Goga Navmi) to the 11th day of dark half of the same month. The estimated congregation is about 60,000 persons. The exact date of the origin of the fair is not known but it is considered probable that it was begun to be celebrated since the death of Gogaji in the 11th century A. D.

2. Gogaji was a Chauhan king of Dadrewa, a village in Nohar tehsil, which is also known as Seesh Medi, and is at a distance of 10 km from Goga Medi. Gogaji fought many battles against the Muslim invaders and emperors to save his principality from their yoke. He was a protector of cows and saviour of Hindu religion. He fought against his cousins, Sarjan and Arjan, and killed them in the fight. His mother Bachhal was enraged by their murder and she sent him into exile for twelve years. During this long absence,

Bachhal and her sister thought that Gogaji had died but it was not so. He used to come at night into the palace to spend time with his wife Suriyal. Gogaji had advised her not to disclose his visits to the palace to his mother. One day his mother Bachhal reprimanded Suriyal for putting on beautiful clothes and decorating her body as she thought she was a widow. Suriyal was greatly provoked by the remonstrances of her mother-in-law and she gave out that Gogaji was alive and he daily visited the palace to live with her. On the next visit Suriyal showed Gogaji to her mother-in-law. Bachhal again rebuked Gogaji for disobeying her orders and visiting the palace without her permission. She ordered him to leave immediately and not to show his face any more. It is said that Gogaji left the palace immediately, arrived at Medi and took *samadhi*. The place where Gogaji took *samadhi* is known as Goga Medi. It is declared that Gogaji was seen at the spot riding his horse with a spear in his hand. Gogaji is known as Jahar Peer also.

Means of communication

3. Goga Medi is a railway station on the Northern Railway at a distance of 359 km from Jaipur and 109 km from Loharu. It is situated at a distance of 25 km to the east of Nohar, which is the headquarters of the tehsil as well as of the sub-division. There is a metalled road upto Sadulpur via Loharu, and buses ply over it. There is, however, no road connecting Sadulpur with Goga Medi. The railway station is at a distance of 3 km from the village where the *samadhi* of Gogaji is located.

People's participation

4. Both Hindus and Muslims participate in the fair. Hindus worship him as Goga Veer or Jhujhar Veer and Muslims pay him homage as the Johar peer. The Kayamkhani Muslims regard him as their ancestor and worship as a peer.

History of the fair

5. It is nearly certain that the fair began to be held towards the end of the 11th century. The historians are not unanimous in conclusion regarding Gogaji after whom the fair is named. According to Laloo Bhai Bhim Bhai Desai*, a writer on the subject, Gopendra Raj was a descendant of Chauhan, a Chauhan king of Sambhar. Gopendra Raj is popularly known as Goga Dev. He defeated Muslim invaders eleven times. He was killed while protecting the cows. He ruled over Sambhar in Vikram Samvat 752 (A. D. 665). While Dr. Ram Kumar Verma†, the celebrated Hindi author, has stated that Guru Gorakh Nath and Gogaji Chauhan were the same person. A legend makes Gogaji the disciple of Gorakhnath. Though it seems correct that Gogaji ruled somewhere in Northern Rajasthan, but to say that he was a contemporary of Prithvi Raj Chauhan is not correct.

6. Another author Shri Jhabarmal Sharma‡ has given a different opinion. According to him *Jahir* means visible, but here

* Chauhan Kul Kalpadrum, p. 22.

† Hindi Sahitya ka Alochanatmak Itihas p. 146.

‡ Shodh Patrika Part I Vol. III p. 142 & 153.

it denotes *Johar* or *Jujhar* which means a warrior. Shri Amba Prasad Suman another author quoted by Shri Chandradan Charan in his book 'Gogaji Chauhan-ri-Rajasthani Gatha' (page 10) has stated that Jahar peer was known as Goga Peer. In the medieaval period persons who sacrificed their lives while protecting the cows were called *Gogas*. *Veer* and peer are one and the same thing. Sir Henry Eliot has also stated that Marahattas called him Johir Peer @.

7. Thakur Ratan Singh, a descendant of Gogaji, has produced the genealogical table of the Chauhans, according to which Kesri Sing succeeded to the throne of Seesh Medi and Ummed Singh to that of Goga Medi. The Muslim poet Jan in his book 'Kayamkhan Rasso' has given another genealogical table of the Chauhans and there is very little difference between the two. It can be concluded from the above authority that Gogaji Chauhan was reigning in Dadrewa before 17 generations from Kayamkhan who lived from 1385 to 1419 A. D. Gogaji must have, therefore, reigned about 400 years ago. This time coincides with the time of the reign of Mahmud Gaznavi.

8. Col. Tod* is of the opinion that Goga, the Chauhan, fell with his 47 sons defending the passage of the Sutlej on Mahmud's invasion. Shri K. M. Munshi has also stated in his book 'Jai Somnath', that Goga Chauhan was the most renowned hero of the times. According to him he was the ruler of Ghoga Gadh, and he, along with his sons and relatives, died in a battle with Mahmud Gaznavi. He has averred that the heroic deeds of Gogaji are not imaginary. According to him Gujars regarded Gogaji as their ancestor. Goga is famous as a warrior throughout Gujarat and a procession used to be taken out annually in his honour at many places in the State.

9. Shri Gauri Shankar Hira Chand Ojha has stated that Gogaji was born in Rajputana in the eleventh century and not in Gujarat. Kayam Khan was the Chauhan ruler of Dadrewa at that

@ History, Folk Lore & Distribution of Races of the N.W. Provinces of India, p. 252.

* Anna's and Antiquities of Rajasthan, Vol. I-p. 574

time, that is why his descendants regard Gogaji as their ancestor. It is probable that when Gujars were converted to Islam, they followed in the foot-steps of Kayam Khanis and regarded Gogaji as their ancestor. Dr. Satyaketu Vidyalankar and Dr. Dashrath Sharma are also of the view that Goga was a contemporary of Mahmud Gaznavi.

10. We see thus that most of the historians are agreed that Gogaji was born and lived in 11th century A. D. and he was a contemporary of Mahmud Gaznavi. He is associated with Dadrewa and Medi. In 12th and 13th centuries i. e. during the rule of Chauhans, village Dadrewa was a town.

Gogaji as Jahir Peer

11. Gogaji is also worshipped as Jahir Peer. He is referred in Uttar Pradesh by this name. It is said that Gogaji accepted Islam and became a peer, which Shri Jhabarmal Sharma regards as highly improbable.

12. Gogaji is worshipped as a snake god. No proof, however, is available about his associations with the snakes. There are some songs relating to Gogaji in one of the manuscripts in the Anoop Sanskrit Library at Bikaner in which Gogaji has been associated with snakes in one form or the other.

Gogaji as local god

13. There is a difference of opinion among historians about the life and career of Gogaji but the people in general have never taken note of it. He is popular as a god of snakes. He is more revered in Rajasthan than in any other Indian State. There is a *Than* (sacred place) of Gogaji in every village. It is generally located under a tree of Khejra (*Prosopis spicigera*). On being questioned whether the God is great or Gogaji, the people generally reply that whosoever may be great, they do not desire any enmity with the snakes. At every *Than* the idol of Gogaji is in a different form. At some *Thans* there is a likeness of snake while at others there is an idol of Gogaji riding on horse. These idols are engraved on

stones. When any person is bitten by a snake in a village, he is carried to the *Than* of Gogaji. There big drums and gongs are sounded throughout the night and the patient is kept awake. Some persons dance with iron chains in their hands which they strike on their backs and heads. That they are not hurt or wounded is ascribed to the supernatural powers of Gogaji. It may be that dances and songs are arranged to keep the person bitten by the snake awake, as poison affects the sleeping person more speedily than if he were awake. They keep on chanting *mantras* to counteract the poison. Replicas of Gogaji's horse are worshipped on Goga Navami in all households in the region. It is widely believed that if a person is bitten by a poisonous snake, he can be cured only by worshipping Gogaji and not by any medicines.

Life of Gogaji

14. The life of Gogaji is very interesting. His mother Bachhal did not have any issue for a considerable period after her marriage. Hence she devoted herself to the worship of various gods and goddesses and afterwards Gorakhnath gave her his blessings and said that soon she would have a son. Her husband's sister complained to Jhawar in open court that Bachhal went daily to the saint and devoted most of her time in meditation and that her conduct was unbecoming for a female member of the royal family. Jhawar, thereupon asked Bachhal to go to her father's house as her brother was going to be married. Bachhal knew that it was a lame excuse but as she had no alternative, she set out for her father's house in a bullock-cart. She spent the night in a village. At that time Gogaji, who was in her womb, thought that if he were born at his mother's house he would be called *Nanadia* which he did not like. Gogaji, therefore, ordered a snake to bite one of the cart bullocks. It thus became impossible for Bachhal to proceed further. After sometime Gogaji asked his mother to return to Dadrewa. No sooner than she decided to return to Dadrewa, the bitten bullock became well again. When on her reaching Dadrewa she informed her husband that she was with a child, her husband and father-in-law were very happy.

When Gogaji was born there was great rejoicing in the family. One day when he was lying in a cradle, a snake was seen moving around him. The parents and other members of the family were horrified at seeing the snake and wanted to kill it; but Gogaji forbade them to do so. After Gogaji grew up he met Pabuji. The two sat for a game of chess and it was agreed that if Gogaji was defeated he would hand over the kingdom of Dadrewa to Pabuji and if the latter were defeated he would give his niece, Kelamde, in marriage to the former. Gogaji won the game. When after this success Gogaji went to Kolumandu a village some 10 km from Phalodi, he saw the gate-keeper refusing to open the gate. Gogaji thereupon used his supernatural powers and the gates were thrown open. As there was a great difference in the ages of Gogaji and Kelamde, the promised offer of marriage was sought to be withheld. Gogaji was greatly annoyed and he ordered Padma Nagin to bite Kelamde. Kelamde, before she became unconscious, prayed Gogaji to cure her and she was saved. Gogaji returned to Dadrewa.

15. After some time a priest arrived there from Kolumandu and asked for Gogaji as he had come to request him to accept Kelamde in marriage. Goga's mother Bachhal informed the priest that Goga was already married and that he might offer Kelamde's hand to Arjan or Sarjan, her sister's sons. The priest was disappointed and unhappy; but when he was on his way back to Kolumandu, he met Gogaji who accepted the coconut from him. The marriage was celebrated with great pomp and show.

16. After the death of Jhawar, Gogaji succeeded him to the headship of Dadrewa. He fought against Arjan and Sarjan and defeated them. They later sought the assistance of the ruler of Delhi; but Gogaji defeated the Moghul army also. One day while Kelamde was walking in her garden, Arjan and Sarjan entered it and deprived her of her ornaments. Kelamde returned to the palace and reported the incident to her mother-in-law and Gogaji. Gogaji immediately armed himself and fought and killed Arjan and Sarjan. When Bachhal came to know about

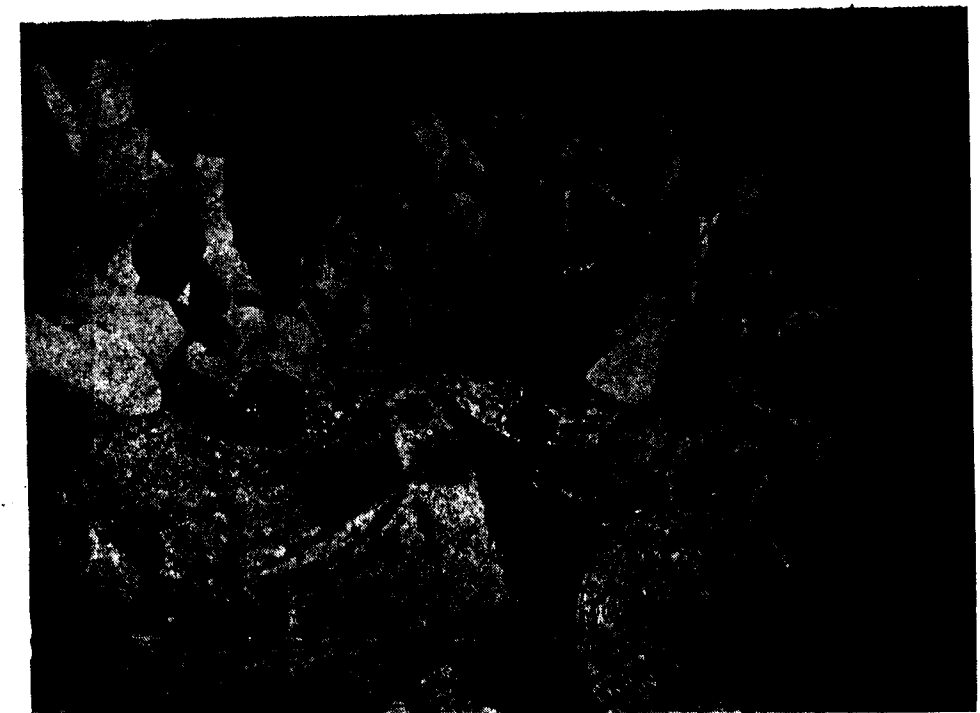
their death, she sent Gogaji into exile for 12 years. During this time Gogaji prayed to mother earth and asked her to give him shelter. The earth opened up and Gogaji vanished into it.

17. Gogaji's first wife whose name was Suriyal, bitterly wept at the disappearance of Gogaji. She prayed to Gorakh Nath and implored him to restore Gogaji's life and bring him back to the earth. It is said that Guru Gorakh Nath went to Indra Lok and brought back Gogaji to the earth.

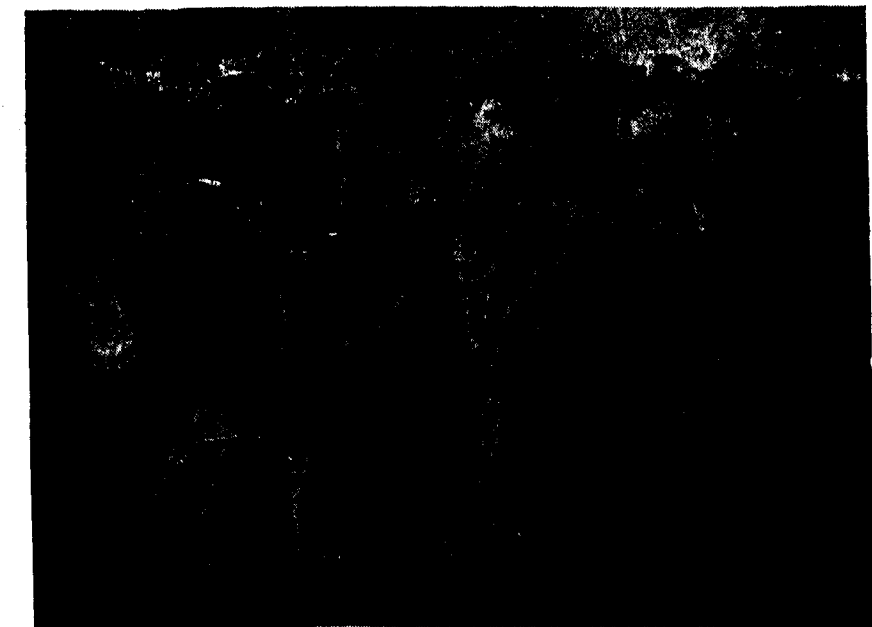
18. Gogaji used to pay visits to Suriyal at night and stay with her till dawn. One day her mother-in-law Bachhal made satirical remarks on the fine way in which Suriyal decorated her body. It was this provocation that made her give out the secret that Gogaji was still alive and stayed with her at night. That night when Gogaji came to the palace to meet Suriyal, she showed him to her mother-in-law. Bachhal reprimanded Gogaji, and asked him not to show her his face any more. Gogaji left the palace immediately and came to the place which is now known as Goga Medi. Here he took *samadhi*. As thousands of devotees began visiting the place annually to pay homage to him, a *mela* or fair began to be held there.

Memorial of Gogaji

19. The *samadhi* of Gogaji is made of white marble. In the sanctum is the idol of Gogaji riding a blue horse with a spear in hand. He has been shown dressed in the formal dress of a Chauhan ruler and a snake has been shown around his neck. Five more sculptures are kept by the side of the path used for *pradakshina* (circumambulation) by the people. The entire area is surrounded by a boundary wall with a big gate. The outside of the building has a look of a fort. Two minarets have also been added to the building and the hall. The *samadhi* and the boundary wall have been repaired. It is said that the Muslim ruler, Mahmud Gaznavi had great respect for Gogaji and after the fulfilment of his desires due to the blessings of Gogaji, he affected these repairs and converted the temple into a mosque. An inscription incorporating



Devotees making offerings at the Samadhi of Gogaji



A bunch of fair visitors to the shrine



A bird's-eye-view of the tented township



Village folk ready for dancing with umbrellas held aloft

these facts has been installed at the main entrance to the hall in persian.

Participation of communities

20. In the Gogaji fair at Goga Medi some Scheduled Castes viz. the Bhangis, the Chamars, the Nayaks attend the fair. The Naths are also seen among the visitors in large numbers. Persons of other communities also come in the fair. Many of them come for trade or recreation and no one of them was seen at the *samadhi* offering worship to Gogaji.

Offerings

21. Coconuts, *batashas* (sugar-drops) and cash is offered at the *samadhi*. Generally people offer Rs. 1.25. The cash and other offerings are retained by the Nath priest who holds charge of the *samadhi* and offers worship. The rubbing of incense forms the main part of the worship.

22. In the area outside this hall one can see several Naths moving here and there with a replica of the whip (*chabuk*) of Gogaji. It is said that Gogaji used to make use of a whip while riding his blue horse. The devotees go to the Naths and worship the whip. They place Rs. 1.25 in cash before the whip as an offering. People generally engage the services of a Nath priest, who have been serving them for decades. Persons bow before the whip and pray to it for the fulfilment of their desires. The money collected by the Nath is retained by him as his income.

23. The priest, as has already been said, belongs to the Nath sect. He selects the disciple who is to succeed him to the priestship after his death during his life time and also prepares a will in his favour.

Name of places from where people assemble

24. Most of the devotees attending the fair are from Rajasthan. Some of them come from the U. P., the Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The purpose of the visit differs from devotee to devotee. Some of them come to offer special worship to Gogaji as some of their family members may have been

cured by Gogaji's intervention of the effects of snake bite or other diseases while others come to express obligations for the birth of a son. The priest arranges special prayers and the devotees remain awake for the night singing songs in praise of Gogaji.

Management of the fair

25. The Sub Divisional Officer stationed at Nohar is the Fair Officer by virtue of his office. He is assisted by the Police Officers and his personnel in his work. The representatives of Animal Husbandry Department organise the famous cattle fair. During the last fair 384 cows, 269 calves, 208 bullocks and 1,059 camels were brought to the fair. Residents of Goga Medi and a few adjoining villages made purchases of the cattle worth Rs. 8,513. Visitors from outside did not transact any business as there are no transport facilities in the area.

Market

26. There are shops of food stuffs, food grains, utensils and camel saddles. There are also a number of restaurants, shops of sweets to provide food to the people. There are stalls which sell general merchandise including buttons, soaps, pearl garlands and other petty items. The shopkeepers come from Nohar, Bhadra and Hanuman-garh. It is estimated that their income ranges from Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per day.

The fair

27. The devotees are generally busy in offering worship to Gogaji at the memorial. Some of them can be seen prostrating in obeisance while approaching the memorial. In the hall there is an atmosphere of calmness and serenity. Fragrance and incense fill the hall. Even outside it one can see a number of devotees offering worship to the *chabuk* or whip of Gogaji. The only source of recreation is that persons can be seen singing, dancing and moving about with *Nishans* (bamboos with multi-coloured flags at top) in their hands. Big flags are hoisted over the memorial of Gogaji. The songs of Gogaji are very popular and most of the people in the

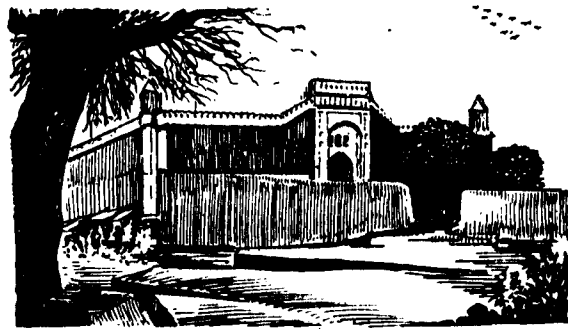
region know them by heart. Some devotees purchase booklets in which these songs are given,

and sing them to the accompaniment of drums and gongs. One such song is given below:

गोगाजी तिसरे बासा मे पोखर पर छोड़या पागड़ा जी राज ।
बेठ्या पाबूजी का सात भरे दरबारों लुलकर मुझरा साजीयां ओ म्हारा राज ।
नमे नमे करे पाबूजी का सात जी म्हारा राज ।
अगुणि पेड़या पर नहावे पाबू जीरा सात जी म्हारा राज ।
नहाता नहाता पाबू जी का रपट्या जी पांव म्हारा राज ।
रपटते पांवां ने गोगाजी डाटीया ओ जी म्हारा राज ।



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)



Temple of Gogaji



JAMBHESWAR FAIR

JAMBHESWAR fair is held in village Mukam of tehsil Nokha, Bikaner district, twice a year, on Phalgun Budi Amavasya and Ashvin Budi Amavasya, in commemoration of Jambheswarji, the illustrious founder of the Bishnoi sect. The fair was initiated by his disciples on Phalgun Budi Amavasya, Vikram Samwat 1648 (1591 A. D.). This is attended by more than 12,000 persons, who come from all parts of the country to pay their homage to the saint. The fair which is held on Ashvin Budi Amavasya is a smaller one.

2. The first settler of the village is said to have been one Mala Ram Jat who established himself there in Vikram Samwat 1535(1478 A.D.). Seven years later he came under the influence of Jambheswarji and became one of his ardent followers. Presently there are 200 families in Mukam and other villages who trace their descent from him. The Bishnois probably form a separate religious sect among the agricultural population, so much so that they can be said to have developed

into a separate caste which holds no social intercourse with other Hindu castes.

3. Their deity is Vishnu, who is worshipped in his incarnation as Jambhaji. Jambha built a large tank in Phalodi and near it he founded a village which is called after himself 'Jambha'. On the bank of the tank, he dug a grave with his own hands and asked his disciples to bury him there when he died.

4. Jambhaji died on the ninth day of the dark half of Margshirsha in Samvat 1593 (1537 A. D.) on the top of the sand-dune to which he had gone after leaving Peepasar village. His disciples, who were with him when he died, would not allow his body to be taken to the grave he had dug for himself near the tank but said that they would bury him where he had died and this they did. His grave and a temple are still to be seen near village Talwa, which place is also called 'Mukam' for Jambha had taken his *mukam* or abode there.

Means of communication

5. On the road from Bikaner to Jodhpur at a place 60 km from Bikaner is the town of Nokha, the tehsil headquarters. Mukam is 15 km distant from Nokha. Nokha is a rail head of Northern Railway metre gauge system. There is a bus-stand for village Mukam. Regular bus services plying from Bikaner to Jaipur, Bikaner to Salasar and Nokha to Sujangarh touch Mukam bus-stand. The village is thus in regular and constant communication with the tehsil and district headquarters and neighbouring places.

Participants

6. The fair is open to all persons, irrespective of caste or religion. Muslims are allowed to enter the temple and pay homage to the saint although not many of them visit the place.

Shrines

7. There are two temples of Jambheswarji, one in the village Mukam and the other on the sand-dune of Samarthal. The foundation of the shrine was laid in the village on Mangsar Budi 11, Samvat 1593 (1536 A. D.), and was completed seven years later by Jambhaji's disciple Randhirji. It is a two storeyed building and has entrance from three sides which have artistic balconies with exquisite designs carved on them. There is a paved platform on the four sides of the temple. In the shrine on the first floor at the height of 6 m from the ground floor, in the central hall, is to be found the *samadhi* of Jambheswarji. The real vault in which the body of the saint was buried, is said to be some 30 m underground. There is only one entrance to this hall, the rest of the sides are closed. Towards the *samadhi*, there is a life-size portrait of Jambheswarji. On all sides of the central hall on the first floor, there is a marble pavement. At the back of the hall, there is a verandah in which *havan* is performed. There is a small aperture in this verandah, which opens into the big room on the ground floor, through which the grain received by way of donations is dropped from time to time. On the ground floor, behind the main hall, there

are five rooms in one of which grain is stored. The rest of the rooms serve as a guest house. On one side of the shrine, there is a platform with wire-gauge fencing, which is utilised for scattering corn to feed pigeons, peacocks and other birds.

8. The temple at Samarthal is simple in structure. Here the symbol of Jambhaji's *samadhi* is installed in one room. This was the principal seat of Jambhaji during the period he propagated his religion. It is believed that the place is permeated with the spirit of the saint Jambheswarji, who is present there in ethereal form ever since he laid down his mortal frame. The Bishnois hold that the *swarna-nagri* (golden city) and the golden *singhasan* (throne) of the legendary emperor Vikramaditya lie buried under this sand-dune.

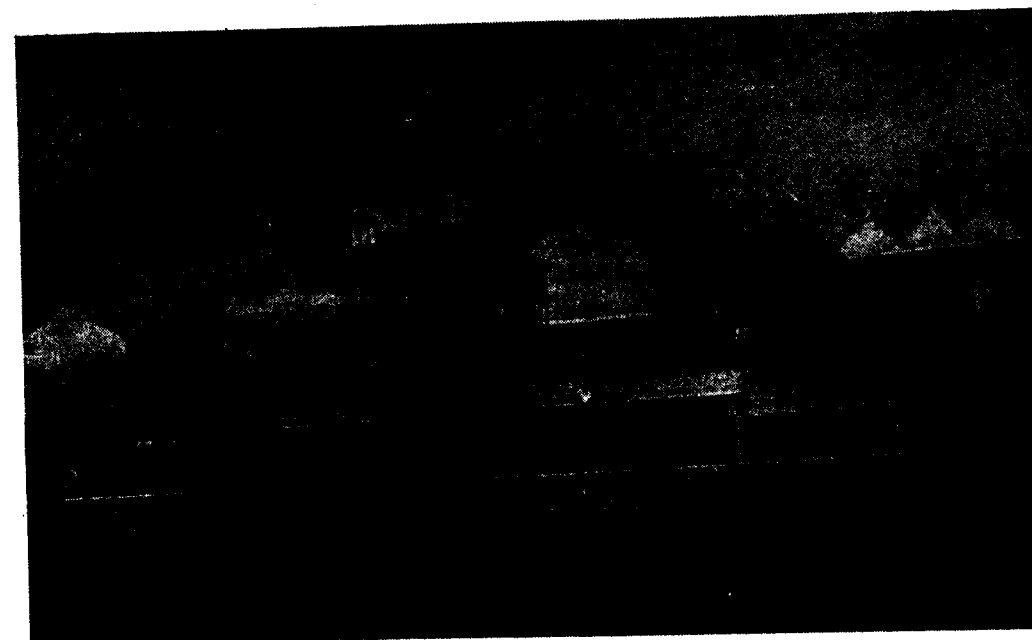
Electricity and water supply

9. The village gets its electric supply from Nokha. Electric light is provided inside the shrine and at all its four entrances. A few lamp-posts have also been erected in the street near the shrine. The *dharamshalas* are also electrified.

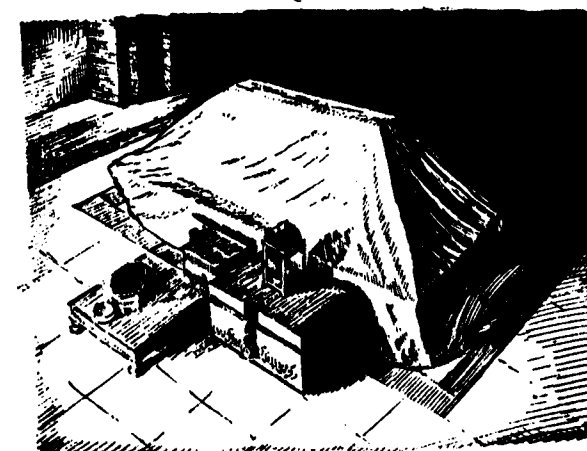
10. There is only one well in the village; and it is the only source for the supply of water. Recently, however, through the good offices of the Bishnoi Maha Sabha pipe connections have been obtained from a well in the nearby village of Talwa. Due to the shortage of power, the scheme has not yet started functioning; and the people of Mukam have to rely on their own well which is 100 m deep. Water has to be lifted with the aid of a *charas* worked by bullocks or camels.

Life and teachings of Jambheswarji

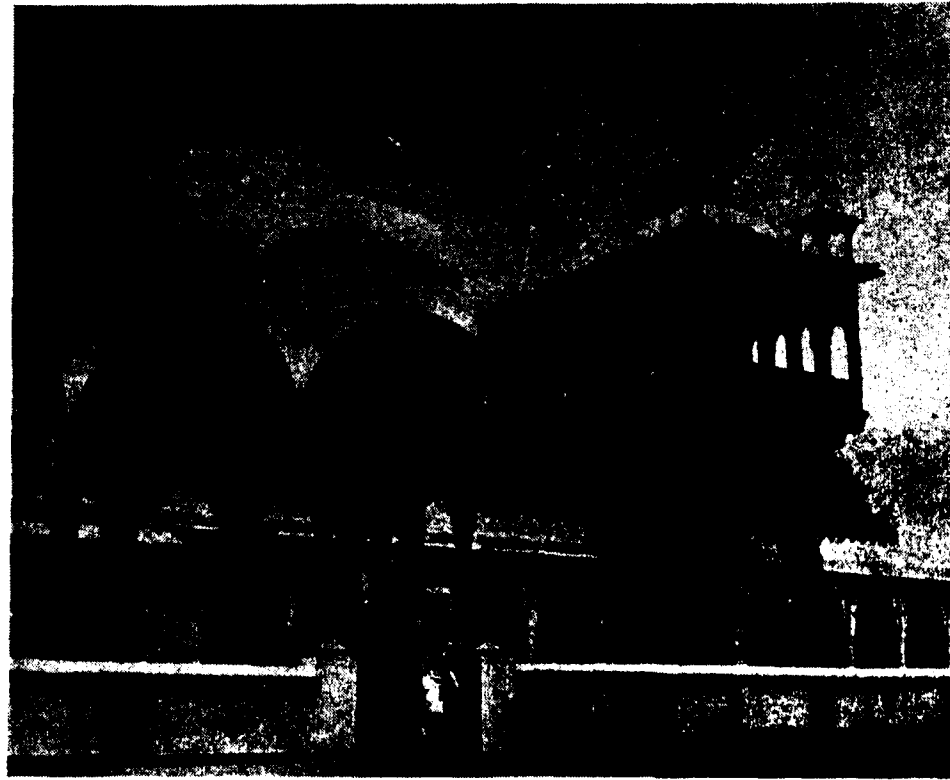
11. It is said that Jambheswarji was born at Peepasar, 16 km away from Mukam, on Bhaddon Budi 8, Vikram Samvat 1508 (1451 A. D.). His father was one Jhabar Lohat, of the Panwar Rajput clan and was the jagirdar of the village. It is believed that Jambhaji was born in the 32nd generation in the direct line of the legendary king Vikramaditya. According to another account, Jambhaji was found lying under a Khejra tree



Front view of the temple



The Samadhi



Another view of the temple



The Pujari

outside his house by Jhabar Lohat. Even in his childhood, Jambhaji is said to have begun tending cows which work he is said to have continued upto the age of 27. Thereafter he is said to have propagated the teachings of his religion. Jambha was reported to be dumb upto the age of 12. The parents were greatly worried on that account and they sought the advice of a learned person. Some earthen lamps placed at the place of worship by the learned man could not be lighted. Jambhaji is said to have then lowered an unbaked earthen pot tied to an untwisted thread in a well and to have drawn out water from it. As soon as this water was sprinkled on the earthen lamps arranged by the learned man, they began to burn brightly. All those who witnessed this miracle were wonder-struck; and from that moment onwards, Jambhaji was considered to be an incarnation of God Vishnu.

12. About the same time Jambhaji gave up his occupation of a shepherd and took up his abode on the top of a hill near the boundary of the village Talwa, about 9 km from Peepasar. He taught the Jats the 29 articles of the religion. The term 'Bishnoi' given to his followers comes from *Bees* (twenty) and *Nov* or *Nol* (nine).

13. Jambhaji had no utility for mundane objects and riches. His teachings greatly influenced the life of the people and made them god-fearing and virtuous. The *sabdas* (sayings) of Jambhaji, 120 in number, sum up his philosophy and teachings. He succeeded in putting the most abstruse thoughts of the Vedas and the Upnishads in his *sabdas* which are easily understood by common people for whom they were meant. A characteristic of these compositions is the constant employment in them of imagery drawn from common life and universal experience. It is by simple metaphors, by constant appeal to needs, passions and relations which all men understand, that he drives home his intense conviction of the reality of the soul's intercourse with the Transcendent. The cardinal virtues of Hinduism i. e. purity, self-control, detachment, truth and non-violence have all been emphasized by Jambhaji, again and again, in his *sabdas*. By purity he implies both ceremonial and moral purity.

Detachment is the highest phase of self-control, liberation from the world and union with the Supreme Being are not possible so long as one clings either to evil or to good. Truth is inseparably associated with non-violence. The two are the highest virtues. The ideal of *Ahimsa*, according to Jambhaji's teachings, is to permeate all aspects of life. He who has humility and a sense of forgiveness and who is pure within and without, whose heart is chaste and merciful, is entitled to the summum bonum of life. Jambhaji was an ardent believer in the laws of *Karma* and rebirth and *Avatar* (incarnation). In the mediaeval times, when ignorance and darkness prevailed in Rajasthan, and hatred and cruelty occupied the hearts of men, Jambhaji was the torch bearer who gave them light.

Offerings

14. All the members of the Bishnoi community who pay visit to the fair, offer something in cash or kind at the shrine. It is, however, estimated that donations of the value of more than Rs. 20,000 comprising of ghee, moth and cash are received. The cash is handed over to the Managing Committee of the Bishnoi Maha Sabha; and the corn is stored in the room reserved for that purpose. It is utilized for feeding pigeons, peacocks and birds. No other use can be made of the stored grain. The quantity of grain which is offered at the time of both the fairs is sufficient to feed the birds throughout the year. Ghee which is collected in quintals and is used for the performance of *havan* on both the fairs and the rest is utilized in the *deepaks* which are kept lighted for all the twentyfour hours throughout the year at both the shrines. It is also customary among the Bishnois to offer the first instalment of ghee made from the milk of a new cow to the saint. In no case are these offerings disposed off or given to any other persons. The cash received as donations and offerings is collected and utilised for the maintenance of the temple and management of the fair. The salary of the *pujari* is also paid out of this collection.

Priests

15. Worship is offered to the shrine of Jambheswarji at Mukam by a priest daily. He belongs to the Bishnoi community. He gets his daily food from the village in lieu of his services. In addition he is paid Rs.35 per month by the Bishnoi Mahasabha. He remains unmarried and when one priest dies, another takes his place by choice. If the new priest happens to be already married, he forsakes his wife and the children live with their mother. In such a case she does not remarry; but may do so if she has no children.

16. A *sanyasi* offers worship to the model of Jambhaji's shrine, which is located in a small temple at Samarthal, and performs *agnihotra* morning and evening. The *sanyasi* belongs to the Bishnoi caste. He gets his food from the Bishnois in the village.

17. At both these places *dipak* (an earthen lamp) is kept lighted all the 24 hours of the day. An *arti* in the praise of the saint is sung every morning and evening in a fascinating tune. The exact wordings of the *arti* are reproduced as under :

कू कू केरा चरण पधारो गुरु जम्बदे महात्मा पुरुष थारी आरती करे.....
जम्बे गुरु ध्यावे तो सरस सिद्धी पावे कोटि जनम केरा पाप क्षरे.....
हृदय ज्यू हवेली माही रहो प्रभू रात दिन मोतीझा की प्रभू माला गले
कर्म कमंडल सोवे सीस सोवे टोपी नैना मांही दोग मशाल सी जले.....
सोने को सिंहासन प्रभू रेशम केरी गायियां फूला हंदि आसन प्रभू बेड़ियां ही तरे
प्रेम केरा प्याला प्रभू पीवे थारा साधुजन जटा मुकुट तेरे चंवर बुरे.....
संख शहनाई बाजे झींजा बाजे झन न न भेर नगारा बाजे नोबत घुरे
मजिंरा तिकोरा बाजे घंटा बाजे घन न न सबद सुम्या पाप क्षरे.....
कंचन केरो थाल कपूर केरी बत्तिया अगर केरो धूप रबि इन्दर ज्यू कदे
सेज तो सेवे कुबेरसा भंडारी शिव ब्रह्मा थारी आरती करे.....
आरती में आवे २ शीश निवावे जागरण सुन्यां सू जमराज डरे
जाहेवे सुतावे गावे नव निधि पावे सीधी मुकती सिधारे बाल ब्रह्म ज्यू तरे

(English rendering on next Page)



(Staff notations of tune rendered on flute)

Welcome to Lord Jambheswar, I offer thee *arti*. Whosoever worships thee attains success and gets the sins of all births washed away ;

Pray, reside in my heart night and day my Lord; who wears a garland of pearls, has a *kamandal* in hand, dons a beautiful cap and has eyes glittering like a flame ;

Thy devotees, who drink from the cup of the nectar of thy love, attain salvation my Lord, who adorns a golden throne with silken cushions spread with flowers and whose hair plaits waive over his crown ;

The conch shells, the clarinet, the bells, the cymbals and the drum all play in thy praise and the hearing of such musical notes removes all the sins ;

In a golden plate with wicks of camphor burning, Lords Sun and Indra offer thee incense, Kubair, the Lord of wealth, spreads thy bed and Lords Shiva and Brahma offer thee *arti* ;

Yamraj, the Lord of death, fears those who attend the *arti*, bow to thee and listen to the night-long prayers, for, those who recite and sing in thy honour attain success, wealth and salvation.

Fair

18. The main fair is solemnized on Phalgun Budi Amavasya (February-March) every year. The participants in the fair come from Firozepur, Muradabad, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Deharadun, Nainital, Kanpur, Lucknow, Itava, Jabalpur, Housangabad, Delhi, Hissar, Punjab and Rajasthan. The majority of them are from the Punjab and Rajasthan. The second fair is held on Ashwin Budi Amavasya (September-October) every year. This is a local affair and people come from the nearby villages riding on camels, or in bullock-carts or even on foot. Some come in carts driven by camels. The day of Amavasya is of special significance to Bishnois. They observe fast, perform congregational *havan* or *agnihotra* and do not conduct any other business on the day.

19. The total number of shops put up in the main fair is about 200. They deal in food stuffs, grain, utensils, cloth, ghee, religious books and general merchandise. There is no liquor or drug shop, and none of the participants is expected to take liquor or any other intoxicant. In the second fair, there are only 25 shops, most of which are from Nokha and Himmatsar while

others are from Bikaner. They deal in grain, ghee, cloth, books, and general merchandise. There are barber's saloons also. About half a dozen shops are those of sweetmeat sellers and almost an equal number of tea stalls. A few shopkeepers sell hides, which are brought from the neighbouring villages in carts drawn by camels. A few cobblers are also there to mend the *pakhals* (water bags made of hides) and the locally made shoes. Three or four heaps of winnowing fans coated with cow-dung are also to be seen. Melons and local cucumber brought on camels and by carts are offered for sale at the fair. All traders do roaring business.

20. Big *havans* are held on the platform in the shrine, morning and evening extending 4 to 5 hours each time at which Ved *mantra* and *sabdas* of Jambheswarji are recited. Women keep awake all night, singing religious songs many of which extol the greatness of Jambhaji. At Samarthal also *havan* is performed and a stream of visitors can be seen going from Mukam to the sand-hill to pay homage to the saint, who used to preach there in his life time.

21. Some learned *sanyasis* deliver sermons at the fair which are heard with rapt attention by

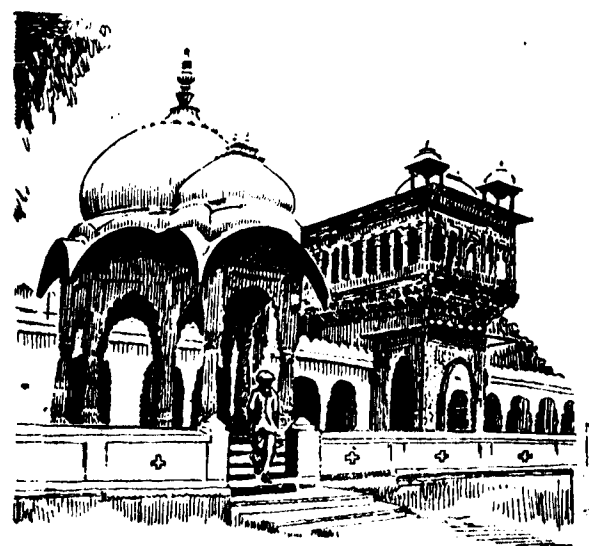
the devotees. It is customary for the people who intend to visit Samarthal to take some sand from the *Talai* (Tank) at Mukam and deposit it at the foot of the dune at Samarthal when they go to pay homage there.

22. The affairs of the shrine are managed by the Bishnoi Mahasabha. The executive committee of the Mahasabha consists of the members who hail from Rajasthan and the Punjab. The management of the fair is looked after by the Statutory Panchayat.

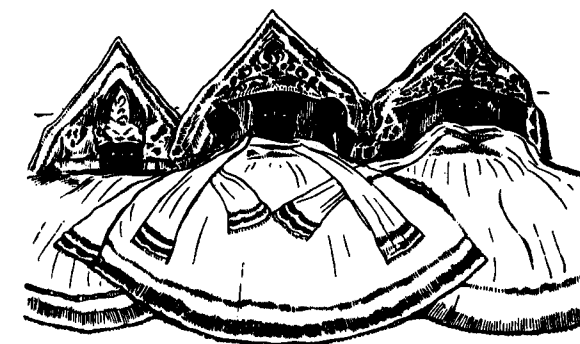
Recreations and amusements

23. Cinema films of educative value and information shorts are shown by the Public

Relations Department. Sanitary arrangements are made by the Medical and Health Department in coordination with the Statutory Panchayat. Preventive measures are adopted to check the spread of diseases. A Medical Officer, a Sanitary Inspector, a Compounder, a Nurse and some Vaccinators are deputed for the purpose. Elaborate Police arrangements are made to maintain law and order. In the main fair, a Family Planning Centre is opened to popularize the scheme in rural area and free literature and contraceptives are distributed to the villagers. An exhibition is held to make the people acquainted with the Five Year Plans and their achievements. The children of the Middle School at Himmatsar also open a reading room to provide newspapers and magazines to the visitors.



The shrine of Jambheswarji



KAPIL MUNI FAIR

KOLAYAT, the place of the fair is situated in Bikaner district of Rajasthan 5 km to the south-west of the city of Bikaner. Kolayat is remarkable for its fresh-water lake which has 52 neat ghats shaded by fine and luxurious pipal trees. It is a place sacred to the memory of saint Kapil Muni. A fair, the biggest in Bikaner district, is held at Kolayat on Kartik Purnima when nearly 60,000 people congregate.

2. Kolayat is a very old place. The exact period of its establishment is not known. The word *Kolayat* comes from the Sanskrit word *Kapilayatan*. The second letter 'P' of *Kapilayatan* in course of time, took the form of 'Va' with the result that it came to be called *Kavalayatan*. Gradually it came to be pronounced as *Kolayatan* and ultimately Kolayat.

3. Kapilayatan had great religious significance from times immemorial. It is held in even greater esteem than Pushkar (situated at a distance of 21 *Yojan*, i. e. about 269 km) and considered to be one of the greatest of all the *tirthas* or holy places of India.

Physical aspects

4. Kolayat is located on a *magra* that is a plateau with hard and rocky ground, a part of the Great Indian Thar desert. The rock formations are believed to be of Eocene Age and belong to the nummulitic limestone series. The geologists are of the view that this area was once a land surface of the Vindhyan series. It was then encroached by sea in the Eocene Age and was subjected to sedimentation of sand stones for a long time.

Kolayat Lake

5. It is formed of a long depression and its water edge measures about 3 km in length. When the lake is full, its water is 6 m deep and it has a capacity of 3 million cubic metres. The catchment area extends over 194 sq. km. Its water is sweet, fresh and healthy and is used for bathing and drinking purposes and is also brought by rail to Bikaner for use in the Electric Power House for the well-water of Bikaner is a little brackish and is not considered quite suitable for

steam-boilers. This lake has 52 ghats of which several are exclusively for women. These ghats have been so constructed that privacy is maintained. Such arrangements are rarely found elsewhere. Innumerable temples also exist on the bank of the lake and most of the ghats are named after these temples.

Means of communication

6. Kolayat being the headquarters of the tehsil and the seat of the Panchayat Samiti is easily approachable. Rails were laid from Bikaner upto Kolayat some time before the Kartik Purnima in 1921 A.D. since when Kolayat is open to traffic by rail. A great number of regular buses ply from Bikaner to Kolayat. At the time of the fair special trains and buses are run to meet the demands of the pilgrims. Camels, bullock-carts are the only mode of transport and communication for the people residing in the neighbouring villages. All facilities like a Post Office, a dispensary, etc. are permanently located at Kolayat.

Memorial

7. In memory of saint Kapil Muni, a temple was constructed at the main ghat, locally known as 'Kapil Muni Ghat.' It is said that some years ago the temple was an ordinary brick structure. It was later rebuilt in marble with a white dome over the central hall in which the statue of the saint is installed. The floor is paved with marble tiles. The temple was rebuilt with money, about Rs. 75,000, received from the various visitors whose names can be read on the temple walls.

8. The statue of Kapil Muni, installed in the temple, is of white marble. It shows the Muni standing. Its height from the platform is about half a metre. The temple is artistically engraved and shows flowers, creepers and other objects.

Mythological account

9. According to the Skandh Puran Maharshi Kardam was the son of the creator at the beginning of the Universe i. e. Brahma.

Kardam married the daughter of Maharshi Manu, Devhuti, who gave birth to Kapil Muni. The precocious child attained the highest religious merit even in his boyhood. He taught his mother the 'Sankhya-Shastra' and retired to the north-east of the Himalayas as a recluse after giving up the mundane world. While proceeding on his journey he came across an oasis in a vast desert. Maharshi Kapil was bewitched by the natural beauty of the place and he stayed there for performing *tapasya* (penance) for the redemption of the world. He however, did not sit there with his entire *atma* (soul). Only a fraction of it remained at the oasis and the remaining part proceeded on its original errand towards the north-east. As Maharshi Kapil selected the oasis as the place for his sacrificial penances, it was named after him as Kapilayatan. In course of time the site attained great sanctity so much so that the gods and other holy places like Ayodhya, Kashi, Puri, Dwarika, Avantika, became jealous of it. They, therefore, planned to hide it in the sandy desert. But Skandh Deo, the son of god Shankar, and goddess Parwati took pity on the suffering humanity and brought this sacred place to light for the benefit of all so that they may attain peace and summum bonum of life in this dark age of Kaliyug by having a dip in its holy waters. So great is the belief in the efficacy of a visit to this place that within a radius of several km of the lake no sinner is to be found. No sooner than a person, who has committed the greatest sin comes within the bounds of this area, he is instantly purged of all the sins and it becomes superfluous for him even to take a dip in the lake. Great importance is, however, attached to the bath in the Kolayat Lake. It is open for pilgrimage all the year round but special significance is attached to the dip in the month of Kartik. The last five days of the month, known as Bhishma Panchak, surpass the rest of the days. Greatest merit is, however, attained by having a dip on the Kartik Purnima. The benefit that one derives by staying at other sacred places for 10 years, could be derived in Kapilayatan just in a day.

10. In ancient times six pious girls took birth in the house of *Tapasvis*. They were named (1) Manda, (2) Mandakini, (3) Moda,



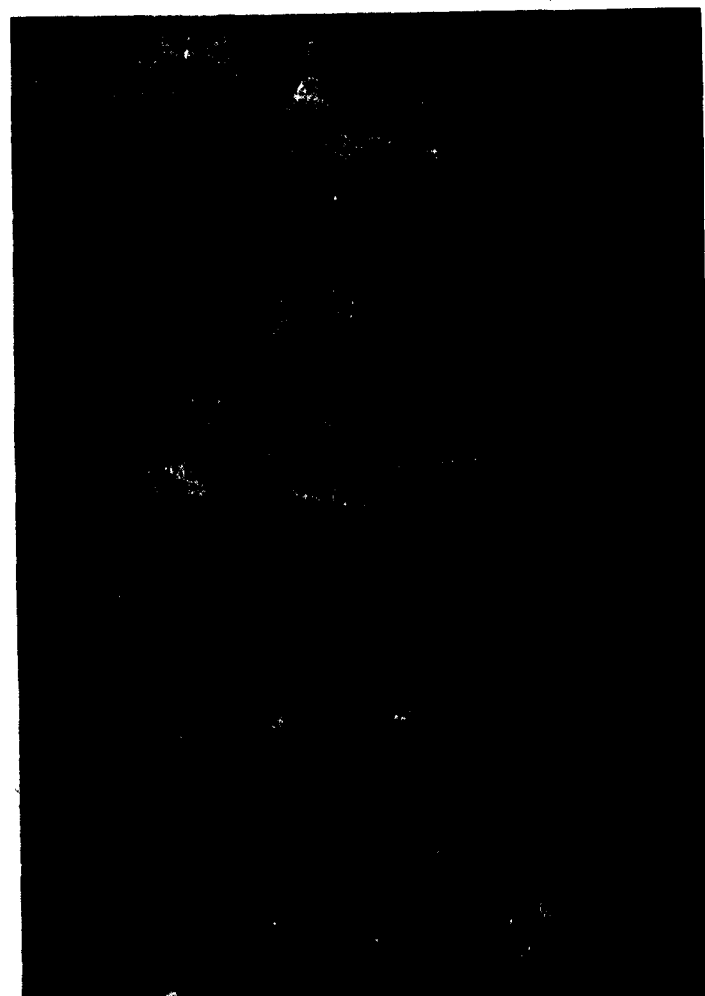
A view of the temple from Kapil Muni Ghat



Kolayat Lake



A view of the temple from outside



A close up of the temple

(4) Narbada (5) Shubhda and (6) Bida. They were renowned for their beauty, grace and chastity. From their very childhood they were addicted to an ascetic life. They used to take their bath in the Kapilayatan tank early in the morning and to perform their household duties with great care. They spent their time in singing songs in praise of God. Once while these girls were living a life of *tapasya*, many holy men from parts of the country gathered at the Triveni at Prayag for sacred dip. The fair ascetic also went there. There they saw Maharshi Narad in full bloom of his youth singing to the accompaniment of his Vina melodious songs in the praise of God Vishnu. The girls got infatuated and, it is related that they fell from their high pedestal and their vow of *Brahmacharya* (celibacy) was broken. Becoming aware of it they felt great remorse and put an end to their earthly lives. In course of time they again took birth in the house of some pious Brahmins and on attainment of youth got themselves married to six Brahmin Muni Kumars. Due to indiscretion in a previous birth of having left the remains of the fruits, which they had eaten on the bank of the Kapilayatan lake, they become instrumental in polluting its waters. They were abandoned by their husbands. They again gave up their mortal forms and attained, by having regular daily dips in the tank of Kapilayatan for a number of years, the form of glistening stars. They were given a special place among the immortal stars in the heavens. They are now known by the name of 'Krittikas', (meaning a dagger) from the shape of the constellation. Every morning during the month of Kartik they are visible.

11. Another legend is in connection with a deer which got the human life in its second birth. According to which there once lived a rich man in a big town of Gujarat. He had a son who was blind from his birth. One day while he was sitting in his father's shop some one brought there a consignment of moong for sale. The boy took a little of the moong out of the lot. While feeling them he went into ecstasis and held it to his bosom with great affection. The bystanders thought that he had gone insane. The boy, however, explained that they were wrong in

thinking so. The fact was that he had been reminded of his previous life when in the form of deer, he had partaken of them near a sacred place called Kapilayatan, and that one day, having become infatuated, he got his horns entangled in a tree, and, being unable to get released, he died there, that his dead body had been eaten away by the jackals, and the bones which remained were washed away into the lake during the rains. Due to the sanctity of the waters of the lake, he was born a human being. He further said that his horns were still there on the tree and that if they went there and dropped them in the lake his eye sight would be restored to him. They did as directed and found the bones of his horns hanging from the tree. When these were thrown into the lake, the boy had his eyesight restored.

Participation in the fair

12. Even leaving aside the legendary stories given in the Puranas regarding Kapil and Kapilayatan lake, there is no doubt that this place has exercised a great religious and cultural influence on the minds and lives of the persons living in the region. Almost all the communities living in it participate in the fair and pay homage to the saint. By nature the people abhor things that would be considered sinful. Most of them believe in the sanctity of life and would not willingly injure or hurt any creature.

Mode of worship

13. The puja in the temples is being performed by priests who belong to the Sevak Brahmin community. The post of the pujari is hereditary and he and his associates live on offerings made by the pilgrims and on the amount given to them by the Devasthan Department.

14. Normally there are no arrangements for community feasts or free kitchens. The people who participate in the fair look after themselves. The offerings made to the saint in the main temple or in other shrines are in cash as well as in kind. Mostly coconut, *batasha* (sugar drops), dry fruits, *mishri* (sugar candy) are commonly offered.

15. In the morning and in the evening, daily *arti* is performed and *bhog* is offered. On the day of Kartik Purnima when the fair is held, *Deep Malika* is performed in the evening. The residents of Kolayat light their homes by *deepaks* or clay lamps. The people who gather there also float lighted *deepaks* in the sacred lake. This is considered to be very colourful and auspicious.

Cattle fair

16. Simultaneously with the religious fair, a cattle fair is also held at Kolayat. The name of this fair is Kolayat Cattle Fair. This show is arranged by the Panchayat Samiti, Kolayat. Previously it used to be organised by the District Board. Usually the cattle, assembled in this fair, come from within a radius of 15 to 20 km. In the year 1962, 1,305 animals were brought to the fair of which 1,075 were heads of cattle, 25 buffaloes, 200 camels and 5 horses. Out of this 417 cattles, 15 camels and 2 horses were sold. The total income of the fair was Rs. 1,275.55 while the expenditure amounted to Rs. 688.

The best breeders were awarded certificates and prizes.

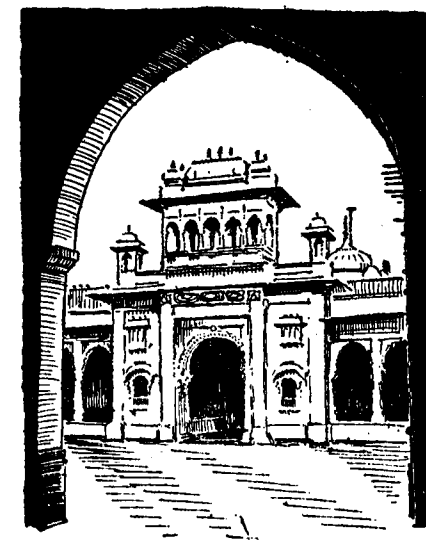
17. During the time of the fair, marketing facilities are also provided. Apart from some permanent shops at Kolayat, arrangement is also made to provide space at the fair site to other shop-keepers also. The rent is collected by the Panchayat Samiti. These shopkeepers mostly come from Bikaner. Important among these are the shops of food stuffs, cloth, general merchandise, agricultural implements. Shops of utensils are also to be seen in the fair. A majority of shops sell cooked food. Almost all the important hoteliers of Bikaner set up their shops in the fair.

18. The fair arrangement is looked after by the Panchayat Samiti. Medical facilities are provided free of charge by the State. Apart from this an exhibition is also arranged in which Public Relations Department, Medical Department, Animal Husbandry Department, etc. participate. Cinema films of educative value are shown free of charge by the Public Relations Department.

The lake of Kolayat and its mystic tradition has its magical effect on the minds of the people and they sing songs in its praise:

महारा इमरत सागर, भरदे गागर, प्यास लयी है मौय
कपिल मुनी की कृपा ज होई, आन खुदायो सोय, पानी जि थारो इमरत निकलियो दुश्मन दीयो रोय ।
दूर दूर से गड्ढां आवे, प्यासी न जावे कोय, इमरत सागर की नदिया जोकर जन्य विरावत लोय ।
आछा काम किया बड भागियो, बीज घरम का बोय, कपिल मुनि थारा गुण गावें, निर्भय जाके सोय ।

"Our sea of nectar, fill my pitcher and quench my thirst. When the gracious saint, Kapil Muni, was pleased, he came here and got you dug. Thine water turned out to be as sweet as nectar. The enemies shed tears. Cows come from great distances and none of them returns thirsty. They have a look at the streams that feed thee and get rid of the sins and hardships of life. Good work has been done by praiseworthy, lucky people. Seeds of religion have been sown. Kapil Muni extols your importance without the least fear."



KARNI MATA FAIR

KARNIMATA fair is held twice a year at Deshnok, a town in tehsil Nokha of Bikaner district. The first fair is held in Navratra from Chaitra Shukla Ekam to Chaitra Shukla Dashmi (March-April). The largest congregation is on Saptami and Ashtami. Nearly 30,000 devotees assemble at the fair to pay homage to the Mata. The second and smaller fair is held also in Navratra from Ashvin Shukla Ekam to Ashvin Shukla Dashmi (September-October) in which about 5,000 people participate.

Origin of the place

2. As far as the origin of the place Deshnok is concerned, it is said that it was founded in Vikram Samvat 1476 (1419 A. D.) on Baisakh Shukla Dauj, by Karni Mata herself. Karni Mata was quite popular even then and venerated in the nearby villages. The people thought it better to migrate to this place from their locations. Rao Rimal, the then ruler of Bikaner, requested Karni

Mata to name the village as "Desh-ot" (or-shelter) but she did not accede to his request as she regarded it as a place of prestige rather than a place of shelter and named it as "Deshnak", or "Desh Nok"; and it is known as such all over Rajasthan.

Means of communication

3. Deshnok is connected by train and bus with Bikaner, Nagaur, Jodhpur and Jaipur. 10 to 15 buses ply daily on these routes and they all halt at Deshnok. The metalled road is well maintained and most of it is tarred. During the fair in Chaitra, special trains and buses are arranged for. These means of transport make the place approachable throughout the year.

People's participation

4. Both Hindus and Muslims participate in the fair as they have great regard for Karni Mata who helped them at all times.

History of the fair

5. The history of the fair is connected with the life of Karni Mata. According to Kishore Singh Varaspatya's book 'Karni Charitra' Karni Mata was born on Ashvin Shukla Saptami in Vikram Samvat 1444 (1387 A. D.) in village Suyap. Her father was Meha and she was born in the twentyfirst month of pregnancy. She was the sixth female issue and on her birth, there was more of disappointment in the family than rejoicing and merry making. Her aunt, who attended the delivery, intended to cause her physical injury, but the lady's hand was dislocated by unknown power. When she narrated the event to the members of the family, they were wonderstruck. She named her as Karni Bai as she was a strange girl. At the age of 5, Karni Bai cured the dislocation of her aunt. She cured her father of snakebite and blessed him saying that he would get a son. After seven daughters, he got a son. On Ashadh Shukla Navmi, Vikram Samvat 1473 (1416 A. D.), Karni Bai was married to Deepaji; but she informed her husband that she will not be able to serve him, as she had dedicated her life to the removal of sufferings of the poor, helping the needy and service of some righteous cause. Her words always came true. In Vikram Samvat 1475 (1418 A. D.) she left her husband's house and established herself near a *johad* (pond), where her cows had plenty of water to drink and grass to eat. In Vikram Samvat 1476 (1419 A. D.), she laid the foundation stone of Deshnok 3 km away. Karni Mata possessed supernatural powers and used to help people in all walks of life. People from all over Rajasthan pay visit to her and seek her advice and receive her blessing. She used to hear tales of their miseries patiently and showed them ways with which to save themselves. In Vikram Samvat 1594 (1537 A. D.), it is reported, when she was 151 years of age, she decided not to live any longer. While on way to Kharoda in Sind to meet her sister, she reached Jaisalmer, where she met Bana, a blind carpenter, whom she asked to prepare her statue. She asked him to keep the statue, when it was completed, below his head while sleeping. Thereafter he would find himself with the statue in Deshnok the next morning. As soon as the statue was installed in

the temple, he would regain his sight. Bana did as he was asked to do. He prepared the statue, kept it under his head at night and slept. He found himself next morning in Deshnok along with the statue and was cured of his blindness. Karni Mata died on Chaitra Shukla Navmi, Vikram Samvat 1595 (1538 A. D.) and her statue was installed in the temple on Chaitra Shukla Chaudas, 1595. The fair is held to commemorate her memory and she is worshipped as a goddess since Vikram Samvat 1596 (1539 A.D.).

Principal followers

6. The principal followers of the deity are Charans, who are also the priests and belong to the community to which Karni Mata belonged, and Rajputs who worship her as their family deity. The Jats, the Bishnois, the Brahmins and the Mahajans also worship her. Local Muslims also respect her, but they have never been seen in the temple at the time of worship. The Rajputs celebrate *jadula* (the first hair-cut of a child) ceremony of their children at Deshnok and place the child at the feet of the deity to obtain her blessings. She was and is the patron goddess of the rulers of Bikaner. It is said whenever an enemy waged war against Bikaner, the ruler first went to Deshnok to receive the blessings of Karni Mata and then set out for the battle field; and whenever he passed through Deshnok, his special train made a halt there enabling him to pay his respect to the Mata.

Offerings and its disposal

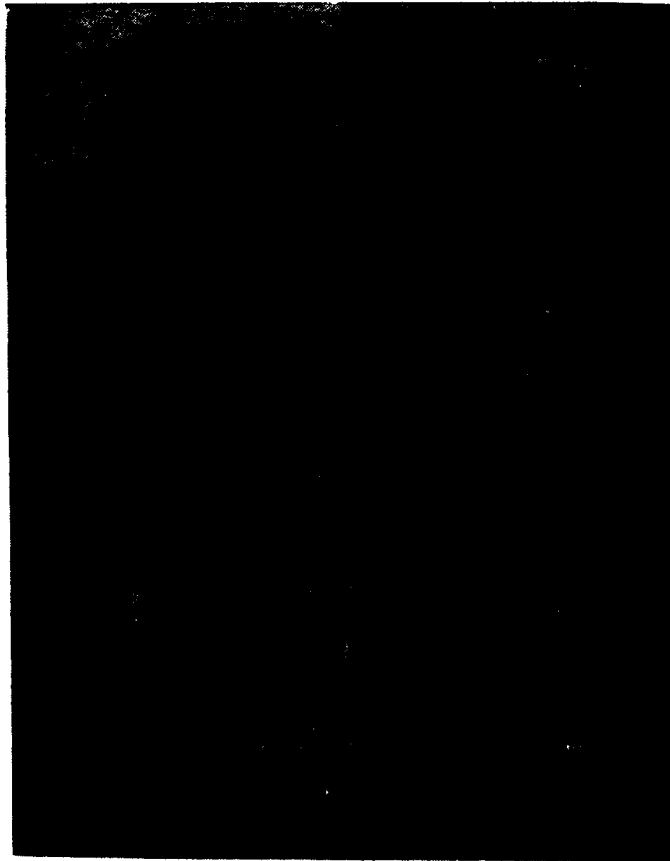
7. People offer sweets, coconuts and cash to Karni Mata. Some devotees offer from Rs. 21 to Rs. 501 for preparing *bhog* (special food) for Karni Mata. The priest retains one-sixteenth of the offerings for himself and returns the rest to the devotees who distribute a part of it to those present. There are two kinds of offerings. One is called *Dwar Bhent* and the other *Kalash Bhent*. 50 percent of the *Dwar Bhent* is retained by the priest and the rest is distributed among the workers of the temple, who are all Charans by caste. The *Kalash Bhent* is deposited to swell the funds of the temple. The cash-book and the ledger are



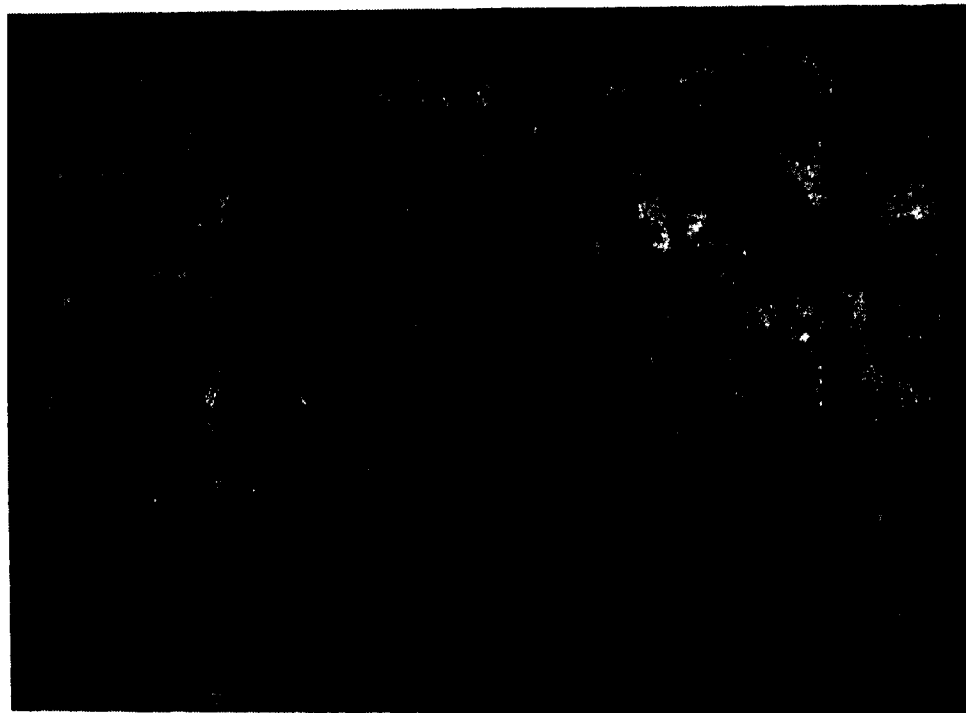
The main gate to the shrine



The idol of Karni Mata



The silver gate of the temple



A marble panel

duly maintained. The amount is spent for the maintenance of the temple. The funds are controlled by the Managing Committee of the temple.

The memorial

8. The temple of Karni Mata is known as *Madh* also. There is one *Gumbara* which was constructed with big stone slabs and they were put on one another without sand or lime. The gaps between stones were filled in by the branches of Jal tree. This place *Gumbara* is locally called *Kaba* and is mostly occupied by rats. They number about 3,000 and did not die even in the plague of 1917. These rats do not get scared away by the presence of human beings; they climb over their heads and eat *ladoos*. The latter happening is regarded as very auspicious for the devotees concerned. These rats are fed partly by the devotees and partly from the temple funds. While entering the temple one has to guide his feet very cautiously for if any rat is killed, the devotee has to offer to the deity a rat made of gold or silver.

9. The 75 cm image of Karni Mata is sculptured out of yellow marble found in Jaisalmer. The image is oval-faced, wearing a *mukut* (tiara) on the head and earrings. *Trishul* (trident) is in her left hand and heads of a he-buffaloe and a man in the right. She is dressed in *odhni* and *ghaghra* with garlands and necklaces round her neck and bangles on her wrists. It is only on four important occasions that she is made up with clothes received from the royal house of Bikaner. On ordinary days, one can see the stone image as it is. The deity is shown riding a tiger. A golden *chhatra* (umbrella) can be seen over the figure. There are other images installed on either side of the deity. On the left there are six images representing the six sisters of Karni Mata, while on the right there are seven of the sisters of Avad Mata, the family deity of Karni Mata.

10. The first temple, a structure of unbaked bricks, was built by Rao Jait Singh, a former ruler of Bikaner. Later, sometime in the 19th century, Maharaja Shri Surat Singh rebuilt it in

stone. He also provided a dome to it. The main entrance to the temple as well as the temple were rebuilt once more in marble by Maharaja Ganga Singh.

The priest

11. As has been stated above, the priest belongs to the Charan community. The gates of the temple are thrown open at 4 a. m. With the beat of the drums, the visitors assemble in the courtyard of the temple. The priest then performs *Mangla-ki-Arti*. At 9 a. m. he offers *bhog* (food) to the deity. At 2.00 p. m. the vermilion coat of the previous day is washed away and a fresh one is applied. This is known as *Bag Chadana*. At sunset, he again performs *Sandhya-ki-Arti*; and at 8.00 p. m. *bhog* is offered to the deity. This is the daily programme for worship. On every Chaturdashi of Shukla Paksha in the month of Chaitra, Bhadrapada, Ashvin and Magh special worships are offered. Rs. 200 are spent in making the arrangements of these worships. The following are the items of expenditure :

7 he-goats to be sacrificed to Karni Mata,
1 he-buffaloe to be offered to Avad Mata,
Flags,
Dress (*Poshak*),
Sweets of Rs. 25 and
Rs. 18 in cash offering.

In Baisakh, Kartik and Margsheersh, goat sacrifice is not permitted and only sweets are offered to the deity.

Places from where people assemble

12. Most of the people who gather at the shrine come from Bikaner, Ganganagar and Churu districts; but it has been observed that the Rajputs and the Charans who participate in the fair come from all over Rajasthan.

Articles of sale

13. In addition to the local shopkeepers, who put up their stalls in the fair, shopkeepers and dealers come from Bikaner, Nokha and Sujargarh. Most of them sell sweets, *batasha* and coconuts. There are also a number of tea-

stalls, betel shops, restaurants and hotels. Bangle-sellers and toy-dealers do brisk business. Some shops of food stuffs, grain, cloth and utensils are also opened up. One can also see a shop of religious books and pamphlets, and pictures of goddesses. People generally purchase photographs of Karni Mata. There is no liquor shop in the fair as it is not offered to Karni Mata in the temple.

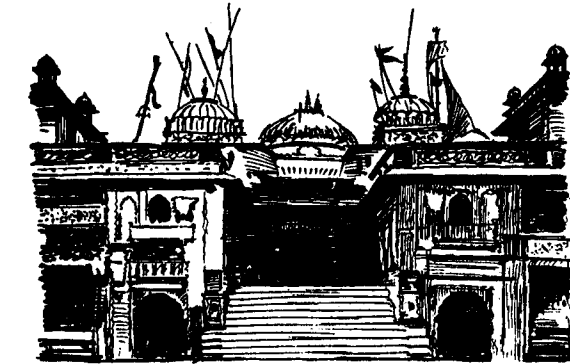
Recreation and amusement

14. The Panchayat Samiti Nokha puts up an exhibition of development plans, charts and maps. It also arranges talks on social education. One can also hear poems on the life of Karni

Mata. At night children see the films shown by the State Publicity Department.

Management

15. A First Class Magistrate is deputed as the fair officer. He is responsible for maintaining law and order. He is assisted by a Sub-inspector of Police and some Constables. The light, water and sanitary arrangements are taken care of by the Statutory Panchayat. The temple affairs are supervised by the Managing Committee of the temple which is composed of the members of the Charan community. The site for shops is allotted by the Statutory Panchayat. The fair is religious and the devotees mostly remain busy in the temple.



KAILA DEVI FAIR

KAILADEVI fair is one of the principal religious fairs of Rajasthan held from Chaitra Krishna 12 to Chaitra Shukla 12. The fair is held at Kaila about 24 kilometres to the south west of Karauli, which is a sub-divisional head-quarter of district Sawai Madhopur. Kaila is identical with goddess Bhawani, whose idol is said to have been installed in Vikram Samvat 1171 (1114 A. D.) in a temple standing atop a rock in picturesque surroundings.

2. The site is linked by road with Karauli, Hindaun and Mahavirji, and is approachable in all seasons. There is regular traffic all the year round on this road, which is maintained in good condition. Hindaun, the nearest Railway Station is at a distance of about 48 km. There is a regular bus service from Hindaun to Karauli and from Karauli to Kaila. This place is connected with Gangapur also by a road running via Shri Mahavirji which is another Railway Station on the broad gauge line of the Western Railway near kaila.

3. During the fair, which attracts nearabout two lakh pilgrims, special arrangements are made

by State Transport for the safe conduct of passengers to and from the site of the fair. About four hundred buses are used under special permits and special supervisory staff is posted to control their movement. In addition to the government vehicles, buses from and to Agra, Gwalior, Bharatpur and Gangapur run every hour. People from nearby villages come on camels and horses, and in bullock-carts.

4. From the point of view of the Hindus, Chaitra is an important month as it marks the beginning of the Hindu year which commences when the sun crosses the vernal equinox and moves towards North. During this month people propitiate Durga, the goddess of prowess and valour, for health, vitality and prosperity. One striking feature is that thousands of villagers and pilgrims come on foot covering distances of fifteen to twenty km and, what is more striking is the sight of those who measure a distance of 15 to 20 km with the length of their body, lying prostrate. This mode of travelling is locally known as *Kanak-Dandoti*. After stretching themselves on the ground full length, they draw a line on the path with their fingers, rise up, move a few paces

forward, stand on the line drawn and, after bowing, lay themselves down again to measure the road. The process is repeated till the person reaches the temple. The persons are followed by their wives or other relatives, who, at every step, touch their feet and apply the dust of their heels to their forehead. Thus 'Kanak-Dandoti' devotees march day in and day out for three, four or five days. Some of them do take rest and accept milk, but the staunchest among them continue the march without rest or sleep and taking nothing but water.

5. Although there are no restrictions on people of other religions participating in the fair and going into the temple for *darshan*, only Hindus are seen among the devotees.

6. The village Kaila is just 2 kilometres towards north-west from Trikut Parwat (literally triangular hill) where the temple stands. No authentic document or record is available on the history of the village or of the beginning of the fair. From stories narrated by the temple priests and others of the area, it is gathered that a sadhu, Kedargiri by name, used to reside in a small hamlet situated on the banks of river Kali-sil which flows towards the south of Trikut Parwat. Sadhu Kedargiri was a great devotee of Bhawani. He heard stories about the miraculous powers of goddess Shakti or Hinglaj in a town in Bihar. He repaired to that place for meditation and spent twelve years in worship there. One night he had a vision and he saw the goddess, Hinglaj Mata, in person, blessing him. She bade him go back to his village where she assured him she would come in one of her phases (*kala*). Kedargiri returned to his hamlet near Trikut Parwat. Time rolled by and one night a 'Jogi' knocked at his door. He carried an image of Durga on a bullock, which he had brought from somewhere near Delhi. The place was invaded by Muslims from the north-west and they were pulling down temples and demolishing the idols. The Jogi needed a place of safety for the goddess and, for fear of the iconoclasts, he was seeking protection in the capital of the Khinchi rulers, who were then the most powerful potentates holding sway over the region from Delhi to Gwalior. The Jogi disclosed

his fears to the sadhu, requesting him at the same time for a night halt which the latter granted him. That night Kedargiri had another vision when he had *darshan* of Mahalaxmi. He recalled the promise of the goddess Hinglaj Mata. Next morning when the Jogi was preparing to leave, the sadhu advised him to leave the image with him, but the former refused and started on his journey. When he came to Trikut Parwat, which was about 2 kilometres from the hamlet, his bullock refused to move further. All attempts to drive the animal further having failed, the Jogi made a halt there and fell asleep. In dream the goddess communicated to him her desire to stay where she was. When he awoke he went back to sadhu Kedargiri with a request to accept the image and to instal it at the place where the bullock lay down. The sadhu named the goddess as Kaila Mata for she appeared before him with one phase (*kala*). As legend goes the village where the sadhu Kedargiri used to reside came to be known as Kaila.

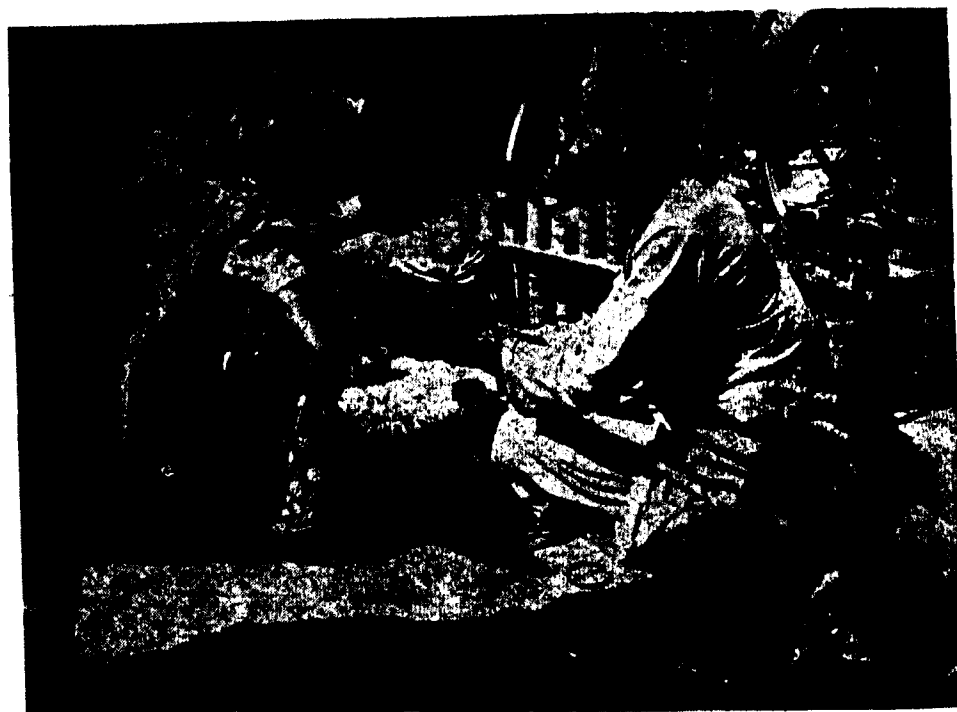
7. In the temple of Kaila Mata one may see two images standing side by side. On the right is the image of Kaila Devi commonly known as Mahalaxmi (goddess of wealth) and on left that of Chamunda. Chamunda is stated to have been brought from Bansi-Kheda, which is about five km south of Trikut. She was the family deity of the Khinchi rulers who used to pay two visits in a year in the months of Chaitra and Kwar to worship Chamunda. Bansi Kheda was ravaged by Muslim invaders from Delhi in the early fifteenth century; but the Khinchis managed to remove their guardian deity to Trikut Parwat, where the image was installed by the side of Mahalaxmi; and a temple, dedicated to both of them, was built in the year 1464 A. D. It is further stated that the original temple was a kutchha one. Two inscriptions on two stone slabs bear testimony to this fact. One of the inscriptions indicates that in Vikram Samvat 1202, Chamunda was installed in Bansi-Kheda and the other, belonging to Samvat 1464, says that the Chamunda was brought to Trikut to be installed there with her sister Mahalaxmi. After the fall of the Khinchis the area was wrested by the Yadava princes, who established themselves in



The temple of Kaila Devi



A view of the Congregation



A bangle seller

Karauli. These princes came to know about the miraculous powers of Mahalaxmi of Kaila village and that she was venerated by the people as the guardian deity of that area. In order to win over the confidence of the masses the princes of Karauli adopted Kaila Mata as their family deity also ; and Maharaja Gopal Singh constructed a big temple with a dome surmounted with a golden pinnacle. It was during the period of Maharaja Bhanwarpal of Karauli that a number of other buildings were constructed on the spot and the temple assumed unprecedented importance.

8. Although Gosains, who are in the direct disciple-line of Kedargiri are the hereditary priests and claim the temple as their own, its management vests in the ruling chief of Karauli who is known as the chief trustee. Whatever offerings are received during the fairs, are claimed by the prince who makes all arrangements for the fairs. It is learnt that nearly a lakh of rupees are collected by the management every year. This amount is spent on arrangements of the temple and the fairs, for providing facilities to the pilgrims and general upkeep of the shrine and the site. For the rest of the period the temple remains in charge of the Gosains and the offerings in cash or kind go to them. The temple is so well-known that on an average 40 to 50 pilgrims from different parts of the country visit the place every day ; and their number goes upto hundred on the 8th of every Hindu month as the day is considered very propitious for the worship of Durga. The two Gosains, who hold charge of the temple in turn for one year, make an annual income of Rs. 3000 to 4000.

9. The place is very attractive. The small temple, situated in a secluded spot surrounded by hills looks quite magnificent. The river Kalisil flowing by its side lends charm to the beautiful surroundings. The road, flanked on both sides with *Dharamshalas*, about twenty in number, goes right upto the temple courtyard which is spacious enough to accommodate more than five thousand persons. Seven steps above the courtyard is a marble platform with small rooms on either side painted with all richness. Further on is the

sanctuary, in front of which is the porch with marble pillars. The main entrance has been divided by iron railings for separate entries to men and women at the time of the fair. The inside of the sanctum does not have any work of marble. Inside it stand two stone slabs bearing images of Mahalaxmi (Kaila) and Chamunda, installed side by side. Mahalaxmi is seen with jewelled tiara in an equestrian position looking askance with her face turned a little to the left. She is so attired that, except for her face, no part of the body is visible. It is reported that no one except the Gosain has ever seen the full image. It is also stated that the image of Mahalaxmi is not sculptured out of stone but has been moulded out of a mixture of several metals. At the time of the fair when people fail to get access to the portico for making offerings, they usually throw whatever they bring, including coconuts, from a distance. These coconuts sometimes cause injury to the guards on duty. There are tales told about persons who happened to see the undecorated figure of Mahalaxmi in the process of repairs and that a *darshan* in this form brought misfortune to them. The goddess is dreaded much that no one ever dares to have her *darshan* unattired. It is reliably learnt that there is an inscription just below the tiger which she is riding. It is neither shown to any one nor has it been deciphered so far. This inscription might throw some light on the history of the temple and the installation of the idol of Mahalaxmi at this site. It has nevertheless been ascertained that Mahalaxmi, bearing different weapons in her eight hands, is shown riding a tiger. She is in wrath as she is shown hurling a lance at Mahishasur (buffaloe-demon). This is why, she is portrayed with her face turned to the left. People, however, describe this posture in a legendary way. They say that one Goli-Bhagat, a resident of Agra and a great devotee of Kaila, was disallowed the privilege of her 'darshan' by an ex-prince of Karauli. After he had left the place, the image was noticed in an angry mood and turned its face when the prince came for 'darshan'. Goli-Bhagat owned a temple at Agra and used to come with a large following of pilgrims at the time of the fair. He used to be received with full State

and escorted all the way by a big contingent of the State forces. On reaching the temple he used to make costly offerings in cash and kind, collected in the name of Kaila Devi at his Agra shrine. The practice is still followed and the successors of Goli Bhagat visit the place at the time of the fair with all their paraphernalia.

10. There is another story related about the visit of Goli Bhagat. Formerly a large number of people used to come from Uttar Pradesh and northern areas via Bayana and Hindaun. The Maharajas of Bharatpur got another temple constructed about six km from Bayana in a village named Kaila, a railway station near Bayana. People coming from far off places used to be so misled that they used to turn back after paying a visit to Kaila in Bharatpur State rather than reaching the real Kaila at Karauli. This happened mostly in times when no transport facilities existed. Goli Bhagat, a staunch devotee of Kaila, installed a portrait of Mahalaxmi at Agra and made such arrangements that people came to make vows at Agra to Kaila Devi. This saved the devotees some trouble. Thus Goli Bhagat, in a way, worked as an intermediary between Kaila Mata and her devotees.

11. The fair opens on Chaitra Budi 12 and lasts for a fortnight. A township with surging crowds eager for *darshan* springs up as if from nowhere. Hundreds of shopkeepers rush to this place with all varieties of goods and occupy every yard of land. Sweets, wooden toys, terracota goods and ornaments are sold in large quantities. Cheap articles of general merchandise, such as combs, mirrors, bangles are mostly purchased by rural women. From fifth to sixth of the dark half of Chaitra are the peak days when the police and the Boy Scouts make special arrangements to control traffic to the temple. On these days the throng of devotees becomes so large that one has to wait for several hours before one has *darshan*. It becomes impossible to regulate the entry and exit of pilgrims when *arti* (vespers) is offered in the temple. Most of the pilgrims are able only to take a glance at the temple portico and hurl the articles of offerings in the direction of the deity from a distance. Apart from cash,

articles like coconut, *kajal* (soot), *tikki* (vermilion) sweets, bangles are usually offered. One notices these articles and hundreds of coins spread over the floor trampled by the crowd. But no part of the offerings is ever appropriated or touched by any visitor or devotee. All articles are picked up by the guards on duty and passed on to the temple authorities. The Maharaja of Karauli, who is the chief trustee of the temple, personally supervises the arrangements. Although there is a Police Station at Kaila, the Government of Rajasthan deputes a special contingent of constables and a First Class Magistrate for detection of crime and summary disposal of cases at the time of the fair. As usually happens, this fair too is visited by notorious pick-pockets and gangs of traffickers in women and children. All *dharamshalas* are fully utilized still thousands of people have to pass several nights sleeping on bare ground during the peak period. In order to regulate and control the rush of pilgrims the management has fixed days for visits of various communities like the Minas, the Rager, the Gujars and the Ahirs who come in large numbers. The area around Kaila is thickly inhabited by the Minas and the Chamars and about a lakh of them alone usually visit the place every year. It is interesting to see mirthful multitudes of Minas, men and women, in their colourful dresses wending their way dancing, jumping and singing. Often they cross the limit of decency and indulge in obscenity. They contend that the goddess is all omnipotent and omniscient and, hence there is no harm in their behaving like nature's children in her presence. She is, they say, all-forgiving and enjoys their mirthful and boisterous behaviour. At night people gather in the spacious courtyard where they give a display of dances and games of skill. All night they dance, all the while composing and singing songs in praise of Durga i.e. Kaila and Hanuman.

12. 'Languriya' is the local name for Hanuman whose image stands in a small temple in front of the shrine of Kaila Devi. To the masses, Hanuman has been an ideal devotee of Shri Ram and they invoke his blessings for devotion and selfless service which, they believe, lead to salvation. There is another small temple in the courtyard

dedicated to Bhairon, who is worshipped as the guardian of the land. Bhairon is specially propitiated for warding off the evil influence of spirits. There is a Bhopa attached to the shrine of Bhairon who acts as an intermediary, and claims to cure persons suffering from the influence of evil spirits. He provides talismans to the people.

13. There is an open courtyard to the south of the temple where sacrifices of goats and buffaloes are made to the deity. Sacrifice is banned inside the temple, as human and animal sacrifice is not acceptable to Mahalaxmi whom sweets, coconuts etc. only are offered. Animal sacrifices are offered only to Chamunda, and non-vegetarian communities such as the Rajputs, the Minas and the Chamars usually decapitate animals. Only the members of the royal families and the Rajputs sacrifice animals in the courtyard and offer their blood to Chamunda. The rest of the people slay animals far outside the premises. At the back of the temple one can notice a number of Swastika marks made with cow-dung. People worship these marks. Thus, they believe, their wishes are fulfilled. They also promise a visit to the temple to offer animals or special *pufa* in

the event of their success. There are numerous stories regarding the miraculous powers of the goddess and they are sung in songs by the devotees. One very popular tale is told about the son of a millionaire of Calcutta who refused his barren wife a visit to Kaila for begetting a son. Being advised by some woman, his wife took a vow and she begot a son. Still her husband did not permit her to go to Kaila, and soon after he suffered from leprosy. When his condition became critical he was brought to the temple and was cured. He built a decent *dharamshala* to make his gratitude to the deity.

14. There is no arrangement for free kitchen etc. but some persons feed the Brahmins who minister to their religious needs; and some others distribute alms to the beggars. The management makes satisfactory arrangements for water and light. Water from Kali-sil river is pumped up and supplied through pipes. The Power House of Karauli meets the demand of light. There are several places of interest of which the water reservoir at Kali-sil, the rest house and the *dharamshala* constructed by His Highness of Karauli are worth mentioning.



SHRI MAHAVIRJI FAIR

SHRI MAHAVIRJI fair is held in village Chandangaon which is situated on the bank of the river Gambhir in tehsil Hindaun of Sawai Madhopur district. The fair is held to commemorate the memory of Shri Mahavir Swami (6th century B. C.) the 24th Tirthamkar of the Jains. Chandangaon is considered to be one of the holiest places of the Jains. It attracts hundreds of pilgrims every month and about a lakh at the time of the fair which is organised from Chaitra Shukla Navami to Baisakh Krishna Ekam every year.

Means of communication

2. Chandangaon is at a distance of 6.5 km from Shri Mahavirji, a railway station which lies on the Delhi-Bombay broad gauge line of the Western Railway. Tongas and buses are available at the station to carry passengers to the temple. The village is 18 km from Hindaun, 29 km from Karauli and 176 km from Jaipur. The road is metalled all along the way. Buses ply regularly between Hindaun and Shri Mahavirji throughout the year; and during the fair special buses and tongas ply throughout the day and

night to carry the passengers. During the rainy season, the Gambhir is in spate and, as it has to be crossed twice to reach the village, the road is closed. Shri Mahavirji Trust has promised to give rupees one lakh towards the construction of the bridge to the Government of Rajasthan.

Community participation

3. All Hindu communities besides the Jains, the Minas, the Gujars and the Chamars participate in the fair. Muslims come to the fair as pedlars, hawkers and shopkeepers.

Origin of the place

4. According to Jain scriptures any place associated with a miracle is named as 'Atishya Kshetra', a supreme sacred place. The legendary account describes the miracle which occurred on the spot where today the temple stands in all its majesty in the stately enclosure known as 'Katala' at Chandangaon. Kripa Das, a Chamar or cobbler, used to graze his cattle on the mound known now as 'Devata-ka-Tila'. One of his cows did not give milk for some days. In order to ascertain the cause, he followed the cow and, to

his great surprise, he noticed that the cow was shedding milk from her udders at a certain spot on the mound. This convinced him that a deity must be lying under it. He started excavating the place and saw a white line going deeper and deeper and at last he found the image which he took out. It was of dark brown colour. The news spread all round and people from surrounding villages began to pour in to see the image. Kripa Das installed the image in an improvised hut and started lighting *deepak* before the image. The devotees started visiting the place in greater number to pay homage and to receive blessings for the fulfilment of their vows. But all this while no one could recognise the image. When Amar Chand Bilala, Jain of Baswa, heard about this miracle, he visited the village and recognised the image to be of Mahavirji. He contributed huge amounts of money for the construction of the temple. It is not known when this temple was constructed. It is, however, roughly estimated that it might have been built in the middle of the 18th century. The Jains of Jaipur wanted to remove the image for installing it in a temple there. With great difficulty it was placed in a chariot but, in spite of all their efforts, the chariot did not move. It was finally decided to install the image at its place in the temple. The Maharaja of Jaipur gave village Jaisinghpura (also called Naurangabad or Alamgirpur) as a Muafi grant (rent free land) in Vikram Samvat 1839 (1782 A. D.) for the maintenance of the temple. The image was installed in the new temple in the month of Chaitra in the closing years of the 18th century; and since then a fair is held every year and the place has gained considerable importance.

The memorial

5. The present temple has been constructed at the site of the old temple which was made of red stone. It is still visible. The ground floor of the temple has been reconstructed and the first floor has been dressed in white marble. Several domes have been raised on the building to add to its beauty and grandeur. On the first floor is a big hall which has been beautifully decorated. In the centre of the hall there is a big *vedi* on which the statues of Mahavir Swami and other

Tirthamkars have been installed. Just at the back of this *vedi* there is another room in which the idol of Mahavir Swami, discovered at Devata-ka-Tila, has been installed. Gates covered with silver sheets have been provided to these rooms. The entrance of the main hall is guarded by Bhaironji, whose image has been installed in a niche on the door. Bhaironji is called 'Kshetrapal'. On the ground floor, in the big hall, the office of the Managing Committee is situated. In front of the temple there is a big platform, on which 16 m high Man Stambh, (Tower of Glory) has been constructed, at the top of which is a beautiful dome. Mahavir Swami's statues have been installed in all the four wings of this dome. The cost of the construction of the tower is reported to have been Rs. 50,000. The tower has been electrically illuminated. Around the temple but within the enclosure of the Katala, there are double-storeyed buildings to provide residential accommodation to the pilgrims. There is sufficient space in the temple premises for religious discourses. The temple is bounded on all sides with a wall and a wide entrance with a huge gate has been provided to it. Outside the temple premises there are ten *dharamshalas*, for the use of the pilgrims. These were constructed by the philanthropists as rent-free accommodation for the pilgrims. Light and water are also supplied free.

Life and teachings of Mahavir Swami

6. Shri Mahavir Swami is the 24th Tirthamkar of the Jains. The word 'Tirthamkar' means a ford-maker. Literally *tir* means bank, and *tham* refers to ford or bridge, and *kar* to maker. Hence Tirthamkar signifies a person who provides easy means for crossing the stream of life. He was born on Chaitra Shukla Triodashi in the year 598 B. C. in village Kundalgram in Bihar Province. Kundalgram was a part of Vaishali. He came from a high family of Kshatriyas. His father was Siddharth and mother Trishula. His parents were the followers of Shri Parashavanathji, the 23rd Tirthamkar. During his childhood he was named as Vardhaman. From the very beginning he was brave and courageous.

It was due to his heroic deeds that he was called 'Mahavir'. Mahavir Swami was born at a time when social disorder, discontent, atrocities and tyranny were prevalent everywhere. The case of Chandan Bala is a live example. She along with her mother was taken prisoner after her father Dadhivahana, king of Champa, was killed in battle. The mother escaped indignities at the hand of the conqueror Satanika by committing suicide. Chandan Bala was publicly auctioned. Vardhman Mahavir was greatly moved by such incidents and the existing social atmosphere. He decided to renounce the world. In the beginning his goal was to achieve self-emancipation. He became a monk at the age of 30. During his early period he had to face difficulties, tortures, abuses and beatings, but he suffered them patiently and exercised self-restraint. After 12 years of meditation he attained the position of a Tirthamkar.

7. From the very beginning Mahavir Swami did not enunciate new principles of religion or law, but only propagated the teachings laid down by the preceding twentythree Tirthamkars. Mahavir Swami was called 'Nigantha Nataputta' by the Buddhists. It was said that he knew and saw all things, claimed perfect knowledge, and taught annihilation by austerities of the old *karmas* (deeds).

8. Vardhman Mahavir in addition to the 4 vows of Parashavanathji added his fifth of *Brahmacharya*. The five vows are as follows :

- (1) Non-violence (*Ahimsa*)
- (2) Truth (*Satya*)
- (3) Non-stealing (*Asteya*)
- (4) Non-attachment of property (*Aparigraha*)
- (5) Celibacy (*Brahmacharya*)

Brahmacharya according to Vardhaman, is the victory over passions and inner inertia, complete abstinence from sexual cohabitation. In order to gain victory over attachment and control over matter, he enunciated this principle. Mahavir Swami used to hold religious discourses four times a day and preach to the masses, the five tenets by which the state of perfection or

moksha can be attained. This can be achieved in this life, without shedding the body. He toured for 30 years propagating his tenets to the masses. He formed a *sangh* and had eleven disciples called *Gandhar*. At the age of 72, on Kartik Krishna Amavasya he attained *moksha* at Pavapuri in Bihar in 528 (or 478 B. C. according to some scholars). The substance of his teachings is that a person can achieve perfection by leading a life of austerity and practicing *ahimsa*. If he can free himself from the burden of *karma*, which weighs him down, he can become a *Kevlin* i. e. one who shines with perfect grace, soaring above the mundane world.

Principal followers and other communities' participation

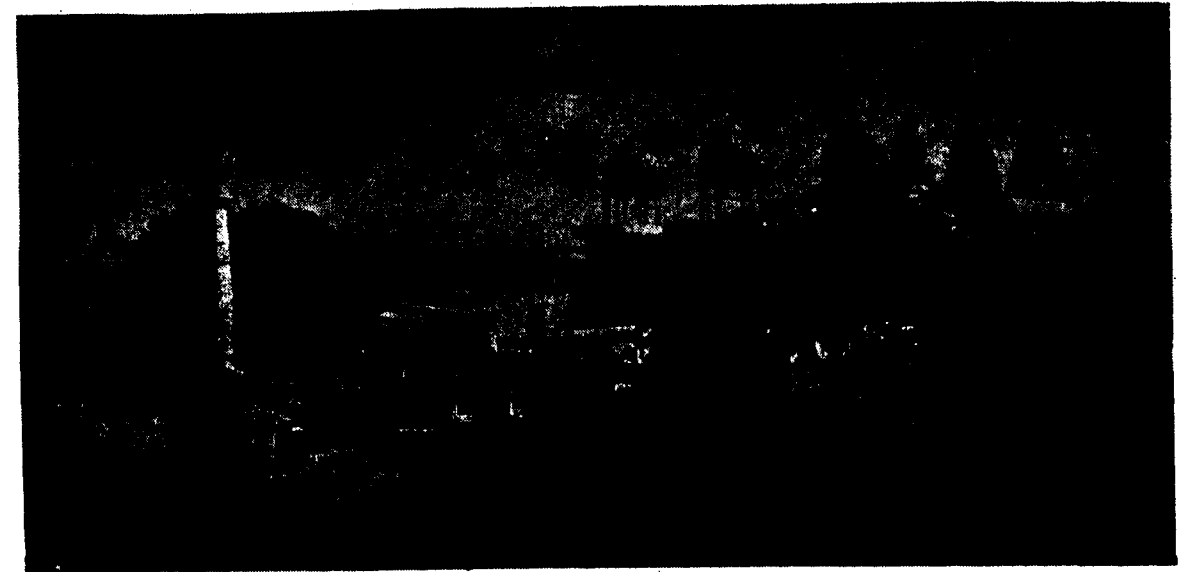
9. Digambar Jains are the principal followers of Mahavir Swami. They come from far and wide to pay homage to the saint. Other communities from surrounding areas also come to earn religious merit in overwhelming numbers,—approximately three times the number of Jains. For these communities, Mahavir Swami is a household name. It is the only temple of Jains where no restrictions have been imposed on the basis of caste and creed for entering the temple and worshipping the saint. For Chamars this place is of special significance, because a legend connects unearthing of the image of Mahavir Swami from the mound with a member of that caste.

Offerings and their disposal

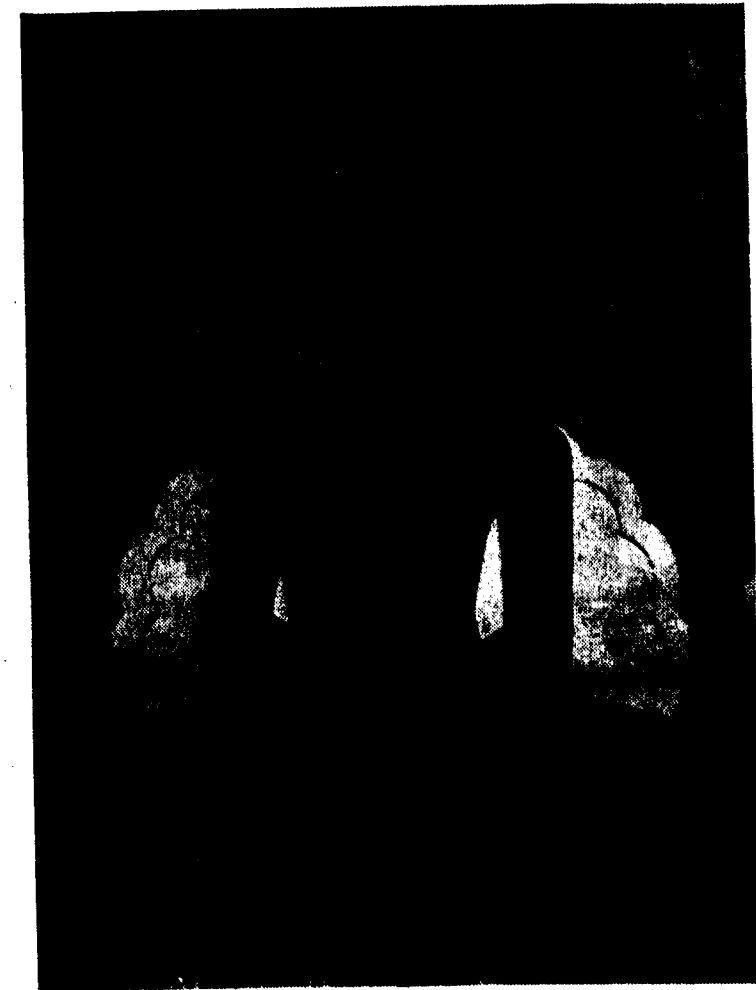
10. No special offerings are made to the saint at the time of fair. The offerings are called *ashta-argh*. They comprise of rice, white and yellow flowers, sandal (*chandan*), camphor, saffron, sugar candy (*mishri*), and dry fruits. *Deepak* is also lighted before the saint by putting wicks in ghee. No sweets or perishable articles are offered to the deity.

Priests

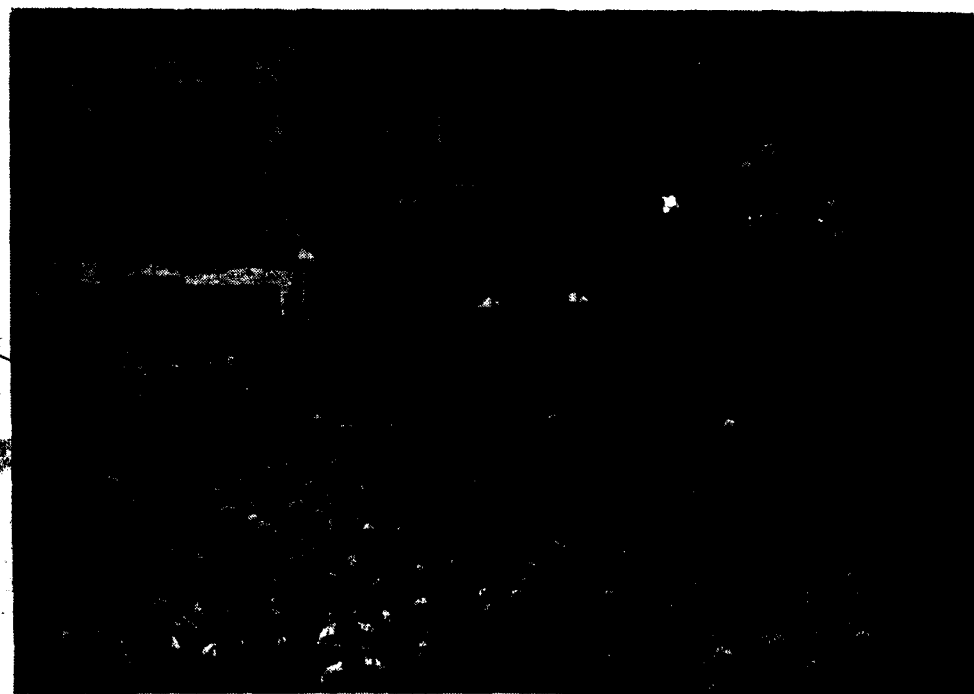
11. The chief priest is known as *Bhattarak*. He is a learned man, well-versed in Jain religion and holds overall charge of religious rites and worship. He worships the deity on special



The temple of Mahavirji with marble Man-Stambha on the left



Shri Mahavirji



A view of the fair



A view of Rath-Yatra

occasions and guides the *Brahmacharis* who have been employed to worship the deity at appointed time. At present three *Brahmacharies* have been engaged to worship the deity. They are paid Rs. 1,740 annually and the *Bhattarak* Rs. 684 as honorarium. All the *Brahmacharies* and the *Bhattarak* are Jains. The daily programme of worship is that the deity is given bath early in the morning from 5 a. m. to 6 a. m. This is known as *prakshal*. First of all it is done by the priest and later on by others in the prescribed manner. *Pujan* is performed from 6 a. m. to 9 a. m. At this time *ashta-argh* or eight oblations is offered to the deity. In the evening *arti* is performed. Ghee *deepaks* are lighted for all the twentyfour hours before the deity.

Areas from where people assemble

12. The pilgrims come from Sawai Madhopur, Bharatpur, Alwar, Jaipur, Kota, Jhalawar, Bundi and Bikaner districts. They also hail from Utter Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Maharashtra, Delhi, Calcutta, Assam and Bihar States.

Articles brought for sale

13. There are permanent shops of food grains, general merchandise and cloth. In addition to them temporary shops are put in the fair. They sell vegetables, fruits, butter, milk, sweets, utensils, toys, glass-bangles etc. Restaurants, tea-stalls and betel shops are also found in plenty. The shopkeepers come from Hindaun, Karauli, Bharatpur, Mathura, Agra, and Delhi. They make roaring business during the fair.

Light

14. The temple authorities have their own power-house. The temple, the *dharamshalas*, the shops and the streets are supplied power from 7 p. m. to 6 a. m. The power house is situated on the bank of the river.

Water supply

15. A reservoir of 50,000 gallon capacity has been constructed near the power-house from which water is supplied to the *dharamshalas*,

temple and other public places through pipe and taps.

Income

16. The income of the temple from September to August 1961 was Rs. 149,028.07. This includes monthly donations, amount from auction of garlands, secret donations, *chanvar* and other donations, rent of shops and houses, interest on fixed deposits and loans, sale of coconuts, books, refund of scholarships, sale of dairy products, cultivation, income from orchards, sale of medicines, income from electricity and water supply, income from bus service, and sale of flags. Income from the fair as such could not be ascertained. The cash donations at the time of fair are accepted by the cashier and their regular account is maintained. Articles of gold and silver are also donated. Utensils, medicines, saffron, etc. are also accepted.

The fair

17. The exact time and date of commencement of the fair can not be ascertained. Originally the management of the temple and the fair was vested in the *Bhattaraks*. There was so much mismanagement in their time that in 1923, Digambar Jain Panchayat of Jaipur handed over the management of the temple to the Court of Wards. In 1930, the Panchayat took over charge from the Court of Wards, and reassumed the entire responsibility of the management. During the last 32 years, the Managing Committee has managed to construct or start several big *dharamshalas*, a hospital, a library, a Higher Secondary School, a girls' school, and boarding house, water-works and the power-house. Metalled road has been built from Hindaun to Mahavirji. In addition to these achievements, efforts have been made to give wide publicity to Jain culture, art, religion and literature. Scholarships and loan have also been granted to deserving students.

18. Though the affairs of the temple are managed by the Managing Committee, the fair is organised by the Fair Officer. The Sub-Divisional Officer, Hindaun, is the Fair Officer. He makes

all arrangements in close cooperation with the Managing Committee. He is assisted in his duties by the Deputy Superintendent of Police and his staff who control the traffic and make necessary arrangement for the security of life and property. The State Transport Department also posts Traffic Inspectors to regulate traffic and to enforce transport rules. A Magistrate is detailed by the District Magistrate to try the offenders on spot and administer speedy justice. The Development Department puts up exhibition stall in the fair. The District Medical and Health Officer posts a Doctor and a team of Sanitary Inspectors to make necessary arrangements to prevent adulteration of food, etc.

19. Pilgrims who hail from distant places, arrive here some days before the *Rathiyatra*. They stay in *dharashalas* where all the amenities are made available to them. Utensils, buckets, etc. are issued from the store. During their stay the pilgrims worship the saint and devote most of their time in meditation and reading religious books in the temple. The area around the temple is packed with devotees. Sometimes there is a great rush and people find it very difficult even to reach the temple; but once a person reaches its gate and enters the temple he finds calm and peaceful atmosphere. After making offerings, the pilgrims stand before the deity with folded hands to secure his blessings. Eventually the *darshan* of the image influences the devotees and they forget their worldly worries for the time being at least. Some of the pilgrims attend *prakashan*, *pujan* and *arti*. They assert that in the morning, during the day, and after sunset, the *abha* (beauty) of the image is different. It varies with the times. The newcomers are so fascinated by the image of Shri Mahavir Swami and the all-pervading calmness in the temple that they recollect the scene again and again and thank god for providing them an opportunity to have a glimpse of the deity.

20. The children, young and old enjoy the marry-go-round, cinema, circus and dramas. A one-act-play depicting the Jain teachings is staged by the students of the Girls' School. The women purchase bangles, *tikki*, *kajal* (soot) and other cosmetics which are their favourites. The villagers of the adjoining area sing songs. These are unconnected with the teachings of Mahavir Swami. On Baisakh Krishna Ekam, the peak day of the fair, the image of Mahavir Swami is taken out of the temple, and carried in procession in a golden chariot to the bank of the river Gambhir for *kalash abhishek*. It is drawn by a pair of bullocks. The seat of the coachman is a privileged position and is occupied by the Collector or, in his absence, by the Sub-Divisional Officer. Four persons wave *chanvars* (whisks) over the idol. The idol of Mahavir Swami is seated in the chariot by the temple priest. Unless the chariot is pushed, it is believed, by a male descendant of Kripa Das (chamar) it does not move forward. Formerly the Minas and the Gujars used to gather at one and the same time; but due to an affray which took place some years ago they do not now attend the fair simultaneously. The Minas have been asked to accompany the chariot from the temple to the river. Thousands of pilgrims join the procession. The entire fair ground echoes and reechoes the slogan of 'Shri Mahavir Swami-ki-Jai'. Some devotees keep busy in reciting *bhajans* and other religious songs. After arriving at the river Gambhir, *kalash abhishek* ceremony is performed and a garland used on the occasion is auctioned. It is delivered to the highest bidder. Soon after this ceremony, the Minas disperse and leave the place for their respective homes. The procession returns to the temple with the same pomp. It is headed by Gujars now. The idol is then taken off from the chariot and seated in its *vedi* according to the customary procedure. The fair ends with this ceremony.



MALLINATH FAIR

MALLINATH fair, one of the biggest cattle fairs in Rajasthan, is held annually on the dry bed of the river Luni near Tilwara, a village in Pachpadra tehsil of Barmer district, from Chaitra Badi 11 to Chaitra Sudi 11 (i. e. for a fortnight during the months of March-April). Tilwara happens to be a central place where a congregation of cattle breeders and dealers from the surrounding districts of Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Pali and Jalor have been meeting from old times. Large numbers of animals are brought, particularly from the villages of Barmer district, where large sections of people maintain herds of cattle and flocks of sheep for their subsistence as nature is unhelpful for regular agriculture on account of the scantiness of rainfall, high velocity of wind and barrenness of the soil. This cattle fair is famous for many well-known breeds such as Tharparkar, Kankrej and Sanchori cows, Ramthalia camels from Shiv, Jaisalmer and Marwar and sheep, goats and horses from Balotra. The quality of the animals offered for sale is so good that purchasers not only from Rajasthan but from other states of India like Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh throng at Tilwara in large number.

Means of communication

2. Tilwara is a railway station on the Northern Railway lying on its Jodhpur-Barmer section. The line has been extended from the station to the site of the fair and regular and special trains carry passengers right to the site of the fair ground. Buses also ply between Balotra, Jodhpur, Barmer and Tilwara. The animals are transported to the fair grounds by rail and trucks. Some lead them on foot too.

Origin of the village

3. At a distance of 5 km from the present site of the village lie the ruins of an ancient settlement called Khed, which was an emporium of great importance in the region as caravan routes from Sind, Pali, Jaisalmer, Jalor and Mandor converged on it. It is said that Parmar Rajputs held paramountcy over this area till the tenth century A. D. when it was wrested by Chauhan Rajputs from them. The latter styled themselves as "Mallis", after their titular god Malli Nath, and the area came to be known as Mallani. The Mallis were an aboriginal tribe holding sway over

the tract on the eastern side of the Indus river, and they are reported to have harassed Alexander the Great on his march from Punjab to Sind (C. 325 B. C.). Tilwara was one of their nine famous forts. In course of time the Rathors moved to this region from their seats of power, Kanauj, after they were defeated by Mohammed of Ghur in the early part of the 13th century. They can be said to have continued to occupy the area as its masters till 1949 when the democratic State of Rajasthan was formed. During the regime of the feudal potentates, who indulged in internecine warfare, the region was pillaged by the Muslims and the Jats; and even prosperous centres of trade and commerce almost disappeared. Khed shared the same fate and shrank into a small village. It came to be known as Tilwara as a great number of families of the Teli and the Ghanchi communities, which engaged in the business of extracting oil from Til (sesamum), made it their permanent abode.

Malli Nath

4. During those turbulent times any brave person who came forward to organise resistance to the invaders was hailed as savior. Malli Nath did this. He was the son of Rao Sulkhaji, ruler of Mallani, which included Jasol, Sindri, Mehwa, Barmer and Gura. He subdued the neighbouring Bhomias, led expeditions against Umarkot and proved himself to be a troublesome neighbour to the Muslim ruler of Mandor. Malli Nath's territory extended upto Sind in the west and Jaisalmer in the north. He also annexed Mandor. He is reported to have ascended the throne of Mehwa in Vikram Samvat 1431 (1374 A. D.). He breathed his last in 1399 A. D. in Tilwara where a temple was constructed to commemorate his memory. Malli Nath took the title of Rawal. There are numerous folk songs current in Marwar extolling his successes against the Muslims. The Rathor ex-rulers of Jodhpur are descended from Malli Nath's brother, Viram.

Naya Tilwara (Borawas)

5. The jagirdars of village Tilwara were Mehcha Rajputs. They have records which

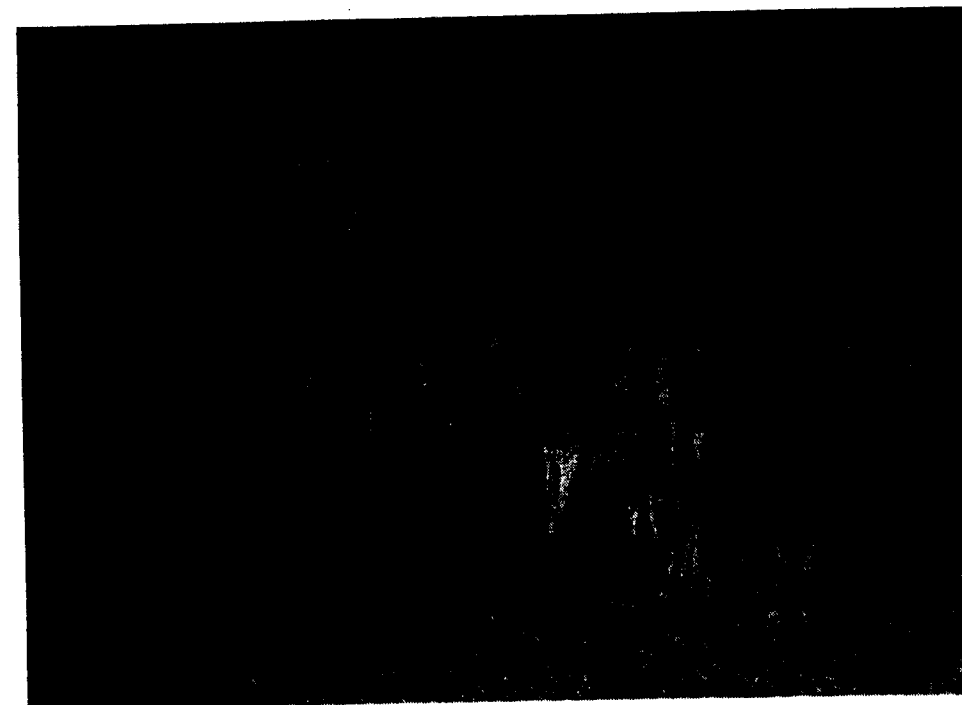
indicate that the village was a thickly populated town upto the end of the 18th century. It is said that in 1812 A. D. river Luni was in spate and washed away the dwellings and the people. The Bhil and Telli inhabitants migrated to Gujarat and Sind; and the population in the village declined. A new township, called Naya Tilwara or Borawas, has comparatively recently sprung up near the railway station.

Origin of the fair

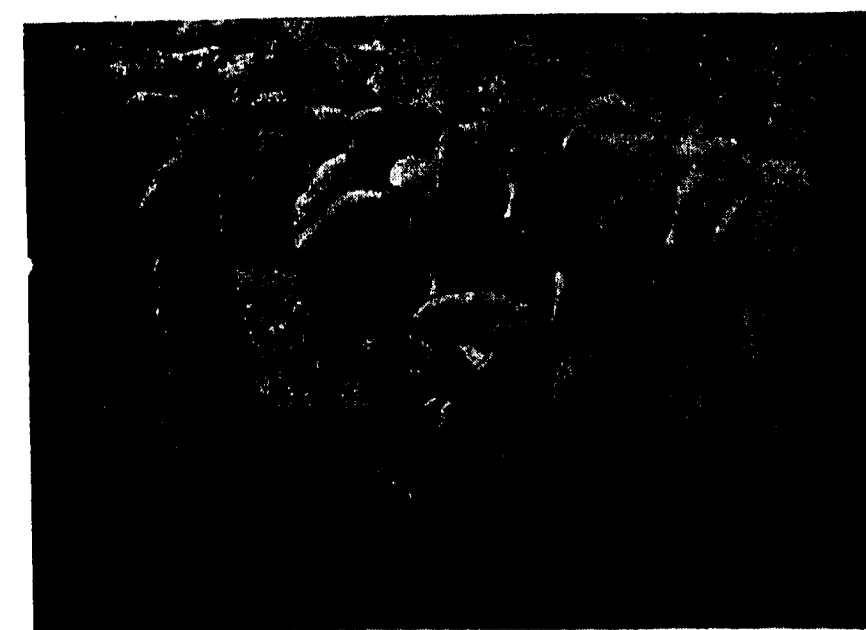
6. Rawal Malli Nath is believed to have possessed supernatural powers. His admirers congregated at Tilwara from far and near to see him. They came on different kinds of animals or mounts, which caught the eye of willing purchasers and thus small transactions began taking place. It is said that the first regular fair was held by Mota Raja Udai Singh in Samvat 1656 (1599 A. D.). In former days the Rawal of Jasol, the jagirdar of this area, used to organise the fair and collect a small fee from the participants. As the fair grew in importance, the income increased and, in due course, the management was taken over by the former Government of Jodhpur State. With the disappearance of the Rajput principality and the formation of the State of Rajasthan, the responsibility of managing the fair devolved upon the Government of Rajasthan which manages it through its Animal Husbandry Department.

Participants in the fair

7. The people of this area are highly indebted to Rawal Malli Nath in whose memory large number of songs are sung. He provided an opportunity to them to hold the cattle fair every year and trade in animals to earn their livelihood. People of all castes and creeds without any distinction of religion freely participate in this fair. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can be seen coming to this fair along with their cattle. The cattle-breeders come from Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jalor, Pali, Jodhpur and Nagaur districts of Rajasthan while the purchasers hail from other districts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and West Pakistan.



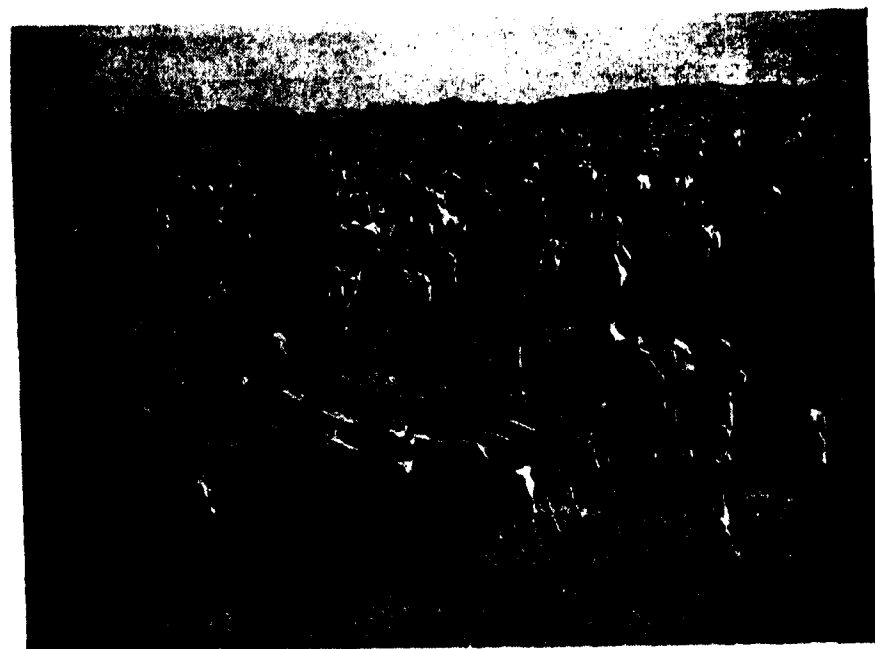
The glistening construction in the background is the shrine of Mallinathji



The hole in the foreground is a well from which water is drawn and poured in the shallow trench for the cattle



The white badge fastened to the head of an animal indicates it is a prize-winner



The evening scene—Lengthening shadows suggest the day is over

Cattle trade

8. Statistics are available for the year 1875 A. D., when little live-stock was brought to the fair for sale. Comparing them with, say, those of 1959-1960 we get an idea of its growing importance.

Type of cattle	Number brought to the fair	
	1875	1959-60
1. Young cattle	15,000	45,710
2. Full grown cattle	15,000	
3. Camels	5,000	12,062
4. Horses	400	1,009
5. Donkeys	—	995
6. Buffaloes	—	69

9. The Animal Husbandry Department of the State Government derived an income of Rs. 140,068 as fair-tax imposed on live-stock sold during the year 1959-60. The highest prices quoted for various kinds of animals at the fair in the year are given below :

Type of animal	Highest price (in Rupees)
1. A pair of bullocks	1,400
2. Camel	1,200
3. Donkey	105
4. Horse	1,200
5. Male buffalo	130

Priest

10. The office of the priest to the temple of Rawal Malli Nathji is hereditary. It is held by a Swami who offers worship at the shrine daily.

Offerings at the temple

11. An image of Rawal Malli Nathji has been installed in the temple to which offerings of *batashas* and *laddoos* are made by the visitors. A part of the offerings is retained by the priest and the rest is returned to the devotees who prefer to distribute it among the by-standers as *prasad*.

Some people make offerings in cash. A few offers consist of twentyfive paise coins but generally people offer two to ten paise only. Some persons make a vow at the shrine, on fulfilment of which they offer replicas of a horse (supposed to be a mount of Rawal Malli Nathji). A number of miniature horses made of wood, brass and bronze can be seen arranged in rows inside the shrine. These miniature horses are brought for sale in the fair by shop-keepers who come from Mathura, Agra and Aligarh. The offerings collected by the priest are utilised by him for the maintenance of the temple and his family.

Management of the fair

12. The fair is managed by a committee with the Collector of the district as Chairman. It consists of district officials, district representatives in the State Legislative and Parliament, the Pramukh of the Zila Parishad, the Pradhan of the Panchayat Samiti, and the District Animal Husbandry Officer. The last one acts as the Fair Officer by virtue of his office. An annual budget is sanctioned for the fair according to which expenditure is incurred. A week before the commencement of the fair, plots and stalls are put to auction. Separate wards are provided in the fair for different varieties of goods. Tents are pitched for public servants on duty on separate site. The usual exhibition ground is located at a central place where Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Health and Medical, Community Development, Industries, Co-operative, Mining and Public Relations Departments, Handicrafts and Khadi Board and Small Savings Organisation put up their exhibits. The Fair Officer also looks after lighting arrangement and water supply. On the opening day of the fair the flag of Rawal Malli Nathji is hoisted with the chanting of prayers in his praise. The priest gets a gift of Rs. 11 from the Government of Rajasthan. People continue to bring their cattle to the fair till the last day. Every person bringing the animals is required to obtain a pass for entering the fair-ground through check-posts set up for the purpose; and, when any animal leaves the fair, the owner is made to pay the tax due for the animals sold.

13. The following is the rate at which the tax is collected :

Type of cattle	Rate per head (in Rs.)
Cattle	3.00
Buffaloe	2.00
Horse	5.00
Camel	5.00
Donkey	0.50
Sheep	0.50
Goat	0.50

It has been observed that animals assemble at the fair in the first week of the fair, and are purchased in the second week. Adequate arrangements are made for preparing agreement forms and sale deeds by appointing licensed scribes. During the second week the fair is in full swing.

Award of prizes to good breeds

14. At the fair a selection committee is set up to select the best animals of different breeds from among those brought to the fair. They

select the 1st and the 2nd quality animals from each breed. Prizes and certificates are distributed to the winners on the closing day of the fair. The animals receiving prizes are naturally sold at high prices.

Shops in the fair

15. A large number of shopkeepers come from Barmer, Balotra, Jodhpur and Pali. There are shops of utensils, buckets, scales, beads, ornaments, agricultural implements, musical instruments, ready-made clothes, general merchandise, food grains, eating houses, tea-stalls and restaurants. A separate market for fodder is also set up.

Recreation.

16. The Public Relations Department of the State Government exhibits news-reels and cinema films of educative value at the occasion. Some theatrical companies stage religious plays. Races of bullocks, horses and camels are organised for the recreation of the people.



PUSHKAR FAIR

PUSHKAR, the widely known sacred town, is situated 530 m above sea level in an enchanting valley of the Arravali hills, 11 km north-west of Ajmer. It has a population of 6,703. A large number of temples, including the only one dedicated to Brahma in India, fringe the bank of the holy lake. A fair of countrywide importance is annually held in the month of Kartik at this pilgrim centre, which is among the five principal places of pilgrimage mentioned in the Hindu scriptures, the other four being Kurukshetra, Gaya, Ganges and Prabhas. A cattle fair too is held at the place at the time of the fair. The town and the lake present a beautiful spectacle on such occasions. About one and a half lakhs of pilgrims and visitors congregate on this occasion. Another fair in the month of Baisakh is also held when about six thousand pilgrims congregate. This latter fair is mainly of local importance. The first fair is held from Kartik Shukla Ekadashi to Kartik Purnima and the latter from Baisakh Shukla Ekadashi to Baisakh Purnima. The act of visiting Pushkar during these days is popularly known as *Pushkar Yatra* or *Panch Bhishm Snan*.

2. Pushkar is easily accessible by a well-maintained metalled road, joining Ajmer to Merta,

the home-town of famous Bhakta Mira Bai. The nearest railway station is Ajmer, a junction on the Delhi-Ahmedabad meter gauge line of Western Railway. The Railway management issues tickets to and from Pushkar and passengers are taken by regular bus service from Ajmer Railway Station to the holy town. The Ajmer-Pushkar road is picturesque as it runs along the bank of the beautiful Anasagar Lake, and winding over the Naga Parvat (Serpant Mountain), descends into the valley on the other side. It is a very busy road as a very large number of people are attracted to Pushkar on account of its Pauranic sanctity; and one can find people moving on the road on foot, on bicycles, in tongas, buses and other vehicles. Regular buses ply between Pushkar and Ajmer almost every hour throughout the year as about a thousand pilgrims and visitors visit the holy lake every day. During the Kartik fair hundreds of buses ply on this road and transport about one and a half lakh pilgrims and visitors. There are about twentyfive *dharamshalas* where the pilgrims and visitors can stay free of charge for three days. They are required only to pay charges of lighting and bed, cots, etc. Utensils for cooking and serving meals are also issued to the pilgrims free of charge. The pilgrims

also stay with their Pandas. The Pandas look after the comforts of their clients and help them in performing oblations and paying homage at various sacred ponds and temples.

3. Pushkar has a rich historical background. The area round the town was once inhabited by Mers, a hill tribe, who gave the name of Merwara to the region. In early centuries of the Christian era this area came under the occupation of Takshakas of Scythian origin. Their growing rivalry with the Buddhists and the incessant raids of the Huns compelled the Takshakas, then known also as Nagas, to move to places of safety. They ousted the Mers from their region, and made Pushkar their stronghold. The Nag Parvat still preserves the memory of their supremacy. Under the Parmars, one of the later lines of rulers, the area came to be known as Padmavati. Both the Nagas and the Parmars professed Jainism, and their feuds with the then Brahmanical sects are mentioned in the Puranas. The Brahmins with the help of the Parihar chieftains of Mandore (near Jodhpur) and the Gurjar lords of Merwara, regained power by vanquishing the Parmar Jains. The Parihars continued to hold sway over Pushkar until the time Ajaipal founded the Chauhan dynasty of Ajmer in ninth century A. D. It was one of these Parihar sovereigns who is stated to have constructed the sacred tank at Pushkar. It was so named for it was excavated in the Hindu month of Paush, which derives its name from Pushya Nakshatra (Procyon constellation). The supposed residence of Ajaipal, the great ancestor of Bisaldeo and Prithviraj Chauhan (1179-92 A. D.) is still shown at Naga Parvat, where only a few remains mark the site.

Sanctity of the lake

4. There is a mythological tale related in Padma Puran* which accounts for the origin and sanctity of Pushkar lake. According to this source the area was tenanted by a demon, Vijra Nabh by name, who used to murder children of God Brahma, who on hearing this, repaired to this spot and killed the demon with a lotus. The petals of the flower fell at three places where

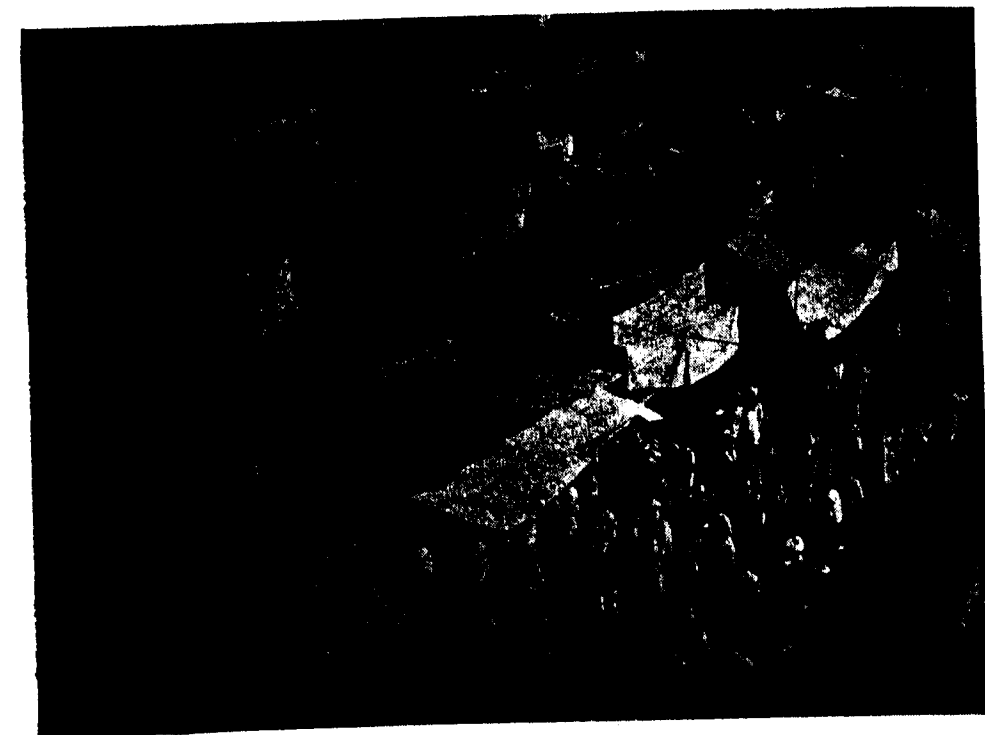
three lakes, named as Jyeshtha Pushkar (main Pushkar), Madhyam Pushkar (middle Pushkar) and Kanishtha Pushkar (little Pushkar) were formed. Soon after Brahma resolved to perform a Yajna to which he invited all gods and sages. This Yajna was held in the month of Kartik which is governed by Kritika Nakshatra (Pleiades constellation). Hence Kartik Purnima day was ordained as the most sacred day for Brahma's Yajna, the memory of which is still solemnized by the Hindus every year.

5. At the exact time of the performance of the Yajna Brahma's consort Savitri was absent, and, as without a wife the Yajna could not be commenced, Brahma married a Gurjar girl named Gayatri to get over the difficulty. Thereafter Savitri appeared on the scene, accompanied by Parvati and Lakshmi, suitably attired and made up for performing the Yajna with Brahma, her husband. On noticing another woman sitting by the side of her husband, Savitri flew into rage and cursed Brahma and all those who had assisted him in the performance of the Yajna. This caused horror and people trembled with fear. Brahma soon created goddess Shrap Mochini and asked all persons to have her *darshan* in order to be absolved of Savitri's curse. This is how the temples of Brahma, Savitri and Gayatri (Shrap Mochini Devi), who were the main actors in the drama, are all found in Pushkar town. The temples of Savitri and Gayatri are perched on two hilltops, one opposite the other, in very beautiful surroundings. This legend depicts the sanctity of the Pushkar lake and also answers for the presence of the famous temple dedicated exclusively to the worship of Brahma.

6. The main purpose of visits to Pushkar by the pilgrims is to have a dip in the holy lake in order to wash away their sins and to ensure entry into heaven after death. The lake, which is elliptical in shape, is bounded by 52 *ghats* or flights of steps which are associated with spiritual yarns. Of all the *ghats*, Varaha Ghat, Brahma Ghat and Gau Ghat are considered to be the most sacred. Special sanctity is attached to a plunge in the lake at the legendary Varah Ghat as Lord Vishnu is said to have appeared in the form of Varah (boar)



A view of the Pushkar



A view of the fair



Visitors from neighbouring villages



Dance and music in progress

at this spot. Brahma is said to have taken bath here after the performance of a Yajna in the presence of Vishnu and Mahadeo. At this very *ghat*, which is revered as the holiest spot of the Pauranic era, Gau Ghat was constructed at a cost of over a lakh of rupees by the Maratha Chiefs in the year 1809 A.D. It is the site where Guru Govind Singh recited the sacred Granth Sahib in the Samvat year 1762 (1705 A.D.). Queen Mary ordered the construction of a separate *ghat* for women at the place in the year 1911 A.D. Gau Ghat has recently been given the name of Gandhi Ghat because a part of the ashes of the Mahatma was immersed there. Both in the morning and in the evening, *arti* is offered to Pushkar lake and a large number of lighted *deepaks* (Lamps) are seen floating over the surface of the lake.

7. The lake is about 10 m deep and is fed by water during rainy season from mountains rising on its three sides.

Fair

8. Religion plays an important part in keeping the fame of Pushkar alive. Every year a lakh and a half people gather at the lake, have Kartik bath and thus seek redemption for their souls. Every month on Purnima (full moon) day more than two thousand votaries assemble at the lake, Jyeshtha Pushkar, for a plunge; but on Kartik Purnima the waters become the holiest and a dip on that day is considered specially meritorious. At the time of the fair a large number of people are seen flocking from 3-00 A.M. at the lake and go down the flights of steps which reach the lake. A large contingent of Pandas i.e. Brahmin priests stand in knee-deep water helping the pilgrim-bathers with their chanting of Sanskrit *mantras* (incantation) and receiving fees. The fair is mainly a Rajasthani one and people belonging to numerous communities, mostly from Ajmer, Pali, Jodhpur, Nagaur and Jaipur districts congregate and have the holy dip. People begin reaching Pushkar a few days earlier than the Purnima though the dip takes place on the Purnima day and then make offerings of coconut, flowers, sandal and cash to

the lake and the Pandas. Cash is received by Pandas who recite *mantras* in praise of Pushkar Raj on behalf of the votaries. Such offerings are not made by each and everybody because majority of the pilgrims are poor and they prefer to give alms to the poor, the blind and the crippled. Delicate clay lamps on *pattals*, that is leafy dishes, are lighted and allowed to float over the sacred lake. After performing oblations here the pilgrims go to the Brahma's temple to pay him homage. These are the minimum rites performed by all the pilgrims visiting Pushkar.

9. As has already been mentioned there are three Pushkars viz., Jyeshtha, Madhyam and Kanishtha. The last one is popularly known as 'Boodha Pushkar'. Oblations are performed at all the three, but mostly pilgrims perform oblations only at the Jyeshtha Pushkar. The oblations are first performed at the Jyeshtha Pushkar. Many of them then go round the lake. Those who wish also perform oblations at the Madhyam and Kanishtha Pushkar, after performing the rites said above. Instead of performing oblations at both the latter Pushkars some perform only at the Kanishtha or Boodha Pushkar. Madhyam and Kanishtha Pushkars are at a distance of 5 km and 8 km respectively from Pushkar. The distance between the Madhyam and the Kanishtha Pushkars is about 4 km. Performing oblations at the three Pushkars is known as *Panch-koti-Parikrama* as about five *kos* (16 km) distance is covered while performing it. Some of the pilgrims who are not very orthodox cover the distance on vehicles also.

10. There are many other shrines and sacred places and ponds around Pushkar. Many pilgrims visit them during the fair and even on other days of the year in addition to performing oblations at the three Pushkars. The visit to all the shrines is completed in seven days and is known as *Chaubis-koti-Parikrama* for a distance of twenty four *kos* (77 km) is to be covered in performing it.

11. At about 6 km from Pushkar there is a small pond known as Gaya Kund. It

is a general belief that the oblations performed here on the Chaturthi in the bright half of any month, provided it falls on Tuesday, has the same effect as oblations performed at Gaya, one of the famous pilgrimage centres in Bihar as has already been mentioned. Thousands of persons, mostly from the adjoining areas congregate here on such a day and offer oblations to manes.

Temples

12. Of sacred places having their own importance and legend, there is no paucity in Pushkar. There are as many as 400 temples there; but the most important of these are those of Brahmaji and Rangaji. The temple of Brahmaji is situated in the centre of the town where a life-size, four-headed image of Brahma in sitting posture, with legs crossed, is installed. During the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D.) the old temple was razed to the ground by Muslim iconoclasts, and a second temple at the site was built by a Brahmin lady of Jaipur in the year 1719 A.D. which was later modified and given its present form by Gokal Chand Pareek, a minister of Daulat Rao Scindia.

13. Rangaji's temple is a magnificent one and is fine example of the elegance of Indian architecture. It is dedicated to Vishnu, Lakshmi and Narsinghji. Seth Magni Ram Bangur of Deedwana (Nagaur district) pays for its maintenance.

14. A cave situated at a distance of about one km from Pushkar, called Bhartrihari-ki-Gupha where the royal sage is said to have carried out a penance, is also worth visiting.

Cattle fair

15. Simultaneously with the Kartik fair, a big cattle fair is organised in Pushkar. It used to be managed by the Government but the work has now been transferred to the local Municipality. Rajasthan is quite rich in cattle wealth and is the home of many recognised breeds of cattle like Nagauri, Hariana, Mewati, Tharparkar, Kankrej, Gir, etc. A large number of cattle assemble at this fair and a brisk trade takes place. The Municipality not only imposes tax at the rate of 6 paise per head on visitors to Pushkar but it also imposes capitation tax on the sale of various types of cattle. An annual income of more than Rs. one lakh is collected in this manner from the cattle fair. All types of entertainment including cultural shows, cinema, exhibitions and sports competitions are organised. Large troupes of minstrels and bards also come on the occasion and usually recite tales of valour and chivalry of the heroes of the past. A large number of sadhus, ascetics and mendicants visits the fair.

16. During Kartik, Pushkar grows into a humming and bustling town. Hundreds of shopkeepers come from Ajmer and other places to sell different varieties of goods to the people assembled there. Most of them are confectioners and victual sellers. A temporary market sprouts up as if from nowhere. Camel saddles, strirrups, cattle ropes, embroidered animal covers (*jhools*), necklaces of glass beads and trinklets manufactured in Nagaur, ivory work of Merta, printed cloth of Ajmer and Jodhpur, and brass ware of Jodhpur and Jaipur find ready market there. Small shops of general merchandise selling cheap goods and catering to the needs of the rural folk are seen on both sides of the road.



RAMDEORA FAIR

RAMDEORA fair is held every year for ten days from Bhadon Sudi 2 to Bhadon Sudi 11 (August-September) when more than a lakh of people from far and near congregate to pay their homage to the well-known 15th century Marwari saint, Shri Ramdeoiji.

Approach

2. The village Ramdeora lies at about 13 km from Pokaran, which is a sub-divisional headquarters in Jaisalmer district. The latter is connected with Jodhpur by a good metalled road. A branch of the Northern Railway runs from Jodhpur to Pokaran where it terminates. Ramdeora is a railway station also on this route. Two buses ply daily between Jodhpur and Ramdeora by way of Pokaran; and many more are commissioned to operate at the time of the fair. Thus Ramdeora is approachable during all seasons by rail as well as road. Many people reach the place on camels and in bullock-carts, and still others prefer to traverse the entire distance on foot.

Origin of the village

3. There is no written record available about the origin of the village; but a legend says that

Ramdeora was a place where Shri Ramdeoiji established himself. He is said to have been born on Bhadon Sudi 2 in Vikram Samvat 1461, and took *samadhi* in Samvat 1515 on Bhadon Sudi 11, in the village itself. According to Erskin the year of *samadhi* corresponds to 1458 A.D., and it can be presumed that the village came into existence about the same time.

4. Village Ramdeora was granted in jagir to the temple of Ramdeoiji during the time of the old Jodhpur State. It was then in Phalodi Pargana of Jodhpur Raj. After the formation of the State of Rajasthan in 1949, it was placed under Phalodi tehsil. Later, when a separate tehsil of Pokaran was created under Jaisalmer district, the village was transferred to it.

Congregation

5. Ramdeoiji is also known as Ram Shah Pir; and is worshipped by both Hindus and Muslims. Although there are no Muslim residents in the village, they come from far and near to attend the fair of Ramdeoiji.

Temple of Ramdeoiji

6. The shrine dedicated to Ramdeoiji is situated on the bank of Ramsar tank to the south-west of the village. A rubble-road connects the shrine to the railway station.

History of Ramdeoiji

7. Ramdeoiji was a Rajput of Tomar clan. He is hailed to be an incarnation of Lord Krishna in Kaliyug era. It is said that Prithviraj Chohan (1175 to 1192 A.D.) was the son of a daughter of King Anang Pal, the ruler of Delhi, who had no male issue. While going on a pilgrimage he felt the necessity of entrusting the administration of his kingdom to somebody; and, on the advice of his nearest relatives, entrusted it to Prithviraj Chohan. It is said that when King Anang Pal returned after his pilgrimage, Prithvi Raj refused to restore the kingdom to him. Anang Pal's descendants, therefore, left Delhi and established themselves in "Undre Kashmir", which is now reported to be a part of the present Shiv tehsil in Jaisalmer district. One of Anang Pal's descendants, named Ajmal, was a devotee of Dwarka Dheesh (Master of Dwarka i.e. Lord Krishna) but he had no issue. According to a legend, as he was setting out one day during the rains some farmers, who were proceeding to their fields, turned back on seeing him. On questioning the farmers stated that it was a bad omen to see a person who had no issue. Ajmal was upset with the reply and took to the worship of Dwarka Dheesh. Because of his sincere devotion and penance, Dwarka Dheesh was pleased with him and took birth as his son. In Vikram Samvat 1460 on Basant Panchmi, a son was born to his wife and was named as Viramdeo. After some time when the wife of Ajmal went to the cradle in which Viramdeo was sleeping, she found a second child lying with signs of Dwarka Dheesh. This child was named Ramdeo. Ramdeoiji became famous as a saint in Marwar and his fame spread far and wide. Five Pirs (priests) came from Mecca to test him. Ramdeoiji offered food and milk to them but they refused to take it as they had forgotten to bring their utensils from Mecca. Ramdeoiji got their utensils from Mecca by his miraculous powers.

The Pirs were impressed by this demonstration of supernatural powers and paid obeisance to him. Since then Ramdeoiji began to be addressed as Ram Shah Pir.

8. Ramdeoiji got constructed Ramsar Tank; and an old well called 'Parcha Baori' was repaired by him. It is believed that the water of the well cures many diseases.

9. Ramdeoiji married a girl named Nehalde. He found a little female child in a basket one day who later grew to be his true follower and took *samadhi* before him. Her name was Dallibai. Her grave can be seen in the shrine of Ramdeoiji. Another famous follower of Ramdeoiji was Harji Rajput of Bhati clan.

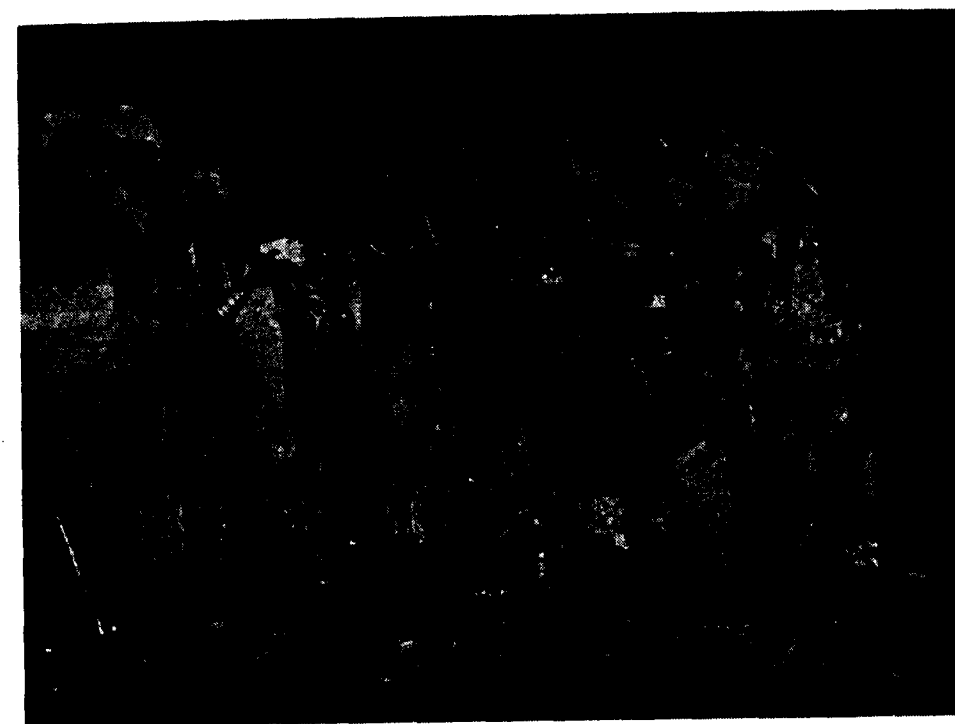
10. Ramdeoiji is worshipped by all Hindu communities but by the Scheduled Castes whom he specially patronised, he is worshipped more ardently. There are no caste, creed or sex restrictions of the entry into the shrine of Ramdeoiji or for bathing in the Parcha-Baori and Ramsar tank. Mostly the Bhambis, the Meghwals, the Chamars and the Banjaras worship him apart from other Muslims and Hindus.

Teachings

11. Ramdeoiji is considered as the invincible hero who devoted his life to the uplift of the down-trodden. He did not believe in the low and the high of the caste hierarchy and the rich and the poor. He wanted to put an end to this distinction and treat all persons equally. He believed in helping the needy. He possessed mystical powers and influenced the mind of his followers by miracles. He taught these principles to his followers by precept. Hindus, Muslims and Scheduled Castes had full faith in him and worshipped him as a hero. Ramdeoiji buried himself alive. This is the reason why his followers bury the dead irrespective of caste though Ramdeoiji himself never asked his followers to bury or burn the dead.

Fair

12. On the occasion of the fair the ground lying between the railway station and the shrine



An inside view of the shrine. Note the toy-horses offered to the deity



A group of devotees reciting songs in praise of Ramdeoiji



A view of the fair with the shrine of Ramdeoiji in the background



A view of a shop dealing in arms and accessories

in Ramdeora is crowded with people. Open spaces in front of Ramsar tank and the shrine are also full of congregations. There are 13 *dharamshalas* with a total of 150 rooms which accommodate 2,000 to 3,000 persons on nominal charges. On both sides of the roads stalls are established, and shops set up.

13. Around the grave of Ramdeoiji, a magnificent temple was constructed by Maharaja Shri Ganga Singhji of Bikaner in 1931 at the cost of Rs. 57,062.

14. The followers of Ramdeoiji offer cash, flags, coconuts, *churma* and rice on the *samadhi*. Some of it is returned as *prasad* to the people who offer them. Toy wooden horses covered with clothes, and coloured pottery are usually offered at the *samadhi*. These horses are of different sizes and can be seen inside the shrine duly exhibited by the management. Some of them are preserved in the temple but the rest are taken away by the visitors in memory of Ramdeoiji.

15. The prominence given to the offering of toy horses is due to the reason that Ramdeoiji was greatly attached to his horse who was his constant companion. He covered long distances on horseback and conquered his enemies with the aid of horses. According to him a horse is the most loyal servant of his master. He can understand the instructions of his master and carry them out at the cost of his life. Once his disciple, Harji Bhati, was singing songs and telling stories of Ramdeoiji before the public in Jodhpur City. He had with him a wooden toy horse, which was the replica of the horse of Ramdeoiji. The police officials arrested Harji Bhati along with the wooden horse and confined them both in a lock-up. During those days the grain and water used to be stored by the princes to provide the same to the people in famine areas. Harji Bhati narrated the miracles of Ramdeoiji's horse and asserted that the wooden one with him was capable of carrying the same stores wherever required. The prince remarked that Harji Bhati should order his wooden horse to transport the stock of grain and water to the affected areas. Harji Bhati and his wooden horse were locked during the

night in the room wherein grain and water were stored. In the morning the prince was surprised to see that the entire stock was consumed by the wooden horse. The prince was struck dumb with surprise. Since then wooden horses are worshipped by the followers of Ramdeoiji.

16. An organisation called 'Ramdeo Anna Kshetra' exists in the village which arranges for free distribution of food, to beggars and *sadhus* who assemble on the occasion of the fair. The organisation is financed by the devotees of Ramdeoiji.

17. The trust for the management of temple, Ramdeoiji appointed a Muntazim (Manager) to look after its affairs. The person stays at Ramdeora during the time of the fair to ensure that all offerings made to the shrine are properly collected and utilised. 75 per cent of the collection is handed over to the Tomar Rajputs of the village who are descendants of Ramdeoiji. Each male member of the Tomar clan receives equal share irrespective of his age. The remaining 25 per cent is kept in reserve and is spent in maintaining the shrine and giving aid to several organisations like the School, the Panchayat and the *dharamshala*. At the fair of 1962, the collection amounted to Rs. 90,000. 75 per cent of the coconuts collected were distributed amongst the Tomar Rajputs, the Bhils and the Bhambis of the village.

18. The priests of Ramdeoiji's shrine belong to the Tomar clan of Rajputs. The eldest son of the family of Ramdeoiji is considered to be the chief priest. In other villages the priests of Ramdeoiji are from the Bhambi or the Meghwal communities.

19. During the fair of 1962, about 1½ lakh people had congregated to worship Ramdeoiji. Followers of Ramdeoiji came on foot from Bikaner, which is 130 km miles from Ramdeora. The Mers and other castes of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Kota, Bundi and Mewar came in thousands. Some followers came from as far away as Bombay and Calcutta. 13 special trains were run between Jodhpur and Pokaran apart from 400 buses to carry the passengers.

20. The shopkeepers at the fair came from Phalodi, Jodhpur, Pokaran, Balotra, Ajmer, Bikaner, Panipat, Mathura, Agra, and Hardwar. They sold betels, wooden toy horses, food stuffs, readymade clothes, other cloth, sweets, bangles brassware, ornaments, pictures of Ramdeoji etc. There were 186 shops during the fair. The classification of the shops was as under:

Bangles	29
General Stores	25
Potteries	27
Necklaces	9
Food stuffs	21
Cloth	14
Sweets	47
Miscellaneous	14

21. It is not possible to assess the earnings of the shopkeepers as no record was kept. They were most unwilling to give any information about their incomes.

Recreations

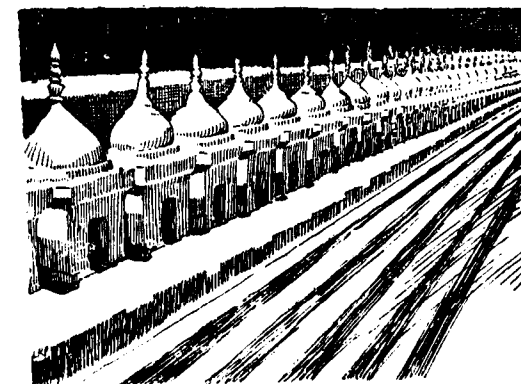
22. A circus and a few travelling companies of actors came to the fair and gave their performances. The Social Welfare and Public Relations Departments of the Government of Rajasthan screened films of educational value. No dances are staged in the fair but an interesting performance called 'Terah Tali' was presented by persons of Kamod community. The party

consisted of two men and two women. While the two males of the party recited the story of Ramdeoji to the accompaniment of one-stringed *ektara*, the women gave an excellent exhibition of their acrobatic feats. Tying *matiras* (melons) to the various parts of their bodies and balancing earthen pots filled with water or lighted candles on their heads, they depicted the acts of daily life to the great enjoyment of the spectators e.g. winnowing, cutting of the crops, cleaning of flour, mixing water in bajri flour, making breads of bajra, preparing ghee, reaping, crushing, kneading of flour, mixing water in wheat flour, making breads of wheat, making butter from milk and weaving.

23. The followers of Ramdeoji who desire to get their cherished objects achieved with the blessings of the saint, arrange this *Terah Tali* for the whole of the night. The minimum charges of the performers are Rs. 10.

Taboos

24. Taking wine or meat in the area of the fair is strictly prohibited. If a person is caught red-handed he is fined by the village Panchayat. The Panchayat looks after lighting, water, sanitary arrangements in the fair. It allots land for construction of stalls for land-rent. It collects fairtax from the bus-owners and ground-rent from shopkeepers. This constitutes its main income.



RANI SATI FAIR

RANI SATI fair is held in Jhunjhunu town which is the headquarters of the tehsil and district of that name. The actual site of the fair is around the premises of the temple of Rani Sati which is situated at a distance of 2 km from the bus stand and 6 km from the railway station. The fair began to be held from Samvat 1969 (1912 A.D.) when a Managing Committee was formed for the first time. It took the present form in Samvat 2017(1960 A.D.). The fair is held twice a year on Margshirsh Krishna Navmi and Bhadrapada Amavasya. It was on the Margshirsh Krishna Navmi that Rani Sati - the first in the series of the 13 satis of the Jalan family - immolated herself and a fair, when about a thousand persons assemble, is held on this day. The last sati sacrificed herself on the Bhadrapada Amavasya. The main fair in which more than 100,000 persons congregate is held on this day to commemorate the memories of the satis. As Rani was the first sati in the family the temple and the fair is known by her name. On all other days, the average attendance is about a hundred. There is no other occasion when the congregation may be said to exceed the average.

Origin of the place

2. Jhunjhunu is situated in the area known as Shekhawati. It is so named after Shekhji, the great grandson of Udai Karan, who was Chief of Amber towards the end of the 14th century. The country was wrested either by Udai Karan or his fourth son, Balaji, from the Kaimkhanis who were descendants of the Chauhan Rajputs converted to Islam by Ferozshah Tuglak, in about 1383 A.D. and who had been permitted by the Delhi kings to hold their estates as a reward for their apostasy. *

3. The current belief is that Jhunjhunu was populated for the first time by Kaimkhanis who came here from Hissar. They were members of the ruling family of Hissar and came here with a view to settle permanently as they had developed some conflict with the then ruler of Hissar. Before they came to this place, a Jat named Jhunjha lived here. They asked him to let them settle in the village which he did on the express condition

* Imperial Gazetteer of India (Provincial series) Rajputana (1908) pages 253-254

that the place will be named after him. The visitors agreed and the village was named as 'Jhunjha-ka' meaning the village of or belonging to Jhunjha. The word *ka* i.e. of, means *nu* in the local dialect; and the name changed to Jhunjhu-nu which, with lapse of time, became Jhunjhunu.

4. The area around Jhunjhunu is mostly a mass of shifting sand-dunes where the rainfall is precarious averaging from 31 to 37 cm. On the west of the town is a hill 550 m high, which is visible for kilometres around.

Means of communication

5. Jhunjhunu is connected by a metalled road to Jaipur and Loharu. The distance between Jaipur and Jhunjhunu is 187 km. Four direct buses ply every day from Jaipur to Loharu via Jhunjhunu on this route. At the time of the fair special buses are run to carry pilgrims and others from and to the fair. Jhunjhunu is connected with Jaipur and Loharu by rail also. Jhunjhunu is 171 km from Jaipur on meter gauge line of the Western Railway.

People's participation

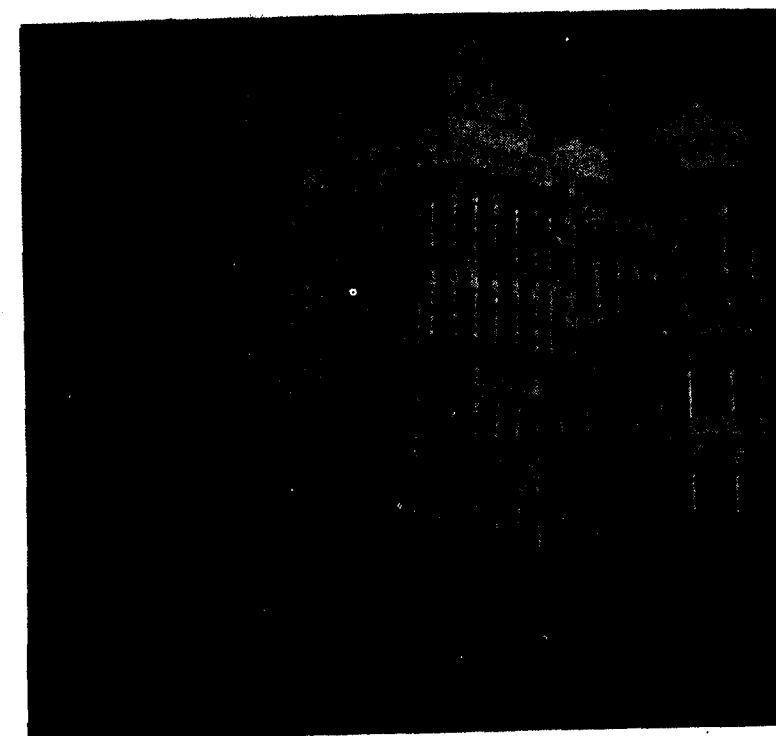
6. It is a religious fair and mostly Hindus participate in it. There is no prohibition for Scheduled Castes and Muslims but they have never been seen offering worship in the temple.

Origin of the fair

7. It is commonly believed that about six and a half centuries ago, an Agrawal Bania of Bansal *gotra*, named Jali Ram, was serving as Dewan of the Nawab Jharjand of Hissar. His son, Tandhan Ram, had a fine mare which the Nawab's son wished to have for himself. The prince communicated his desire to Jali Ram through his father, the Nawab of Hissar, but Tandhan Ram did not accede to the request of the prince. The prince was greatly annoyed by the refusal. So he determined to achieve his object through dishonest means. One night he entered the stable of Jali Ram to steal the mare.

On seeing the stranger the animal neighed which aroused Tandhan Ram from his sleep. The latter threw a spear at the unwelcome stranger and killed him. When he went near the corpse he was shocked to find that he was none other than the prince. He went immediately to his father and narrated the whole incident to him. Jali Ram, anticipating the wrath of the Nawab, immediately left the place along with his family and sought shelter with the Nawab of Jhunjhunu who was a bitter enemy of the Nawab of Hissar. Dewan Jaliram was given a similar post and status to the one he held before. The Nawab of Hissar, as was expected resolved to avenge the death of his son by slaying Tandhan Ram. He came to know that Tandhan Ram was married to Naraini Devi, daughter of Seth Gursamal of village Dokva near Maham in Hissar, and the *gauna* ceremony which takes place after the marriage had not been performed till then. He deployed his soldiers in the surrounding forest and lay in wait to meet Tandhan Ram where he least expected him. When Tandhan Ram was returning to Jhunjhunu with his wife, Naraini Devi, and a few companions, the deputies of the Nawab attacked him and his party. Tandhan Ram and his companions fought bravely but as they were outnumbered, he and his companions were soon overpowered and killed; his wife and a man of Rana community somehow survived. She took the dead body of her husband in her possession and decided to become sati that is to immolate herself on the pyre with her husband's body. She prepared the funeral pyre with the help of her Rana companion and became sati.

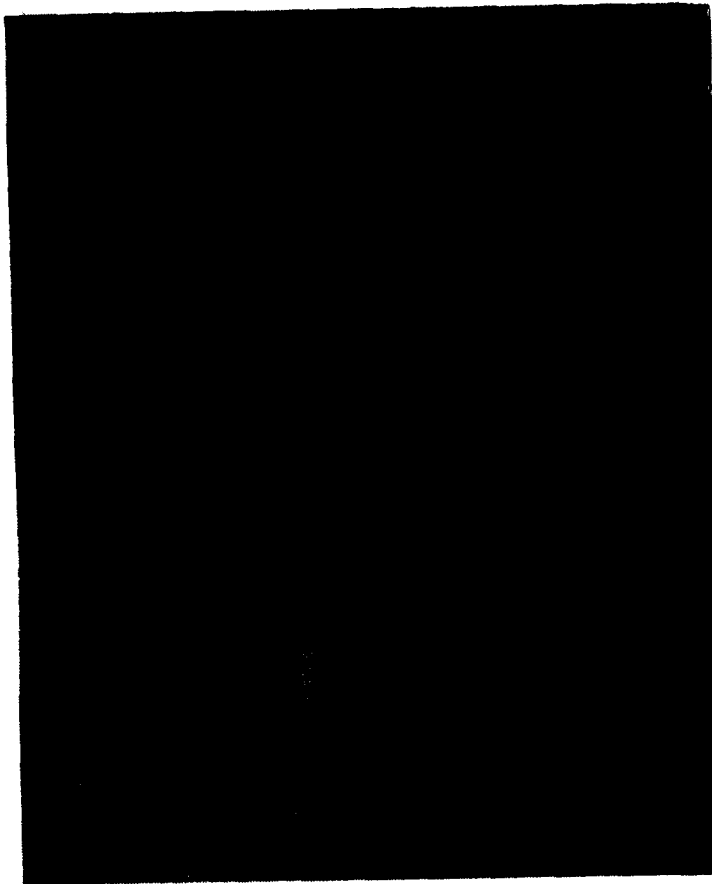
8. After immolation Naraini Devi appeared before her companion as a goddess with a trident in her hand and asked him to collect the ashes and deposit them where his mare might stop on way. The Rana left for Jhunjhunu and did as he was commanded to do. On the spot where the ashes were deposited, a temple was constructed by Jali Ram, the sati's father-in-law. Naraini Devi became famous by the name of 'Rani Sati' as her ashes were brought here by the Rana. Naraini Devi's self immolation, according to some, took place on Tuesday, Margshirsh Krishna Navami, in Samvat 1352 (1295 A.D.), while according to



The imposing entrance to the temple



A part of the front view of the Rani Sati Dharamshala



The temples of the Satis



Mundhs of the manes

others, she immolated herself in Samvat 1652 (1595 A.D.). Their argument is that the town of Jhunjhunu was populated in some latter year than Samvat 1352. It has already been mentioned that the town was populated by Kaimkhanis who were converted to Islam in 1382 A. D. and as such the Samvat year 1352 (1295 A.D.) does not appear to be correct. On the basis of the geneological tables given in the annual report of Rani Sati temple for 1961 A.D., it can be stated that the present generation of Jalans is possibly the 20th generation from Jali Ram. This shows that about 500 years have elapsed between Jali Ram and the present generation. These two facts support the latter view. But this region was taken from the Kaimkhani muslims by Udai Karan towards the end of 14th century. In the light of this fact the validity of the second view also remains obscure. Most probably some of the Kaimkhanis came to this place from Hissar afterwards when it was with the Chief of Amber and populated this town and it was then that Jali Ram came here. In the light of the above discussion the year in which Naraini Devi immolated herself remains rather indefinite but the latter view seems to be more correct than the first.

9. Twelve other women of Jali Ram's family at different times became satis after Naraini Devi. The last woman is said to have immolated herself on Bhadrapada Amavasya in Samvat 1860 (1803 A.D.) at Jhunjhunu. The dates and the years in which rest of the women became sati are not known. It is said that when the last woman expressed her desire to immolate herself she was locked up in a room by the other members of the family. When the body of her husband was being taken to the cremation ground the lock of her room miraculously broke down, and the doors were flung wide. She dressed herself properly and reached the cremation ground where the dead body of her husband was about to be placed on the pyre. All persons were astonished to see her there, and, being convinced of the intensity of her desire to immolate herself, they raised no more obstacles in her path. She sat on the pyre with the body of her husband in her lap and immolated herself. The names of all the satis are as follows:

1. Rani Sati
2. Jeevni or Gyani Sati
3. Poorni or Poorra Sati
4. Prayagi Sati
5. Jamna Sati
6. Tili Sati
7. Bali Sati
8. Manawali or Manbhavli Sati
9. Manohari Sati
10. Mahadei or Madi Sati
11. Urmila or Unmela Sati
12. Gujri Sati
13. Sita Sati

10. There has been noted some difference in the order of these satis. According to some Gujri Sati was the last while others maintain that it was Sita Sati who immolated herself last. Similar differences of opinion are found in the case of other satis also. The order of names followed above is the one in which the present temples have been constructed at the site. It is only to commemorate the memories of these satis that the fair is held twice a year at the place; but the devotees come throughout the year to pay homage to them.

The memorial

11. Originally there were only small *mundhs* that is shrines of all these satis situated in a forest far away from the town; but due to the increase in population the township has expended and the site is now almost connected to the township. The Jalans, who are the principal followers, wanted to convert the *mundhs* into big temples so that the place may look attractive. They also desired to construct *dharamshala* or rest house for the devotees. To take up all this work a Managing Committee was formed by the descendants of Jali Ram in 1912 A.D. The construction work was started in 1917 A.D. The main seven storeyed gate was completed in 1936 A.D. by Seth Shiv Chand Rai Jhunjhunuwala at a cost of Rs. 40,000. The *dharamshala* which has two courtyards was constructed later with money offered by devotees from time to time. The *mundhs* were converted into temples as recently as in 1955-56 A.D. In front of the main gate of the temple there are two small

parks and an open maidan in a part of which shops and stalls come up during the period of the fair. On both sides of the main gate there are rooms in which the office of the institution is situated. On entering the main gate one comes to a big courtyard on all sides of which are two storeyed buildings. These are used for residential purposes by the devotees who flock to the fair. In this courtyard there is a small *mundh* of Balaji.

12. After entering the second gate one comes to the second courtyard which is also surrounded on all sides by two storeyed *dharamshalas*. In the centre of this courtyard there is a temple of Balaji. The idol of Balaji is about 1.5 m high and depicts the deity as carrying Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders with his right foot placed on a female figure symbolising Kamda goddess. On either sides of this temple are the temples of Lord Shiva. On the right of the temple is a small *mundh* of Balaji and on the left a fountain, a beautiful example of Rajasthani craftsmanship. After crossing the second courtyard one comes to the third gate which opens into the third courtyard wherein the temples of satis have been built. This courtyard is known as Sati Chowk. There are thirteen temples in this courtyard. The temples of satis are situated in the middle of the courtyard facing east and there is a passage running round them. On the left of the passage, at the back of the temples, there are small shrines of *Pitras* (manes). There are also two rectangular stone slabs placed on the floor, one in the north-west and the other in the south-east of this courtyard. These also represent *Pitras*.

13. Devotees first go to the temple of Rani Sati by the passage at the back of these temples. This temple is on a lower level as compared to other temples. Inside it there is a small shrine of marble in which a silver trident representing the deity has been fixed. Two eyes have also been made in the middle of the blades of the trident. After worshipping Rani Sati the devotees proceed towards the shrines of other satis. The roofs of all the temples have been joined but there have been left spaces in between the temples for *pari-krama* or circumbulation. The floor of these verandahs and the passage all round the temples

are paved with black and white marble tiles. The pillars are also of marble. The brackets on either sides of the upper end of these pillars depict elephant heads with raised trunks and in between them have been carved figures of *dwarvals* (gate-keepers). There is a stone slab fixed above the door of each temple bearing the name of the sati, the year of the reconstruction of the temple and the name of the person who financed it. There is also written the name of the goddess of Hindu pantheon beneath this slab. The front wall of the temple is covered with white tiles on the upper side and with pink and tan coloured ones on the lower side. Verses from Ramayana and other holy books are inscribed on the walls of the verandah and the rooms facing it.

14. In each of the seven temples starting from the temple adjacent to the Rani Sati temple, a silver trident nailed to the wall, in the middle of the outline of a temple painted in yellow represents the deity. In the eighth one a trident mark in the centre of a similar line etched on a mirror represents the deity. In the following three temples, the deity is represented as in the case of the first seven temples. In the last one the deity is represented by a yellow trident and a red aluminium foil pasted on the wall inside a small *mundh* similar to that of the temple of Rani Sati. On either sides of the trident representing the deity, female figures offering flowers to the deity have been painted. Two *jhalars* hang in each temple, one inside the temple and the other above the door. A curtain also hangs at the door. Small cash boxes are fixed on the right of the doors of all shrines for devotees to drop their cash offerings.

Life and teachings

15. Naraini Devi, who became Rani Sati, was born in the noble family of Seth Gursamal, of village Dakva near Maham in Hissar. She was brought up with great care. She studied Ramayana and Geeta. She had also learnt to use the arms and could take part in a fight. She knew her duties very well. She fought valiantly against her enemies after the death of her husband and ultimately immolated herself on his funeral pyre. She sent a message through the Rana to her

father-in-law that he should not worry about the death of Tandhan Ram. The Members of his family would increase and the name of his son and son's wife would always be remembered by the people of Jhunjhunu and that she would always safeguard the interests of the people.

Principal followers

16. Jalans are the principal followers of the deity. The descendants of Kamal Rai, who was a son of Jali Ram are known as Jalans. After 4 or 5 generations from Kamal Rai, one Tulsidas was born in the family. His descendants are known as Tulsians. Tulsians who settled outside Jhunjhunu are also known as Jhunjhunuwalas. In the same way in which the Tulsians separated from the Jalans some seventytwo furcations of the sept came into existence in course of time. All these descendants of Jali Ram worship Rani Sati as their family deity. In the light of these observations it is evident that Rani Sati is the family deity of all those who trace back their descent to Jali Ram. These days more than a lakh of persons congregate at the fair. All of them do not assemble at one time. At any specified time the number hardly exceeds 10,000. Of all the persons congregating here only two to three thousand are of Jalan lineage who come for *jat* (obeisance) to their family deity. *jat* is the obligatory obeisance paid to the deity on occasions of marriages, births etc. Only these persons are allowed to worship the deity. As the temple is essentially a private institution of the Jalan family, others are not expected to make offerings of any kind. People of various communities however, visit the temple to pay their respects to the sati. There is a general belief that paying homage to Rani Sati on this occasion brings general prosperity and other material benefits.

Offerings

17. The temple of Rani Sati remains open from 4 A. M. to 1 P. M. and 3 P. M. to 11 P. M. on the day of the fair. Devotees offer *roli* (red powder prepared by treating powdered turmeric with some alkali), *moli* (coloured yarn), flowers, *mehandi* (myrtle), jaggery, sugar-drops, fruits,

unripened coconuts, sweetmeat, *chura* (lac bangles) of red and green colour, rice incense, scent and *odhni* or *peela* (sheets used by women for covering head and back). After a child's birth or after the performance of a marriage in the family, some people offer 13 *odhnis* one to each sati. Canopies and ornaments of silver or gold are also offered. Besides these cash is also presented. The sweets etc are distributed among those present there, and *odhnis*, canopies, ornaments and cash are collected at the counter where a receipt is issued. Devotees desiring to donate money for the construction of *dharamshala* or temple, deposit it with the cashier and obtain receipts. Some of the devotees come to the fair to perform *jadula* ceremony (tonsure) of their children. The locks are retained by the temple authorities who arrange to consign them to the holy waters of the Ganges.

Priests

18. The priests of the deity are Brahmins. They are salaried employees of the Managing Committee. They do *arti* twice a day with a lampstand with 108 *battis* (wicks) dipped in ghee. The *arti* is done first at the temple of Rani Sati and then at the other shrines. After this ceremony the priest goes to the temples and shrines of Balaji and Lord Shiva, and then repairs to the main gate where he waves *arti* before a small pillar known as Kirti-stambh which stands to the right of the main gate. He returns to the temple of Rani Sati and again waves the *arti* before it. He completes the service by chanting some *mantras* and sprinkling some water on the devotees who happen to be there at the time. *Prashad* consisting of *makhana* (parched lotus seeds), *mishti* (sugar candy) together with Tulsi leaves is distributed among the devotees. The holy water, collected after washing the *mundh* of Rani Sati is also distributed among the devotees. The holy water is considered to have developed some extraordinary properties for it is supposed to cure all ailments of the devotees. It is known as *Dadiji-ka-jal* (water of Dadiji or grandmother). Many devotees take it along with them and utilise it in curing their ailments. This water is considered to be as holy and pure as the water of the holy Ganges.

19. The devotees first of all worship Rani Sati in the following way :

Mundh is first washed with water. Then 13 dots are marked on its floor with *roll* and *mehandi* respectively with the ring finger of the right hand. Two swastika marks are then made with *roll* on either side of these dots. Rice, *moli* and *prashad*, consisting of *laddoo*, sugar-drops and coconut, are placed on each dot. This is followed by burning incense, lighting earthen lamps and offering canopies and *odhnis*. The devotees thereafter touch the water which collects below the *mundh* and wash their eyes with the right hand fingers. They then go to other temples and offer *roll*, *moli*, *prashad*, and incense. Some sprinkle water on the *chhatra* of the *pitras* while others offer worship at the slabs of *pitras*.

20. The same procedure is followed on festivals and fair days except that on the occasion of the fairs *bundi* (a sweet grains dish) is distributed as *prashad*. Metallic gongs are beaten and conch shells are blown while doing *arti*. In the evening kettle-drums are also played.

Names of places from where people come

21. The people of Jhunjhunu and the adjoining area have great respect for Rani Sati and most of them participate in the fair to pay her homage. People also come from other parts of Rajasthan to receive the blessings of the Sati. It is true that the persons who come to worship the sati belong mainly to Janan community. They all belong to the business community, many among them are industrialists and come from distant places such as Bihar, Calcutta, Bombay, Nagpur, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Punjab, U.P., Burma and Hongkong.

Market

22. In the open space outside the temple a small market of about 100 shops is set up during the days of the fair. Foodstuffs, betels, flowers, pictures, clothes, toys, medicines are generally sold in the fair. There is also a shop selling daggers and swords. Besides, there is always a large number of vendors and hawkers selling vegetables, coconuts, flowers and sweetmeats. The shopkeepers

make a roaring business but their exact income however, cannot be ascertained.

Recreation and amusement

23. There are merry-go-rounds, grand-wheels magic show etc. Priti Sammelans (meetings) are also organised as was done in the evening of 20th August, 1963 by the temple authorities in which poems were recited by local poets in honour of Rani Sati and a cultural programme was arranged by the students of Rani Sati Girls Primary School. Considering the number of participants in the fair the source of amusement and recreation provided was negligible. Only children enjoy themselves with recreation but the adults are all the while busy with their devotional programme. Intense religious atmosphere pervades the entire area and people appear busy in *bhajans* and *kirtans*. Songs of devotion to the deity are sung in which the heroic deeds of Rani Sati and her husband, and their miraculous powers are described.

Other activities

24. There is also a boarding house which provides accommodation for 75 students. There is a Girls Primary School in which 175 pupils receive education. A Library is also maintained in the premises of the temple. There is also a *Pakshi-Graha* i.e. Birds Enclosure where a large number of pigeon holes have been made for the birds to lay in eggs and taking shelter. Foodgrains, costing about Rs. 10 are scattered to these birds daily. A restaurant is also run at the time of the fair and food is served in its dining hall. Only Re. 1 per diet is charged from the devotees.

Light

25. The temple authorities have constructed their own Power House which provides power to the temple, the *dharamshalas*, the market, etc. The entire expenditure is borne by the temple authorities and no fee is realised from the devotees.

Water

26. The Managing Committee has constructed a water reservoir and water is supplied through

pipes to the *dharamshalas*, temple, market, public parks and other places. The entire cost is met by the temple authorities.

Residential accommodation

27. The temple premises have been divided into three parts. For *dharamshala* two storeyed buildings have been provided in the first two parts to provide rent-free accommodation to the devotees. The facility is extended to any devotee. Those coming from far off places are naturally given priority.

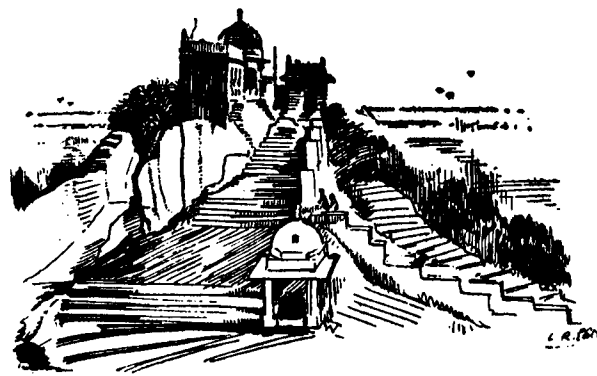
Management

28. A Managing Committee was formed in the name of 'Rani Sati Sahayta Kosh Committee' in 1912 A.D. There were 72 members in it. Later this committee was reshuffled and a new name 'Rani Sati Mandir Committee' was given to it. It framed its own constitution and got itself registered as a Trust in Calcutta on 7th Feb. 1957. At present there are 3 units of the management of this institution. The first is the Board of Trustees comprising of 7 trustees. The Board of Trustees looks after the assets and income of the temple. The second is the Management Board comprising of 21 members, including the 7 trustees. The remaining 14 members are from donors and life members of the institution. The members of the

institution are of three types viz. (1) Donor members paying Rs. 5,100 or more at a time, (2) Life members paying Rs. 101 or more at a time and (3) Ordinary members paying Re. 1 p.m. Apart from the 7 trustees, 7 members of the Managing Board are from the donor members and 7 from the life-members. The Managing Board looks after the management of the Institution. The third is the Working Committee which executes the decisions of the Managing Board. In 1961-62 the committee consisted of 57 members including a President, 4 Vice Presidents, 1 Secretary, 2 Deputy Secretaries, 1 Cashier and 48 members. Besides these there is the salaried staff of the temple. There is a manager, an accountant, 2 priests and the menial staff of watchman, peons etc. The Trustees have overall charge of the temple and its properties. The members of the Managing Board are selected every year at the general meeting held at the time of the fair, but if the quorum is not full, the adjourned meeting is held at Calcutta, where most of the trustees reside, and the members are elected.

Income and expenditure

29. The total assets of the Trust upto 25-3-1963 were declared as Rs. 405,582. Income during 1962-63 was Rs. 63,164 and the expenditure equalled the income.



SHEETLA MATA FAIR

SMALLPOX is a great scourge of this country and the chief deity worshipped is Mata which is represented by a red stone. Such stones are to be met with on all sides but chiefly under Khejra trees, which are sacred to the Mataji. In commemoration of Sheetla Mata, a fair is held every year on Chaitra Krishna Ashtmi (March-April) in village Seel-ki-Doongri in tehsil Chaksu of Jaipur district. The village is named after the goddess. There is a shrine of Mataji on the top of a hillock, locally called *doongri*. The present building is a masonry structure and is said to have been built by Maharaja Madho Singh of the princely State of Jaipur. The fair is attended by more than 100,000 persons, who flock to the village, Seel-ki-Doongri, from all parts of the State.

Means of Communication

2. The village is situated on the bank of a tank known as Band Sheodungri. The village is situated on the left of the Jaipur-Kota road. It is 35 km south-east of Jaipur and about 5 km from Chaksu, which forms the tehsil headquarters of the circle in which the village is situated.

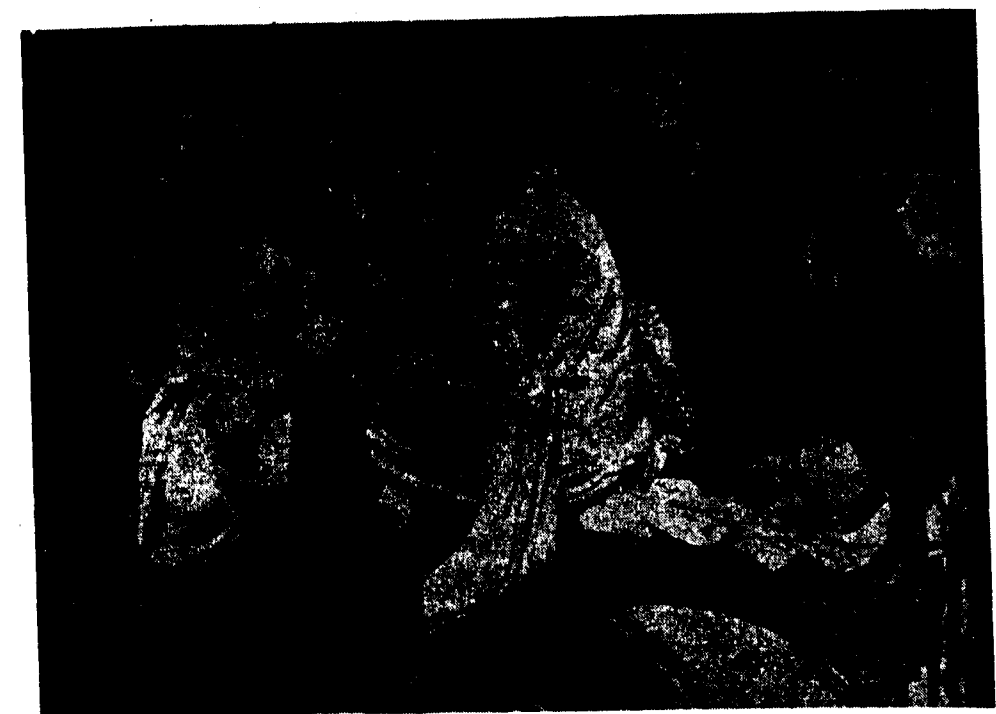
The nearest railway station is Chaksu on the Western Railway meter gauge system on Jaipur-Sawai Madhopur section. There is a bus stand and a kutchra diversion, about 200 m long, has to be covered to reach the shrine. Regular service buses plying on Jaipur-Kota, Jaipur-Tonk, Jaipur-Deoli routes touch the village not less than twenty times a day. During the time of the fair elaborate arrangements are made by the State Transport to transport the people.

The goddess and the belief

3. Sheetla Mata is worshipped by almost all communities in Rajasthan. She is amongst the Pauranic goddesses and manifests herself casually but in a virulent form. Every Hindu household, irrespective of caste or creed, worships her so that she may visit his house only once and depart peacefully. Every Hindu believes that Sheetla Mata would visit his house any day. He fervently worships her and expects to be left unharmed by the ailment. Sheetla Mata is worshipped not only in Rajasthan but she is worshipped in many other states also. It is strange that the ways of worshipping are almost similar



Sheetla Mata's temple on the hill top



Young visitors' arrival at the fair



Visitors' camp on the eve of the fair



Singing accompanied by the Algoja

throughout the country. She is considered to be the protectress of children.

4. Sheetla Mata is addressed by different epithets in different parts of the country. In Uttar Pradesh she is known as 'Mata' or 'Maha Mai,' in Western India as 'Mai Anama'. In Rajasthan, she is called as 'Sed-Sheetla' and 'Sedal Mata' also.

5. It is the belief of the people that all ailments which spread in an epidemic form are nothing but the manifestation of the wrath of the gods and the goddesses. They hold that these diseases do not spread on account of unhygienic conditions only.

6. The word 'Sheetla' comes from *seetal* meaning calm and peaceful. The appearance of Sheetla Mata is possible only after high fever and it is believed that Sheetla Mata comes to calm down the high fever. She is addressed with great respect as her name 'Mata' (mother) suggests. The child dying of smallpox is not cremated but buried. No medicine, aopathic, ayurvedic or yunani, is administered to a patient who suffers from smallpox or any other similar ailment of lesser intensity. The patient is simply laid down in a dark room, however hot the climate might be. The patient has to suffer the wrath of the goddess. The relatives perform various rites and take a vow to offer something to please the goddess and pray that she may depart peacefully. It very often happens that when the wrath of the Mata is the greatest, the patient sometimes loses his eyes. For this nothing is done. It is endured patiently thinking that Sheetla Mata wished it that way.

7. There are certain ideas about the ways of preventing the disease in Rajasthan. The patient is wrapped in rags and is called by ugly names. At the entrance of the room in which the patient is accommodated, some twigs of Neem tree are tied with a string. It is held that the Mata does not prefer noisy atmosphere, so no body is allowed to speak loudly. Even the *ghatti* or handmill is not allowed to be operated during the period. Members of the family are not permitted

to take bath in the house and to wear new garments. When the condition of the patient becomes worst, it is attributed to the effect of *Chhot* and the persons paying courtesy call are not allowed to see the patient. A donkey is supposed to be the conveyance of Sheetla Mata and as such during the period of the ailment, foodgrains are offered to donkeys; and the patient is given the milk of a she-donkey.

8. To lessen the effect of the disease, certain magical formulas and quaint rites (*tona* and *tonka*) are performed. Some member of the household brings an earthen pot and some articles of food are put into it. The same is then moved several times round and over the patient. A man then carries it to a square in the village where he keeps it and returns home. All this is done in utter silence. According to another belief, a man belonging to the patient's family goes to a well at night and brings some water in his mouth and suddenly throws it on the patient. It is said that after this treatment recovery is rapid.

9. Besides this there are some religious beliefs which are held throughout Rajasthan. Unmarried girls pour water over the stone representing the goddess daily. This is done for a year with the hope that the wrath of the goddess will thus be pacified. Childless married women worship the goddess so that she might bless them with an issue. The mata is offered worship at marriages. After marriage when the bride arrives at her father-in-law's house for the first time, she along with her husband, is taken to the shrine of the mata. The couple does the puja.

Offerings

10. Offerings in cash or kind are made by the people who go to the shrine for worship. Offerings of a piece of red cloth, gur and *gulgulas* (a sweet dish) made at the shrine of Sheetla Mata are believed to bring relief to persons affected by smallpox. Basora festival which comes on the seventh day of dark half of Chaitra is celebrated with a view to propitiate the Mata. But if this date falls on a Saturday, a Sunday or a Tuesday, the people celebrate Basora on the sixth day of

the month. In Punjab, the Basora festival is celebrated on the first Tuesday in the month of Chaitra. On this occasion women prepare *gulgulas* and such other sweet eatables on the previous night. They are offered at the shrine early in the morning of the festival amidst the singing of devotional songs. The offerings are claimed by the village Kumhar (potter).

Priest

11. The priest of the temple of the Mata belongs to the Kumhar community. In the village Seel-ki-Doongri, the venue of the fair, there are several persons of this community who are working as priests of the shrine. They have to work by turns. Everybody amongst them gets his chance after every fifteen days; and during that period the offerings collected at the shrine become his property. But at the time of the fair, the offerings are divided among all the priests equally. The duty of the priest is to perform *arti* twice a day. During the time of the fair, all the priests are supposed to work in close collaboration with one another and their duty hours are fixed. The collections both in cash and kind, are pooled at one place; and, after the fair is over, it is equally divided.

12. Ordinarily, the offerings consist of *batashas* (sugar drops), coconuts and some cash, while at the fair, they consist of *gulgulas*, *puris*, sugar drops, curd, coconuts, etc. and some cash. During the fair held in 1964, apart from offerings in kind, cash worth Rs. 10,000 was collected.

Management

13. Before 1949 A.D. the expenses incurred on arrangements of the fair were borne by the State Government of Jaipur. Now it is being spent partly by the Panchayat and partly by the priests themselves. Arrangements for light and water etc. are the responsibilities of the Panchayat; while the other arrangements at the shrine are made by the State Police Department.

14. No arrangement for community feasts, kitchens or distribution of *prasad* are made in the

fair. The persons visiting the fair make their own arrangements for meals. Most of them bring their lunch with them. It is all cooked the previous night. They first offer it to the Mata after which they eat it.

Market

15. During the fair, a temporary bazaar is set up. The site for the shops and stalls is allotted by the Panchayat and the charges are very nominal viz. Re 1 to Rs 4 only. About 180 shops were opened during the 1962 fair. Of these 100 were big ones. The shops sold food stuffs, general merchandise, agricultural implements, utensils, cloth, books, betel leaves and cigarettes, shoes, etc. No wine shop was seen in the fair.

16. Apart from this, arrangements for recreation and amusement were also made. Free cinema shows were arranged by the State Public Relations Department. An exhibition was also arranged in which the following departments and institutions displayed their products and schemes:

1. Agriculture Department
2. Animal Husbandry Department
3. Public Health Department
4. Khadi Gramodyog Board

The exhibition attracted a large number of visitors.

Cattle fair

17. A cattle fair is also organised at the time of the fair which lasts for a week. It is a minor affair. Bullocks, camels and horses are usually brought to the fair. Arrangements for lighting and water are made by the Panchayat. The Panchayat charges the following nominal tax on the sale of each cattle:

Camel	Rs. 4.00	Donkey	Rs. 2.00
Bullock/cow	Rs. 2.00	Goat	Re. 0.50
Buffaloe	Re. 1.00	Sheep	Re. 0.50

Prizes are awarded to the best breeders.

18. Drinking of alcohol and any other intoxicant during the ceremonies of worship at the fair is strictly forbidden.



SITABARI FAIR

SITABARI is a small place near village Kelwara in tehsil Sahabad of Kota district. The fair which is of religious importance, is held from Baisakh Sudi Punam to Jeth Badi Amavas. The management of the fair, which was being looked after by the State so far, has now been entrusted to the statutory Panchayat of Kelwara. The fair is at its peak on Chandra Amavas, Padwa and Dooj. More than 50,000 persons from villages in the Kota district and the neighbouring areas of Madhya Pradesh congregate at the fair. Thousands of persons come to the pilgrim centre for a dip in tanks called Sita Kund, Laxman Kund and Suraj Kund, which are regarded by the visitors to be as holy as the Ganges. People also visit Sitabari on Mondays falling on Amavas and on the day of the solar eclipse.

Origin of the place

2. Sitabari is situated at a distance of 1 km from Kelwara. It is situated in a picturesque dense forest. According to a legend prevalent

in the village, Sitabari marks the place where Sita was left by Lakshman in the forest at the behest of her husband Shri Rama at the time of her second banishment as her chastity was doubted by the people of Ayodhya. While she was being led through the jungle one afternoon, Sita felt thirsty and asked Lakshman to fetch water for her. Failing to find water he shot an arrow in the ground as a result of which a spring gushed forth from the bosom of the earth. The stream created by Lakshman is known as "Lakshman Babhuka". He brought water for Sita in two cups made of Dhak (*Buteas frondosa* leaves). When he reached the spot where he had left Sita he found her asleep. He hung the leaf-cups to the branch of a tree under which Sita was resting and left the place to return to Ayodhya. Some time after Lakshman had left her, an easterly wind spilled some water from the leaf-cups on the body of Sita. She woke up and found Lakshman missing. She soon realised that she had been left alone in the forest under the orders of her husband, Shri Rama. She erected

a small hut with twigs and branches and settled down to pass the rest of her life there. The place is even now known as 'Sita Rasoda' i.e. kitchen. Later on she is said to have shifted her residence to Valmiki Ashram which was situated in another part of this very forest.

Means of communication

3. Kelwara is connected with Shahbad, the tehsil headquarters, Baran, the sub-divisional headquarters, and Kota, the district headquarters by a metalled road. The distance from Kelwara to Kota is 117 km and buses ply regularly on the route. During the days of the fair bus owners are given special permits to ply more buses to carry the passengers from and to the fair. The nearest railway station is at Baran which is at a distance of 75 km from Kelwara.

People's participation

4. Hindus and Muslims equally participate in the fair. Even the Scheduled Tribes, particularly the Saharias, join the fair in large numbers to pay their respect to Lakshman and Sita. A large number of Vaishnavites come here to offer worship to Sita, Lakshman and Bharat. They visit the Sita Rasoda and pray before the idols of Lakshman, Mahadeo and Hanuman and bathe in the holy Kunds.

The Memorial

5. There are four tanks filled with water from natural springs. They are called 'Kunds' in local dialect and are believed to have great religious significance. These are Lakshman Kund, Suraj Kund, Sita Kund and Bharat Kund. Their water is considered sacred. Persons excommunicated by their caste Panchayats are asked to take a purificatory dip in these Kunds. The water of these Kunds is credited with medicinal value. It is said to cure persons suffering from mental disorders.

6. During summer the water of all the Kunds is cold whereas in winter it is warm. The Kunds never go dry. The water from these springs is ultimately drained in a small stream,

locally known as 'Ban Ganga', and is used for irrigational purposes. As the name 'Ban Ganga' suggests (*ban*=arrow) it is a stream emerging out of that Lakshman Babbuka. About 50 water channels of varying magnitude coming from all directions join the Ban Ganga at Sitabari. The entire water from Sitabari is collected at Gardha, about 16 km away where a reservoir has been constructed. Sugarcane and paddy are raised by irrigating the fields by its water.

Lakshman Kund

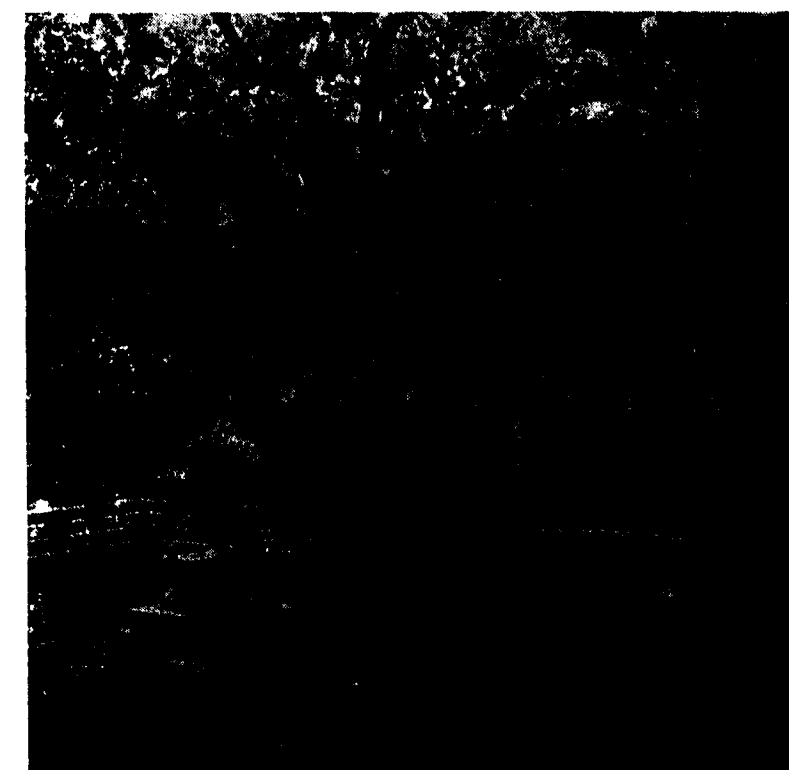
7. This is the biggest of the four Kunds but is only 1½ m deep. Water can be seen flowing out of the rocks at various places. A few steps have been provided on all the sides to enable devotees to reach the water; and the pilgrims take bath sitting on them. A spacious verandah running around this pool is used by the visitors for resting. One of the three gates is called "Lakshman Darwaza". The other two are small ones and open on the west and the east. An idol of Lakshman has been erected on the southern side of the Kund. Lakshman is shown carrying water for Sita. The floor in front of the idol is paved with black and white marble tiles with silver coins stuck in them. There is a wooden platform on one side of the idol. It is called "Lakshman-ka-Takhat". No one but a Brahmin is allowed to sit on it. The members of other communities, however, are permitted to touch it and bow before it. A little in front of it is a plant of Tulsi surrounded by a marble platform. The pilgrims circumambulate about the idol and the Tulsi plant at least once. Under the Champa tree near the Lakshman Darwaza is an idol of Hanuman. Members of all communities can enter the temple and all but Harijans can go very near the idols and take a dip in the holy waters.

Suraj Kund

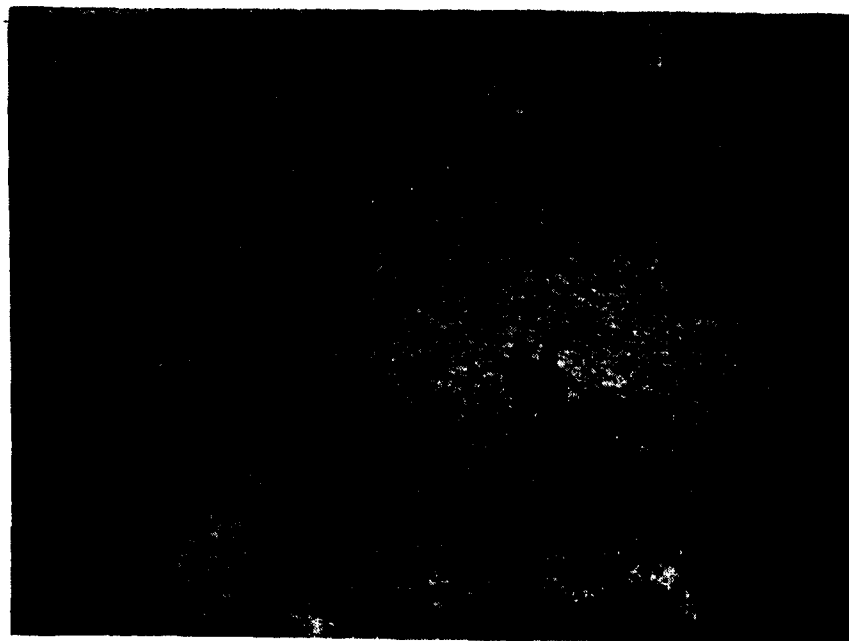
8. This Kund is comparatively very small. Its water is very clean and remains crystal-clear inspite of the fact that all types of people bathe in it. This is so because water emerges out of the soil in large quantity and the surplus overflows the Kund. The platform around the Kund was



The entrance to the shrine



The shrine of Lakshmanji. In the foreground is the Lakshman Kund



The Lakshman Kund



Women bathing in the Suraj Kund

paved with marble in Samvat 1972-74 (1915-17 A.D.) at a cost of Rs. 2,294 out of which Rs. 250 were donated by the old Kota State and the rest were collected by voluntary contributions by the devotees. Verandahs have been constructed all around the Kund and their roof is made of wire gauge so that the dry leaves from surrounding trees may not fall in the holy waters. Ashes of the cremated persons are thrown outside this Kund in water that flows out from it by persons who cannot afford a visit to the holy Ganges. It is taboo to wash clothes in the Kund or to use soap. Pilgrims can, however, do so outside it where a pukka reservoir has been made.

9. This Kund has got two important idols. One is that of the 'Ling' of Mahadeo lying in the right corner and the other is of Suraj Narain (Sun god) mounted on a horse.

10. The remaining two Kunds known as Sita Kund and Bharat Kund are in dilapidated condition as they have not been repaired for some years.

Valmiki Ashram

11. Just opposite to the Sita Kund is the Valmiki Ashram or hermitage. In the courtyard of the Ashram there are 3 strong stone-slabs, two vertical and the third resting over them horizontally so as to form a place for a cradle. This is called the cradle of Lav and Kush, the two sons of Sita who were born in the Valmiki Ashram. It is a very quiet place; many shady trees making it look beautiful. The statutory Panchayat makes an income of Rs. 1,000 by annual lease of the land attached to the Ashram.

12. People offer cash, grain, *batashas* i.e. sugar drops, jaggery, coconut, etc. to the idols of Lakshman, Shiva and Hanuman. Some part of the offerings is retained by the priest but the major portion is returned to the devotees, who distribute a part of it among all persons present. Cash and grain are retained by the priest for his maintenance. No part of the offerings is spent on the worship of the idols or the maintenance of the shrines and the Kunds.

13. The priestess at the Lakshman Kund is Shrimati Surja, a Brahmin widow from Kelwara. She does not worship the idol of Lakshman herself. She has given this work to Sita Ram who is her employee. The right of priesthood is hereditary and she has adopted a boy. The offerings amount to Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 annually which are appropriated by her. She pays Rs. 50 p.m. to Sita Ram and gives him food. She also owns 12 *bighas* of free agricultural land in Kelwara. The income from this agricultural land is in addition to the offerings received. She is further entitled to receive offerings made at the Sita Kund. There is no land attached to the Bharat Kund nor are any offerings made at the place. This is not due to the reason that people have no respect for Bharat; but because the place is in a neglected state. At Suraj Kund there are two priests. One of them is a Brahmin and worships Suraj Narain; and the other, who is Gosain, worships Mahadeo. Both of them are from Kelwara. They retain the offerings presented to these deities.

Market

14. Apart from its religious background, the fair has great economic importance in the area. A large number of traders are attracted to Sitabari at the time of the fair and transactions amounting to a lakh of rupees take place. The shopkeepers come from Delhi and Mathura. About 500 stalls are set up on both sides of the road. They sell all varieties of goods required by the visitors. The fair provides an opportunity to the breeders to bring their cattle for sale. The cattle are brought from Jhalawar, Eklara, Bundi, Kota, Gunah, Bhilwara and Nagaur. All people make roaring business. It is, however, not possible to assess their income as no statistics are available.

Recreation and amusement

15. Most of the people remain busy with their religious observances but some of them, specially the children, enjoy plays presented by the touring companies. They are usually of religious nature. Groups of acrobats come from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The

Directorate of Public Relations, Rajasthan, sends its publicity van to screen films of educative value. The other departments of the State Government also arrange exhibitions of different phases of development programmes executed by them. Sahariyas who throng to the fair can be seen singing and dancing. The fair undoubtedly offers wholesome break in the monotonous life of the rural people in the area.

Residential accommodation

16. There are two *dharamshalas* at Sitabari. They are meant for the use of the pilgrims who come from distant places. The local people and those from the adjoining areas begin arriving in the morning and leave the fair grounds before dusk. A part of one of the *dharamshalas* is used as a Police Station. The Government officials generally pitch their tents in the open as there is no Rest House at Sitabari for them. One of the *dharamshalas* was constructed by the Telis of Kelwara some 40 years ago. The other one belongs to the Kirars of Talhati.

Light

17. No electricity is available at the fair and simple lighting arrangements are made by the statutory Panchayat by putting up kerosene lanterns and patromax lanterns at important places.

Drinking water supply

18. Water required for drinking purpose is drawn from the wells and supplied to the

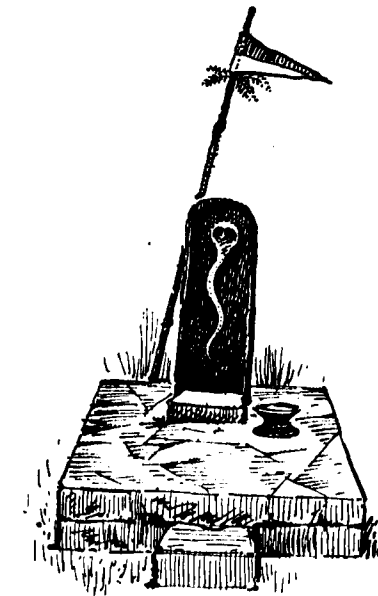
devotees. Some philanthropists also put up water-huts for the purpose.

Management

19. Sites for shops are allotted by the Panchayat of Kelwara. It charges nominal rent from the shopkeepers. The rent varies according to the width of the shop and is usually 75 paise per metre.

20. The Panchayat charges fair-tax at the rate of $1\frac{1}{4}\%$ of the sale-price of the cattle. The circus and dramatic companies have to pay Rs. 75 each for the duration. The total income of the Panchayat from these taxes is about Rs. 7,500 annually. A part of this income is spent by the Panchayat on the maintenance of the temple and making improvements wherever needed. It planted 500 mango and Jamun trees about 8 years ago. The annual expenditure incurred in looking after these plants is Rs. 400. Repairs to the boundary wall and the streams are also done by the Panchayat. The metalled road from Kelwara to Sitabari has been constructed by the Government of Rajasthan; but the road from Suraj Kund to village Khandesh, about 11 km long and to Godla about 19 km in length have been constructed by the statutory Panchayat at the cost of Rs. 1,500.

21. A Magistrate is deputed by the State Government to act as Fair Officer, and with a posse of constables he maintains law and order. Minor offences are dealt with on the spot. The police personnel regulate traffic and supervise transport arrangements.



TEJAJI CATTLE FAIR

TEJAJI CATTLE FAIR is held in Parbatsar town of tehsil Parbatsar, district Nagaur. It is celebrated from Bhadon Badi Dashmi to Bhadon Sudi Ekadashi (August-September) every year. The religious fair of Tejaji is also held on Bhadon Sudi Dashmi which is also known as Teja Dashmi. The fair is held in honour of the celebrated hero Tejaji, who is supposed to be a protector of the cattle-wealth of the country. In the region surrounding Parbatsar many heads of cattle and human beings die of snake-bite. It is said that Tejaji has rendered great help to the people by curing them and their animals of the poisonous effects of snake-bite. This is one reason why men and cattle gather at Parbatsar.

Means of communication

2. Parbatsar is a railway station. It is connected with Makrana, a station on Phulera-Merta section of the Western Railway, by a 19 km

branch line. It is also easily approachable by buses which ply regularly from Parbatsar to Basi, Harsor, Narainpur and Kishangarh. Special buses also run from Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner to Parbatsar at the time of the fair. Parbatsar-Harsor route connects Kuchaman City and Deedwana also. Only gravel roads are to be found in this area. Special trains run between Makrana and Parbatsar when the fair is on. During that time a flag station is also established just 2 km from Parbatsar to provide wagons to the traders to transport cattle to various destinations. In 1963, 25,000 cattle were lifted by 700 railway wagons. The people of the rural area generally make use of camels and bullock-carts.

3. The routes for the export of cattle are definite. They have their origin at the place where the cattle fair is organised - the destination being the various towns and villages in other

tates from where the purchasers come. Private vehicles are also available at the fair for the transportation of animals by road. The local purchasers select the route where facilities of food, fodder and water are available. While leading the cattle on foot they avail of the grazing land on the way and the night halts are made at convenient places. When animals are to be transported by trucks, the operation is done mostly during night and the required fodder is carried in the trucks. In the transshipment of cattle by rail fodder is purchased either at the place of origin or at junctions. The attendants travelling with the animals provide them with water at the railway watering stations.

Origin of the place

4. Literally the word 'Parbatsar' means a village located on the bank of a river or a tank, and surrounded by hillocks. It is situated on 6°53' north longitude and 74°46' east latitude and about 660 m above the mean sea level.

Origin of the fair

5. The fair is held at Parbatsar since Samvat 752 (1695 A.D.). At first the fair was held at Sursura. Subsequently, the venue changed to Parbatsar. It is said that during the time of Maharaja Vijai Singh there was a prominent Hakim at Parbatsar, named Bhandari Vijai Singh, who found that Marwaris, especially the Jats, a great number went to Sursura village and the Maharaja of Kishangarh made good income out of this. He knew that the main object with which the Jats went to Sursura was to offer worship to Tejaji. He gave out that Tejaji appeared before him in dream and desired that his devotees henceforth should worship him at Parbatsar. The Hakim got a figure of Tejaji made and ordered all Jats to gather at Parbatsar for the fair and not to go to Sursura any more. Some persons are of the opinion that there was no proper arrangement of water at Sursura, and the people on that account decided to change the venue of the fair to Parbatsar.

6. People can easily spare time to participate in the fair as they are free from agricultural activities at that time. They are in a mood to

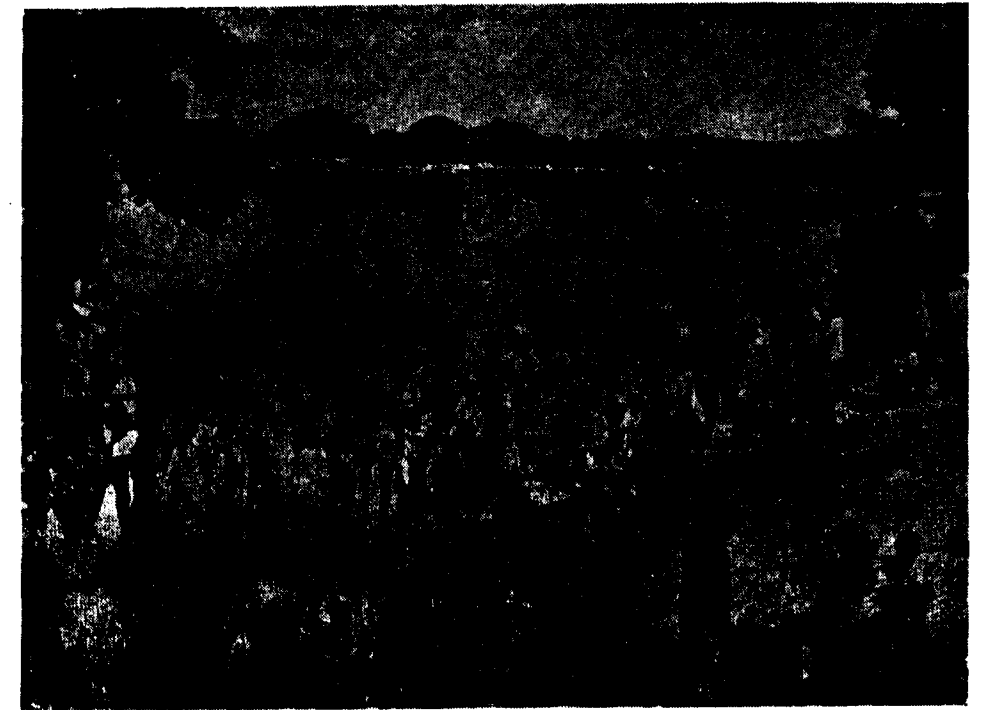
enjoy. They get an opportunity to meet their friends and relatives, and to purchase and sell their cattle at high prices.

Life of Tejaji

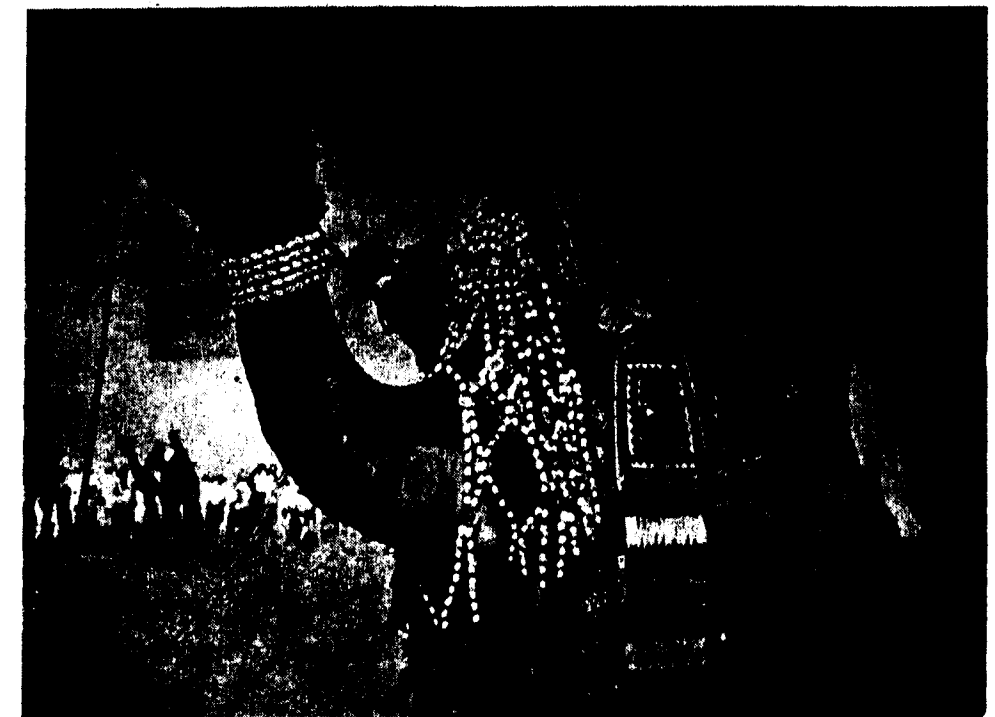
7. Tejaji, it is reported, was a Jat of village Karnal in Nagaur district. He lived in the 10th century A.D. and was married to the daughter of Badna in village Panera of tehsil Roop Nagar of Kishangarh State.

8. According to a legend, Tejaji was tending his cows when he observed that a particular cow which belonged to a Brahmin went to a certain spot in the forest nearby and, following her, saw that milk flowed spontaneously from her udders into a hole inhabited by a snake. Tejaji on his own offered to give milk to the snake daily, and thus prevented loss of milk to the Brahmin. One day he could not give milk to the snake as he had to go to his father-in-law. The snake became annoyed, overtook him on the way and wanted to bite him. Tejaji confessed his fault but he requested the snake-god to allow him to go to his father-in-law's house first and said that on his return journey the snake could bite him. The snake-god agreed to the proposal. Tejaji went on his errand and at Kishangarh he rescued the village cattle from the hands of robbers but was severely wounded in the encounter. He was very particular about his return journey for he was eager to fulfil the promise. He returned to the village and presented himself before the snake-god, who could not find any spot to bite as Tejaji had been severely injured by the robbers in all parts of his body except the tongue. Tejaji, therefore, put out his tongue which the snake bit and Tejaji died.

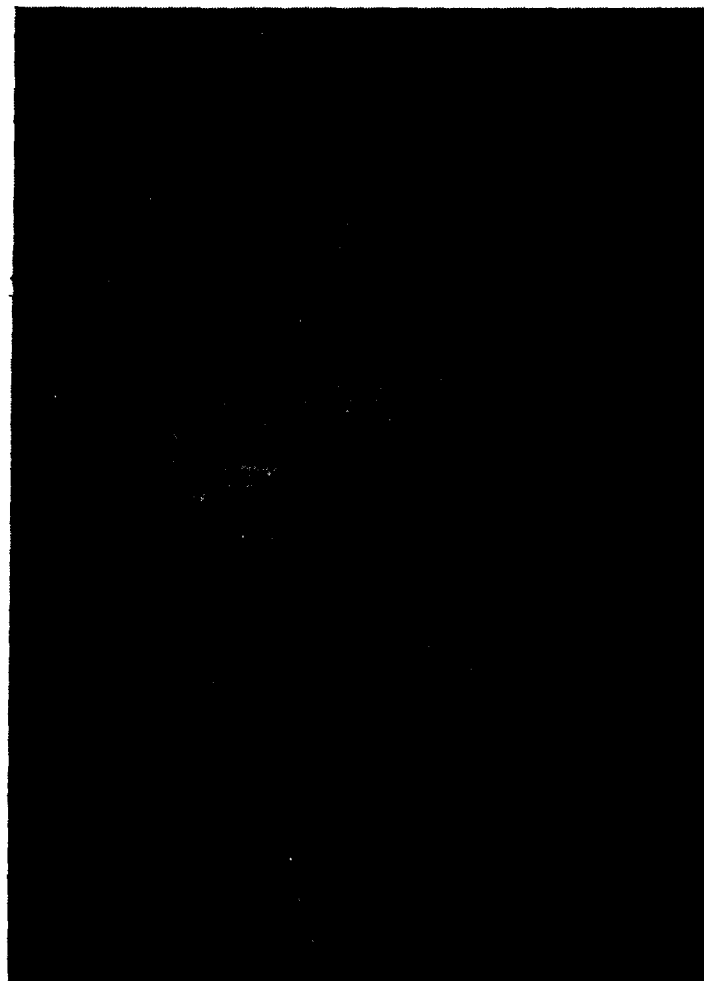
9. According to another legend, some cows belonging to Lachha Gujar of Paner, Tejaji's father-in-law, having been stolen by Minas, assistance of Tejaji was sought. Tejaji pursued the Minas and recovered the cows. While proceeding on his errand to recover the cows, Tejaji met a snake in the way who wanted to bite him. Tejaji informed him of his mission and promised to present himself to the snake after his duty was done. Tejaji kept his promise



The Kharia Tank



A decorated Camel



Visitors posing for a photograph

but he was wounded all over his body and the snake could not find any un-injured part where to sting him. Tejaji then offered his tongue. The snake bit him there but he offered to restore him to life. Tejaji refused the offer but requested the snake-god to grant him the power of restoring to life all persons and animals bitten by snake. The snake-god bestowed this power on the dying Tejaji who laid down his mortal remains at village Sursura, 11 km from Kishangarh. His wife immolated herself on his funeral pyre.

10. Whenever any one of the people of this area is bitten by a snake, they tie a thread round the right foot while repeating the name of Tejaji. The thread is removed on Teja Dashmi before the image of Tejaji and the person is cured by sprinkling holy water. Tejaji is represented as a man on horseback with drawn sword while a snake is shown biting his tongue. Nearly all Jats wear amulets or the effigy of Tejaji with this device round their necks.

The memorial

11. The temple of Tejaji is situated on the bank of the Khariya tank and his image has been installed in a room of 2 m × 1 m size constructed on the platform at the height of about 3 m from the ground. On his left stands an image of his wife. Both are shown riding on horseback with drawn sword. The temple was constructed in Samvat 1781 (1724 A. D.).

People's participation

12. Both Hindus and Muslims participate in the fair in the sense that they gather there to make purchases; but from religious point of view only Hindus attend the fair. Muslims of the region, no doubt, have great respect for Tejaji. Jats are the principal followers of the deity but other castes also pay respect to him. The participants in the sale and purchase of cattle can be broadly classified into three classes :

1. The breeders i.e. the persons who rear cattle at their homes or farms.
2. The middlemen or dealers of cattle, i.e. persons who do not rear the cattle

themselves but purchase them from the breeders in one cattle fair and sell them in another at a profit.

3. The outside purchasers who come from other States and purchase animals for breeding or for re-sale. They are chiefly connected with the export of cattle.

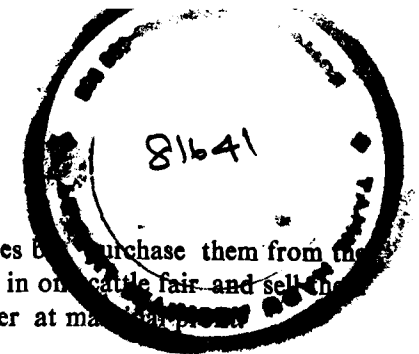
In the first category come the peasants of the district who rear and breed animals and sell them in the cattle fair. They can be further classified into two classes :

1. Those who rear and breed cattle to sell them and earn a profit.
2. Those who do not rear cattle for profit but have to sell their surplus stock.

13. As regards the castes engaged in the trade there is no restriction. Anybody can participate in the transaction but as far as breeders are concerned they belong to agricultural class consisting of Jats and Malis. Rebaries, Banjaras, Gujars, Ahirs and Bishnois usually come as middlemen.

Offerings

14. People participating in the fair offer something to the temple as well as to the saint. Their offerings consist mostly of coconut, sugar drops and sweets. Cash is also offered. The priest retains the cash but some portion of other offerings is returned to the devotees who distribute it to all those present. The offerings so collected are the property of the priest. For the last ten years the right to collect offerings is given by auction to the highest bidder. This year the final bid of Rs. 5,811 was accepted and the amount was deposited in the Government treasury under a separate head of the temple. The amount so collected will be utilised in constructing the temple of Tejaji at the new site of 'Peerji-ka-Naka' situated at a distance of 3 km from the present site, where the fair is likely to be held in future. During the rest of the year the priest collects the offerings.



The priest

15. The priest belongs to the Brahmin community. He worships the saint daily. He has the highest regard for the devotees and has voluntarily offered to the State Government to auction the right of collection of offerings at the time of the fair so that the temple of Tejaji may be constructed at the new site.

Market

16. The shops which are on the site of the main road are auctioned by the Municipal Board while the rest are auctioned by the Animal Husbandry Department. The minimum price fixed by the Department is 10 paise per sq. feet and the first bid starts from this amount. The site plan is prepared by the Department. Sites are earmarked for commodities. The exhibition area is entirely separate where sites are allotted to the different departments of the Rajasthan Government for putting up their stalls. This year there were about 600 shops. There were shops of food stuffs, utensils, cloth, food grains, agricultural implements, animal stock, books, hotels and restaurants, cobblers etc. The shopkeepers generally come from Ajmer, Merta, Nagaur, Jodhpur, Sikar and Pali districts. All the shopkeepers make good income. The general impression is that every shopkeeper earns Rs. 150 to Rs. 300 during the fair.

Recreation and amusement

17. It is really a great pleasure to see the healthy bulls, bullocks and calves of Nagauri breed in the cattle fair. They are a source of great amusement to the visitors as well as the traders. The breeders bathe their bullocks, paint their horns and parade them in the fair to attract buyers. The camels are also decorated with fine saddles and ornaments. Races of bullock-carts and camels are organised and the victorious are awarded prizes. Cultural shows are also organised in the fair. The Municipal Board arranges Kavi Sammelan and dramas. The Animal Husbandry Department, Public Relations Department, Family Planning Unit, Agricultural, Co-operative and

Education Departments put up exhibition stalls in the fair to highlight development plans. During the year 1963 the stall of the Animal Husbandry Department was given the first prize and Family Planning Unit the second prize.

Light and water

18. The arrangements for light and water are made by the Animal Husbandry Department. They hang petromax lanterns at important centres in the fair. In addition to it they also supply one petromax to a group of villagers. The tank and wells are the only source of drinking water for the visitors and sometimes, due to the late monsoon, there is acute shortage of water.

Management of the fair

19. The District Animal Husbandry Officer is the Fair Officer by virtue of office. He is assisted in his duties by his colleagues, compounders, sanitary inspectors, vaccinators, etc. He is also the Secretary of the Executive Committee which looks after all the arrangements. The district level officers are the members of the Executive Committee and the Collector is the Chairman. In 1963, Rs. 15,000 were allotted for the fair. Villagers come in groups and prefer to occupy a particular spot in the fair where they have been staying at the previous fairs along with their cattle. The same arrangement is approved by the Fair Officer and petromax and medical aid is given to the particular group at the place of their occupation. The check-posts are established at important points in the fair ground and other places. In 1963, 18 check-posts were established. When the sellers enter the fair ground along with their cattle they are required to enter through one of these check-posts and to obtain a red slip from the Nakedar of the Animal Husbandry Department in which the total number of animals brought to the fair is mentioned. After securing the slip the owner of the cattle is free to take the cattle in the fair. On the date of the commencement of the fair, the Fair Officer allows sale of the cattle. After his permission the buyers and the sellers are at liberty to make transactions and on the completion of the sale, a white slip is issued by the

fair authority through his agents who are given commission on sales. This slip duly stamped, is a sort of sale deed which is signed by both the parties. The cost of white slip is 25 paise of which 10 paise are borne by the seller and the rest by the purchaser. After the issue of the white slip the seller and the buyer are legally bound to honour the deed. After taking delivery of the animals and payment of the purchase price, the purchaser has to go to the fair authority to get *ravanna* (export permit) so that he may move the cattle out of the fair. Before issuing the export permit the Government charges the fair fees according to a prescribed schedule. The following was the schedule of fair fees in 1962 and 1963 :

Name of animal	Fair fee per animal	
	1962	1963
Bullock	3.00	5.00
Camel	5.00	8.00
Horse	5.00	6.00
Buffaloe	2.00	2.50
Donkey	0.50	2.00
Goat and sheep	—	0.50
Mule	2.00	2.50

20. In addition to the fee an additional sale tax of 5% on the sale value was collected on camels exported outside the State. According to the Excise Department which had collected the tax on behalf of the Central Government on spot, 250 camels were exported from Rajasthan to other States, and the revenue of Rs. 8,000 was collected from this source. In 1963, 25,000 bullocks were exported from Rajasthan. Due to the enhanced rate of fair fees and sales tax on camels the purchasers were disgruntled and the sales were adversely affected. There were no other taxes by the Panchayat or the Municipal Board on the import and export of animals. In order to check evasion of fair fees strict checking is done at all the check-posts and the guilty are brought to books. The Fair Officer and his assistants are very vigilant in controlling the movement of the cattle. Even more than 730 animals were reported to have been taken out of the fair grounds without paying fair

fees. During 1962 the income of the fair was Rs. 1,68,849 while it was Rs. 1,78,000 in 1963. In spite of the fact that the fair fees had been increased by more than 50 percent, the income was almost the same. In 1962 the total income of breeders was Rs. 1,34,72,559 while in 1963 it was Rs. 96,71,514.

21. Apart from these arrangements, the sanitation is looked after by the Fair Officer. He is assisted in this work by a team of doctors and sanitary inspectors deputed by the Public Health Department. There was an Ayurvedic Hospital and medical dispensary. A veterinary dispensary was also established to look after the health of the cattle. During the fair 32,000 cattle were vaccinated against rinderpest. About 100 animals were daily brought to this dispensary for treatment. During the fair black-quarter disease spread and 40 animals were affected of whom 35 died. The preventive measures were taken at once and 492 animals which were likely to be affected by the disease were vaccinated.

22. A Sub-Divisional Magistrate is responsible for maintenance of law and order. He is assisted in his duties by the Deputy Superintendent of Police and his staff. In 1962 there were several cases of pick-pocketing but in 1963 effective measures were taken and the pick-pockets were rounded up before they could do any mischief.

23. A branch of the State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur was also opened at the fair.

24. During the year 1962, 1,48,999 cattle assembled in the fair out of which 53,425 were sold while in the year 1963, the total number of cattle assembled was 97,218 of which 32,540 were sold. As regards the type of breed, most of the bullocks were of the Nagauri breed but Kankrech, Tharparkar were also there. Camels of Marwari and Bikaneri breed were also seen in the fair. The following are the statistics regarding the cattle assembled and disposed off during the fairs held in 1962 and 1963. The maximum and the minimum price of each head of cattle has also been given in the statement :

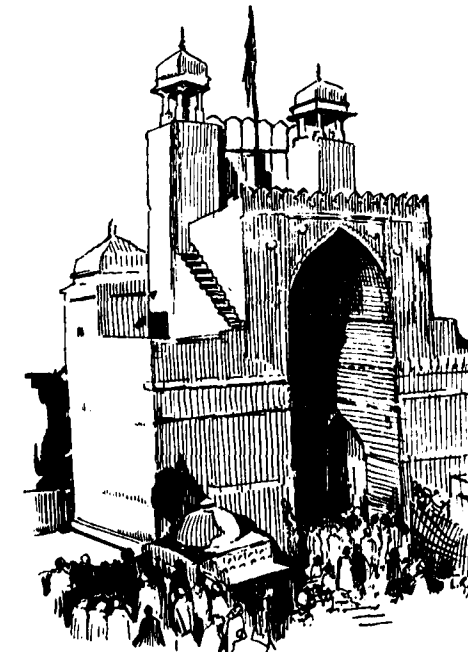
Type of cattle	1962				1963			
	Total No. of cattle assembled	Total No. of cattle disposed off	Price in rupees		Total No. of cattle assembled	Total No. of cattle disposed off	Price in rupees	
			Max	Min			Max	Min
Bullocks	126,189	47,809	2,000	250	76,058	28,417	1,700	150
Buffaloes	7,170	1,985	200	30	5,409	1,197	120	32
Horses	869	262	450	200	62	38	500	400
Camels	12,364	2,182	1,200	250	15,682	3,037	1,000	300
Sheep	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goats	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Donkeys	2,338	1,187	25	15	2	1	30	20

It is evident from the statement that the prices of animals vary with its age, breed and quality. There is so much difference in the prices according to the above statistics that during this fair the highest selling price of a bullock was Rs. 1,700 while the minimum was only Rs. 150.

Incentives and awards

25. The fair ends with the prize distribution ceremony in which prizes are distributed to the best

animals. The owners of the cattle are also awarded merit certificates. The selection of the cattle is done by the Director of Animal Husbandry with the assistance of the departmental experts and people's representatives who are experienced men. The fair report is also read at the function which gives a comparative review of the fair, the development of the cattle and the efforts made by the State to help the people in improving their livestock.



URS AJMER SHARIF

AJMER, the beautiful city, is situated in the heart of Rajasthan on 26°27' north latitude and 74°37' east longitude. This ancient city lies in the valley between Taragarh and Madar hills. Its climate is quite healthy and nights during summer are very pleasant. The area where Ajmer is located was once inhabited by Mers and it was in the eleventh century that it was over-run by a Chauhan military conqueror Ajaipal by name, after whom it was named as Ajaimeru, later known as Ajmer. This city has great importance for Hindus and Muslims alike as it is associated with Pushkar, one of the holiest lakes and the Dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin, one of the holiest Muslim sanctuaries in India. The Muslim world calls it as 'Ajmer Sharif', the 'Holy Ajmer' and the biggest Muslim fair in the country, the Urs (Garib Nawaj) is held here every year in the Muslim month of Rajab from 1st to 6th. Khwaja Moinuddin the Muslim divine (1136 to 1233 A.D.)* is also popularly

known as 'Garib Nawaj' i.e. the helper of the poor as the Khwaja is said to have helped the poor and needy throughout his life.

2. Ajmer, having a population of 231, 240, comprising of the Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis and the Jews is a cosmopolitan town having all amenities of life. The city is inhabited by 19,792 Muslims of whom 10,293 are males and 9,499 are females.

3. It is an important junction on Delhi-Ahmedabad metre gauge section of Western Railway. A branch line connects Ajmer to Udaipur and Ratlam via Chitorgarh; and good metalled roads join it to Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Udaipur and Kota.

4. During Urs Ajmer becomes a centre of religious, cultural and commercial activities, when over two lakh Muslims assemble there to pay

* "The Holy Biography of Hajrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer" by W.B. Begg.

homage to the memory of Khwaja Moinuddin at the Dargah (Mausoleum). The localities with concentration of Muslims present a gay spectacle on this occasion. Men and women put on new clothes and arrange feasts at their residences. The children also make themselves merry. Many of the devotees arrange feasts etc. not only during the days of the fair but also on the sixth day of every lunar month of Hejira calendar. These feasts are known as *niyaz* and are given after performing *fatiha* ceremony. Those who can, arrange Qawwalies also and read Milad Sharif.

5. Nothing can be said with certainty about the beginning of the Urs fair. Because of his habit of favouring the poor and helping the needy, the Khwaja was very popular and he initiated a large number of people to Islam; and many of these devotees began to assemble here to celebrate his Urs ceremony (death anniversary). Later, because of the interest shown by the Mughal emperors in the shrine, the number of devotees and visitors increased, which, with the lapse of time, became a permanent feature. Nothing can be definitely said regarding the non-Muslim participation in this fair as no such data is available; though the Dargah authorities hold the view that it has increased in the last decade. More than 80% of the congregation is from outside Ajmer. A good number of the devotees come from Pakistan too. It is said that Muslims from every corner of the world come here to pay their homage to the Khwaja.

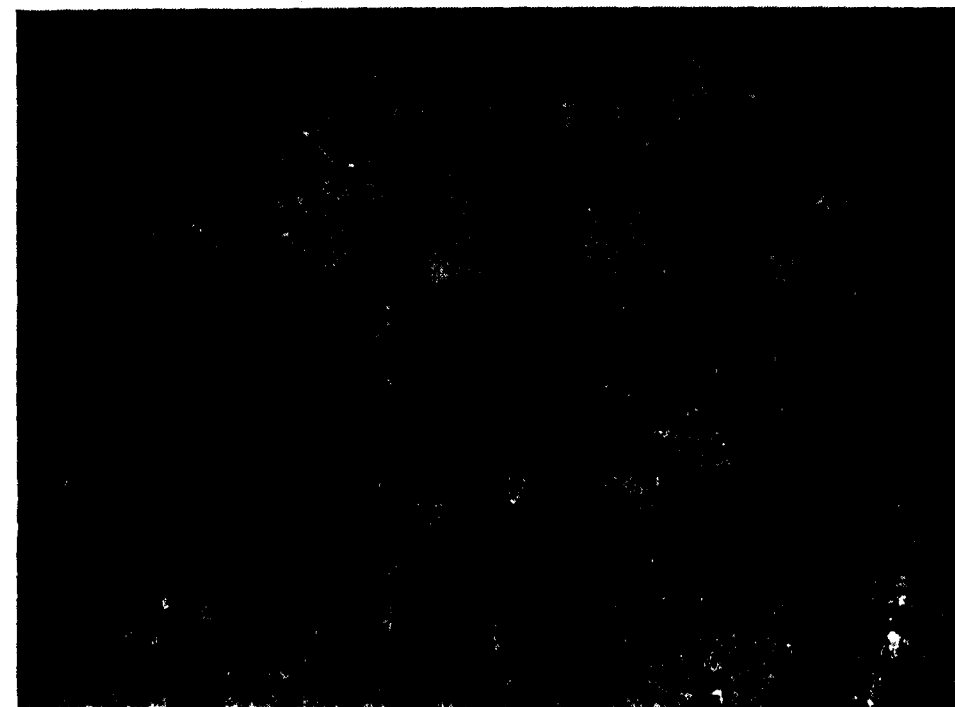
6. Special arrangements are made by the railway authorities and special buses are plied from all corners of the country to cope with the rush. Arrangements are made for the selling of railway tickets in the Dargah office. A railway enquiry office is also set up there during the days of the fair. Those who can afford, stay in hotels and messes, while others accommodate themselves in the Dargah premises or in the tents erected by the authorities for the purpose in the open grounds at the back of the Dargah. No statewide or sectwise distinction is observed at these places and the devotees and the visitors readily accommodate themselves wherever they can.

7. It is generally observed that cholera in epidemic form breaks out during the Urs. The causes are not far to seek. The close contact of people in hotels, restaurants and other places, and eating of cheap, stale food, unhygienically prepared, stored and sold are some of them. The Dargah authorities do their best to check the spread of the disease by spraying D.D.T. and inoculating people and repeatedly asking them to observe the general rules of hygiene and sanitation. Temporary lavatories and urinals are erected by the Dargah authorities but these prove to be inadequate; and all people do not use them to satisfy their natural urges. This also helps the spread of the diseases. Special arrangements are made to remove patients to the hospitals. Small Unani and Allopathic dispensaries are also opened within the Dargah premises.

8. Special arrangements are made by the district authorities to regulate the crowd and to maintain law and order. Special police personnel are deputed for the purpose; and they are assisted in their task by volunteers belonging to various organisations in the city.

Life of Khwaja

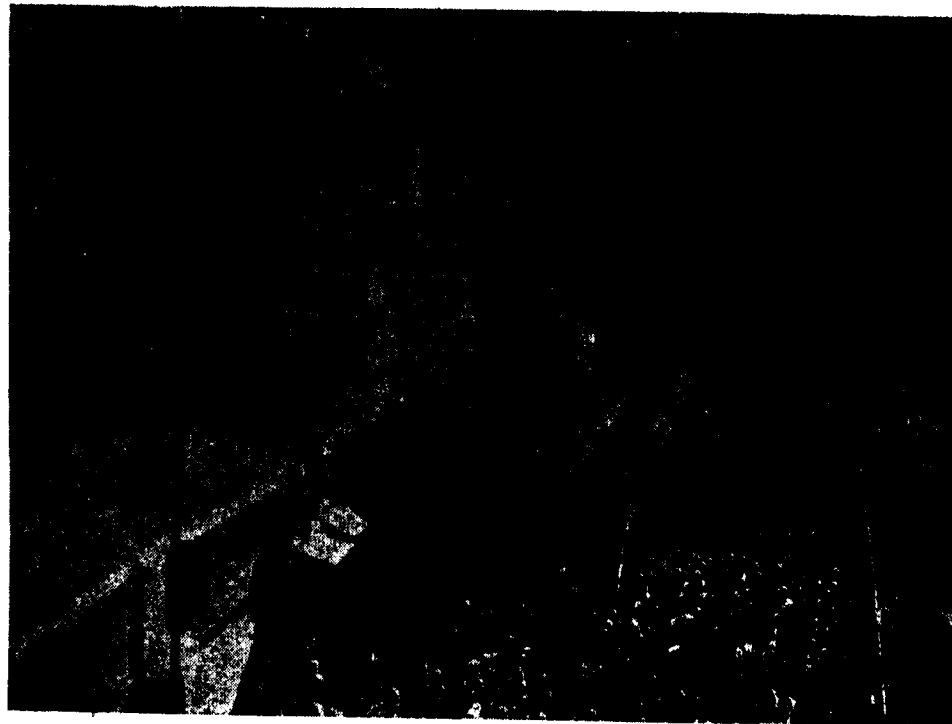
9. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, in whose memory the Urs is held, was born in the town of Sanjar in Sistan (Iran) on April 18, 1142 A.D. On father's side he was in direct line from Hazrat Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet. He was born at a time when the whole Middle East was seething with troubles. In boyhood Khwaja witnessed ghastly scenes of massacre at the hands of Tartar invaders. As he grew up, he decided to renounce the world. Having disposed of his house, the garden and the water-mill, which he had inherited from his father, he entered the service of a great mystic saint, Khwaja Usman Harooni, who later initiated him into the ways of the spirituals and the mystics. Hazrat Usman was a recognised caliph belonging to the Sufi school of Chishtia order. Chisht is a village in Khurasan and it was one of the four seats of Sufism which stands for strict adherence to the laws of Koran. The word Sufi comes from *suf* i.e. wool; and means a person who wears it as a mark of personal



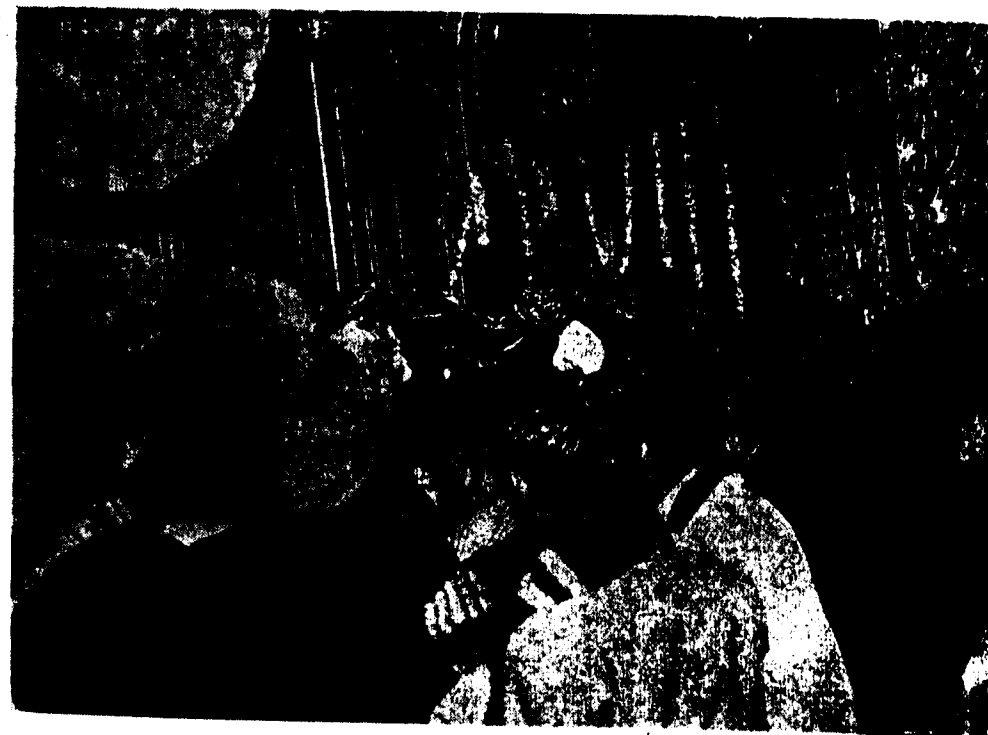
A birds-eye-view of the Dargah



Devotees reciting verses from the Holy Koran in the Dargah



The outer view of the sanctum sanctorum



Devotees inside the sanctum sanctorum of the Dargah

penitence. Sufism enjoins upon its followers a life of piety, enlightenment, detachment and renunciation.

10. The Khwaja spent 20 years in the company of his spiritual master who ultimately invested him with the office of the caliph and conferred upon him the sacred relics of the Prophet viz. a staff, a robe (*Khirqah*), wooden sandals and a small carpet (*Musalla*) used for prayers. The Khwaja was further ordained to carry on the peaceful message of Islam to the afflicted lands. He started on this mission in the year 1186 A.D.

11. There is an account told about his journey to Ajmer. While he was at Madina, the Khwaja had a prophetic dream; and, during his spiritual communion with the holy Prophet, he was commanded to repair to Ajmer for the service of Islam. It is stated that he was shown a sketch map of India prominently showing the geographical location of Ajmer. He immediately resumed his journey to India. But it was only in the year 1191 A.D. that he reached the country. The date of his entry coincides with the invasion of India by Mohammed Ghori. Some historians maintain that the Khwaja came to India several years before the conquest of Ajmer by Shahbuddin Ghori. In *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, it is mentioned that Khwaja Moinuddin came to India with the army of Sultan Ghori. Famous historian Farishta also supports this view when he says "Syed Hussain Mashedi Khang Sawar was appointed Darogah of Ajmer and he received the Sheikh (Khwaja Moinuddin) with great respect."* Whatever be the truth, Khwaja Sahib came to India to preach Islam and later reached Ajmer when Prithvi Raj was its ruler. He made it his headquarters and spent the rest of his life in propagating his faith through his religious discourses based on the Koran. He stressed the importance of pious living and laid down a code for social, moral and intellectual conduct of men in their affairs. In his opinion the gospel truth of Islam lies in metaphysical relation between man and his Creator without any intermediary. To

him righteous living was the essence of peace between man and man. He died at the ripe age of 91 in the year 1233 A.D. It is said he entered a cell on the 1st of Rajab for final prayers leaving a word to his disciples not to disturb him. There he remained in meditation for five days. On the sixth day when his cell was opened, he was found dead.

Fair

12. To perpetuate the memory of this great saint of Ajmer his death anniversary is being celebrated every year in the form of Urs and the votaries of Islam and devotees of the Khwaja throng at the holy place from all over India and Pakistan to pay their respectful homage to and seek and receive blessings of the Sufi saint. The Urs of a holy personage is observed on the day of the union of his soul with the Supreme Spirit or Universal soul. All the pilgrims make rich offerings (*Najrana*) at the holy spot where the Khwaja was entombed in the Dargah. Although it belongs to the Sufis of Chishti order, it is venerated by Muslims of all sects; and even Hindus participate in the celebrations. The Dargah, situated at the foot of the northern extremity of Taragarh, covers a large area where his devotees later on constructed impressive buildings, most of which are monuments of architectural beauty.

13. Khwaja Moinuddin is believed to have possessed miraculous powers enabling him to do things like ensuring child birth, curing all the ailments, warding off evil spirits, ensuring good luck. He is venerated by his devotees with such a high esteem that he is placed next only to the Almighty.

14. Centres of the Sufis are found in almost every town with Muslim population in the country. No information is available regarding the number of devotees of different sects among the Sufis or the initiated devotees of the Khwaja. He is said to have initiated about 9 million persons into Islam. Khwaja Moinuddin

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is given the highest position by all the sects of the Muslims and the Sajjada Nashin of this shrine is also given the highest status. No information is available regarding the status of various saints and Sajjada Nashins of other orders of Muslims.

The sanctum sanctorum

15. The main shrine has marble flooring and a beautiful tomb with a golden pinnacle at the top. The tomb also is of white marble inlaid with semi-precious stones. It is covered with velvet, embroidered with gold and silver tracings. Running around the tomb, which is surrounded by a silver screen, is a silver railing. The distance between the railing and the tomb which is covered with a canopy, is about a metre. The ceiling of the tomb is decorated with embroidered velvet. Rose and jasmine flowers, sandal paste, perfumes and incense offered by the devotees to the tomb fill the air with fascinating aroma. Overlooking the principal entrance, there is a beautiful porch known as 'Begami Dalan'. It was constructed by princess Jahanara, daughter of emperor Shahjahan. The walls, the pillars and the ceiling of this courtyard are embellished with gold. There are two entrances to the shrine through this portico and the doors of both of them are mounted with beautifully carved silver plates. Among other prominent attractions are the following:

Buland Darwaja (High gateway): There are two mighty gateways about 22.5 m high. The Nizami gate on the northern side is the main entrance to the Dargah and was built in 1912 A.D. by the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the other, the Buland Darwaja, was built with a donation from Sultan Gayasuddin of Mandu between 1469-1500 A.D. On the top of the northern gateway two big drums may be seen. They were presented by emperor Akbar. These drums are sounded at fixed hours to the accompaniment of other musical instruments, *nafirls* and *shehnais*. The same routine is followed during the days of the fair also, although there is no fixed time for the private Qawwals who can be seen singing Qawwalies at any time of the day during the Urs.

Akbari Masjid: It is a spacious mosque 42m square and is an exquisite specimen of Mughal architecture. These days a school for religious education meets in one of the wings of this mosque. It is stated to have been constructed during the reign of Akbar.

Mehfilkhana: It is a huge hall 18 m square with an enclosure running around it. This magnificent building serves as Mehfilkhana or hall of congregation for Qawwals during the Urs.

Jama Masjid: Towards the south of the Mehfilkhana stands the Jama Masjid built in white marble by emperor Shahjahan in 1638 A.D. It has an open enclosure and fine arches inscribed with verses from the Koran.

Degs: On either side of the Buland Darwaja there are two huge Degs (cauldrons) fixed into solid masonry. The diameter of the larger one is over 3 m and it can hold 37 quintals of rice. The smaller one has the capacity of 29.6 quintals. The cost of preparing rice with sugar, ghee and dry fruits comes to about Rs. 8,000 for the bigger Deg and Rs. 5,000 for the smaller one. The bigger Deg was presented by emperor Akbar and smaller by emperor Jahangir. During the Urs rice is cooked and is allowed to be looted by the Amla Shagird Pesha i.e. servants of the Dargah. The practice was started by the great Mughal emperor Akbar, who in order to avoid the quarreling of the people over the distribution of the cooked stuff and wastage of material during these, passed an order and entitled only the servants of the Dargah to share it by way of looting it. The looting is a scene worth watching. The looters dressed in a special kit jump into the Degs and in an hour empty the contents. The rice so looted is distributed to the devotees as *tabarruk* on payment.

Tomb of Charyar: It is situated in the graveyard of this name. It is reported that four fakirs who happened to be fast friends used to live here. They came to the holy city together and died simultaneously. Later on tombs were built on their graves. These fakirs were not related to the Khwaja in any way and are said

to have come at a later date than the Khwaja's. The mausoleums of the two descendants of the Khwaja are also to be seen in this graveyard. No ceremony, connected with the Urs, takes place there.

16. There is no restriction on the basis of sex and religion in the access to various spots in the Dargah premises except for the Mehfls where females are not allowed to sit with the males and have to sit at separate places fixed for them. None is allowed to go bare headed inside the sanctum sanctorum and the Mehfls etc.

Urs ceremonies

17. The ceremonies of the Urs start on the twentyfifth day of Jamadi-ul-Akhir, the sixth lunar month of the Hejira calendar, by hoisting a white flag on the tomb of the Khwaja at about 5 a.m. It is done by the Sajjada Nashin, with the accompaniment of musical instruments. On the twenty-ninth day of the month the Jannati Darwaja of the Dargah is opened at about 5 a.m. This gate is opened only during the Urs. The name signifies the gateway to heaven and it is commonly believed that the man crossing this gate seven times is sure to get the gates of heaven opened for him. On the 1st of Rajab at about 1 a.m. the tomb of the Khwaja is washed with rose water and sandal paste. It is then anointed with perfumes. A well embroidered silken covering is laid on the tomb by the Sajjada Nashin, the descendant representative of the Khwaja. The word Sajjada Nashin means a successor to the office of the representative of the Chishti sect. Before the establishment of the Mughal rule this office used to be held not only by persons directly descended from the Khwaja but also by his other devotees. During Akbar's reign the office was held by a person claiming direct descent from the Khwaja and from that day it became a hereditary office. Jahangir in his *farman* of 1612 A.D. conferred the office of the Mutwalli (Administrator) on the Sajjada Nashin. The two offices were separated in 1627 A.D. and since then the Mutwallis have always been appointed by the State and the office of the Sajjada Nashin had been inherited by the descendants of the previous Sajjada Nashin.

18. After the morning prayer, an assembly of the devotees is held near the shrine. In the evening at about 5 p.m. henna and *kalawa* are presented to the tomb after the *fatihah* ceremony. Henna in the form of paste is applied to the pillars; *kalawa*, a kind of dyed thread, is wrapped around the pillars of the canopy. This continues from the first to the fifth of Rajab. At night a religious Mehfil (a gathering) is held in the Mehfilkhana, which is presided over by the Sajjada Nashin who sits on the gadi of the Khwaja under a brocade *shamiana*. The Mehfil starts on the arrival of the Sajjada Nashin who sits at the place assigned to him. A *dastarkhwan* (pedestal) is placed before him on which some *batashas* i.e. sugar drops are placed in a plate. Then Huffaz (a priest of a sort) reads *fatihah* after which the *batashas* are distributed. Then the Qawwals of the Dargah pay their respect to the Sajjadanashin by singing Qawwalis after which other Qawwals sing theirs.

19. During these Mehfls, which are held on all the six days at about 11 p.m., Qawwali is the chief item on the programme. These Qawwalis which are relayed by the A.I.R. now-a-days are spiritual songs on Sufism highlighting the qualities and the powers of the Khwaja and are sung by professional Qawwals (singers). The Qawwals reap a very good harvest, as they receive good reward for their performances from the audience. The audience do not give the money directly to the Qawwals. They present it to the Sajjada Nashin placing it on their right palm, with the left palm placed below it and kneeling before him, who then takes it with his right hand touches his eyes with it and gives it to the chobdar (an orderly) to deliver it to the Qawwal concerned. If some other pir or Sajjada Nashin happens to sit along with him the money may be presented to him in the same manner, who then presents it to the Sajjada Nashin of this Dargah and it is then donated to the Qawwals. The Qawwali programme ends after mid-night but before the *fatihah* ceremony, which is a prayer for eternal peace for the soul of the departed Khwaja Sahib. The Sajjada Nashin goes to the tomb of the Khwaja at about 1.30 a.m. while the Mehfil is in progress to perform the ceremony of *gusal* (washing of the tomb

with rose water) as described above, and then returns at about 3 a.m. The Qawwali, are sung for about an hour more, during which period tea is served now-a-days to the dignitaries and important guests. At about 4 a.m. *fatiha* is read and then *niyaz* of squash and sandal paste is given. Both these things are given in special bowls to the dignitaries and the important guests and in small earthen pots to all those present. This marks the end of the ceremony, after which the Sajjada Nashin leaves the Mehfil. While the Sajjada Nashin performs the ceremony of *gusal*, the Mehfil is presided over by his younger brother. It is generally presided over by the person who is entitled to the office next to him.

20. More than four thousand persons present themselves in the Mehfil on the night of fifth Rajab. The number continually decreases as the night passes and about half of the gathering remains upto the *fatiha* ceremony.

21. During the Qawwalis many a spectator goes into a trance, shivering and moving his body briskly, repeating the hemistich of the Qawwalies along with the Qawwals and with tears in his eyes. This state of trance is known as *hal* and often scores of people can be seen in this state of exaltation. Such situations are not uncommon and are handled with great care. In 1963 such an occasion arose on the last Qawwali day when about two thousand persons stood up on their toes. This situation which remained tense for some fifteen minutes, was saved by slowly withdrawing the Qawwals.

22. The sanctum sanctorum remains open on all these days for the devotees who make offerings of flowers, rose water, perfumes, sheets of cloth and cash.

23. The offerings in cash are kept by the Khadims. Three types of sheets are offered viz. the *chadar*, the *gilaph* and the *neema*. The first might be embroidered or plain and is from two to four metres in length. It is kept by the Khadims. The *gilaph* is a finely embroidered silk cloth of 36 m and the *neema*, which is meant to be a lining for the *gilaph* is of ordinary long-

cloth, also of the same length. When a *gilaph* is offered the *neema* is also offered along with it otherwise only *neema* is offered. These sheets are offered after the Namaz of Johar. The devotees offering these bring them on their heads with Qawwals accompanying them singing Qawwalis in honour of the Khwaja. The Qawwals stay at the entrance of the tomb while the devotees go inside and make the offering. The *gilaph* and the *neema* are kept by the Baridar i.e. head Khadim, who gives these to the Dargah authorities. The rose water and the perfumes are used in the *gusal* ceremony. The devotees enter the tomb of the Khwaja with the offerings on their hands. These are received by the Khadims who stand inside the silver railing which runs round the tomb of Khwaja. The Khadims then give some of the flowers etc. to the devotees. They continually ask the devotees to touch the sheets and scarfs hanging from the poles of the railing to their eyes and to offer some cash. It is kept by them. In the corners of sanctum the devotees can be seen praying to the Khwaja to forgive them their sins and remove their ailments. Perspiring due to the heat caused by thronging of the devotees, everyone wants to be there as long as possible till he is swept out by the current of the devotees coming from outside.

24. Just in front of the sanctum sanctorum Qawwals sit in groups displaying their art singing the Qawwalis in devotion to the Khwaja and trying to attract the devotees and visitors by singing at the top of their voices. People gather around them and nod their heads and recite the words. The appreciative audience often offers cash awards for noteworthy stanzas.

25. Besides the Qawwals, fakirs are seen begging alms in the name of the Khwaja. the bhisteas (water carriers) asking the devotees to give them money for filling water at *shabeel* (water hut). There are the Mujavirs noting the names and addresses of their patrons, giving them *dastar* (ceremonial headgear) and *tabarruk*, taking them around the Dargah premises and receiving tips for the services. There also are persons suffering at the hands of evil spirits, shivering and shaking their limbs violently.

26. On the sixth of Rajab, at 1.30 p.m., the Urs fair ends with the *Kul* (end-all) ceremony. The day begins with a religious Mehfil in the Mehfilkhana, which as usual is presided over by the Sajjada Nashin. Passages from the holy Koran are read for an hour after which Qawwalis start. This day the Qawwals of the Dargah only participate and all the *Nazars* are handed over to them by the Sajjada Nashin. At about 1 p.m. musical instruments are sounded and crackers are fired and the Sajjada Nashin goes to the tomb, where he performs ceremonies as on previous days. *Fatiha* and *Salamti* are also read. Thereafter he returns to the Khankah, where Qawwalis are recited and tips given to the Amla Shagird Pasha, and *dastars* (ceremonial headgears) are given to the Mashakins (Sufis, Pirs, etc.) by him. In the evening a meeting of mourning is held. Discourses on religion by learned persons are arranged by the Dargah Committee on this occasion.

27. *Kul* means the death of a person. As related earlier Khwaja Moinuddin shut himself in his apartment on the 1st of Rajab 1233 A.D. leaving a word to his disciples not to disturb him. His cell was opened on 6th Rajab at 1 p.m. when he was found to have left for his heavenly abode. As the exact date and time, of the death of the Khwaja could not be known the Urs ceremony is observed from first Rajab to sixth Rajab and the *Kul* ceremony is observed at 1 p.m. on the 6th Rajab at which time it became known that Khwaja had left for his heavenly abode.

28. The Urs fair concludes on 9th Rajab on which day the ceremony of *Bara Gusal* (big bath) is observed at about 8.30 a.m. All the Dargah premises are cleaned and washed on the day.

29. The Friday falling between first and ninth Rajab is considered very sacred and people from far of places come here to read Namaz on the day. There are many people who attach more importance to this Friday prayer than even to the *Kul* ceremony.

30. On the night of 6th Rajab a Mushaira is arranged in which poets from all corners of

the country participate. They read poems of devotion to the Khwaja highlighting his powers. There is no distinction on the basis of sect or religion there. Many Hindu poets also participate in the Mushaira.

31. During the Urs the Dargah enclosure and the Dargah Bazar present a very gay appearance. The devotees, fakirs and mendicants in their colourful dresses may be seen in hundreds occupying places of advantage and making it more difficult to the surging crowds to force their way into the main sanctuary.

32. The main gate of the Dargah is at the crossing of three bazars, which lead to Madar Gate, Delhi gate and Dhai-Din-ka-Jhonpra. Besides these, a street known as Gali Langar Khana runs behind the Dargah from the Nala Bazar, the bazar which leads to Madar Gate. The Nala Bazar is the biggest bazar of the city extends to over four furlongs in length. No additional bazar is set up during the fair. All around the Dargah confectioners and bakers run their hotels. Shops in front of and all around the Dargah are taken on high rents by shopkeepers coming from outside. Tons of flowers are sold every day by flower sellers. The other items of sale are rosaries, silver ornaments, beads, *musalla* (prayer carpets), perfumes, velvet and brocade goods, blankets, Muslim caps and jackets, religious books and pictures, toys, *dholaks* and harmoniums. Traders in these goods usually come from Ahmedabad, Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur. Local shopkeepers also arrange large stocks of consumer goods. It is a religious fair and is not noted for any particular craft or indigenous products. It is difficult to assess the income of individual shopkeepers and other agencies connected with the fair.

Dargah resources

33. It was during the period of the Mughal kings that this Dargah assumed importance. Akbar was the first king who took interest in its affairs. He made an endowment grant of 18 villages and 1% of the sale of Sambhar Lake salt to the Dargah in 1657 A.D. Shahjahan revised the *farman* i.e. royal decree of emperor Akbar and sanctioned Rs. 10,057. as cash payment and

Rs. 15,723 as estimated rental value of 17 villages. King Farrukhsiyar granted two more villages. It was in 1802 A.D. that Daulat Rao Sindhia of Gwalior granted the village of Dantra with an estimated value of Rs 3,544 to the Mutwalli. During this time the beneficiaries of all grants and gifts were the Sajjada Nashins and Khadims of the Dargah. The term Mutwalli means a manager or a person who controls the affairs of the Dargah; but Sajjada Nashin is the spiritual head having a right to sit on the seat (gadi) of the Khwaja himself. The Khadims are servants and are hereditary priests who share the offerings amongst themselves and minister to various religious needs of the place. They were many in number and began to quarrel among themselves with the result that the fair name of the Dargah fell into disrepute and several abuses sprang up. The Government of India was requested by leading Muslims of the country to arrange for better management of the Dargah and the *wakf* (charitable) property attached to it. The Government of India ultimately passed the Dargah Khwaja Sahib Act in 1955 which came into force in March, 1956. Under the Act this entire administration and management of the Dargah was entrusted to an All India Committee with a Nazim as its Chief Executive Officer. The

Committee is successfully trying to remove the old abuses. The Committee makes special efforts to provide necessary amenities to the pilgrims. It provides daily *langer* (free food) to the poor and special *langer* during the Urs days. A school, Moinia Islamia, is also run by the Committee, which holds examinations of Adeeb and Munshi-Fazil besides imparting religious education to its students. The Dargah also owns a water pumping set which supplements water supply from the Municipality. The budget of the Dargah is scrutinised and its accounts audited by the Accountant General, Rajasthan.

34. The main source of income is from *nazrana* (gifts), rent from buildings and shops attached to Dargah, interest on endowment funds and donations all deposited in banks as fixed deposit. It is not possible to give an estimate of the income and the expenditure of the Dargah Committee during the Urs separately as the required data is not kept by the Dargah authorities. The total income during the year 1961-62 was Rs 200,682.91 and the expenditure Rs. 251,548.43. The figures of income and expenditure for the year 62-63 were Rs. 465,643.16 and 288,708.09 respectively.

APPENDIX

Presented below are a few devotional songs called Qawwalis which are sung in the praise of the Khwaja. Staff notations of the tunes rendered on flute by Shri Sri Narayan of this office have also been given.

I

ख्वाजा के दर से कोई, निकाला नहीं जाता ।
मायूस होके अदना, व आला नहीं जाता ।
इस दर से सवाली कभी, टाला नहीं जाता ।
महरूम कोई मांगने, वाला नहीं जाता ।
तुम ख्वाजाए उस्मान के, आँखों के हो तारे ।
कुछ शक नहीं बेशक हो, गरीबों के सहारे ।
अजमेर में जाकर कोई, देखे ये नजारे ।
मखलूके खुदा पलती है, लंगर पे तुम्हारे ।
हमसे तो एक बच्चा भी, पाला नहीं जाता ।
शेर खूदा के शेर हो, ख्वाजा मेरी सुनलो ।
मोहताजे करम हूँ, निगाहे लुफ्त से देखो ।
बेचैन हूँ अब सन्न का चारा नहीं मुझको ।
ख्वाजा खुदा के वास्ते, अजमेर बुलालो ।
कैसे संभाल दिल को, संभाला नहीं जाता ।
किस को गुलाम रंजो, मुसीबत में पुकारे ।
कहते हैं तुम्हें बेकसी, मुफलिस के सहारे ।
सदका मिले हुसैन का सदक़े में तुम्हारे ।
नावां किसी के सामने क्यों हाथ पसारें ।
ग़रों के दर पे चाहने वाला नहीं जाता ।



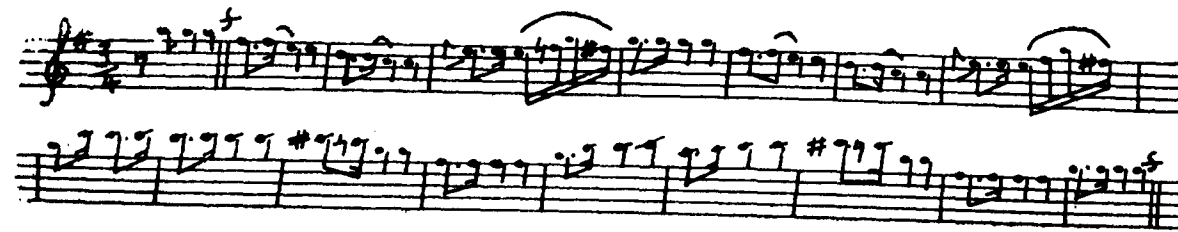
न कलीम का तसव्वुर, न ख्याले तूरे सीना ।
मेरी आरजू मोहम्मद, मेरी जुस्तजू मदीना ।
न कलीम से शिकायत, न तो आजजी से कीना ।
वही खुल्दो तूर ले ले, मुझे छोड़ दे मदीना ।
बजुज इसके जिन्दगी में, नहीं है कोई तमन्ना ।
मेरी मौत भी जो आये, तो हो सामने मदीना ।

मैं गदाए मुस्तफ़ा हूं, मेरी अज़मतें न पूछो ।
मुझे देखकर जहन्नुम, को भी आ गया पसीना ।
मुझे दुश्मनों न छोड़ो, मेरी है कोई जहां में ।
मैं अभी पुकार लूंगा नहीं दूर है मदीना ।
करे ऐसा क़द दिल को, न मिटे ख्याले अहमद ।
इसी आरजू में मरना, इसी आरजू में जीना ।



जुबीं होगी तो होगी उस दरे अक़दस पे ऐ ख्वाजा ।
जहां पर सर व सज्दा है गुले बाग़े अरम ख्वाजा ।
तुम्हारा रोज़ये अनवर कहां जन्नत से कम ख्वाजा ।
यह हसरत दिल में मुद्दत से लिए बैठे हैं हम ख्वाजा ।
अगर निकले तो निकले आपकी चोखट पे दम ख्वाजा ।
कभी तो पूछिये बहरे खुदा की आरजू किया है ।
पसारे अपना दामां किस लिये तू दर पे बैठा है ।
गिला तुमसे और तुमसे यही बस एक शिकवा है ।
न मालोज़र की ख्वाहिश है न दौलत की तमन्ना है ।
दिले हसरत ज़दा पे भी हो एक नज़रे करम ख्वाजा ।

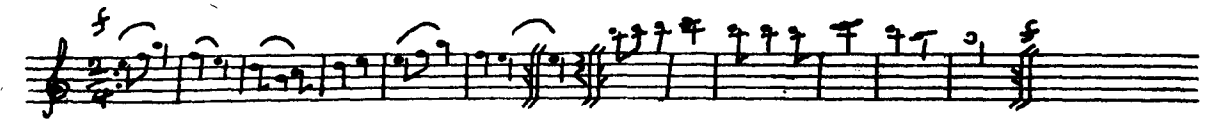
हर एक सू से सदाएं आरही हैं आज बस ये हो ।
कोई सरकार इस सरकार से बढ़कर नहीं देखी ।
लवे जाहिद पे है यही दोप्राए ख्वाजा अजमेरी ।
हमेशा यों ही मैखाना रहे कायम मेरा साक़ी ।
मिले दस्ते अता से एक छलकता जाम जम ख्वाजा ।
करें औसाफ़े ख्वाजा हम बयां कुदरत कहां ऐसी ।
न उनका कोई सानी है न हममर उनका है कोई ।
है कितने शाने ख्वाजा बोलिये हैरत भरी पाई ।
वहां जुरंत भला हो किस तरह लब कुशाई की ।
कलम का भी जहां पे देखिये है सर कलम ख्वाजा ।



मैंने जहां भी बेखुदी-ए-इश्क में सर रख दिया ।
उस जगह को करके बल मैंने मुनव्वर रख दिया ।
मुझपे क्या इलज़ाम तूने ए सितमगर रख दिया ।
कि खुदा को मैंने अब बेखुद बनाकर रख दिया ।
लो सरे तस्लीम मैं ख्वाजा के दर पर रख दिया ।
है यकीं ख्वाजा पिया मेरी मदद फ़रमायेंगे ।
और मुझ नाचीज़ की हर आरजू बतलायेंगे ।
शान अपनी मेरे ख्वाजा आज तो दिखलायेंगे ।
आज उनके रोज़े पे फूटा मुक़द्दर रख दिया ।
ख्वाजा अजमेरी मुझ पर हो करम की अब नज़र ।
चिशियां महफ़िल में हो जाये काश मेरा भी ज़िकर ।
आसमां रोता है ख्वाजा मेरी हालत देखकर ।
आप मेरी हाल से ख्वाजा ना रहना बेख़बर ।
लीजिये क़दमों पे मैंने कल्बे मुज़तर रख दिया ।
दिलबरे उसमानो हारुन लीजिए मेरा सलाम ।
आपके दरबार पे आया है यह अदना गुलाम ।
मैं यहां मर जाऊं हो जाये काश इतना इन्तज़ाम ।
'शोख' और 'अन्दाज़' बस तुमको पुकारे सुबहो शाम ।
भर बो भर दां दर पे मैंने खाली सागर रख दिया ।

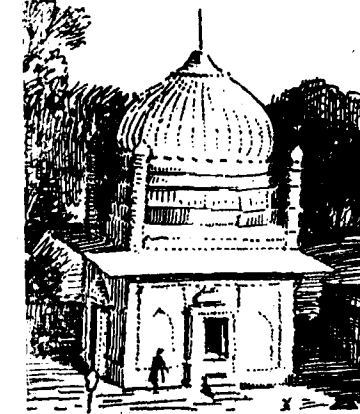


ख्वाजा पिया मुझको भी रोज़े पर बुलाना ।
हिन्दे बली मेरी भी बिगड़ी को बनाना ।
मैं हूं ख्वाजा ग़म का मारा कोई नहीं जीने का सहारा ।
आशा है मुझको तुम से दाता कर दीजिये रहमत का इशारा ।
सोया नसीब जगाना, ख्वाजा पिया० ।
दुनिया ने है मुझको सताया अपना भी है आज पराया ।
तुम्हारे चरन में गर मैं आऊं तो फिर बदले मेरी काया ।
दिल हुआ है ग़म का निशाना, ख्वाजा पिया० ।
नित नित मैं तो नीर बहाऊं, कौन है जिसको विपता सुनाऊं ।
मैं तो पिया हूं तुम्हारी जोगन छोड़ के तुमको अब कित आऊं ।
जोगन को द्वारे बुलाना, ख्वाजा पिया० ।
ग़मगीन है अन्दाज़ ऐ दाता, शोख की विपता सुनिये ख्वाजा ।
तुमको पुकारे ग़म के मारे, रहम करो ए हिन्द के राजा ।
ग़म से हमें भी छुड़ाना, ख्वाजा पिया० ।



VI

शहे अजमेर को अजमेर जाकर हम भी देखेंगे ।
 वह गलियां और वह गलियों के मनज़र हम भी देखेंगे ।
 हवा की गुलफ़शानी, मुस्कराना माह पारों का,
 बहारों का महकना, जगमगाना चांद तारों का ।
 वह मनज़र और वे नक्शे बराबर हम भी देखेंगे ।
 झुकाकर अपनी गर्दन बे खुदी में तेरे मतवाले,
 तसव्वुर में तो जलवे देखते हैं देखने वाले ।
 खुदा तोफ़ीक़ दे नज़दीक जाकर हम भी देखेंगे ।
 जा दीवाने हैं तेरे जोश में नारे लगाते हैं,
 अक़ीदत वाले गलियों में तेरे डेर जमाते हैं ।
 तेरे बूचे में मस्तानों के लश्कर हम भी देखेंगे ।
 बस इतनी देर है तेरी नज़र हो जाये ए ख्वाजा,
 करम तेरा शरीके हाल गर हो जाये ए ख्वाजा ।
 तेरा रोज़ा, तेरी चौखठ, तेरा दरो हम भी देखेंगे ।
 खुदा कर देगा अपने दिल की पूरी जुस्तजू 'नाजा',
 बर आएगी हमारी एक न एक दिन आरजू 'नाजा' ।
 रही गर ज़िंदगी अजमेर कलियर हम भी देखेंगे ।



URS AT GALIYAKOT

GALIYAKOT, a small village of about 4000 persons named after a twelfth century Bhil chieftain is situated on the banks of river Mahi far in the interior of tehsil Sagwara of Dungarpur district. It is a place of great religious significance for Dawoodi Bohras, a sect of the Ismaili Shia Muslims, for it is here that the mortal remains of Syedi Fakhruddin, a celebrated saint of this business community, lie buried.

2. One can visit this village viz. Dahod which is the nearest railway station on the Delhi-Bombay route. The distance of 96 km from Dahod to the village can be covered by bus. Another route to the village is via Ratlam on the same railway line but the distance to be covered by road is 144 km. Although these roads are in fairly good condition, they cannot be used during the rainy season on account of several low culverts and bridges on the way when visitors can go only through Sagwara. A bus also plies between the village and Udaipur which is 160 km away.

3. The habitation of this village was once located within the boundary walls of what now is an old ruined fortress but in the course of time, for reasons unknown the people left their houses and settled at the present site. About a mile and a half to the north of this village lies the Mazar-e-Fakhri the masoleum which houses the tomb of the saint Syedi Fakhruddin. The masoleum has a beautiful dome fiftytwo feet high and twenty-one feet wide and the sanctum sanctorum is built in marble. Within the spacious compound of the masoleum there are a number of important buildings. As one enters the gate on the right is the Noor Masjid by the side of the Mazar. There is a special arrangement for the ladies to offer prayers in so far as there are balconies provided for them on either side of the prayer hall. Other buildings are meant for accommodating the pilgrims. A portion is occupied by the Aamil Sahib. There are a number of graves in the compound, one of which is stated to be of Bhai Sahab, son of saint Fakhruddin. Around the shrine has grown a small township of the Dawoodi Bohras.

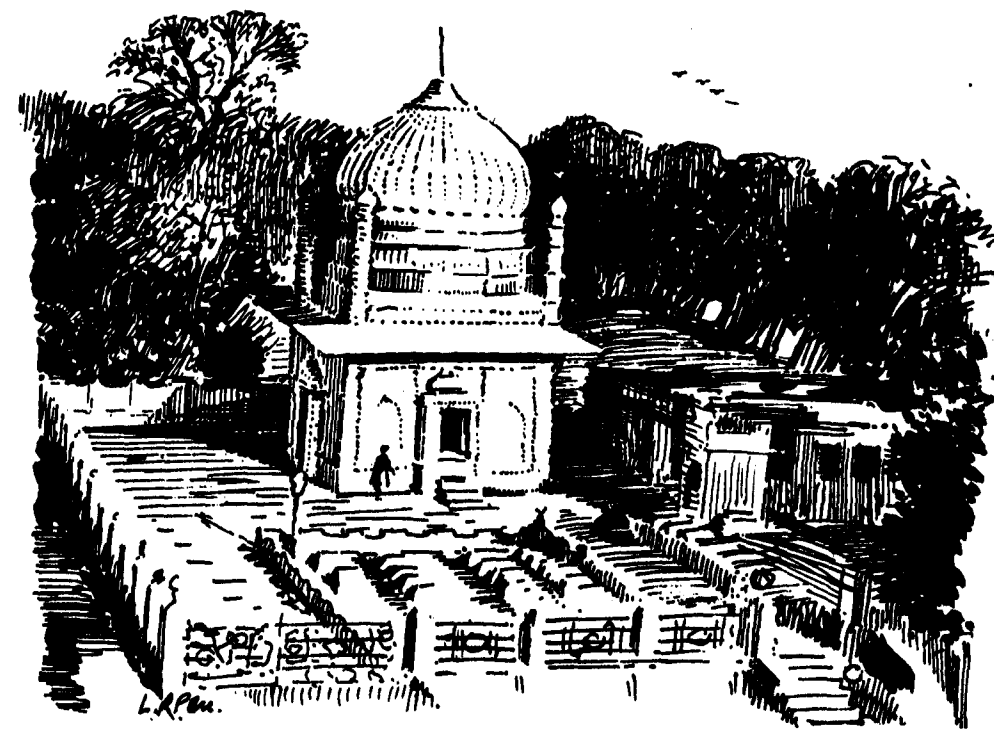
4. Syedi Fakhruddin was the son of Tarmal, Vazir of king Sidhraj Jaysingh who ruled over Gujarat during the period 1094-1134 A.D. Tarmal had accepted the Islamic faith from the missionaries of the Imam-Al-Mustansir of the Fatami dynasty which then ruled over a vast territory in Western Asia and North Africa with Capital at Cairo. Syedi Fakhruddin was essentially a religious man with an ascetic temperament and he was reputed for his learning and saintliness of his character. In the course of his wanderings, the saint met his death in village Galiyakot which is now a place of pilgrimage for the Dawoodi Bohras.

5. A stream of devotees visit the place in search of spiritual solace and some take *Manant* i.e. vows for the fulfilment of specific desires in the name of the saint. Thousands of the Dawoodi Bohra community go on a pilgrimage to the place every year to perform *Ziyarat* that is reverential obeisance at the shrine especially on the occasion of the Urs that is the death anniversary of the saint. When this otherwise quiet village bustles with life.

6. The Urs is celebrated on the 27th of Moharrum - the first month of the Mohamedan year. The Dawoodi Bohras follow the Egyptian calendar. In this calendar first month is of 30 days, the second of 29 and the rest are alternately of 30 and 29 days. It thus differs from the Hijri calendar followed by other Muslims. Preparations

for the celebration of the Urs start four or five days before the 27th of Moharrum. The entire shrine is tastefully decorated and illuminated at night. The tomb is covered with fragrant flowers. The day of the Urs starts with mass prayers and the Holy Koran is continuously recited all the day long. A *Majlis*, that is a special gathering of the devotees, is held when devotional songs in the praise of the saint are recited. All the ceremonies of the Urs are usually attended by the Dai-ul-Mutlaq, the religious head of the community. The entire atmosphere gets saturated with devotional fervour. A free community lunch called *Khana* is arranged on the day of the Urs. As it is a religious feast all devotees participate in it.

7. The Dawoodi Bohras, who form the bulk of the 10,000 estimated congregation, are a business community and are spread over many parts of Asia and Africa. In India their main concentration is in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The fame of Galiyakot as a centre of pilgrimage thus extends far beyond the boundaries of India. The offerings to the shrine usually consist of sweets, fruits, coconut and jaggery. The offerings are handed over to *Mujavirs*—priests in attendance, who retain a part of the offerings and return the rest of it to the devotees. Offerings in cash are credited to the accounts of the shrine and the funds are utilised for its maintenance and the management of the Urs. The accounts are maintained by the management committee of the Mazar.



A view of the Mazar-e-Fakhri



THE VEERPURI FAIR

The fairs in Rajasthan are either mythological which relate to Gods and Goddesses or are celebrated to commemorate the exploits of the mediaeval heroes. A fair of the later category is held in a beautiful garden at village Mandor in tehsil Jodhpur of district Jodhpur in memory of the celebrated heroes of Rajasthan. The images of these heroes are installed in a gallery.

2. Lt. Col. Tod, the famous historian, writing about this impressive gallery in his inimitable way, has said :

'A short distance from the foot of the causeway, an archway opens into an enclosed court or area, in the retired part of which, and touching the mountain, is an extensive saloon; the roof is supported by a triple row of columns, of that light form peculiar to the Jains. Here are displayed, in all "the pomp and circumstance of war," the statues of the knights-errant of the desert, armed *cap-a-pie*, bestriding steeds whose names are deathless as their riders', all in the costume of the times in which they lived. They are cut out of the rock, but entirely detached from it, and larger than life. Though more conspicuous for strength than symmetry, the grim visages of these worthies, apparently frowning defiance, each attended by his pundoo or squire,

have a singularly pleasing effect. Each chieftain is armed with lance, sword, and buckler, with quiver and arrows, and poniard in his girdle. All are painted; but whether in the colours they were attached to, or according to the fancy of the architect, I know not.

'Before, however, entering this saloon, we pass a huge statue of Ganesa, placed as the guardian of the portal, having on each side the two Bhiroos, sons of the god of war. Then appears the statue of Chamoonda (the goddess of destruction), and that of the terrific mother, Kankali, treading on the black demon Bhynsasoor, in whose flank her tiger-courser has buried his blood thirsty tongue : in each of her eight arms she holds a weapon of destruction. The black Bhiroo (son of time), with a sable flag, bearing *argent* a horse *courant*, marshals the way through the field of blood to his mother. Between her and the heroes whose lives passed "in devotion to the sword," is a statue of the *Nathji*, or 'spiritual guide' of the Rathores; in one hand he holds his *mala* or *chaplet*; in the other his *churri* or 'patriarchal rod,' for the guidance of his flock.

'Mullinath heads the procession, mounted on a white charger, with a lance over his shoulder, to which is attached a flag; his quiver resting on

his horse's right flank, and his mistress, Pudmavati, with a platter of food welcoming him from the raid, and who accompanied him when slain to *Suryaloca*, or 'the mansion of the sun'. Then follows Pabooji, mounted on his famous charger 'Black Caesar' (*Kesar Kali*), whose exploits are the theme of the itinerant bard and showman, who annually goes his round, exhibiting in pictorial delineations, while he recites in rhyme, the deeds of this warrior to the gossiping villagers of the desert. Next comes *Ramdeo Pahtore*, a name famed in Maroodesa, and in whose honour altars are raised in every Rajpoot village in the country. Then we have the brave *Hurba Sunkla*, to whom Joda was indebted for protection in his exile, and for the redemption of Mundore when seized by the Rana of Cheetore. *Goga*, the Chohan, who with his forty-seven sons fell defending the passage of the Sutledge on Mahmoud's invasion. Mewoh Mangulia brings up the rear, a famous chieftain of the Gehlote race. It would be tedious to relate any of the exploits of these worthies.*

3. The fair is held on the penultimate Monday of Shravan. The estimated congregation at the fair is about 60,000 persons. The exact date or the year of the commencement of the fair is not known but it is generally believed that it started in the latter part of the 17th century. There are two legends current in Jodhpur about the origin of the fair. According to one, Jaswant Singh, who ruled Mandor in the 17th century, was sent to Ahmednagar by Emperor Aurangzeb to fight against some rebels. His army was greatly outnumbered and finding himself in a tight corner, he recalled to his mind the brave deeds of the heroes of his home land, and prayed to them for succour. He returned victorious from the battle and in commemoration, constructed this gallery of heroes at Mandor. During the rest of his life, it is said, Jaswant Singh used to go to Mandor on this day every year to pay respects to these heroes. He used to go in a procession, accompanied by his numerous courtiers. Thousands of people used to collect by the roadside from Jodhpur town to Mandor to watch the royal procession. Due to royal patronage the people developed great respect for the heroes. His successors,

however, later discontinued going in procession. Why and when this occurred is not known. Another legend is connected with *Veerpuja* (worship of the brother). It is said that during the Moghul period, a Rajput had to proceed to the battle front leaving his unmarried sister alone who bade him farewell by applying *tilak* mark to his forehead with the blood of finger of her right hand and blessed him by wishing that he would return victorious from the battle. So it happened and her brother returned home victorious. It is on the day of the fair that sisters commemorate this occasion and put vermillion mark on the forehead of their brothers

4. The Mandor garden where the fair is held, is situated at a distance of 10 km from Jodhpur on Jodhpur-Nagaur Road and one can use buses, taxis, automobile rickshaws and tongas which are easily available at Jodhpur to reach the site of the fair. The people from the neighbouring areas make use of cycles and bullock-carts also. Mandor is also connected by railway.

5. People of all the communities participate in the fair and there is no restriction on any caste in this matter. People usually do not make any offerings to the statues of the heroes. They, however, put offerings before the images of Ganesh, Bhairon, Chamunda and Kankali which consists of cash coconuts and sweets.

6. About a hundred shops are put in the fair. They deal in foodstuffs, sweets, toys, general merchandise and articles of jewellery. The shopkeepers come mainly from Jodhpur city and make roaring business. They are required to pay ground rent varying from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 20/ for the day to the Public Works Department of the State.

7. Ground wheels and Merry-go-round are installed in the fair which provide a lot of fun to people. Films of educative value are shown free by the Public Relations Department. By far the best recreation, however, is provided by the poetical recitation in the local dialect which goes on the whole night. The visitors enjoy taking



A view of the Mandor gardens

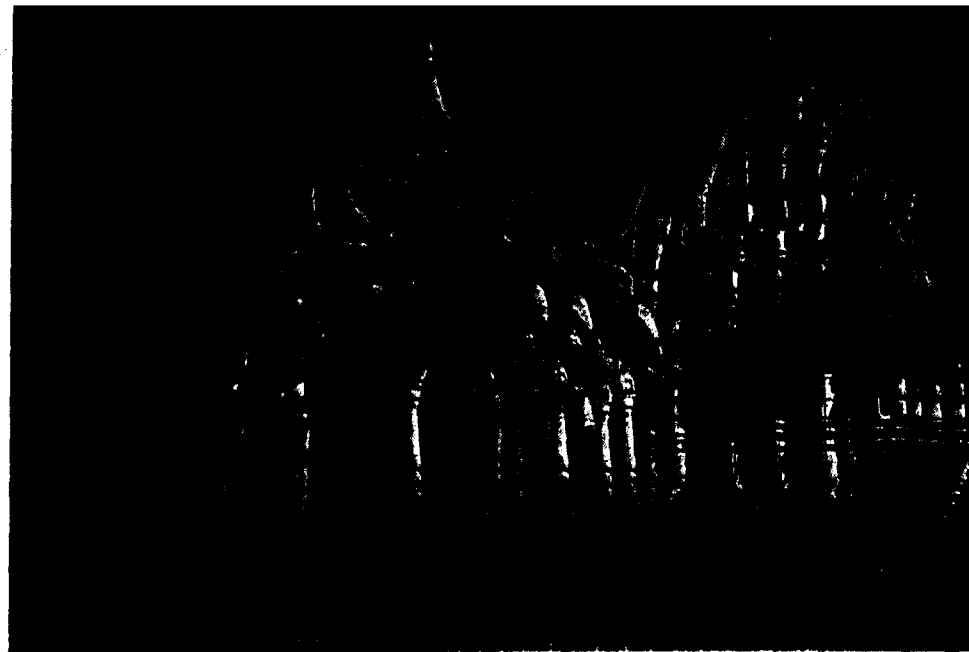
* Annals & Antiquities of Rajasthan—Vol. I

meals in the company of their friends and relatives in the spacious gardens, which are an excellent picnic spot.

8. Most of the people join the fair in the morning and return home by evening but some 4,000 persons stay on for the night programme. The Government officials on duty live in tents

and cenotaphs. There are *Dharamshalas* which provide accommodation to the people at night.

9. The site of the fair has been electrified but special lighting arrangements are made by the Government for the fair. There are two wells and seven tanks in Mandor whose water is used for drinking at the time of the fair. There are some water-huts set by the philanthropists also.



Cenotaph in Memory of Jaswant Singh

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APPENDIX I

Extract from Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, By Col. James Tod.

The opening of the spring being on the 5th of the month Magha, is thence called the Vasant *panchami*, which in 1819 fell on the 30th of January; consequently the first of Posh (the antecedent month), the beginning of the old Hindu year, or "*the morning of the gods*", fell on the 25th of December. The Vasant continues forty days after the *panchami*, or initiative fifth, during which the utmost license prevails in action and in speech; the lower classes regale even to intoxication on every kind of stimulating confection and spirituous beverage, and the most respectable individuals, who would at other times be shocked to utter an indelicate allusion, roam about with the groups of bacchanals, reciting stanzas of the warmest description in praise of the powers of nature. In this season, when the barriers of rank are thrown down, and the spirit of democracy is let loose, though never abused, even the wild Bhil, or savage Mer, will leave his forest or mountain shade to mingle in the revelries of the capital; and decorating his ebon hair or tattered turban with a garland of jessamine, will join the clamorous parties which perambulate the streets of the capital. These orgies are, however, reserved for the conclusion for the forty days sacred to the goddess of nature.

Two days following the initiative fifth, is the *bhan septimi* or 'seventh (day) of the sun,' also called 'the birth of the sun', with various other metaphorical denominations.* On this day there is a grand procession of the Rana, his chiefs and vassals, to the Chougan, where the sun is worshipped. At the Jeipoor court, whose princes claim descent from CUSH, the second son of RAMA,

* Bhascara septimi, in honour of the sun, as a form of Vishnu.—Varaha Purana. Macari, from the sun entering the constellation Macara (Pisces), the first of the solar Magha.—See Asiatic Researches, vol. iii. p. 273.

the *bhan septimi* is peculiarly sacred. The chariot of the sun, drawn by eight horses, is taken from the temple dedicated to that orb, and moves in procession: a ceremony otherwise never observed but on the inauguration of a new prince. (p. 449)

The merry month of Phalgun is ushered in with the *Ahairea*, or springhunt.* The preceding day the Rana distributes to all his chiefs and servants either a dress of green, or some portion thereof, in which all appear habited on the morrow, whenever the astrologer has fixed the hour for sallying forth to slay the boar to *Gouri*, the *Ahairea* is therefore called the *Muhoorut ca sikar*, or the chase fixed astrologically. As their success on this occasion is ominous of future good, no means are neglected to secure it, either by scouts previously discovering the lair, or the desperate efforts of the hunters to slay the boar when roused. With the sovereign and his sons all the chiefs sally forth, each on his best steed, and all animated by the desire to surpass each other in acts of prowess and dexterity. It is very rare that in some one of the passes or recesses of the valley the hog is not found; the spot is then surrounded by the hunters, whose vociferations soon start the *d'hokra*,† and frequently a drove of hogs. Then each cavalier impels his steed, and with lance or sword, regardless of rock, ravine, or tree, presses

* In his delight for this diversion, the Rajpoot evinces Scythic propensity. The grand hunts of the last Chohan emperor often led him into warfare, for Pirthi Raj was a poacher of the first magnitude, and one of his battles with the Tatars was while engaged in field sports on the Ravi.

The heir or Gengis Khan was chief huntsman, the highest office of the state amongst the Scythic Tatars; as Ajanbahu, alike celebrated in either field, of war and sport, was chief huntsman to the Chohan emperor of Delhi, whose bard enters minutely into the subject, describing all the variety of dogs of chase.

†A hog in Hindue; in persian hooq, nearly our hog.

on the bristly foe, whose knowledge of the country is of no avail when thus circumvented, and the ground soon reeks with gore, in which not unfrequently is mixed that of horse or rider. On the last occasion, there occurred fewer casualties than usual; though the Chondawut Hamira, whom we nicknamed the "*Red Riever*," had his leg broken, and the second son of Sheodan Sing, a near relation of the Rana, had his neighbour's lance driven through his arm. The young chief of Saloombra was amongst the distinguished of this day's sport. It would appeal even an English fox-hunter to see the Rajpoot driving their steeds at full speed, bounding like the antelope over every barrier,—the thick jungle covert, or rocky steep bare of soil or vegetation,—with their lances balanced in the air, or leaning on the saddle-bow slashing at the boar. (p. 451)

The royal kitchen moves out on this occasion, and in some chosen spot the repast is prepared, of which all partake, for the hog is the favourite food of the Rajpoot. Nor is the *munwar piala*, or invitation cup, forgotten; and having feasted, and thrice slain their bristly antagonist, they return to the capital, where fame had already spread their exploits,—the deeds done by the *birchi* (lance) of Pudma,* or the *khanda* (sword) blow of Hamira,† which lopped the head of the foe of Gouri. (pp. 451-452)

As Phalgun advances, the bacchanalian mirth increases; groups are continually patrolling the streets, throwing a crimson powder at each other, or ejecting a solution of it from syringes, so that the garments and visages of all are one mass of crimson. On the 8th, emphatically called the *Phag*, the Rana joins the queens and their attendants in the palace, when all restraint is removed and mirth is unlimited. But the most brilliant sight is the playing of the *holi* on horseback, on the terrace in front of the palace. Each chief who chooses to join has a plentiful supply of missiles, formed of thin plates of mica or talc, enclosing this crimson powder, called *abira*, which with the most graceful and dextrous horsemanship they dart at each other, pursuing, caprioling,

* Chief of Saloombra.

† Chief of Hamirgur'h.

and jesting. The last day or *Poonum* ends the *holi*, when the Nakarras from the *Tripolia* summon all the chiefs with their retinues to attend their prince, and accompany him in procession to the Chougan. In the centre of this is a long *sala* or hall, the ascent to which is by a flight of steps: the roof is supported by square columns without any walls, so that the court is entirely open. Here, surrounded by his chiefs, the Rana passes an hour, listening to the songs in praise of *Holica*, while a scurrilous *cavya* or couplet from some wag in the crowd reminds him, that exalted rank is no protection against the license of the spring Saturnalia. While the Rana and his chiefs are thus amused above, the buffoons and itinerant groups mix with the cavalcade, throw powder in their eyes, or deluge their garments with the crimson solution. To resent it would only expose the sensitive party to be laughed at, and draw upon him a host of these bacchanals: so that no alternative exists between keeping entirely aloof or mixing in the fray. (pp. 452-453)

On the last day, the Rana feasts his chiefs, and the camp breaks up with the distribution of *khanda nareal*, or swords and coco-nuts, to the chiefs and all "whom the king delighteth to honour." These *khandas* are but "of lath," in shape like the Andrea Ferrara, or long cut-and-thrust, the favourite weapon of the Rajpoot. They are painted in various ways, like Harlequin's sword, and meant as a burlesque, in unison with the character of the day, when war is banished, and the multiplication, not the destruction, of man is the behest of the goddess who rules the spring. At nightfall, the forty days conclude with "*the burning of the holi*," when they light large fires, into which various substances, as well as the crimson *abira*, are thrown, and around which groups of children are dancing and screaming in the streets like so many infernals. Until three hours after sunrise of the new month of Cheyt, these orgies are continued with increased vigour, when the natives bathe, change their garments, worship, and return to the rank of sober citizens; and princes and chiefs receive gifts from their domestics.* (p. 453)

* Another point of resemblance to the Roman Saturnalia.

CHEYT.—The first of this month is the Samvatsiri (vulg. *Chamchari*), or anniversary of the death of the Rana's father, to whose memory solemn rites are performed both in the palace and at *Ara*, the royal cemetery, metaphorically termed 'Maha-Sati,' or place of 'great faith.' Thither the Rana repairs, and offers oblations to the *manes* of his father; and after purifying in the *Gangabheva*, a rivulet which flows through the middle of "the abode of silence," he returns to the palace.

On the 3rd, the whole of the royal insignia proceeds to Baidla, the residence of the Chohan chief (one of the *sixteen*), within the valley of the capital, in order to convey the *Rao* to court. The Rana advances to the *Ganesh Deori** to receive him; when, after salutation, the sovereign and his chief return to the great hall of assembly, hand in hand, but that of the *Chohan* above or upon *his sovereign's*. In this ceremony we have another singular memorial of the glorious days of Mewar, when almost every chieftain established by deeds of devotion a right to the eternal gratitude of their princes. (p. 453)

Cheyti badi sath, or '7th of Cheyt' is in honour of the goddess *Sitla*, the protectress of children: all the matrons of the city proceed with their offerings to the shrine of the goddess, placed upon the very pinnacle of an isolated hill in the valley.

Cheyti *Sudi* 1st (15th of the month) is the opening of the *luni-solar* year of Vicramaditya. Ceremonies, which more especially appertain to the *Noratri* of Asoj, are performed on this day; and the sword is worshipped in the palace. But such rites are subordinate to those of the fair divinity, who still rules over this the smiling portion of the year. Vassanti has ripened into the fragrant Flora, and all the fair of the capital, as well as the other sex, repair to the gardens and groves, where parties assemble, regale, and swing, adorned with chaplets of roses, jessamine, or oleander, when the *Nolakhu* gardens may vie with the Tivoli of Paris. They return in the evening to the city.

* A hall so called in honour of Ganesa or Janus, whose effigies adorn the entrance.

"*The Festival of Flowers*."—The Rajpoot Floralia ushers in the rites of the beneficent Gouri, which continue nine days, the number sacred to the creative power.

GANGORE.—Among the many remarkable festivals of Rajast'han, kept with peculiar brilliancy at Oodipoor, is that in honour of *Gouri*. Like the Rajpoot Saturnalia, which it follows, it belongs to the vernal equinox, when nature in these regions proximate to the tropic is in the full expanse of her charms, and the matronly Gouri casts her golden mantle over the beauties of the verdant Vassanti.* Then the fruits exhibit their promise to the eye; the kohil fills the ear with melody; the air is impregnated with aroma, and the crimson poppy contrasts with the spikes of golden grain, to form a wreath for the beneficent Gouri. (p. 454)

Gouri is one of the names of Isa or Parvati, wife of the greatest of the gods, Mahadeva or Iswara, who is conjoined with her in these rites, which almost exclusively appertain to the women. The meaning of *gouri* is 'yellow,' emblematic of the ripened harvest, when the votaries of the goddess adore her effigies, which are those of a matron painted the colour of ripe corn; and though her image is represented with only two hands, in one of which she holds the lotos, yet not unfrequently they equip her with the warlike conch, the discus, and the club, to denote that the goddess, whose gifts sustain life, is likewise accessory to the loss of it: uniting as Gouri and Cali, the character of life and death. But here she is only seen as *Ana-purana*, the benefactress of mankind. The rites commence when the sun enters Aries (the opening of the Hindu year), by a deputation to a spot beyond the city, "to bring *earth* for the image of Gouri."† When this is formed, a smaller one of Iswara is made, and they are placed together; a small trench is then excavated, in which barley is sown; the ground is irrigated and artificial heat supplied till the grain germinates, when the females join hands and dance round it, invoking the blessings of Gouri on their husbands. The young corn is then taken up, distributed, and presented by the females to the men, who wear it in their turbans. Every

* Personification of spring.

† Here we have Gouri as the type of the earth.

wealthy family has its image, or at least every poorwa or subdivision of the city. These and other rites known only to the initiated, having been performed for several days within doors, they decorate the images, and prepare to carry them in procession to the lake. During these days of preparation, nothing is talked of but Gouri's departure from the palace; whether she will be as sumptuously appparelled as in the year gone by; whether an additional boat will be launched on the occasion; though not a few forget the goddess altogether in the recollection of the gazelle eyes (*mirg-naeni*) and serpentine locks (*nagni-zoolf*)* of the beauteous handmaids who are selected to attend her. At length the hour arrives, the marital nakaras give the signal "to the cannonier without", and speculation is at rest when the guns on the summit of the castle of Eklinggurh announce that Gouri has commenced her excursion to the lake.

(pp. 454-455)

The cavalcade assembles on the magnificent terrace, and the Rana, surrounded by his nobles, leads the way to the boats. The scenery is admirably adapted for these fetes, the ascent being gradual from the margin of the lake, which here forms a fine bay, and gently rising to the crest of the ridge on which the palace and dwellings of the chiefs are built. Every turret and balcony is crowded with spectators, from the palace to the water's edge; and the ample flight of marble steps which intervene from the *Tripolia*, or triple portal, to the boats, is a dense mass of females in variegated robes, whose scarfs but half conceal their ebon tresses adorned with the rose and the jessamine. A more imposing or more exhilarating sight cannot be imagined than the entire population of a city thus assembled for the purpose of rejoicing; the countenance of every individual, from the prince to the peasant, dressed in smiles. Carry the eye to heaven, and it rests on "a sky without a cloud": below is a magnificent lake, the even surface of the deep blue waters broken only by palaces of marble, whose arched piazzas are seen through the foliage of orange groves, plantain, and tamarind; while the vision is bounded by noble mountains, their

* Here the Hindu mixes Persian with his Sanscrit, and produces the mongrel dialect Hindec.

peaks towering over each other, and composing an immense amphitheatre. Here the deformity of vice intrudes not; no object is degraded by inebriation: no tumultuous disorder or deafening clamour, but all await patiently, with eyes directed to the *Tripolia*, the appearance of GOURI. At length the procession is seen winding down the steep, and in the midst, borne on a *pat'h*,* or throne, gorgeously arrayed in yellow robes, and blazing with "barbaric pearl and gold," the goddess appears; on either side the two beauties wave the silver *chamra* over her head, while the more favoured damsels act as harbingers, preceding her with wands of silver: the whole chanting hymns. On her approach, the Rana, his chiefs and ministers rise and remain standing till the goddess is seated on her throne close to the water's edge, when all bow, and the prince and court take their seats in the boats. The females then form a circle around the goddess, unite hands, and with a measured step and various graceful inclinations of the body, keeping time by beating the palms at particular cadences, move round the image singing hymns, some in honour of the goddess of abundance, others on love and chivalry; and embodying little episodes of national achievements, occasionally sprinkled with *double entendre*, which excites a smile and significant nod from the chiefs, and an inclination of the head of the fair choristers. The festival being entirely female, not a single male mixed in the immense groups, and even Iswara himself, the husband of Gouri, attracts no attention, as appears from his ascetic or mendicant form begging his dole from the bounteous and universal mother. It is taken for granted that the goddess is occupied in bathing all the time she remains, and ancient tradition says death was the penalty of any male intruding on these solemnities; but the present prince deems them so fitted for amusement, that he has even instituted a second *Gangore*. Some hours are thus consumed, while easy and good-humoured conversation is carried on. At length, the ablutions over, the goddess is taken up, and conveyed to the palace with the same forms and state. The Rana and his chiefs then unmoor their boats, and are rowed round

* Tukht, *Pat'h*, Persian and Sanscrit, alike meaning board.

the margin of the lake, to visit in succession the other images of the goddess, around which female groups are chanting and worshipping, as already described, with which ceremonies the evening closes, when the whole terminates with a grand display of fireworks, the *finale* of each of the three days dedicated to Gouri. (pp. 455-456)

In the festival of *Gangore*, as before mentioned, Iswara yields to his consort Gouri, and occupies an unimportant position near her at the water's edge, meanly clad, smoking intoxicating herbs, and, whether by accident or design, holding the stalk of an onion in full blossom as a mace or club. (p. 458)

Whoever desires to witness one of the most imposing and pleasing of Hindu festivals; let him repair to Oodipoor, and behold the rites of the lotos-queen Pudma, the Gouri of Rajast'han. (p. 459)

Cheynt (*Sudi*) 8th, which, being after the *ides*, is the 23rd of the month, is sacred to *Devi*, the goddess of every tribe; she is called *Asocashtami*, and being the ninth night (*noratri*) from the opening of their Floralia, they perform the *homa*, or sacrifice of fire. On this day, a grand procession takes place to the *Chougan*, and every Rajpoot worships his tutelary divinity.

Cheynt (*Sudi*) 9th is the anniversary of Rama, the grand beacon of the solar race, kept with great rejoicings at Oodipoor. Horses and elephants are worshipped, and all the implements of war. A procession takes place to the *Chougan*, and the succeeding day, called the *Dussera* or tenth, is celebrated in Asoj.

The last days of spring are dedicated to *Camdeva*, the god of love. The scorching winds of the hot season are already beginning to blow, when Flora droops her head, and "the god of love turns anchorite;" yet the rose continues to blossom, and affords the most fragrant chaplets for the Rajpootnis, amidst all the heats of summer. Of this the queen of flowers, the jessamine (*chameli*), white and yellow, the magra, the champaca, that flourish in extreme heat, the ladies form garlands, which they twine in their dark

hair, weave into bracelets, or were as pendent collars. There is no city in the East where the adorations of the sex to *Camdeva* are more fervent than in "the city of the rising sun" (*Udyapura*). On the 13th and 14th of Cheyt they sing hymns handed down by the sacred bards:—

"Hail, god of the flowery bow! hail, warrior with a fish on thy banner! hail, powerful divinity, who causeth the firmness of the sage to forsake him!"

"Glory to MADANA, to Cama,† the god of gods; to HIM by whom BRAHMA, VISHNU, SIVA and INDRA are filled with emotions of rapture!"—*Bhavishya Purana*.‡

Vysakh—There is but one festival in this month of any note, when the grand procession denominated the "*Nakarra ca aswari*" (from the equestrians being summoned, as already described, by the grand kettledrums from the *Tripolia*), takes place; and this is against the canons of the Hindu church, being instituted by the present Rana in S. 1847, a memorable year in the calendar. It was in this year, on the 2nd of *Vysakh*, that he commanded a repetition of the rites of GOURI, by the name of the *Little Gangore*; but this act of impiety was marked by a sudden rise of the waters of the Peshola, the bursting of the huge embankment, and the inundation of the lake's banks, to the destruction of one third of the capital. But although the superstitious look grave, and add that a son was also taken from him on this very day, yet the Rana persists in maintaining the fete he established; the barge is manned, he and his chiefs circumnavigate the Peshola, regale on majaom, and terrify Varuna (the water-god) with the pyrotechnic exhibitions. (pp. 459-460)

Sawun, classically *Sravana*. There are two important festivals, with processions, in this month.

* Cupid's bow is formed of a garland of flowers.

† Madana, he who intoxicates with desire (*cama*), both epithets of the god of love. The festivals on the 13th and 14th are called Madana triodasi (the tenth) and chaturdasi (fourteenth).

‡ Asiatic Researches, Vol. iii. p. 278.

The *third* emphatically called "*the teej*" (*third*), is sacred to the mountain goddess *Parvati*, being the day on which, after long austerities, she was reunited to *Siva*: she accordingly declared it holy, and proclaimed that whoever invoked her on that day should possess whatever was desired. The *teej* is accordingly revered by the women, and the husbandman of the *Rajast'han*, who deems it a most favourable day to take possession of land, or to reinhabit a deserted dwelling (p. 461)

Red garments are worn by all classes on this day, and at Jeipoor clothes of this colour are presented by the *Raja* to all the chiefs. At that court the *teej* is kept with more honour than at Oodipoor. An image of *Parvati* on the *teej*, richly attired, is borne on a throne by women chanting hymns, attended by the prince and his nobles. On this day, fathers present red garments and stuffs to their daughters.

On this festival, at Oodipoor, as well as throughout India, they strew particular plants about the threshold to prevent the entrance of reptiles. (p. 462)

RAKHI.—This festival, which is held on the last day of *Sawun*, was instituted in honour of the good genii. when *Durvasa* the sage instructed *Salone* (the genius or nymph presiding over the month of *Sawun*) to bind on *rakhis*, or bracelets, as charms to avert evil. The ministers of religion and females alone are privileged to bestow these charmed wristbands. The ladies of *Rajast'han*, either by their handmaids or the family priests, send a bracelet as the token of their esteem to such as they adopt as brothers, who return gifts in acknowledgement of the honour.

* I returned from three to five pieces of gold for the *rakhis* sent by my adopted sisters; from one of whom, the sister of the *Rana*, I annually received this pledge by one of her handmaids; three of them I have yet in my possession, though I never saw the donor, who is now no more. I had, likewise, some presented through the family priest, from the Boondi queen-mother, with whom I have conversed for hours, though she was invisible to me; and from the ladies of rank of the chieftains' families, but one of whom I ever beheld, though they often called upon me for the performance of brotherly offices in consequence of such tie. There is a delicacy in this custom, with which the bond uniting the cavaliers of Europe to the service of the fair, in the days of chivalry, will not compare.

† *Noratri* may be interpreted the nine days' festival, or the 'new night'.

‡ *Raj Jogi* is the chief of the ascetic warriors; the *Mehunts* are commanders. More will be said of this singular society when we discuss the religious institutions of *Mewar*.

@ The god *CRISHNA* is called *Kishen* in the dialects.

£ This is the *t'hapna* of the sword, literally its inauguration or induction, for the purposes of adoration.

The claims thus acquired by the fair are far stronger than those of consanguinity: Sisters also present their brothers with clothes on this day, who make an offering of gold in return.*

This day is hailed by the Brahmins as indemnifying them for their expenditure of silk and spangles, with which they decorate the wrists of all who are likely to make a proper return (p. 463)

KARGA S'HAPNA. *Worship of the Sword.*—The festival in which this imposing rite occurs is the *Noratri*,† sacred to the god of war, commencing on the first of the month *Asoj*. It is essentially martial, and confined to the *Rajpoot*, who on the departure of the monsoon finds himself at liberty to indulge his passion whether for rapine or revenge, both which in these tropical regions are necessarily suspended during the rains. Arguing from the order of the passions, we may presume that the first objects of emblematic worship were connected with war, and we accordingly find the highest reverence paid to arms by every nation of antiquity. (p. 464)

On the 1st of *Asoj*, after fasting, ablution, and prayer on the part of the prince and his household, the double-edged *khanda* is removed from the hall of arms (*awadsala*), and having received the homage (*pooja*) of the court, it is carried in procession to the *Kishenpol* (gate of *Kishen*), where it is delivered to the *Raj Jogi*,‡ the *Mehunts*, and band of *Jogis* assembled in front of the temple of *Devi 'the goddess'*, adjoining the portal of *Kishen*. @ By these, the monastic militant adorers of *Heri*, the god of battle, the brand emblematic of the divinity is placed £ on the altar before the image of his divine

consort. At three in the afternoon the *nakarras*, or grand kettledrums, proclaim from the *Tripolia** the signal for the assemblage of the chiefs with their retainers; and the *Rana* and his cavalcade proceed direct to the stables, when a buffalo is sacrificed in honour of the war-horse. Thence the procession moves to the temple of *Devi*, where the *Raja Crishen (Godi)* has preceded. Upon this, the *Rana* seats himself close to the *Raj Jogi*†, presents two pieces of silver and a coconut, performs homage to the sword (*karga*), and returns to the palace. (p. p. 465-466)

Asoj 2nd. In similar state he proceeds to the *Chougan*, their *Champ de Mars*, where a buffalo is sacrificed; and on the same day another buffalo victim is felled by the nervous arm of a *Rajpoot*, near the *Torun-pol*, or triumphal gate. In the evening the *Rana* goes to the temple of *AMBA MATA*, the universal mother, when several goats and buffaloes bleed to the goddess.

The 3rd. Procession to the *Chougan*, when another buffalo is offered; and in the afternoon five buffaloes and two rams are sacrificed to *Harsid Mata*.

On the 4th, as on every one of the nine days, the first visit is to the *Champ de Mars*: the day opens with the slaughter of a buffalo. The *Rana* proceeds to the temple of *Devi*, when he worships the sword, and the standard of the *Raj Jogi*, to whom, as the high-priest of *Siva*, the god of war, he pays homage, and makes offering of sugar, and a garland of roses. A buffalo having been previously fixed to a stake near the temple, the *Rana* sacrifices him with his own hand, by piercing him from his travelling throne (raised on men's shoulders and surrounded by his vassals) with an arrow.

On the 5th, after the usual sacrifice at the *Chougan*, and an elephant fight, the procession marches to the temple of *Asapurna (Hope)*; a buffalo and a ram are offered to the goddess adored by all the *Rajpoots*, and the tutelary divinity of the *Chohans*. On this day, the lives

* *Tripolia*, or triple portal.

of some victims are spared at the intercession of the *Nuggur-Set'h*, or chief magistrate, and those of his faith, the *Jains*.

On the 6th, the *Rana* visits the *Chougan*, but makes no sacrifice. In the afternoon, prayers and victims to *Devi*; and in the evening the *Rana* visits *Bikhtari Nat'h*, the chief of the *Kanfara Jogis*, or split-ear ascetics.

The 7th. After the daily routine at the *Chougan*, and sacrifices to *Devi* (the goddess of destruction), the chief equerry is commanded to adorn the steeds with their new caparisons, and lead them to be bathed in the lake. At night, the sacred fire (*hom*) is kindled, and a buffalo and a ram are sacrificed to *Devi*; the *Jogis* are called up and feasted on boiled rice and sweetmeats. On the conclusion of this day, the *Rana* and his chieftains visit the hermitage of *Sukria Baba*, an anchorite of the *Jogi* sect.

8th. There is the *homa*, or fire sacrifice in the palace. In the afternoon, the prince, with a select cavalcade, proceeds to the village of *Sameena*, beyond the city walls, and visits a celebrated *Gosacn*.*

9th. There is no morning procession. The horses from the royal stables, as well as those of the chieftains, are taken to the lake, and bathed by their grooms, and on returning from purification they are caparisoned in their new housings, led forth, and receive the homage of their riders, and the *Rana* bestows a largess on the master of the horse, the equerries, and grooms. At three in the afternoon, the *nakarras* having thrice sounded, the whole state insignia, under a select band, proceed to *Mount Matachil*, and bring home the sword. When its arrival in the court of the palace is announced, the *Rana* advances and receives it with due homage from the hands of the *Raj Jogi* who is presented with a *khelat*; while the *mehunt*, who has performed all the susterities

* On this day sons visit and pay adoration to their fathers. The diet is chiefly of vegetables and fruits. Brahmins with their unmarried daughters are feasted and receive garments called *choonduree* from their Chiefs.

during the nine days, has his *patera** filled with gold and silver coin. The whole of the Jogis are regaled, and presents are made to their chiefs. The elephants and horses again receive homage, and the sword, the shield, and spear are worshipped within the palace. At three in the morning the prince takes repose. (p.p. 466-467)

The 10th, or *Dussera**, is a festival universally known in India, and respected by all classes, although entirely military, being commemorative of the day on which the deified Rama commenced his expedition to Lanka for the redemption of Seeta;** the "tenth of Asoj" is consequently deemed by the Rajpoot a fortunate day for warlike enterprise. The day commences with a visit from the prince or chieftain to his spiritual guide. Tents and carpets are prepared at the Chougan or Matachil mount, where the artillery is sent; and in the afternoon the Rama, his chiefs, and their retainers repair to the field of *Mars*, worship the *kajri* tree, liberate the *niltach* or jay (sacred to Rama), and return amidst a discharge of guns.

11th. In the morning, the Rana, with all the state insignia, the kettledrums sounding in the rear, proceeds towards the Matachil mount, and takes the muster of his troops, amidst discharges of cannon, tilting, and display of horsemanship. The spectacle is imposing even in the decline of

* The Jogi's *patera* is not so revolting as that of their divinity Hari (the god of war) which is the human cranium, this is a hollow gourd.

* From *dus* or *das*, the numeral *ten*; the tenth.

**In this ancient story we are made acquainted with the distant maritime wars which the princes of India carried on. Even supposing Ravana's abode to be the insular Ceylon, he must have been a very powerful prince to equip and armament sufficiently numerous to carry off from the remote kingdom of Koshula the wife of the great king of the Suryas. It is most improbable that a petty king of Ceylon could wage equal war with a potentate who held the chief dominion of India; whose father, Desarat'ha, drove his victorious car (rat'ha) over every region (desa) and whose intercourse with the countries beyond the Brahmaputra is distinctly to be traced in the Ramayana.

this house. The hilarity of the party, the diversified costume, the various frocks, colours, and decorations of the turbans, in which some have the heron plume, or sprigs from some shrub sacred to the god of war; the clusters of lances, shining matchlocks, and black bucklers, the scarlet housings of the steeds, and waving pennons, recall forcibly the glorious days of the devoted Sanga, or the immortal Pertap, who no such occasions collected round the black *changi* and crimson banner of Mewar a band of sixteen thousand of his own kin and clan, whose lives were their lord's and their country's. The shops and bazaars are ornamented with festoons of flowers and branches of trees, while the costliest cloths and brocades are extended on screens, to do honour to their prince; the *torun* (or triumphal arch) is placed before the tent, on a column of which he places one hand as he alights, and before entering makes several circumambulations. All present offer their *nuzzur's* to the prince, the artillery fires, and the bards raise "the song of praise," celebrating the glories of the past; the fame of Samra, who fell with thirteen thousand of his kin on the Caggar; of Ursi and his twelve brave sons, who gave themselves as victims for the salvation of Cheetore; of Koombho, Lakha, Sanga, Pertap, Umra, Raj, all descended of the blood of Rama, whose exploits, three thousand five hundred years before, they are met to celebrate. The situation of Matachil is well calculated for such a spectacle, as indeed is the whole ground from the palace through the Delhi Portal to the mount, on which is erected one of the several castles commanding the approaches to the city. The fort is dedicated to *Mata*, though it would not long remain stable (*achil*) before a battery of thirty-six pounders. The guns are drawn up about the termination of the slope of the natural glaci; the Rana and his court remain on horseback half up the ascent; and while every chief or a vassal is at liberty to leave his ranks and "witch the world with noble horsemanship," there is nothing tumultuous, nothing offensive in their mirth. (p. p. 467-468)

The steeds purchased since the last festival are named, and as the cavalcade returns, their grooms repeat the appellations of each as the

word is passed by the master of the horse; as *Baj Raj*, 'the royal steed' *Hymor*, 'the chief of horses'; *Manika*, 'the gem'; *Buja*, 'the thunderbolt', etc. etc. On returning to the palace, gifts are presented by the Rana to his chiefs. The Chohan chief of Kotario claims the apparel which his prince wears on this day, in token of the fidelity of his ancestor to the minor Oody Sing, in Akber's wars. To others or a fillet or *balabund* for the turban is presented; but all such compliments are regulated by precedent or immediate merit. (p. 468)

The last day of the month Asoj ushers in the Hindu winter (*surd rit*). (p. 474)

On this day, nothing but white vestments and silver (*chandi*) ornaments are worn, in honour of the moon (*Chundra*) who gives his * name to the

"Pale and common drudge
Tween man and man."

There is a procession of all the chief to the Chougan; and on their return, a full court is held in the great hall, which breaks up with "obedience to the lamp" (*jote ca moofra*) whose light each reverences; when the candles are lit at home, every Rajpoot, from the prince to the owner of a "skin (*chursa*) of land", seated on a white linen cloth, should worship his tutelary divinity, and feed the priests with sugar and milk.

CARTICA—This month is peculiarly sacred to *Lacshmi*, the goddess of wealth, the *Juno Moneta* of the Romans. The 13th is called the *Dhunterus*, or thirteenth (day) of wealth, gold and silver coin are worshipped, as the representatives of the goddess, by her votaries of all classes, but especially by the mercantile. On the 14th, all anoint with oil, and make libations thereof to *Yama*, the judge of departed spirits. Worship (*pooja*) is performed to the lamp, which represents the god of hell, and is thence called *Yama-dewa*,

* It will be recollected that the moon with the Rajpoots as with the Scandinavians is a male divinity. The Tatars, who also consider him a male divinity pay him especial adoration in this autumnal month.

the lamp of Pluto', and on this day partial illumination takes place throughout the city,

DEWALI, or *Festival of Lamps*—On the Amavus, or *ides* of Cartic, is one of the most brilliant fetes of Rajasthan, called the *Dewali*, when every city, village, and encampment exhibits a blaze of splendour. The potters' wheels revolve for weeks before solely in the manufacture of lamps (*dewa*) and from the palace to the peasant's hut every one supplies himself with them, in proportion to his means, and arranges them according to his fancy. Stuffs, pieces of gold, and sweetmeats are carried in trays and consecrated at the temple of *Lacshmi*, the goddess of wealth, to whom the day is consecrated. The Rana on this occasion honours his prime minister with his presence to dinner; and this chief officer of the state, who is always of the mercantile caste, pours oil into a terra-cotta lamp, which his sovereign holds; the same libation of oil is permitted by each of the near relations of the minister. On this day, it is incumbent upon every votary of *Lacshmi* to try the chance of the dice, and from their success in the *dewali*, the prince, the chief, the merchant, and the artisan foretell the state of their coffers for the ensuing year.

Lacshmi, though on this festival depicted under by the type of riches, is evidently the beneficent *Anupurna* in another garb, for the agricultural community place a corn-measure filled with grain and adorned with flowers as her representative; or, if they adorn her effigies, they are those of *Padma*, the water-nymph, with a lotos in one hand, and the *pashu* (or fillet for the head) in the other. As *Lacshmi* was produced at the *Churning of the Ocean*, and hence called one of the "fourteen gems", she is confounded with *Rembha*, chief of the *apsaras*, the Venus of the Hindus. Though both were created from the froth (*sara*) of the waters (*ap* or *up*), they are as distinct as the representations of riches and beauty can be. *Lacshmi* became the wife of Vishnu, or Kaniya, and is placed at the feet of his marine couch when he is floating on the chaotic waters. As his consort, she merges into the character of *Sarasvati*, the goddess of eloquence. (p. p. 475-476)

To the infernal god Yama, who is "the son of the sun; the second day following the Amavus is also sacred; it is called the *Bhratri divityā*, or, the brothers, because the river goddess *Yamuna* on this day entertained her brother (*bhratri*) Yama, and is therefore consecrated to fraternal affection. At the hour of curfew (*gaodaluk*, *when the cattle return from the fields), the cow is worshipped, the herd having been previously tended. From this ceremony no rank is exempted on the preceding day, dedicated to *Crishna*: prince and peasant all become pastoral attendants on the cow, as the form of *Prithwi*, **or the earth.

The 1st (*Sudi*), or 16th of *Cartica*, is the grand festival of *ANACUTA*, sacred to the Hindu *Ceres*, which will be described with its solemnities at *Nat'hdwara*. There is a state procession, horse-races, and elephant fights at the *Chougan*; the evening closes with a display of fireworks.

The 14th (*Sudi*), or 29th, is another solemn festival in honour of *Vishnu*. It is called the *Jul-jatra*, from being performed on the water (*Jul*). The Rana, chiefs, ministers, and citizens go in procession to the lake, and adore the "spirit of the waters," on which floating lights are placed,

and the whole surface is illuminated by a grand display of pyrotechny. On this day, *Vishnu rises from his slumber of four months*: *** a figurative expression to denote the sun's emerging from the cloudy months of the periodical flood.

The next day (the *poonum*, or last day of *Cartica*), being the *macara sancranti*, or autumnal equinox, when the sun enters the zodiacal sign *Macara*, or *Pisces*, the Rana and chiefs proceed in state to the *Chougan*, and play at ball on horseback. The entire last half of the month *Cartica*, from *Amavus* (the *ides*) to the *Poonum*, is sacred to *Vishnu*; who is declared by the *Puranas* to represent the sun, and whose worship, that of water, and the floating-lights placed thereon all objects emblematic of fecundity-carry us back to the point whence we started the adoration of the powers of nature: clearly proving all mythology to be universally founded on an astronomical basis. (p.p. 476-477)

* From gao 'a cow'.

** See anecdote in chap xxi, which elucidates this practice of princes becoming herdman.

*** Matsyu Purana

APPENDIX II

Extracts from Gazetteers

The Rajputana Gazetteers, Vol-I

Gazetteers of Bikaner

A fair takes place at *Kolath* every October, at which 60,000 people assemble. This is the principal fair of the State. *Kolath* is a place of pilgrimage, and there is a tank there with a number of bathing-ghats. There is a fair at *Koramdesar* on the 13th August, to which some 10,000 people flock, but there is little trading. At *Devi Kund*, *Sahansarla Gaisulai*, *Harsolai*, *Sujandesar*, and at three of the temples in the city, fairs are annually held; also one at *Dadrewa*, in *Rajgarh*, on the 9th of August, in honour of a Musalman saint. (p. 201)

Devi Kund (previously mentioned), the place of cremation of the *Bikanir* Chiefs, is three miles east of the city. On each side of the tank are ranged the sculptures of twelve chiefs, *Kalyan Singh* to *Ratan Singh*. Several of them are handsome structures, and all are domes supported by graceful pillars. They are built of red sandstone, and the commemorative stones are of marble. On these are sculptured in bass-relief the mounted figure of the chief, and on foot, standing in order of precedence before him, the wives, and, behind and below him, the concubines, who mounted his funeral pyre. Up to the time of *Gaj Singh*, the "Satis" over each chief averaged above twelve. The last famous "Sati" in *Bikaner* was that of *Dip Kanwar*, an *Udaipur* princess and wife of *Maharaja Surat Singh*, who met her death in 1825. People still speak of the courage and devotion her bearing showed as she wended her way with uncovered face to the fatal pile. A numerously attended fair is annually held in reverence to her memory at *Devi Kund*.

(p.p. 201-202)

Gazetteer of the Bikaner State, 1874

Reprint 1935

By Captain P. W. Powlett

The worship of *Karniji*, a *Charan* woman who was an incarnation of *Devi*, is the Chief religious deity of the court. It was her supernatural power which secured the territory of *Bikanir* to *Bika* and his descendants, and where she estranged the state would be ruined. The temple of *Deshnuk*, as old as the state, is therefore the chief shrine in *Bikanir*; but *Karniji* is invoked in other lands far from the place of her origin, and she has devotees of all castes. Some temples in her honor were built in the *Dakhan*, and one raised by a *Sesodia* lady is in the upper fort at *Alwar*. As represented on stones or on gold and silver charms worn round the neck, *Karniji* holds a "trisol" or trident in her hand.

In *Sambat* 1595, the disappearance or translation of the old *charan* woman *Karniji* of *Deshnuk* took place. A short time previous to her end, she went to *Jaisalmir* to cure the *Rawal Jet si* of a tumour. This she is reported to have effected by passing her hand over the sore. She likewise cured an aged carpenter of blindness, by causing him to attempt to look at her. On her way back from *Jaisalmir* she alighted at a place called *Karandan Talai*, where for some time she sat in contemplation with her head covered. At length a jet of flame issued from her body, completely enveloped her, and she was seen no more. *Karniji*, as an avatar of *Devi*, is still looked upon as the protectress of *Bikanir*, and is greatly revered by all classes. Her village of *Deshnuk*, and more especially her temple, is the most inviolable sanctuary in the country, and in other parts of *India* temples have been raised in her honor. Thus there is one in the upper fort at *Alwar*, built not by a *Rathor* as one would have expected, but by a *Rani* from *Shahpura* of the *Sesodia* clan.

Gazetteer of Ulwar

By

Major P. W. Powlett

Fairs are, I believe, always held ostensibly for some religious purpose, except when established by British authority, so it is unnecessary to attempt the separation of the religious and commercial. The following are the principal :—

City of Ulwar, the Gangor, and the Sawan tij, well-known festivals in honour of Mahadevi, held in March and August. One to Jagannath in Asarh (July); one to Sahibji (God), a shrine near the city, on the Tejara road.

Chuhar Sidh, in the Dehra Pargana, eight miles north-west of the city, on the Shiv Ratri festival in February. It is held in honour of a Meo saint (see below).

Bilali, in Bansur, on the Jaipur border, in Chait and Baisakh (March and April, in honour of Sitla Devi (the smallpox deity)

Rajgarh, Jagannath's festival in Asarh (July) Silleserbh. The lake eight miles from Ulwar, in Baisakh (March), in honour of Sitla Devi.

Kundalka, in Thana Ghazi, in honour of Bharatari, in Baisakh and Bhadon (March and August).

Ghasaoli, in Kishangarh, in honour of Sahibji (God ?) in Bhadon (August).

Palpur, in Kishangarh, Mah, Baisakh, Jeth (December, March and June) in honour of Sitla.

Dahmi, in Bahrar, in months of Chait and Asoj (March and October), in honour of Devi.

At Macheri, in Rajgarh, during Chait (March), in honour of Devi.

Barwa dungri, Baldeogarh, in Thana Ghazi, in honour of Narayani, during Baisakh.

Shergarh, in Ramgarh, in Asoj, Asarh, and Magh in honour of Lal Das.

Of the above, the most important are the Ulwar fairs, and those at Bilali and Chuhar Sidh. It is said that 80,000 persons assemble at each of the two latter.

Bilali is on the Jaipur border, and attracts probably more people from Jaipur than from Ulwar territory.

But Chuhar Sidh is in the heart of the State in a range of hills west of the city, and has some special interest as being the Chief fair of Mewat. It is attended chiefly by Meos; and the presentation of offerings, the vast, though not very lively, crowd, the trafficking, and the beggars, are a curious sight. So necessary is attendance as is considered, that many villagers own a few yards of encamping-ground on the hill side near the shrine, which is situated high up and among the hill, beside a stream which, usually only a rill, in the rains acquires a considerable volume, and is regarded with much veneration by the Meos.

Chuhar Sidh is said to have been the son of a Meo by a Nai woman, and to have flourished in the reign of Aurangzeb. He was born at village Dhaneta, and left home through fear of the tax Collectors, who were torturing people to obtain revenue. He gained his living by watching cornfields and grazing cattle in villages near the city of Ulwar, and is said to have received the power of working miracle, from the Musalman saint, Shah Madar, whom he accidentally met. Eventually he took up his residence on the site of the present shrine. Unlike Lal Das, he does not seem to have a teacher; but his shrine attracts more pilgrims than any of those sacred to Lal Das.

The Rajputana Gazetteer, 1879—Volume I

A fair in honour of Narsinghji is held at Dholpur in the latter half of October; it is attended by large number of people. Quantities of merchandise of different kinds, as well as cattle, horses, sheep and goats, are bought and sold during the fifteen days that this fair continues. Goods are brought from Delhi, Agra, Cawnpore, and Lucknow. Religious fairs for the purpose of

bathing are held at Mach Kund, a lake three miles to the west of Dholpur, sacred to Sri Krishanji, in May, and again at the beginning of September.

The lake, which covers an area of 41 acres, lies in a natural hollow of great depth; it is filled in the rains by the drainage of the surrounding country and maintained by the convergence of springs having their source in the sandstone hills by which it is surrounded. The origin of Mach Kund is attributed by local tradition to the era of Sri Krishna. Raja Mach Kund was a faithful servant of the gods, who having lived a holy life, desired to find rest from earthly cares in death. Vishnu refused his request, but permitted him to seek temporary repose, for some centuries, in sleep; and a decree went forth that anyone disturbing the holy Raja should be consumed by fire. Sri Krishna flying from the Rakshas Kalyamun chanced to pass by the place where the Raja slept. Without disturbing him, the god threw a cloth over the face of Mach Kund, and concealed himself close by. Soon after arrived Kalyamun, who, concluding that the sleeping man was the enemy he sought, rudely awoke him and was instantly consumed by fire. Sri Krishna remained with the Raja for some days, but finding that no water was to be nearer than the Chambal, he struck his foot on the ground and caused a depression in the living rock, which immediately filled water and now forms the lake. The piety of successive generations has enected 114 temples on its banks; none are of an earlier date than the end of fifteenth century.

A large fair is held on the "Sheorattre" festival, about the end of February, at the mandir dedicated to Mahadeo at Saepan, 14 miles north-west of Dholpur. This mandir is a large, fine building. It was erected in 1846 by Maharana Bhagwant Singh, the grandfather of the present chief.

The Rajputana Gazetteer, 1879 Volume II

The dargah is an object of veneration and pilgrimage to all religions and sects. The emperor Akbar made a pilgrimage on foot to this tomb, and the banyas of the dargah bazar daily lay their

Key on the steps of the shrine before opening their shops. Khwaja Mueiyyinud-din-chisti, the saint known as Khwaja Sahib, is said to have died in the year 1235-A.D. at the age of ninety-seven, and to have come to Ajmer at the age of fiftytwo shortly before the invasion of India by Shahab-ud-din. Many marvels are related of him in the *Akbhar-ul-Akhyar* and other works, and it is difficult to extract the historical facts of his career from the mass of romantic legends which have gathered round his name. It was at Medina that a voice came from the tomb of the Prophet calling for Mueiyyin-ud-din, and directing him for to go to Ajmer and convert the infidels. He obeyed the call, and on his arrival at Ajmer rested on the spot now known as the *Kangara Masjid* in the dargah, where at the time the king's camels were tethered. From this he was ejected, and went and took up his abode on the hill which overlooks the Anasagar, the margin of which lake he found covered with idol temples. The idolators, enraged at the slaughter of kids by the Musalmans, conspired to massacre them; but on coming in sight of the Khwaja, they remained rooted to the spot: and though they tried to ejaculate *Ram/Ram* could only articulate *Rahim/Rahim*! In vain did the idolators, led by the great sorcerer Ajipal, and the *deota* Shadideo, renew their attacks. They were defeated on every occasion, and finally begged forgiveness of the Khwaja, and invited him to come and take up his abode in the town. He consequently chose the site of the present dargah. Shadideo and Ajipal became Muslims: but the Raja refused to be persuaded in spite of the miracles, and it was owing to a dream in Khorasan, in which he saw the Khwaja calling to him to come over to India and help him, that Shahab-ud-din was induced to march into Hindustan and complete the ruin of the infidel king.

The Khwaja was twice married, his eldest lineal descendant, called the Dewanji, is the spiritual head of the shrine. All descendants of the Khwaja enjoy great consideration throughout India. The Nizam of Haidarabad, they say, will not sit in their presence, and the Maharajas of Jaipur, Gwalior and Jodhpur place them on a seat with themselves.

The dargah is built on the southern side of the city adjoining the city-wall which runs at the foot of the Taragarh hill. The residence of the dewan is to the east of the shrine, and west of it is a quarter of the city appropriated to the Khadims or servitors of the dargah. The first object on entering at the main gate is the *Naubat-Khana* containing two huge drums which were presented by Akbar after the capture of Chitor; and just beyond this, is a high arched gateway tastelessly decorated that flaring colors, and with stairs to the top. Here is treasured a gong, also portion of the spoils of Chitor, which is beaten sixty four times in the twenty-four hours. To the right of this arch is a spacious courtyard where the *Mahfil* is held, and further on, a large mosque built by Akbar, now partially in ruins. Proceeding towards the holier part of the shrine, called the *Bhikar-ka-Ostana*, the visitor sees, on the sight, a white marble mosque built by Shahjehan, still as perfect and fresh as on the day it was finished. On the left is the tomb of the saint, with the tombs of his two wives on the north side, and the tombs of his daughter, Hafiz Jamal, and of Chimni Begum, said to have been a daughter of Shahjehan, on the south. The tomb of the Khwaja is a square-domed building with two entrance, one closed by a pair of sandalwood doort pars of the spoils of Chitor, and the other spanned by a silver arch presented by Siwai Jai Singh of Jaipur.

(p. 61 & 62)

From the first to the sixth day of the month of Rajab in each year, a religious festival called *Urs Mela* is held at the dargah. The festival lasts six days, for it is uncertain on what day the saint died. The proceedings consist for the most part of recitations of Persian poetry of the Sufi school, at an assembly called the *Mahfil*. These recitation are kept up till 3 O'clock in the morning, by which time many pilgrims are in the ascetic devotional state technically known as *Halat*. One peculiar custom of this festival may be mentioned. There are two large chaldrons inside the dargah enclosure, one twice the size of the other, which are known as the great and little *deg*. Pilgrims to the shrine according to their ability or generosity propose to offer a *deg*. The

smallest amount which can be given for the large *deg* is 80 maunds of rice, 28 maunds of ghi, 35 of sugar, and 15 almonds and raisians, besides saffron and other spices; and the minimum cost is Rs. 1000/-. The larger the proportion of spices, sugar, and fruit, the greater is the glory of the desior. About 1840 the Nagir Ilmas of Jodhpur offered a *deg* which cost Rs. 2500, and its sweet savour is still redilient in the precincts of the dargah. The donor of the large *deg*, besides the actual cost of its contents, has to pay about Rs. 200 as presents to the officials of the shrine, and as offerings at the tomb. The small *deg* costs exactly half the large one.

When the gigaritic rice-pudding is cooked, it is "looted" in a state of boiling heat. Eight earthen pots of the mixture are first set apart for the foreign pilgrims, and it is the hereditary privilege of the people of Indurkat and of the menials of the dargah to despoil the chaldron of the remainder of its contents. After the recitation of the *Fathia*, one Indurkoti seizes a large iron ladle, and mounting the platform of the *deg*, ladles away vigorously. All the men who take part in this hereditary privilege are swaddled upto the eyes in cloths to avoid the effect of the scalding fluid. Each takes a ladleful of the stuff in the skirt of his coat and not uncommonly finds the heat so overpowering that he is obliged to drop it. When the chaldron is nearly empty, all the Indurkotis tumble in together and scrape it clean. There is a story that Imdad Khan, a Resaldar of Jodhpur, wished on one occasion to make a fair and equable division to all and partially accomplished his object; but, on his return from the festival, he was stricken by a bullet directed by an unseen, if not supernatural, hewd and died. There is no doubt that the custom of "looting" the *deg* is very ancient though no account of its origin can be given. It is generally counted among the miracles of the saint that no lives have ever been lost on these occasions, though burns are frequent. The rice is bought by Mahajans and others, and most castes will eat it. The number of pilgrims at this festival is estimated at 20,000, but no buying or selling is done except that of pedlars' wares.

The Rajputana Gazetteers Voll. II-1879. Ajmer—Merwara

Pushkar :—Pushkar is a celebrated place of pilgrimage, and the great sanctity of its lake, equalled, according to Colonel Tod, only by that of Manasarowar in Tibet, is due to the belief that here Brahma performed the *Yajna*, and that the Saraswati here re-appears in five streams. The legends connected with those two beliefs may be found in the *Pushkar Mahatmya* of the *Padma Puran*. Brahma was perplexed as to where he should perform the sacrifice according to the vedas, as he had no temple on earth like other deities. As he reflected, the lotus fell from his hand, and he determined to perform his sacrifice wherever it fell. The lotus, rebounding, struck the earth in three places; water issued from all three, and Brahma, descending, called the name of the place Pushkar, after the lotus.* Brahma then collected all the gods, and on 11th day of the bright half of Kartik, everything was ready. Each god and *risht* had his own special duty assigned to him, and Brahma stood with a jar of *Amrit* on his head. The sacrifice, however, could not begin until Savitri appeared, and she refused to come without Lakshmi, Parvati, and Indrani, whom Pavan had been sent to summon. On hearing of her refusal, Brahma became enraged and said to Indra. "Search me out a girl that I may marry her and commence the sacrifice, for the jar of *amrit* weighs heavy on my head." Indra accordingly went, but found none except a Gujar's daughter whom he purified by passing her through the body of a cow, and then bringing her to Brahma, told what he has done. Vishnu observed—"Brahmans and cows are in reality identical; you have taken her from the womb of a cow, and this may be considered a second birth." Shiva added that, as he had passed through a cow, she should be called *Gayatri*.@ The Brahman agreed

* The holy ground extends for one Yojan round the largest lake, called Jyesht Pushkar. The second lake is the Madhya Pushkar, near the tank now called Suda Bai. The third lake is the Kanisht Pushkar, which is now generally called Burha Pushkar. The middle lake is very small, and there are no buildings round it or round the third lake.

@ The image of Gayatri may be seen in the temple of Brahma, close to that of Brahma himself.

that the sacrifice might now proceed, and Brahma, having married Gayatri and having enjoined silence on her, placed on her head the jar of *Amrit*, and the *Yajna* commenced. (p. 67)

The sacrifice, however, was soon interrupted by a naked man who appeared crying "Atmat Atmat!" and who, at the instigation of Shiva, threw a skull into the sacrificial ground. When it was attempted to remove the skull, two appeared in its place, and the whole ground gradually became covered with skulls; till Shiva, at Brahma's request, finally agreed to remove them on condition that he should have a temple at Pushkar, there to be worshipped under the name of Atmateswar. Meanwhile a number of Brahmanas, all ugly men, arrived from the Dakhin. As they bathed in the lake, their forms changed into those of handsome men, and the ghat at which they bathed, called Surup Ghat, is the resort of pilgrims on the 11th day of Kartik.

On the morning of the 12th day the Brahmanas came to Brahma and asked where they were to bathe. He directed them to bathe in the Prachi Sarasvati, the stream which passes by the village of Hokran; and it is explained how the Sarasvati, after disappearing underground to escape the heat of the fire which she is carrying to the sea, re-appears in five channels,* in the sacred soil of Pushkar, how two of these meet at Nand, five miles from Pushkar; and how, from the junction, the river, thereafter called the Luni, proceeds to the sea. The sacrifice was disturbed this day by Batu Brahman, who let loose a snake among the Brahmanas. The reptile coiled itself round Bhrigu Rishi; whose son imprecated a curse against Batu that he might become a snake. Batu, going to his grandfather—Brahma, was consoled by the promise that he should be the founder of the ninth order of snakes, and was directed to go to the Nagpahar, where he should receive worship on the 5th day of the dark half of Sawan at the place called the Nag-Kund.

* The five streams are enumerated as Suprabha, which falls into Jyesht Pushkar; Sudha, which falls into Madhya Pushkar; Kanka, which falls into Kanisht Pushkar; Nanda, which flows past Nand; and, Prachi which passes by Hokran.

The sacrifice proceeded till the 15th, each day having its appointed duties; for this day the Brahmans were directed to make a circuit of the lakes and to bathe in Gayakup.* Shortly after their return, Savitri appeared, greatly incensed at the disregard which had been shown to her. Brahma sought to pacify her, but to no purpose, and she went away in a rage to the hill north of the lake where is her temple.

After the *Yajna* performed by Brahma, Pushkar became so holy that the greatest sinner, by merely bathing in it, went to heaven. Heaven became inconveniently crowded, and the gods complained that no man any longer regarded them or his duty, so easy was it to get to heaven. Brahma agreed accordingly that the *tirth* should only be on earth from the 11th day of Kartik to the full moon, and for the remainder of the year he promised to remove the *tirth* to the air (*antriksha*).† Such is the legend given in the *Pushkar Mahatmya*.

The legends concerning Pushkar after the *Yajna* of Brahma are rather confusing. The virtue of the lake is said to have been forgotten till it was re-discovered by Raja Nahar Rao Purihar of Mandor, who followed a white boar to the margin of the lake, and then dismounting to quench his thirst; found, on touching, the water, that he was cured of a skin-disease. He is accordingly said to have had the lake excavated, and to have built ghats. Pushkar, after this, appears to have come into the possession of Chechi Gujars, for there is a legend that some seven hundred years ago a large body of Sanyasis came to bathe in Pushkar; they disapproved of the Gujars being in possession of the ghats, killed them all on the night of the Dewali, and turning

*It is the duty of pilgrims on the 15th day of Kartik to perform the circuit (Pari Krama) of the lakes and to bathe in Gayakup, the tank now known by the name of Suda Bai. The virtues of the tirth of Gaya are said to reside in this place, whence the name.

† The tirth can be made to descend by the recitation of a mantra commencing "Apo hishta mayobhuvas". "Ye waters are the source of all good things". For Sudras, the recitation of the eight-syllabled mantra. "Om namo Narayanaya," is sufficient.

out the Kanphata Jogis, who had become priests of the temples, themselves left a representative at each temple.

There are five principal temples in Pushkar—those dedicated to Brahma, Savitri, Badri Narayan, Varaha, and Shiva Atmateswara. They are all of comparatively modern construction, for the old temples suffered much at the hands of the Mughals, and Aurangzeb, as elsewhere in India, enjoys the reputation of having destroyed all the temples. A masjid, which is still kept up, was built by him on the site of a temple to Kesho Rao. The temple of Brahma was built by Gokul-Parak, an Oswal Mahajan of Gwalior, and is the only temple dedicated to Brahma in India. The attendant at the temple are Puri Gusaens. The temple of Savitri is built on the north of the lake, and was constructed by the Purohit of Ajit Singh of Marwar. The temple of Badri Narayana was rebuilt by the Thakur of Kharwa about 1800 A. D. That of Varaha, or the boar, was demolished by Jehangir, and the present temple was built by Bakht Singh of Jodhpur. Goma Rao, Subahdar of the Marathas, re-built the temple of Shiva Atmateswara. (p. 68)

The town is picturesquely situated on the lake, with hills on three sides: on the fourth side, the sands, drifted from the plains of Marwar, have formed a complete bar to the waters of the lake, which has no outlet, though the filtration through the sand hills is considerable. Bathing-ghats have been constructed nearly round the lake, and most of the princely and wealthy families of Rajputana have houses round the margin. The principal ones are those built by Raja Man of Jaipur, Ahelya Bai, the queen of Holkar, Jawahar Mal of Bharatpur, and Raja Bijay Singh of Marwar. According to ancient charters, no living thing is allowed to be put to death within the limits of Pushkar. A short time ago an English Officer fired a rifle at an alligator in the lake; the whole population immediately became much excited, petitions were poured in and it was with difficulty that the Brahmans could be pacified. The uproar was probably owing as much to jealousy of their invaded privileges as to any feeling connected with the sanctity of animal life;

but the latter feeling is not confined to the Brahmans at Pushkar, and all the mercantile classes of the district, being of the Jain persuasion, are exceedingly tender of life. (p. 70)

The fair at Pushkar takes place in October or November, and like other, Religious fairs, is used as an opportunity for trade. It is attended by about one hundred thousand pilgrims, who bathe in the sacred lake. In 1877 the quantity of merchandise and the number of animals brought for sale were below the average there were about 401 horses, 1495 camels, and 1985 bullocks. The horses are chiefly Marwari and Katiawar, and the native cavalry regiments serving in Rajputana generally send parties to purchase remounts.

The Rajputana Gazetteer, Vol. II-1879

Jesalmer

Compiled By

Lieutenant-Colonel C. K. M. Walter
Political Agent.

Two large fairs are held, one of these is celebrated on the last day of the month of Baisakh, or April, at Dram Hunda, about 10 miles from the city of Jesalmer—it is attended by the followers of Vishnu, Devi and Shamus; about 5000 or 6000 people visit the place on the occasion—the fair lasts for two days: the other fair is held in honor of Goga (a saint) at the same place in August or September each year; and on this occasion, also, about 3000 or 4000 people assemble. Other fairs of less note are also held, but no trade is carried on at them. The two first mentioned are religious fairs, and the others are held on occasions of local festivals. (pp. 180-81)

Gazetteer of Marwar Mallani and Jeysulmere

By

Major C. K. M. Walter—1877

The principal fairs in Marwar are as follows :-

Balotra or Tilwara, held in March last for fifteen days. In 1875 the livestock brought to this fair was as follows :-

Young bullocks	... 15000
Full grown	... 15000
Camels	... 5600
Horses	... 400

Hides, tanned leather, brass and tin utensils have a large sale. The annual attendance of people is from 30,000 to 35,000 from all parts of the country, the larger number naturally from Marwar, but other parts of Rajputana, Gujrat, Sind, and the Panjab, are well represented. The principal object of adoration is the shrine of Mallinath, all sellers of animals or goods make a small offering of either pice or good at the temple, and the general cry, of all the Hindus throughout the fair is "Jae Mallinath".

Mundwa of Nagor, held in the months of December and January, principally attended by travellers, and gives an income of about Rupees 3,000; it was instituted by Maharaja Bakht Singh in honour of Shree Krishna under the name of Girdhari. It lasts nearly two months, and is visited by from 30,000 to 40,000 people, principally from Marwar, but people from other districts, chiefly from Bhiwani also attend. The Mundwa fair used formerly to bring in an income to the Darbar of from Rupees 10,000 to 15,000, but it has fallen off of late years. Bullocks are sold in large numbers at this fair. (p. 41)

The Parbatsar fair is held in the month of Bhadon (August), and lasts for ten days. Bullocks are sold in large numbers. It is attended by about 10,000 people, and is held in honour of Tejaji, (of whom an account is given in page 30 of the Ajmer Gazetteer). The way the fair came to be held at Parbatsar in Tejaji's honour is that in the time of Maharaja Bigae Singh there was a very sharp Hakim at Parbatsar, who found that Marwaris, especially Jats, went in great numbers of the Sarsora of Kishengurh fair, and that a good income was derived by the Kishengurh Darbar in consequence, so knowing that the chief object which took the Jats to Sarsora was to worship Tejaji shrine, he made up a story that Tejaji had appeared to him in a dream, and desired that he should be worshipped in future only at Parbatsar, so the Hakim had a figure made representing

Tejaji and ordered all Jats, on pain of punishment, to come to the Parbatsar fair and not to Kishengurh. The Darbar derives a revenue of from Rupees 5000 to 6000 a year from this fair, which is attended chiefly by Jats.

The Ram Deora fair is held in the month of Bhadon (August), and is attended on an average by from 8000 to 10,000 people, principally from Marwar, Meywar, Bickaneer, and Jeysulmere. It is held in honour of Ram Deo, (of whom an account is given elsewhere). The income of this fair goes to the Thakur of Pokaran, who holds it from the Darbar on the same tenure as he holds his estate. The fair is represented as of the annual value of *rekh* of Rupees 8750 and he has to give the service of eight men, or one man for each thousand rupees worth of *rekh*. (p. 42)

The Bilara fair is held on Chait Bud 15th, corresponding with the latter part of the month of March, and lasts only one day; 5000 or 6000 people usually attend. No income is derived from this fair; it is held near a spring of water about four miles from the village of Bilara, and the legend is that Raja Bal was in the habit of giving great feasts at this spot, the deity, Ganga, appeared to him once in a dream; and told him that if he shot an arrow into this spring, she would appear there, and that the water of the spring should become as sacred as that of the holy Ganges itself. Bal obeyed his order and the water of this spring has ever since been held sacred especially by the poorer classes, and the place is called *Bahan Ganga* from *bahn*, an arrow. (p. 42)

The Barkana fair is held in the month of the (December); 5000 or 6000 people attend it from the Godwar pargana, in which Barkana is situated, and from Meywar and Sirohee, it lasts for two days, and is held in honour of a Jain temple erected there 1000 or 1200 years ago.

A fair is held in February or March on the top of a hill called Gorambar (a corruption of the word Gorakh), four miles from the village of Saran, pargana Sojat; 5000 or 6000 people attend this fair from the neighbouring villages, and from Magra; Merwara etc; it lasts for two days. There

is a temple of Gorakhnath on the top of the hill and the fair is held in his honour. (p. 43)

A Gazetteer of the Dungarpur State, 1908.

At the fair held at Baneshwar at the Junction of the Som and Mahi rivers in February or March a few cattles and ponies change hands, but the goods brought for sale are chiefly cotton cloths, utensils, sweetmeats, glassware etc. (p. 148)

The Rajputana Gazetteer, Volume I, 1879. (Kushalgarh)

There is a *mela* held near Tanbesra on the 15th of every month. It is numerously attended by the Bhils and Rajputs in the neighbourhood, who come to pay their devotions to Mahadeo. No trading takes place. (p. 130)

The Rajputana Gazetteer, Volume—I Gazetteer of Bundi

(1) On the occasion of the Shivaratri festival (about March), fair is held on a plain outside the city of Bundi. Besides the inhabitants of the city, there is a gathering of about 6,000 people from other states and distant places. Tradesmen from Tonk, Madhopur, Kotah, etc., all assemble and set up about 100 booths and stalls. Blankets, cloths, and other coarse cotton fabrics, brass & copper utensils, sugar etc. are the chief articles sold. The distant traders leave after twelve days, but the local shop-keepers continue the traffic for the remaining days. The gathering for the whole month is about 40,000 people. No duty is levied on goods brought to the fair. Extension of trade may be intended, but its origin is a religious festival. (pp. 239-240)

(2) In the town of Keshorai Patan, a fair is held for four days, commencing in the month of Kartik Punum. The occasion is a religious festival called the "Rathjattr" as well as for bathing in the Chambal. The gathering is, however, confined to Haraoti, and a adjacent places. Distant traders do not attend. The total value of merchandise sold average Rs. 4000. (p. 240)

The Rajputana Gazetteer Volume-II, 1879

The principal temples in Jhalrapatan have the following legend as to the cause of their foundation. When the new city was being built, one Ganga Ram, a Luhar, was engaged in building his house when he was told in a dream that four images would be dug out of the spot, and he was therefore to dig the foundation himself; he did accordingly, and dug out a stone box in which were found the four images—Dwarkanath, Ramnik, Gopinath, and Santnath. Information of this was sent to Zalim Singh, then at Kotah, who hastened down and directed that a small boy should be given four slips of paper with the names of four Hindu persuasions on them; whichever slip the boy placed on an image, that was to be considered the worship that image desired. The result was that Dwarkanath desired Ballabh Kul or the Nath Dwara persuasion, now represented by the large temple in Patan; Ramnik desired Vishnu Marjad worship, and has a temple inside the palace enclosure at the Chhaoni; Santnath desired Jain worship and has a large temple in Patan; Gopinath wished for no worship, and consequently, has no temple. The legend regarding the Chandarbhaka stream is as follows:-

A certain raja had leprosy which he found incurable. One day, when out hunting, pursued a black and white pig to where the present river

now runs in a hollow close by there was water, into which the pig in despair jumped, and appeared the other side entirely black. The raja, seeing this wonderful result, determined to try the pool for his own recovery; accordingly he bathed in it and was cured. The place thenceforth became a resort for pilgrims, and a fair is held here yearly in the month of Kartik, when the ceremony of bathing is extensively performed. The fair lasts for a week: bullocks, cows, buffaloes, brass and copper vessels, and cheap ornaments are bought and sold. In the month of Baisakh, another large cattle fair is held on the banks of the large Patan talao, where bullocks principally exchange hands, the Zamindars of Haraoti and the adjoining States coming in number to make purchases. At ManoharThana in the month of Phagun, there is a Sheoratri fair which lasts for fifteen days; here, too, buffaloes, cows, and bullocks are bought and sold, as also brass vessels and some cloth. Zamindars from Rajgarh, Narsingharh, Patan, Haraoti, and Khilchipur, assemble there. The Khilchipur bullocks are much in favor. In Baisakh there is a fair held at Kailwara, in the Shahbad Pargana, which lasts for fifteen days. The people bathe in the hot pools at the place called Sita Bari, and buying and selling of plough cattle and agricultural implements goes on. People assemble from Jhalawar and Haraoti, especially the latter.

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