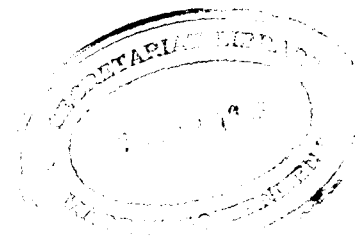


# THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

*With special reference to the United Provinces  
of Agra and Oudh*

*By*

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INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE



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## PREFACE

When I was superintendent of the census operations of 1911 in the United Provinces, one of my duties was to make investigation into certain specific aspects of the caste system. I accordingly collected books that dealt with this subject, but quickly discovered that though there was a considerable quantity of literature available, its nature was such as to make study of that subject difficult. There were firstly numerous books in several languages which related to the origins of caste, and were mostly designed either to prove or to disprove some theory of that origin. Secondly, there were numerous discussions on particular caste problems scattered through the various census reports or in such books as Risley's *People of India*, or in the introduction to such works as Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*. Thirdly, there were brief accounts of the caste system in various encyclopaedias, or in such general works on India as Fuller's *Empire of India*, or Crooke's *Natives of Northern India*. Fourthly, there was much relevant material in ethnographical books such as Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, Fraser's *Totemism and Exogamy*, and Hartland's *Primitive Paternity*. Finally, there were caste dictionaries, of which Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, already mentioned, is a typical example; for every important caste it gives the fullest possible information regarding its history, divisions, manners, customs, ceremonies, and occupations. But there was not then and, so far as I am aware, is not yet, any book which gives a full and connected account of caste as a system, which describes the factors which brought caste into existence, the evolution of the present system, the nature of the customs common to all castes, the principles which underlie those customs, and the reasons for similarity or difference between caste and caste. And my object in writing this book is, to the best of my ability, to supply that want.

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## PREFACE

In a sense this book is a sort of synopsis of Crooke's work; for my description of a particular custom is based on collection and collation of the material to be found in Crooke's accounts of the castes which observe that custom. And my hope that the book will prove useful depends on the fact that it is for the most part merely Crooke's work re-arranged.

There is, however, also a good deal of fresh material. Most of this is derived from the various census reports of 1901 and 1911, which are subsequent to the date of publication of Mr. Crooke's work. (At the census of 1921 no ethnographical enquiries were made, which explains why I have so seldom referred to that report.) The rest of the new material is derived from information which has come into my possession since 1911, either in the course of my other duties or which I have specially collected for this book.

The name of this book is 'The Caste System of Northern India, with special reference to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh'. The twin provinces form a tract which, from the dawn of history, has been the home of Hinduism, the centre of Hindu civilization and culture at their best—in a word, 'Hindustan', the country of the Hindu. And its Hindu social system is the Hindu social system of northern India: if there are variations elsewhere, they are not in essentials. It is this fact which justifies the first part of this book's title. But the second part is equally important, for it defines the scope both of the book and of the author's personal knowledge. And, indeed, some fifty millions of people form a sufficient basis for generalization.

I first began this book when I was on leave in 1913. I completed it when I again went on leave in 1922; during the interval there was a war on, and those of us who, like myself, had to remain in India, had no time to spare for any piece of work that could wait. When I was a third time on leave in 1927, and at intervals during the next two years, I revised the book completely and re-wrote certain parts of it. Finally, in 1930, I added the chapter which is based on certain parts of the report of the

## PREFACE

United Provinces Banking Enquiry Committee, of which I was Chairman. I mention these facts merely to explain why a book which is based to such a large extent on the census report of 1911, has not appeared until twenty years later. I can only hope that now that it has appeared it will prove of some use to somebody.

In this book various primitive customs are described as prevalent in various castes; and it is possible that a reader unacquainted with India may thereby be misled into supposing that such customs are common. That is not the case. The castes which possess such customs are invariably low, and invariably small. Most of them possess only a few thousand members, some only a few hundred. Such customs are survivals from the past, and can be found in every civilized country which has a past. In the present or future they have no importance. Their significance is not sociological, but purely ethnographical.

I have to acknowledge gratefully the assistance which I have received in the preparation of this book. I have to thank first His Excellency Sir Malcolm Hailey, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., Governor of the United Provinces, and his Government, for permitting me to include quotations from Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (which was a Government publication), and also to use the material available in the Banking Enquiry Committee's Report already mentioned. My grateful thanks are also due to Rai Bahadur Pandit Suraj Din Bajpai and Khan Bahadur Saiyid Ain-ud-din, who between them examined the entire book in proof and made many useful suggestions for its improvement; to Miss Gray, who prepared for me the caste index and the glossary of vernacular terms; and to Miss Hills, who prepared the general index.

E. A. H. B.

Lucknow. April 1931

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE OF CASTE

Everybody knows that 'caste' is the name given to groups of a certain kind into which Hindu society is divided; but it is not easy to define the term precisely. Castes are not all built on the same model: the system has grown up slowly and gradually, and castes which are of different origin are also of different nature. They all have, as a common characteristic, a spirit of exclusiveness which has the effect of restricting the intercourse of their members both with each other and with members of other castes. But that will not carry us very far. For this spirit has manifested itself variously, and the restrictions which it causes are consequently various. One caste forbids the remarriage of widows, another permits it; one permits its members to accept food from certain outsiders, another forbids such acceptance from anybody but a caste fellow. In the United Provinces and northern India generally, certain castes are regarded as conveying pollution by touch: in other parts of India, the same or similar castes are regarded as conveying pollution not only by touch but by mere proximity.

None the less it is possible to state certain characteristics which are common to all but exceptional castes. These are three in number:—

2. *The principal characteristics of the caste system* (i) Heredity. A Hindu is born a member of the caste to which his parents belong and all his life<sup>1</sup> remains a member of it. To change one's caste is impossible.

<sup>1</sup> But not after death. The Hindu who believes in transmigration, would see nothing strange in a good Chamar being reborn as a Chattri.

In a functional caste there may, of course, be other ties to reinforce the bond of common occupation—the same tutelary god or fetish, as in the case of the Bhangis, who generally worship Balmik or Lal Beg; the same reputed origin, as in the case of the Chamars, who claim descent, according to different legends, from a prince who buried an elephant whole, from a Brahman who removed a cow from the wayside, or from the union of a Nishada husband and Chandala wife; the same social rank; or the same ceremonies, social or religious. But in all cases the great bond of union is the common occupation.

The tribe in its original form is an aggregation of persons who have, or believe themselves to have, a common origin; it is this, together with common political interests and the need of mutual defence, that holds them together. A tribe is not a close corporation like a caste; it admits aliens who are willing to throw in their lot with it, especially women obtained by purchase or capture. It is not necessarily endogamous, though circumstances, especially its own and its neighbours' unwillingness to give their maidens to strangers, tend to make it so. Tribal castes are sprung from those tribes which have come into close contact with Hinduism and its social ordinances, have gradually accepted them and been merged into the Hindu social system. In such castes there are, of course, usually subsidiary bonds of union, in common deities, common worship, hereditary priests, common observances, taboos, totems, and rites.

Though every caste as a whole is endogamous, this does not always imply that any male member of the caste can marry any woman of the caste, provided she is outside the prohibited degrees. A caste is often, indeed usually, divided into sections which are themselves endogamous: for instance, a Brahman of the Gaur sub-caste can only marry a Gaur woman.

The origin of these endogamous subcastes is a complicated subject which is fully dealt with in a later chapter. But here we may notice the difference between functional

and tribal castes in the matter of these endogamous sub-castes. Functional castes normally possess them: it is indeed probable that such castes from the very first were made up of groups which either refused to intermarry, or were at all events predisposed to endogamy. Amid the goldsmiths, for instance, would be included the big jeweller of the city and the small goldsmith of the village: there would be the Kshatriya goldsmith and the Vaisya goldsmith and the Sudra goldsmith, of different blood and social rank. Presuming that these groups of different origin were already subject to a class prejudice against intermarriage, they would be as unwilling to take wives from each other within the 'trade guild' as they were without it. Tribal castes have fewer endogamous subdivisions: some, such as the Jat and Gujar, have none at all. Where they exist, the subcastes may occasionally date back to the early tribal days: for instance, there may have been no right of intermarriage, from the very first, between members of the full blood and members of the half blood, the offspring of captured or other alien women. But most subcastes of this kind have probably grown up since the tribe has adopted Hinduism and become a caste. The formation of such groups is still constantly going on:

We can now put together the various attributes which we have found to be common to all

7. *Definition of caste* castes, and thus form a working definition, as follows: 'A caste is an endogamous group, or collection of endogamous groups, bearing a common name, membership of which is hereditary, arising from birth alone; imposing on its members certain restrictions in the matter of social intercourse; either

- (i) following a common traditional occupation, or
- (ii) claiming a common origin, or
- (iii) both following such occupation and claiming such origin; and generally regarded as forming a single homogeneous community.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This definition is an expansion of Sir E. Gait's in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.



born'; the latter corresponds to the Sudra of the old dispensation, the former to the other three *varnas*. At other times it will be into the very vague 'touchable' and 'untouchable'. But most frequently, perhaps, the social class of any particular caste will be decided on the basis of the social intercourse which can legitimately be held with that caste in the matter of food and drink. From this point of view, there is nothing which can be called a classification at all: every man decides each case for himself on its merits as it arises and acts accordingly; there are as many classifications as there are men, or, at all events, as there are castes.<sup>1</sup> Yet, vague as it is, the social class is a most important matter to any Hindu. It represents, to use Sir Edward Gait's phrase, the 'external view' of the social organization.<sup>2</sup> To the individual his caste may be of supreme importance: but to anybody else it is a matter of comparative indifference. The Brahman who is brought into contact with a man of lower caste will not care whether he is a Nai or a Teli. The important question for him is the extent to which he can associate with him, whether he can take water from his hands or not; and that question is decided by his class.

Here we may notice how complicated is the segmentation of Hindu society. It is largely this fact which is responsible for the ignorance of the average Hindu about his caste system, and the difficulty, experienced at successive census enumerations, of obtaining a correct answer to the simple question 'What is your caste?'. One man will state his social class, naming one of the ancient *varnas*—especially if the claim of his caste to belong to that *varna* is disputable, and he thinks it desirable to assert it. Another will give his endogamous subcaste—especially if it sounds better than his caste. A third will give his exogamous section; a fourth will mention some caste-title. The Hindu, generally speaking, is ignorant

of all social distinctions which do not affect him personally, and very careless in his statement of those that do—a fact which makes the task of the enquirer into caste none the easier.

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Burn (*Census Report, U.P., 1901*) drew up a classification of this kind.

<sup>2</sup> *Census Report, India, 1911*, p. 366.

Most of the items in the above definition are fully dealt with elsewhere, but a few remarks may be made here in respect of two of them.

(a) *Heredity of membership in relation to endogamy.*

If a group be endogamous, then, provided that no legal or religious fictions of the nature of adoption or initiation are in customary use, membership of it must necessarily be hereditary. But membership of a group may be hereditary without that group being endogamous: for a potter may marry a barber's daughter and his son still be a potter. In the case of the functional groups it is probable that membership was hereditary before the groups became endogamous: for function itself became hereditary at a very early date. The tribal groups probably used legal fictions to recruit their numbers, adopting or initiating outsiders into their communities: indeed some of them, such as the gipsy castes, do so still. It seems likely, therefore, that heredity of membership in their case was the result of endogamy and not antecedent to it.

(b) *The homogeneity of caste.* It is to be noted that the definition of caste does not assert that it is, but merely that it is generally regarded as, a single homogeneous community. As a matter of fact many castes, sprung of heterogeneous elements, are far from homogeneous. The endogamous subcastes may be so; but there are often considerable differences between the customs of one subcaste and those of another. None the less the caste as a whole is regarded as a single entity.

And this fact is of importance in deciding what are castes and what are not. It may be asked, as M. S  nart<sup>1</sup> with the full weight of his authority asked, 'Why not consider the endogamous subcaste as the caste?'. It is endogamous: membership of it arises from birth: it enforces social restrictions on its members, follows a common traditional occupation, or claims a common origin. It is a single homogeneous community in a more real sense than a caste.

<sup>1</sup> *Les Castes dans l'Inde* (1896).

There are numerous objections. The endogamy of a subcaste is not as rigid as that of a caste. A marriage between (say) a Brahman bridegroom and a Rajput bride is unthinkable, but intermarriages have occurred between subcastes of the same caste with no worse consequence than a purificatory sacrifice; and if circumstances make it desirable, such as a lack of women, subcaste endogamy is abandoned. Even in the Brahman caste this has occurred. Subcaste endogamy is mutable: sometimes a subcaste which is endogamous in one place is not so in another. A trifling quarrel will drive two groups that formerly intermarried to endogamy: the removal of the cause of offence removes the restriction. But the most potent of all objections is the fact that endogamous subcastes are not regarded by their own members or by the rest of Hindu society as castes. To call such groups castes is to treat them as being what no Hindu would admit them to be. An investigator is not at liberty to manipulate his material so as to make it fit his theories.

We have seen that Hindu society is divided into two kinds of group, the caste, and the endogamous subcaste, which is a section of the caste of a particular kind. This, however, does not exhaust the segmentation of Hindu society. There is, firstly, a division into groups which are larger than the caste, and, secondly, a division into groups which are smaller than the caste, or endogamous subcaste where it exists. The second kind of group is the exogamous section, which is composed of persons who are, or believe themselves to be, so closely akin that marriage between them is impossible. The nature and place of the exogamous section in the caste system will be fully discussed in a subsequent chapter. The first kind of group is the social class. Theoretically, there are four such classes—namely, the old *varnas*, Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra; and for certain purposes these are still maintained. But for most purposes vaguer classifications are adopted, which vary according to the object in view. Sometimes the classifications will be into 'twice-born' and 'once

9. *Other groups in the Hindu social system*



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firstly, to post-date the origin of caste to comparatively modern times; and secondly, to look for its origin in the nature of the elements composing early Indian society, and for its development in the working of social forces on those elements.

No theory so far propounded has commanded universal assent. Of the best, the most that can be said is that it seems tenable—so far: for information about early Indian society is even still meagre, and the discovery of a new fact may upset the best of theories. The majority are infected with the disease common to so many theories—the lack of a sense of proportion, in that far too much importance is attached to some one point, which is certainly cardinal to the particular theory, but is also regarded as the cardinal point in the whole enquiry. I propose to indulge in no theory-making, but merely to epitomize what information we possess of Hindu society as it was at different periods, and consider what light is thrown on the growth of the caste system by such information.

In the Vedic hymns occurs the well known verse

2. Society in the Vedic period

‘When they divided man, how many did they make him? What was his mouth? What his arms? What are called his thighs and his feet? The Brahmana was his mouth, the Rajanya was made his arms, the Vaisya became his thighs, the Sudra was born from his feet.’<sup>1</sup> This verse is an interpolation, though a very old one. Such as it is, it is the sole Vedic reference to anything that can be connected with ‘caste’; and the connexion is one of names alone. The Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaisya, Sudra described in this verse are clearly not castes; they are merely kinds, or types, of men. Throughout the Vedas there is not a single reference to connubial or commensal restrictions, to any of the characteristics of the modern Hindu social system. A few occupations are differentiated—the leech, the smith, the artizan; but there is no hint of the existence of func-

<sup>1</sup> *Rig Veda*, x. 90, 11-12. Elsewhere a fifth class, the Nishada or barbarian, is mentioned.

## THE EVOLUTION OF CASTE

tional groups or hereditary crafts. But a very marked differentiation is drawn in the Vedas between two races, living side by side in India, namely the Arya and the Dasyu. The Aryas are a fair-skinned race that have already attained a high pitch of civilization; tillers of the soil, founders of villages and towns, possessing a certain knowledge of the higher handicrafts. The Das-yus are a dark-skinned race of semi-savage jungle dwellers, who are (rightly or wrongly) represented as autochthonous. The Vedas, and following them, modern popular belief, represent the Dasyus as forcibly conquered and enslaved by the Aryas. More probably, however, this ‘conquest’ was a peaceful one—‘more moral and intellectual, more a blending of the newcomer with the native, than a substitution of the white man for the dark-skinned race. . . . The Arya became absorbed in the Dasyu, as the Lombard in the Italian, the Frank in the Gaul, the Norman in the Frenchman, the Moor in the Spaniard.’ There were other invasions at a later date, which also led to blending of newcomer and native. The Hindu race in northern India, therefore, is the result of a combination of several strains of blood.

This combination, inevitably, took place by inter-marriage. Experience has shown that when two races are compelled to inter-marry, which are widely different in civilization and in their intellectual and physical attributes, the process is begun with reluctance and ended at the earliest possible moment. The result is mutual contempt all round; the half-breed is despised by the man of pure blood, whether high or low, the man of the lower blood is despised by the half-breed. Inter-marriage ceases as soon as possible—that is to say, as soon as the higher race has bred enough women for its own wants. And, as a result, all the various groups of different degrees of mixed blood tend to become exclusive, to close their ranks to those of lower degree than themselves—in short, tend to become

<sup>1</sup> Crooke, *N.W. Provinces of India*, p. 60.









no doubt that when Manu described the *vratya* and *vrishala* castes as descendants of the twice born *varnas* who had omitted to perform the prescribed rites, he was wrong. As has been suggested above and as will be shown more clearly below, these castes represent foreign groups who claimed the status of the twice born *varnas*, but, as foreigners, doubtless, *did* neglect to 'perform the prescribed rites'. Similarly, the occupational *varna-sankaras* were not descended from mixed unions, but they were, as we have seen, made up of groups of different parentage, and consequently were of 'mixed' descent. In short, Manu's etiology may be grotesque if taken literally, but it is not at all grotesque if taken allegorically. In any case, so much can safely be said—that the account in Manu's Institutes is in essentials an accurate account of the social system, as it was at the time. We find, side by side, *varnas* or classes, tribal castes and occupational castes. That is precisely the state of affairs as it exists at the present day. Moreover, if we allow for an increase in the number of tribal castes sprung of the various invaders of India during the intervening period, it is also the state of affairs which existed in the early Buddhist era, so that continuity between the earliest and latest times is established. In the matter of marriage, mixed unions still occur and Manu gives many regulations on the subject. Here again there is continuity. The endogamous custom which was regarded as 'preferable' in the Buddhist period has become 'usual' by the time of Megasthenes, and by Manu's, a rule the exceptions to which are carefully regulated.

In 465 A.D. there occurred an inroad of 'white' Huns. These were savages from the Central Asian steppes, and closely akin to the Huns who invaded Europe under Attila and, twelve years before this date, had been crushed at Châlons. By 500 A.D. the hordes of these white Huns had overrun northern India, and a Hun kingdom had been set up with its capital at the modern Sialkot. Mihiragula, their last king and a

bloodthirsty tyrant, was defeated and slain about 528 A.D. by a coalition of Indian princes, and with his death the power of the Huns came to an end. Indian writers are as silent about Mihiragula as they are about Alexander, or Mahmud of Ghazni, or any other of their conquerors. But Hiuen-Tsiang's account of the portents which were supposed to have accompanied the death of the Hunnish tyrant shows how deep was the impression which his barbarity made on the Hindu imagination; and if we remember the sufferings inflicted on Europe by Attila, we shall have no difficulty in believing that the Hunnish invasion shook Indian society to its foundations.

Of late, evidence<sup>1</sup> has been discovered which connects some of our modern castes directly with these Huns. The Gujar caste takes its name from Gujara, a tribe which is frequently found coupled in inscriptions with the Huns, and was obviously related to them. Hun is still the name of a Gujar sect or subcaste, which makes the connexion but the clearer. The Gujar carved out a couple of kingdoms in Rajputana; the capital of one of these was at Bhinmal or Bhilmal. In 810 A.D. a king of Bhinmal, of the Pratihara dynasty, conquered Kanauj and founded the Parihar dynasty which ruled there till 1018 A.D. It seems, therefore, a legitimate presumption that the present Parihar clan of Rajputs is of Gujar descent. And Crooke's pages are full of evidence suggesting that similar affinities exist between other Rajput clans and other foreign or aboriginal races.

This evidence from several points of view, has an importance which can scarcely be overestimated. Firstly, it shows conclusively the way in which the Hunnish and probably all other invasions, affected the development of the caste system. Neither the aboriginal tribes of India—Dravidian or Dasyu, or whatever they may be called—nor the foreign invaders were ever entirely extirpated. They

10. Results of the Hunnish and other invasions on the caste system

<sup>1</sup> Which we owe largely to the researches of the late Mr. A. M. T. Jackson, C.S.



Kshatriya. One Purana states that from Chandragupta onwards, most kings were Sudras. To turn from history to fiction, the *Toy Cart* tells us how an Ahir cowherd became King of Ujjain. It seems, therefore, that the ancient Kshatriya, like the more modern Rajput, was a social class to which all rulers in virtue of their sovereignty were recognized as belonging; and both Kshatriya and Rajput groups can, therefore, be described as 'essentially an occupational caste, composed of all clans following the Hindu ritual, who actually undertook the work of government'.<sup>1</sup>

In the earlier Buddhist period, the Kshatriya was socially supreme. In Manu's picture of society, that supremacy has passed to the Brahman, and he enjoys it still. Manu, a Brahman himself, may have exaggerated the importance of his own order; yet the main fact, that the Kshatriya's power decayed and was replaced by a sacerdotal hegemony, cannot be doubted. The causes are to be found in the history of the time. From 200 B.C. to 500 A.D. India was subjected to a series of invasions by powerful and occasionally savage enemies. The Kshatriya ruling and military class must have suffered severely in consequence: it was their rulers whose kingdoms were overturned, their soldiery on whom the brunt of the fighting fell. The ancient Kshatriyas were exposed to a constant process of attrition which must have gone close to destroying them altogether. But they were exposed to attack from within as well as from without. Buddhism was essentially a Kshatriya religion: founded

<sup>1</sup> Manu says that men become Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, if their actions are those of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, or Vaisyas. This is usually regarded as a sort of moral precept; men are esteemed according to their conduct. If it is, it is a singularly inefficient explanation of the origin of caste, which is what Manu meant it to be. The facts related seem to suggest that the words are to be literally interpreted; that a man becomes a Brahman if he is a priest and, therefore, acts as a Brahman; that he becomes a Kshatriya if he actually rules; and so on. Certainly facts are in favour of this interpretation. We have here cases of non-Kshatriyas becoming Kshatriyas because they ruled, and we have already found instances where non-Brahmans became Brahmans because they were priests or ascetics.

by a Kshatriya prince,<sup>2</sup> it was in definite opposition to Brahmanism, though it never succeeded in completely ousting it. For some ten centuries the struggle between the two creeds went on, till Brahmanism ultimately conquered its rival after the death of Harsha of Thanesar in the middle of the seventh century A.D. There is no evidence that the struggle ever culminated in persecution or bloodshed, though the Brahmanical legend, according to which the Kshatriyas were wiped out of existence by the Brahman hero, Parasu Rama, or 'Rama with the axe', may conceal some unknown historical event.<sup>3</sup> But so much seems certain, that the process of attrition to which the Kshatriyas succumbed was internal as well as external. The Kshatriya, therefore, decayed. His power as ruler passed by right of sword to foreigners—Sakas, Pahlavas, Kushans, Huns, each in their turn, who usurped the title of Kshatriya with their thrones. The new kings and kinglets of India were often Hinduized outsiders.

This was the Brahman's opportunity. These pseudo-Kshatriyas, or Rajputs, may have usurped the powers and privileges of their predecessors, but they never attained to their social pre-eminence. They might call themselves Kshatriya, but everybody else called them *vrishala*. Meantime, the Brahman had increased his authority and consolidated his position. He had long emerged from the stage when, in Vedic times, he was a humble acolyte at sacrifices, an assistant to the head of the family who officiated as the priest. During the period which ended with the advent of Buddha, amidst a people that was intensely religious and still more intensely ritualist, he had become the hereditary priest, the sole master of religious ceremonial, the theologian, and as such had won for himself an almost unassailable spiritual supremacy.

<sup>2</sup> Gautama Buddha was a Kshatriya of the Sakya clan.

<sup>3</sup> Parasu Rama may represent some successful tyrant. A legend-monger would not hesitate to turn even the Hun Mihiragula into a Brahman hero.

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macy. Further, as philosopher and statesman, by sheer force of learning he had acquired considerable temporal power. The king's minister was usually a Brahman—and no mere figure-head. Vasishta, the family priest of Trayyaruna, King of Kosala, acted as his regent in his absence and set up a Brahman theocracy. Chanakya overthrew the Nanda kings, put Chandragupta Maurya on the throne, and as his minister stood to his royal master in much the same relation as the Peshwas stood to the Maratha rajas. All the later Sunga kings were the merest puppets of their Brahman advisers: the last of them was put to death by his minister Vasudeva, who succeeded him as founder of the Kanva dynasty. But apparently it was unusual for Brahmans to usurp the royal dignity, doubtless preferring the substance which was theirs to the shadow which was the king's. Hiuen-Tsiang refers to certain 'Brahman' kings, but appears to mean no more by the term than 'Brahmanical Hindu'; and the first Brahman dynasty, after the Kanvas, is the Shahiya dynasty of Ohind in the 10th century. Be that as it may, it is not strange that Megasthenes, a worldly Greek, in writing of the Brahman priest and adviser of the king, chose the word 'philosopher' by which to describe him. It was an unconscious tribute to the learning which had raised the former attendant at sacrifices to high estate.

During the Buddhist era, the Brahman's power suffered eclipse: Buddhism, a Kshatriya religion, was a definite revolt both against Brahmanical ritual and against Brahmanical metaphysics. But Brahmanism, as has already been stated, was never entirely destroyed. Under the Gupta dynasty when Brahmanical learning became widely diffused, the Brahman's ascendancy, both spiritual and temporal, revived, and it increased during the troubled period which came with the destruction of the old Arya nobility. Once the Kshatriyas had been ousted by Hinduized foreigners, the Brahmans, the chief remaining link with the past, obtained the social hegemony which had formerly belonged to the Kshatriyas, never again to lose it.

## THE EVOLUTION OF CASTE

Manu's account may be regarded as a true picture of the social system as it was about the end of the 4th century A.D. But though it resembles in all its principal features the system of the present day, yet there are certain important differences. The endogamous restrictions, though generally observed, are not yet rigid and unavoidable; there is not yet any trace of such important elements in the present system as sub-caste endogamy or commensal restrictions. The Hun invasion, which occurred some sixty years after the date of Manu's account, no doubt had some effect; but the Hun empire only lasted some sixty years, and that effect must not be overestimated. It is necessary to look further afield for an explanation of the later development of the caste system. Unfortunately, little is known of the period between the death of King Harsha of Thanesar in 650 A.D. and the commencement of the Muhammadan era; and though our historical knowledge then improves, yet it relates to the doings of kings and governors, of courts and armies, not to the condition of the people or to the social system. It is, however, possible to fix a limit date for this final stage of evolution, and in a somewhat curious fashion. For there is current in the great caste of Kayasthas, a circumstantial legend,<sup>1</sup> which exemplifies, firstly, the existence of subcastes, as we now know them; secondly, the formation of endogamous groups under the influence of forces that can still be observed in operation; and, thirdly, the present commensal restrictions in full force. This tale, which seems undoubtedly historical, can be dated between the years 1202 A.D., when Bakhtiyar Khilji became governor of Bengal, and 1266 A.D., when Nasir-ud-din, one of the 'Slave' dynasty, died; for both play a part in the events related. The last stage in the evolution of the caste system can therefore be dated between the second half of the seventh, and the end of the twelfth century A.D.

<sup>1</sup> The tale is mentioned in Chap. III, para. 27, and given in full as an appendix to Chapter III.

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(iii) the influence of Hinduism, which attracted and assimilated the most diverse elements :

(iv) the huge distances of India, its political and other divisions, which prevented the growth of national feeling and drove men to unite into smaller groups :

(v) the influence of a sacerdotal order, able and willing to consolidate and regulate these multifarious groups : and lastly

(vi) The psychological attributes of the Indian, amenable to control and discipline, fearful of offending against custom, ready to submit to the coercion of guild council or Brahman lawgiver, to welcome the development of custom into law.

In short, the caste system did not spring fully developed into existence, like Athene from the head of Zeus. It was not the artificial product of a man or body of men working consciously to that end. It was a natural growth, the result of a process of evolution.

Nor has that process stopped. Under the influence of its environment it has continued unceasingly up to the present day. This assertion the following chapters are designed, incidentally, to prove.

16. *Continuance  
of the process  
of evolution*

Principal authorities.—Rhys-Davids, *Buddhist India* (1903).  
V. A. Smith, *Early History of India* (1904).  
Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of N.-W. P. and Oudh* (1896).

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II

### *The Story of Visvamitra and Vasistha*

The story of the two famous *rishis*, Visvamitra and Vasistha, sheds much light on the early history of the caste system. The story is related, in various forms, both in a number of the Puranas, and also in the two great epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana ; and Mr. F. E. Pargiter has collated and compared these various traditions in an article, which he published in the R. A. Society's journal for October 1913. We need not follow the arguments by which he shows how a plain straightforward account of what may well have been fact was overlaid by a mass of what is certainly fable. But it is necessary to state his conclusions.

The Puranic accounts are based on a common original. This original Mr. Pargiter holds to be a Kshatriya ballad, first handed down orally from one court bard to another, and put in writing some six or seven centuries before Christ. This ballad exhibited the famous Brahman *rishi*, Vasistha, in a most unfavourable light : and consequently the Brahman writers, who compiled the Puranas, took care to manipulate the story so as to extenuate the *rishi's* conduct : whilst in the epics it becomes a monstrous fable.

The original story ran thus. Trayyaruna, the Kshatriya king of Kosala, whose capital was at Ayodhya, had a son, whose name was Satyavrata. This prince, 'in an outburst of youthful wantonness', interrupted a wedding ceremony and carried off the bride. She had not yet taken the seven steps which complete the wedding *mantras*, and so was not yet a wedded wife : and consequently his deed amounted only to the abduction of a betrothed maiden, which, though a serious offence, was much less serious than the rape of a wife would have been. Vasistha, who was the king's priest, was well aware of these

After the death of Harsha, the country was parcelled out into a number of small Rajput kingdoms; and they again, in accordance with the Rajput feudal system, into baronies, whose owners held them on condition of rendering military service to the king. These petty kings and petty barons were constantly fighting, either with each other, or with the remnants of aboriginal and foreign tribes, and the country-side must have been strewn with the wreckage of war—companies of soldiery in pursuit of an enemy, gangs of robbers, bands of broken men who had been driven from their homes. Travel, always difficult by reason of the great distances of India and the badness of mediaeval communications, was positively dangerous, save for the Brahman, protected by his sanctity, and the pilgrim, protected by the nature of his errand. In such conditions, each different state had its own social and functional groups; and since a man dare not wander far afield in search either of clients or a bride, these local groups perforce became endogamous; and so were produced those local endogamous sub-castes that are so common in most widespread castes. And yet, despite the multiplicity of political divisions, Hindu society always remained one and undivided. One cause of this was the custom of pilgrimage (*tirath jatra*); the sacred places were centres where members of the same caste from all over the country could meet to discuss and decide matters of common interest.<sup>1</sup> Another cause was the unity of Brahmanism, transcending all political boundaries, which secured the unity of the society in which the Brahman was supreme. But possibly the most important cause was the utter indifference of the people to political matters. Subjects were not concerned with the quarrels of their rulers; kings and their armies, barons and their followings might go to war, but the peoples whom they ruled remained at peace. A political boundary meant no more to them than a district boundary means to their descend-

<sup>1</sup> The importance of pilgrimages in preserving the unity of caste was suggested to me by a Brahman friend.

ants at the present day. It merely determined the direction in which they must go to pay their taxes; and a change of rulers was merely a change of tax-gatherers. And so the local groups never ceased to regard themselves, or to be generally regarded, as mere sections of a single widespread caste.

The advent of Muhammadan rule did not alter the situation just described. There was, no doubt, a central government, under Sultan or Badshah at Delhi. But the empire was divided into provinces ruled by Muhammadan governors, and tributary states ruled by Hindu princes; and when the central government was weak, governor and prince became semi-independent, and made war as they pleased. To the existing dangers of the country-side were added others—the Moghul raider, the Turk or Afghan mercenary in search of service, the Rajput clan moving in search of a new home under Muhammadan pressure. The people were perhaps less indifferent than of old to political matters; but that was principally because the Muhammadan sultans were apt to visit the sins of rebellious rulers on their innocent subjects.

We have now examined the Hindu social system at various stages of its history, and we may pause here to summarise the results of that examination. At all times Hindu society has been divided into classes of differing rank, with a substratum of tribes too alien and too humbly placed to be within the social pale, and a cross-division of functional groups. This system, which existed in embryo during the Vedic period, has developed through the ages under the influences of circumstances which combined to make the groups endogamous, until it became the caste system as we know it. We can gauge the effect of some of these circumstances with a certain accuracy; the effect of others is still no more than conjectural. Amongst these circumstances were:

- (i) the juxtaposition, at several periods, of races different in blood, civilization, and especially colour:
- (ii) the composition and system of the powerful trade guilds:

facts : but he concealed them from his master, who, under the impression that his son was guilty of the major crime, sentenced him to the degradation of herding with out-caste dog-eaters, in whose hamlet he was compelled to live. The king, overwhelmed by the disgrace, went into exile : and Vasistha took charge of his kingdom—ruling, as is pointedly stated, with the help of the priests and religious teachers. In other words, Vasistha schemed successfully to usurp the throne, and to replace the Kshatriya rule by a Brahmanical régime.

At this time Visvaratha was the Kshatriya king of Kanya-Kubja. He desired to acquire the status of a Brahman, and for this purpose undertook a course of austerities that lasted twelve years. During this period, which coincided with the period of Vasistha's rule, he placed his queen and his son in a hermitage in the Kosala country, where they suffered severely from a drought that prevailed throughout the twelve years. But Satyavrata, though living himself in the utmost misery, managed to support them, providing them with food from the spoils of his hunting. Incidentally, Satyavrata added to his crimes by killing a cow which belonged to Vasistha—a crime which Vasistha did not dare to avenge, save by dubbing the prince 'Trisanku'—the man of three sins.

At last Visvaratha, having completed his austerities, returned to his kingdom as a Brahman *muni* under the name of Visvamitra : and in his gratitude he restored Satyavrata to his kingdom, and, 'despite the gods and Vasistha', offered sacrifice for him as his priest. There was no conflict ; as soon as Visvamitra took up Satyavrata's cause, Vasistha's power collapsed, no doubt because the people, and especially the Kshatriyas, disapproved of Vasistha's rule, and the intrigues by which he had obtained power. Visvamitra, famous king and famous saint, had only to touch that power to break it.

As regards the early history of caste, this story shows us :

- (i) How a Kshatriya could become a Brahman.
- (ii) That Vasistha, the most famous of *rishis*, was a mere family priest, without any temporal power : and that

his attempt to usurp it from a Kshatriya king caused resentment.

(iii) That outcasting in early days was not, as at present, a mere 'casting out', but involved consorting with a caste of lower degree.

(iv) That low castes, then as now, were segregated from other castes and lived in hamlets of their own.

(v) We learn, incidentally, that Visvaratha was grandson of Kusika, brother-in-law of Bhargava, and uncle of Jamadagni. All were Kshatriyas : and yet they are best known as Brahman *rishis*, and founders of Brahmanical *gotras*. Brahmanical writers allege that ten of their *gotras* were actually founded by Kshatriyas who 'became' Brahmans. That theory would fit the facts so far as Visvaratha himself is concerned : he would be the founder of the Visvamitra *gotra*. But there is nothing to show that Kusika, Bhargava and Jamadagni also 'became' Brahmans : and the fact that these Kshatriya princes have given their names to Brahman *gotras* supports another theory—that the Brahmans occasionally named their *gotras* after their royal Kshatriya masters.

(vi) Lastly, the whole tradition confirms the conclusion that can be drawn from the Buddhist records—that in early times the Kshatriya was at the head of society, and that the Brahman was simply his priest.

## CHAPTER III

### CASTE, SUBCASTE, AND MARRIAGE

Of Hindu males over 15 years, some 85 per cent are married; of females of the same age, no less than 98 per cent. Many are wedded (byaha) long before that age, but such 'marriage' is only irrevocable betrothal, and the *gauna* ceremony, when the wife first goes to her husband, does not take place till later. Old bachelors and old maids are rare in Hindu society—so rare that in some parts the same word (*randua*) is made to serve both for old bachelor and widower.

Marriage to a Hindu is essentially a religious rite. It is a duty which he owes to himself and his ancestors. 'By begetting a virtuous son,' says Baudhayana, 'a man saves himself as well as the seven preceding and seven following generations.' Saves himself—from hell; marriage to a Hindu is the one way of salvation, for by it alone can he have legitimate sons who will perform the funeral ceremonies and preserve him from Yama, King of the Dead. If a Hindu maiden is marriageable but unmarried, she brings social disgrace on her family in this world and damnation on her parents in the next.

Yet, although marriage is an imperative duty for a Hindu, there are various customary restrictions which make it difficult for him to choose a mate. These are:

(a) The custom of endogamy, which compels him to marry within a certain group. This group may be either the caste or subcaste.

(b) The custom of exogamy, which forbids him to marry within a certain group. This exogamous group is a subdivision of the endogamous group.

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(c) The Hindu 'table' of prohibited kin. Various castes have various such tables; in some it replaces the restrictions of exogamy, in some it reinforces them. The effect is generally to forbid marriage with certain kinds of relative who are not included in the exogamous group.

(d) The custom of hypergamy, by which a bride may not marry a man of lower social rank than herself.

(e) The custom of virgin marriage, which forbids a man to marry a widow.

Save for certain quite exceptional castes, the first of these restrictions is universal. Either the second or the third operates in every caste; generally both operate together. The fourth is common. The fifth applies to perhaps one-third of the population, i.e. to most higher castes. Endogamy and exogamy both involve segmentation of the caste: the other three restrictions do not. It will be convenient, therefore, to examine, on broad lines, the general nature of caste segmentation before considering the various restrictions on marriage. For various reasons, it is convenient to deal with these in the following order:

- Exogamy;
- Hypergamy;
- Endogamy;
- Prohibited kin;
- Virgin marriage;
- Other marriage customs and restrictions.<sup>1</sup>

#### A. GENERAL NATURE OF THE SEGMENTATION OF CASTE

At the census of 1891 the subdivisions of caste were recorded in detail, and the resultant lists, published with the report, contain thousands of names of every kind. The Jat and Ahir, for instance, were each responsible for over 1,700 entries; the Kurmi for nearly 1,500.

<sup>1</sup> The last three are dealt with in Chapter IV. The actual rites and ceremonies carried out at marriage are not considered, being outside the scope of this book. They are fully described in Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh*.





sible to assert that any particular class of name is peculiar to either kind of subdivision; but the following general statements can be made:

(a) *Local names*.—The original Dravidian exogamous group was the village. Names of villages, small towns, etc. in low castes are probably, therefore, those of original exogamous groups. On the other hand, names referring to large areas would presuppose a migration, in which case distance would quickly make the group endogamous.

(b) *Eponymous names*.—If the name is that of a real or reputed ancestor, the group would originally be exogamous: since such groups are, or are supposed to be, groups of relatives descended from a common ancestor. If, on the other hand, it refers to a real or reputed protector, the group might be either endogamous or exogamous according to circumstances: most often, perhaps, the former, since it would imply some sort of separation from the original group.

(c) *Occupational names*.—These must always connote a separation from the original group as a result of the change of occupation, since otherwise there would be no need to take a new name at all: and the groups with such names would generally be endogamous from the first.

(d) *Caste names*.—Where the name connotes a particular descent, the groups must have been endogamous from the first, since in respect of the group to which it affiliated itself, it was so already. Where the name merely connotes the existence of a particular relation to the caste in question, the group would not necessarily be endogamous, and most probably would be exogamous, in origin.

(e) *Totem names*.—These would originally be names of exogamous groups.

## B. EXOGAMY AND HYPERGAMY

<sup>1</sup> The exogamous group may be defined as a group of persons related, or who believe themselves to be related, by blood, between whom intermarriage is forbidden. The relatives to whom such a prohibition applies will vary according as descent is traced through the father and the mother: in Northern India we have only the former case to consider.

The Buddhist records show that the exogamous group amongst the Aryans was the *gotra*, or group of agnates: amongst the Dravidians, the totem-group or the village. <sup>14. The exogamous groups of early Indian society</sup> The *gotra* was an exaggerated family, a group of relatives tracing descent from the same ancestor. Whatever be the true origin of totemism, members of totem groups would regard themselves as relatives. We know little of the nature of a primitive Dravidian village, but we may perhaps surmise that the idea of the village as an exogamous group dates back to the time when a village was a collection of a few huts in a jungle clearing, built and inhabited by a group of relatives.

It is usual to write of the *gotra* as peculiar to the Brahman caste; but the Buddhist literature shows that it was an Aryan and not a purely Brahmanical institution. <sup>15. The Brahman gotra</sup> The Brahmanical legend names eight original *gotras* descended from the eight sons of Brahma, who are known as *gotrakara rishis*; they occupy, as Mr. Crooke says, much the same position as the sons of Jacob did amongst the Jews. Only one indubitably descended from such a *rishi*, could found a *gotra*. To these eight, were added ten 'Kshatriya' *gotras*, founded by Kshatriyas who became Brahmans, as well as several thousand other *gotras* founded by descendants of the eight *gotra*.

<sup>1</sup> For theories of the origin of exogamy see Crooke, *Tribes and Castes*, Introduction, Chapter IV; and more modern books such as Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy* and Hartland's *Primitive Paternity*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. A. S. B. Vol. III (1903).



of it would lessen the number of women that a man was forbidden to marry.

In view of the fact that the exogamous unit of the primitive Dravidian was the village, it is curious to find that the villager still looks on a fellow casteman, residing in the same village, as in some sense his relative—a *ganw ka bhai* (village brother) as he calls him—and also that in many castes a villager usually goes outside his village for his wife. In most cases, all the members of a caste living in the same village probably are, as a matter of fact, members of the same exogamous group, which would compel them to go outside it for their brides: and in all cases there is that vague relationship of the village to make it desirable.

Villagers themselves give another reason for the exogamy of the village. They hold it a good thing that a woman, once married, should not live too near her own relatives. If a husband and wife are members of the same village and quarrel, then it involves a quarrel between their two families also, and sometimes the woman takes the extreme step of abandoning her husband and returning to her old home. The avoidance of connubial quarrels is doubtless desirable, but it is scarcely sufficient to account for a custom of this kind.

The custom of hypergamy introduces an important modification into the marriage laws of many castes. Where it prevails, the exogamous groups are classified according to their social position; and whilst a group of higher rank will take brides from, it will not give brides to, a group of lower rank. The law is found most highly developed amongst Rajputs, but it is observed by many other castes, such as the Bhat, Byar, Dharkar, Gujar, Jat, Kanaujiya and Jhijhotiya Brahmans, Kharwar, Khattri, and Patwa. Indeed, amongst all Hindus there is probably a tendency towards hypergamy. A curious proof of this fact is provided by the statistics of birthplace in the United Provinces. In two successive census reports (1901 and 1911), it is shown clearly, firstly, that the bulk of persons living

in districts other than that in which they were born are women; secondly, that the migration of these women is due to their marriage: and thirdly, that the general trend of this migration is from east to west. As the lower branches of a widespread caste, generally speaking, live in the east of the Provinces, and the higher in the west, the conclusion that hypergamy has something to do with the nature of this 'marriage' migration appears sound.

The law of hypergamy greatly complicates the marriage system of the castes who observe it. For instance, the Khattris are divided into Dhaighar, Charchar, Baraighar, and Bawanjati. A Dhaighar man can take a wife only from the Dhaighar or Charchar groups, whilst a Dhaighar woman can marry only a Dhaighar man. The Dhaighars, therefore, are exogamous as regards men and endogamous as regards women. Amongst Rajputs, the relative rank of the various clans is carefully determined: every Rajput knows into what clans he may marry a son or daughter. If the practice were uniform everywhere, it would be possible to lay down an exact warrant of marriage precedence: but a clan ranked high in one district is often ranked low in another, and in the second gives brides to clans from which in the first it accepts them.

Hypergamy, amongst groups which are of a rank so low that they find it difficult to obtain wives, produces a shortage of marriageable women, and, consequently, a tendency to neglect the law of endogamy. It also produces a deplorable effect on the age when marriage takes place, and on the esteem in which women are held.

### C. ENDOGAMY

The endogamous group, whether it be caste or sub-caste, is a factor of the greatest importance in the caste system. Generally speaking, the marriage restrictions govern all other restrictions. If a man can marry another man's daughter, he can eat, drink, and smoke with him: and he can also meet him in *panchayat* (caste council).

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It is necessary, therefore, to deal with the characteristics of the endogamous subcaste in detail.

Caste endogamy is absolutely rigid and immutable, permitting no open evasion. Sometimes even high castes are compelled by a lack of women to make a practice of taking low caste women as wives: but in such cases both the husband and his caste connive at their own deception, and if they are willing to ignore custom, are very unwilling that the fact should be generally known. Gipsy tribes used to recruit from other castes: but even they observed the letter of the endogamous law whilst they neglected its spirit. For, before a recruit could marry man or woman of the tribe, he or she was adopted or initiated into it, thus becoming a member with full rights. Subcaste endogamy in most cases is as rigid as caste endogamy. Occasionally a breach of the endogamic law of a subcaste can be condoned by a purificatory sacrifice, as amongst the Kumhars and Ahirs of Ghazipur, or by a fine, as amongst the Telis and Lodhas of Cawnpore; but as a rule permanent excommunication is the penalty imposed. In 1911, inquiries were made into the endogamous regulations of the subcastes of twenty-one castes;<sup>1</sup> and all of them, in almost all parts of the Province, punish offences against these regulations by permanent excommunication.

But though subcaste endogamy is as rigid as caste endogamy, it is not so immutable. It can be set aside altogether, even by Brahmans. Saraswats have taken brides from Gaurs, Gaurs and Kanaujiyas from Sanadhs, Kanaujiyas also from Jhijhotiyas. The Ahar and Ahir are two castes closely akin. Being separated by a long standing feud, they do not intermarry: but attempts have lately been made to compose the quarrel and resume intermarriage. The Jadubansi and the Nandbansi subcastes of Ahir, formerly endogamous, are said to be on the way to amalgamation and intermarriage. Further,

<sup>1</sup> Ahir, Baheliya, Bharbhunja, Bhat, Bhuinhar, Chamar, Dhanuk, Dom, Gadariya, Kahar, Kayastha, Khatik, Koeri, Kori, Kumhar, Kurmi, Mali, Nai, Pasi, Sonar, and Teli.

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the marriage regulations of subcastes vary from place to place. In South Cawnpore, the Laungbarsa subcaste of Dhanuks finds its wives in its own ranks, but also gives girls to the Badhiks. In East Cawnpore, it is endogamous. In North-East Cawnpore, it takes girls from three subcastes and exchanges them with a fourth. In North-West Cawnpore, it marries in its own ranks, exchanges girls with one subcaste and takes them from another: and all these variations take place within the boundaries of a single district of ordinary size.

The system of marriage sections in most castes is perfectly simple. The caste is divided into endogamous groups: these are occasionally further subdivided into smaller groups of the same nature: finally the endogamous subcaste or sub-subcaste is broken up into exogamous sections. But some castes have systems that are much more complex. The endogamous and exogamous sections are often cross-divisions. The Agarwal, for instance, is divided up into eighteen exogamous *gotras*, and also into two endogamous sections known as Dasa (tens) and Bisa (twenties). Representatives of both the 'tens' and 'twenties' are found in each *gotra*, and the rule of marriage is that the Dasa of one *gotra* may only marry a Dasa of another *gotra*. The Kanaujiya Brahman's marriage system is of the same nature, but even more complicated. The subcaste consists of a number of exogamous *gotras*. These *gotras* are divided into *kuls* or families, also exogamous. These *kuls* are grouped together in three classes known as Khatkul, Panchadari, and Dhakra: which classes are endogamous in precisely the same way as the Dasa and Bisa sections of the Agarwal. But that is not all; for though a Khatkul may only marry a Khatkul as his first wife, he *must* marry a Panchadari as his second wife, a curious restricted rule of hypergamy. Should he defy convention and marry a Panchadari as his first wife, then he sinks to the rank of a Panchadari. Strangest of all, the Bhar in Azamgarh is divided into two exogamous sections, the Patait and Khuntait: but families who do not keep pigs will not

marry with families who do, so that there are two endogamous sections which do not even possess a name.

Endogamous groups, whether castes or subcastes, are the result of one of two processes—accretion or fission. In earlier days, accretion was probably the usual process; most of the old guilds must have been formed in this way. A goldsmith guild would be formed, let us suppose, amongst Vaisyas, to which Kshatriya goldsmiths, Brahman goldsmiths, Sudra goldsmiths would affiliate themselves. The process by which the goldsmiths of one locality united themselves to the goldsmiths of another locality until there was one widespread caste of Sonars was also a process of accretion. At the present day accretion only occurs as the result of a previous fission; since the whole population is already divided up into castes, clearly no new caste or subcaste can be formed save by means of a split in an already existing caste. Cases of such accretion do occur: a group breaks off from its parent caste and attaches itself to another caste, but the transfer is so slow as to be usually imperceptible. Only one such case was reported in 1911: some Gual Nats took to trade and adopted the designation of Badi Banjara. There can be no doubt of the transfer; for the Badi Banjara's women still occasionally dance in public, a habit preserved from the time when they were Gual Nats; and his *gotra* (Dharmotsi) is that of the Gual Nats.

The formation of new subcastes by fission is now, as always, going on every day. It is a popular idea that caste is immutable; yet a comparison of the past with the present, or of two periods in the past, makes it abundantly clear that caste is, on the contrary, *'varium et mutabile semper'*. And caste has become no more immutable with time; 'changes are always in progress, new endogamous groups are constantly being created, the process of fission is ever in operation'. Occasionally, as we have just seen, the group, having left its parent caste, transfers itself as a new section to some other caste; at

22. The formation of endogamous groups

23. The nature and causes of fission

other times, it merely forms one more subdivision within its own caste; most frequently perhaps, it severs itself altogether, becoming an independent caste. The causes which produce the change may vary, but the process is always the same, and in the following paragraphs examples of all these kinds of change are stated indifferently. A very trivial cause suffices to produce fission within a caste. In the past, perhaps the most fruitful of all causes was a change of locality. Nowadays, when the effect of distance is diminished by better communications, such a change matters little. But a change of occupation, a change of social or religious customs, a change involving pollution, increased prosperity, a caste quarrel about the most trivial matter—all these have led in the past, and most of them still lead from time to time, to the formation of new endogamous groups.

Many local subcastes are indigenous to the locality whose name they bear. They grew up independently of each other, and with the improvement of communications combined to form a caste whilst still preserving their endogamy. From this it follows that local subcastes may preserve racial differences.<sup>1</sup> Other subcastes were the result of migration to a new settlement, where, by reason of distance from their home, the settlers were compelled to become endogamous. Many castes and subcastes possess traditions of an original home, which serves to show that the foundation of distant settlements was a common occurrence. A few actually connect their endogamous rules with their migration; the Sarwariya Brahmans ascribe their origin to the fact that when their ancestors were sent to perform the *jagiya* (purificatory ceremony) for Rama after he had killed Rawan, they accepted '*dan*', or part of the sacrificial offering;<sup>2</sup> and, on their return, the Kanauiyas, to whom they belonged, refused to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Census Report, U.P.*, 1891, p. 269; and ditto, 1901, p. 241, for the connexion of Brahman subcastes with dialect.

<sup>2</sup> Any Brahman may accept *dakshina*, which is simply a fee for services rendered; no Brahman of good status will accept *dan*, which is anything definitely forming part of the sacrificial or ceremonial offering.





### APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

#### *The Gaur and Bhatnagar Kayasthas*

1200-1260 A.D.

After the conquest of Bengal by Bakhtiyar Khilji about 1200 A.D., the Gaur Kayasthas learnt that some persons of the Bhatnagar subcaste were in the Muhammadan service, and the two bodies began to amalgamate, and some of the Gaur Kayasthas also took service with the foreigner. Finally, they adopted from the Bhatnagars the Bam Margi or left-hand worship and the veneration for Bhairava Chakra, and began to eat with them. So the Bhatnagars invited the Gaurs to eat *kachhi* with them, and though there was no intermarriage between the two clans, the Bhatnagars came and ate *kachhi* at the houses of the Gaurs; but when the Bhatnagars invited the Gaurs to pay them the same compliment they refused. At this the Bhatnagars took extreme offence, and when some of the Gaurs, who were friendly to them, did eat *kachhi* with them, their more scrupulous brethren excommunicated them. At that time Nasiruddin was Emperor of Delhi, and he had both Gaur and Bhatnagar Kayasthas in his service. When the Delhi branch of the Bhatnagars heard of these events they determined to excommunicate their Eastern brethren unless the Gaurs would agree to eat *kachhi* with them, and pressure was brought to bear by the Muhammadan Emperor to secure this object. In the end some Gaurs did eat with the Bhatnagars, and were hence called Gaur Bhatnagari; while other more scrupulous Gaurs fled from Delhi in preference to eating with the Bhatnagars. One of them was a woman far gone in pregnancy. She took refuge in the house of a Brahman, and when her son was born and grew up the Brahman married his daughter to him. The remaining Gaurs went to Budaun and settled there. Hearing of this, the Delhi Bhatnagars again complained to the Emperor

#### THE GAUR AND BHATNAGAR KAYASTHAS IN 1200-1260 A.D.

and he sent officers to bring the Budaun Gaurs and force them to eat with the Bhatnagars. They implored the help of their Brahman friends, and, in order to protect them, the Brahmans invested them with the Brahmanical cord, and when they were asked said that these Kayasthas were their brethren. The royal officers were not satisfied with this statement and forced the Brahmans to eat with these Gaur Kayasthas on the same cooking-place (*chauka*). On this, to the great disgust of the Bhatnagars, the Emperor dismissed their complaint, and in their anger the Bhatnagars excommunicated their brethren; and thus there came to be two classes of Bhatnagars—the Khas or 'real' Bhatnagars, who had held no communion with the Gaurs, and the Gaur Bhatnagars, who had eaten with them. And for the same reason there came to be four sections of the Gaurs—*first*, the real Gaurs, who held offices on the Bengal frontier, such as at Nizamabad, Jaunpur, and other places; *secondly*, those who had eaten *kachhi* with the Bhatnagars; *thirdly*, those who were admitted into communion by the Budaun Brahmans; and *fourthly*, those who had admitted to caste rights the woman whose son was born in the Brahman's house.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (Taken—with slight adaptations—from Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. III, pp. 192-193.)

their *chaudhris* or headmen. Twenty years ago each group had one *chaudhri*, but now Jaiswala has three and Manikpur two. The quarrel, or rather the series of quarrels, was as follows. Firstly, a woman (her *ghol* is not given) peddled fruit about the streets. Two brethren ordered her to desist from the practice, which is derogatory to the caste's dignity: women should only sell in shops. Her husband and she proved contumacious: and finally their own *ghol*, acting singly, outcasted the man. The Dalmau *ghol*, however, dissenting from this action, admitted the husband to communion with themselves upon payment of a fine of Rs. 80, in lieu of excommunication. Secondly, a man (the *ghol* is again not given) was excommunicated by his own *ghol*, acting alone: and while his case was under trial, the Jaiswala *chaudhris* invited him to dinner by mistake. Thereupon the three *ghols*, acting in concert, fined the *chaudhris* Rs. 30. Lastly, fines had accumulated and it was decided to hold a *katha* (sacred recitation). The Dalmau *chaudhri* said he preferred to have his share of the money; but the Manikpur *chaudhris* (who seem to have kept the joint purse) refused, taking up the attitude that there was going to be a *katha*, to which the Dalmau people could come or not as they liked. The matter at this stage was brought into court; meanwhile the three *ghols* ceased to intermarry, so that one endogamous subcaste split into three endogamous groups. It will be noted that in all these quarrels, *ghol* was pitted against *ghol*.

If in any caste a group should adopt some new or unusual worship of which other members do not approve, one would expect that group to break off and become an endogamous subcaste. That such subcastes are uncommon is due to the tolerance of the Hindu, who troubles himself little about a man's beliefs and worships—much less than he troubles about what and with whom he eats and whom he marries. We do, however, find the Mahabiriyas and Pachpiriyas amongst Telis, the latter also amongst Halwais, the Sadhs amongst Koris, and the Nanakshahis amongst Barhais, Bhangis,

and Kadheras. But the most important kind of subcaste, the formation of which is due to a change of religion, is the Muhammadan subcaste in castes which are common to both religions: there are often Hindu and Muhammadan subcastes with the same name, and all these are probably the result of fission consequent on the adoption of Islam. It is worth noting too that the Christian members of castes are now apparently forming, or at all events are regarded by Hindus as forming, subcastes. Christian converts from the Bhangi caste, for instance, described themselves at the census of 1911, and were spoken of, as Bhangi Isai. From the Hindu's point of view, of course, the development would be quite normal; for if he is to allow such a body any social status at all, it will be that of a caste in the Hindu social organism, the only sort of status that he knows in the only social polity that he knows. And the only question is whether we shall ultimately find the Christian community as a whole regarded as a caste, with subcastes corresponding to, and called by the names of, the castes to which its members belonged before conversion: or whether to each caste which possesses Christian converts, a subcaste will be added called Isai. At present all that can be said is that, judging from the case of Islam, the latter alternative is the more probable. One authority held that the Arya movement was likely to produce a similar result, and it is quite possible that some day there will be 'Arya' subcastes added to various castes. At present, however, the great majority of Aryas give their caste name as if they were Hindus. Jain Baniyas, of course, often describe their subcaste (or to be more accurate, in this case their caste) as Jaini or Saraogi.

Principal authorities.—*Census Reports, U. P.*, 1901 and 1911, Chapters on 'Marriage' and 'Caste'.  
Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh* (1896).

## CHAPTER IV

### CASTE, SUBCASTE, AND MARRIAGE—*contd.*

#### D. PROHIBITED KIN

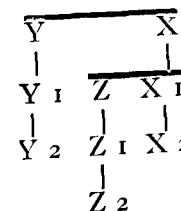
The law which prevents marriage within the exogamous group in a patriarchal system does not prevent a man from contracting unions with very close relatives through his mother, sister, and daughter. He could marry his mother's sister, his sister's daughter, or even his daughter's daughter: and any of his cousins save the daughter of his father's brother. Marriages of this kind form the subject of various special rules which have the effect of bringing certain relatives within the prohibited degrees. Castes which have no exogamous groups rely entirely on such rules.

1. *Prohibited degrees*  
(a) *The 'sapinda' rule.* All castes which follow Hindu Law—i.e. all castes of good position—are bound by its 'sapinda' rule. This prohibits the union of any two persons who have a common ancestor not more than six degrees removed on the male side, or four degrees removed on the female side. This rule is said to exclude 2,121 kinds of relative: the table of kindred of the Anglican Church excludes 30, of which 15 presuppose a former marriage. It is unnecessarily wide, from a practical point of view: many of these relatives would not be available for matrimonial purposes, since they would be dead. It is excess of caution to forbid a man to marry his great-great-grand aunt.

2. *Various rules of prohibited degrees*  
(b) *The 'avuncular' rule.* Many lower castes, such as the Barai, Bharbhunja, Bhuiyar, Byar, Chero, Dangi, and Dhuniya, are bound by a rule which forbids unions with any person in the line of the paternal and maternal uncle and aunt (*chachera, mamera, phuphera, mausera*). This

### CASTE, SUBCASTE, AND MARRIAGE

bars all marriages between any kind of uncle and niece, or aunt and nephew. It also bars all marriages between all first cousins. It also bars a marriage between a man and any descendant of any of his first cousins, or between a woman and any descendant of any of her first cousins. But it would not bar marriage between cousins more distant than this, as the following table shows. (It is worked out only for the paternal aunt, but *mutatis mutandis*, would apply to any other 'avuncular' line.)



(X, X 1, X 2, are males. Y, Y 1, Y 2, Z, Z 1, Z 2 are females.)

Here X could not marry Y 1, since he is her mother's brother: but he could apparently marry Y 2, since there is no direct 'avuncular' relation between them: he is not Y 2's mother's brother or father's brother, or in either of their lines. X 1 could not marry Y, since she is his father's sister, or Y 1 or Y 2, since they are in the line of his father's sister. He could not marry Z 1, but could marry Z 2, being in the same relation respectively to Z 1 and Z 2 as X is to Y 1 and Y 2 respectively. X 2 could not marry Z, Z 1 or Z 2, for the same reason that X 1 could not marry Y, Y 1 or Y 2. But X 2 could apparently marry Y, Y 1 or Y 2 who are not in the line of his father's sister, but of his grandfather's sister. In theory, therefore, this rule is much less stringent than the 'sapinda' rule: in practice, of course, the only marriage of those described that could in normal circumstances occur (especially as marriage in India takes place at a very early age) is that between X 2 and Y 2—i.e. between second cousins. It is, therefore, quite stringent enough: especially when it is remembered that wherever there are exogamous groups, all relatives on the father's side and





Whenever a widow refuses to marry an available levir and marries somebody else, there are always certain conditions attached to her doing so. She loses all claims of maintenance or inheritance in her first husband's family: she has to give up her children by him to that family, and the new husband has always to pay a bride price to his predecessor's relations. It is important also to notice that widow marriage and the levirate almost always co-exist, a fact which suggests a causal connexion. The evidence suggests that the levirate was originally the only possible form of marriage of a widow, and that the restriction was gradually relaxed. In the United Provinces thirty years ago there were still castes in which the widow had to marry her brother-in-law if one existed. Elsewhere, in more primitive societies, the evidence is much stronger. In Australia<sup>1</sup> the widow, as a rule, must marry the levir if there is one, and may marry nobody else if there is not. Throughout the four volumes of Sir James Frazer's work, *Totemism and Exogamy*, I can only find five cases where widow marriage is permitted and the levirate forbidden; one of these is in Australia, three in Mysore, and one in Assam.<sup>1</sup>

The levirate as it now exists must not be confused with the *niyoga* custom of which Manu and other lawgivers write.<sup>2</sup> The *niyoga* resembled the Jewish custom described in Leviticus; the brother-in-law took his widowed sister-in-law to wife *only* if she was childless, and for the express purpose of raising up a son and heir to his deceased brother. The marriage had to be expressly sanctioned by the husband before his death, by a relative, or *guru* (spiritual guide): and as soon as its object was achieved, the connexion ceased. The levirate of the present day is quite different: the widow marries her *dewar* whether she is childless or not,

<sup>1</sup> Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*—references under 'Levirate' in Vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> Manu, *Institutes*, ix. 59, et seq.; Gautama, *Institutes*, xviii. 4-5; etc. etc.

the fiction of raising up seed is ignored, and the connexion is permanent.

#### F. OTHER MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AND RESTRICTIONS

We may here pause to compare western and Hindu ideas on the matter of marriage: it will be the easiest way of bringing home to the reader the 'truth about marriage' amongst Hindus. In the west, marriage is by no means universal: indeed, it is reprobated unless a man can comfortably or sufficiently support a wife. Amongst Hindus it is so universal, that the only classes who remain unwed are faqirs and other celibates who do not want to marry, and men who cannot find wives owing to the shortage of women, which in the United Provinces is considerable (915 women to 1,000 men in 1911). In the west, a bachelor can marry any woman in the world, save fifteen kinds of relatives. In India, what with restrictions of endogamy, exogamy and hypergamy, with far-reaching prohibited degrees and the disability of widows to remarry, a man's choice in the biggest caste is limited to a few thousands, and in the smaller castes to a few hundreds or even tens.

As some compensation for all these restrictions the Hindu has the dubious advantage of being able to wed more wives at a time than one. In theory polygamy is legal for all Hindus, but in practice it is uncommon: in 1911 there were only 1,009 married women to 1,000 married men. Poverty is a universal impediment to polygamy: only the comparatively well-to-do can afford more than a single wife. Hindus of the better class rarely contract a second union in the lifetime of the first wife, save in exceptional circumstances, such as the first wife's barrenness or her failure to bear a son. Ahirs, Bahelias, Baris, Barais, Bhatiyas and many other castes also permit a second marriage in the case of infidelity on the part of the first wife: usually the permission of the tribal council is required. Some castes limit the total number of wives: for instance, amongst Audhiyas, Barwars,











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| Caste        | Girls           | Boys      |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Baheliya     | ... 7-8         | —         |
| Baiswar      | ... 10-12       | 14        |
| Bajgi        | ... infant      | adult     |
| Balahar      | ... 8-9         | 10-11     |
| Banjara      | ... 7-15        | —         |
| Bansphor     | ... infant      | 12-13     |
| Barai        | ... 8-9         | 9-12      |
| Bargahi      | ... adult, 7-11 | 9-12      |
| Barhai       | ... 9           | 14-15     |
| Bari         | ... 12-13, 10   | 12, 10-12 |
| Barwar       | ... infant      | adult     |
| Basor        | ... 10-12       | —         |
| Bhangi       | ... 7-9         | 10-11     |
| Bhar         | ... 5-12        | —         |
| Bharbhunja   | ... 7-9         | —         |
| Bhuiya       | ... 12          | —         |
| Bhuiyar      | ... 10-12       | —         |
| Bind         | ... 10-12       | —         |
| Byar         | ... 6-12        | —         |
| Chai         | ... 10-12       | —         |
| Chamar       | ... 3-8         | —         |
| Chero        | ... 5-10        | —         |
| Chhipi       | ... infant      | —         |
| Churihar     | ... 5-10        | —         |
| Dangi        | ... 7-8         | 12-13     |
| Dhangar      | ... 10-12       | —         |
| Dhanuk       | ... 7-11        | —         |
| Dharkar      | ... adult       | adult     |
| Dhobi        | ... 12          | 14        |
| Dom (Hills)  | ... 8-10        | —         |
| Dom (Plains) | ... 11-12       | —         |
| Dusadh       | ... adult       | adult     |
| Gadariya     | ... 7-12        | —         |
| Ghasiya      | ... adult       | adult     |
| Gond         | ... adult       | adult     |
| Goriya       | ... under 14    | 5-10      |
| Gujar        | ... 9-16        | —         |
| Habura       | ... adult       | adult     |
| Halwai       | ... 9-10, 5-12  | 10-14     |

CASTE, SUBCASTE, AND MARRIAGE

| Caste    | Girls          | Boys        |
|----------|----------------|-------------|
| Kachhi   | ... 9          | 10          |
| Kahar    | ... 8-12       | 8-15        |
| Kalwar   | ... infant     | infant      |
| Kanjar   | ... 7-8, 6-8   | 10-12, 9-10 |
| Kapariya | ... 7-8        | —           |
| Kasera   | ... under 12   | —           |
| Kewat    | ... 5-7        | 5-10        |
| Khagi    | ... 8-10       | 12-13       |
| Khairwa  | ... 7-15       | —           |
| Kharwar  | ... 5-10       | —           |
| Khatik   | ... 8-10, 3-15 | 3-15        |
| Koiri    | ... under 12   | —           |
| Korwa    | ... 10         | 12          |
| Kumhar   | ... 9-10       | 10-15       |
| Lodha    | ... 5-10       | 6-12        |
| Lohar    | ... 5-14       | —           |
| Luniya   | ... 10-12      | —           |
| Majhwar  | ... 12         | 16          |
| Mali     | ... 7-10       | 10-15       |
| Mallah   | ... 9-10       | 10-12       |
| Nai      | ... under 10   | —           |
| Nat      | ... 10-12      | 15          |
| Pasi     | ... 5-16       | —           |
| Phansiya | ... 7-12       | —           |
| Sahariya | ... 0-10       | —           |
| Sejwari  | ... 9          | 10          |
| Teli     | ... infant     | infant      |
| Tharu    | ... adult      | adult       |

These figures show that adult marriage is rare and infant marriage common amongst low castes; whilst there is a tendency to lower the age of marriage, consequent on the rise of low castes in the social scale, which is only partially counteracted by the efforts of reformers to raise that age.

Other circumstances, however, affect the question. The time when a man will marry his child depends in part on the amount of money he can spare for the pur-



## THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

A husband seldom calls his wife by her name: a wife never calls her husband by his. This custom is usually explained as due to respect; but why should respect take this particular form? Most probably the custom is one instance of the general taboo on the use of names, which is common in many races. The name is supposed to be closely connected with the personality; and it is advisable to keep it secret, for should an enemy chance to learn it, he will acquire control over its owner's personality. For this reason Hindus have two names, one secret, one for use; and frequently give a child some opprobrious nickname such as Ghasita, Tinkauriya, or Bhikhu.<sup>1</sup> It is said that the officiating priest causes the bride to pronounce her future husband's name at the wedding by introducing it into the formulas which she has to repeat. As the name is so often that of a god his inventive faculty is not greatly strained. The usual circumlocution adopted is 'father' or 'mother of so and so', or a general term of respect and affection.

Principal authorities.—Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910).  
Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (1909).  
Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh* (1896).  
*Census Report, U.P., 1911.*

<sup>1</sup> The commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain', is due to the same idea. To take His name in vain (unnecessarily or heedlessly), is to insult His personality. Another explanation refers the taboo to marriage by capture.

## APPENDIX I TO CHAPTER IV

### *The Origin of the Levirate*

McLennan<sup>1</sup> refers the origin of the levirate to a system of fraternal polyandry. In such a system, a wife is the joint property of a group of brothers: when one of them dies, her position is not affected, for she remains the property of the rest. Her children, by whatever brother, are affiliated to the eldest of them in his lifetime: and the affiliations to the deceased husband which are characteristic of the Jewish and Aryan levirates are a mere extension of this practice. Finally, if in such a system a younger brother were to acquire a wife of his own, he would leave the joint establishment altogether,<sup>2</sup> and his elder brother would have no more claim to his wife at his death than to the wife of any other stranger: which explains why an elder brother may not marry a younger brother's widow.

Sir James Frazer<sup>3</sup> refers the custom to a system of group marriage under which all the men of a group, who are usually brothers, share all the wives of that group. And there are other explanations, which need not be given.<sup>4</sup>

The custom is widespread: it is found in all ages of the world's history, in all parts of the globe, and in all sorts of marriage systems. No single explanation will suffice to cover all the instances of it: and indeed it takes different forms in different circumstances. But the fundamental idea which underlies the custom appears to be the conception of the wife as property, and therefore as heritable. It may be objected that the natural heir to a man's pro-

<sup>1</sup> J. F. McLennan, *Studies in Ancient History* (1886).

<sup>2</sup> As actually happens in Jaunsar-Bawar.

<sup>3</sup> Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910).

<sup>4</sup> Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh* (1896); Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage* (1901); *Ency. Brit.* (11th edition),—article on 'Levirate'; Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*.



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### 4. Levirate

- Gharib ki bahu sab ki bhawaj.* The poor man's wife is everybody's elder brother's widow.
- Dada leik ban, ban leik sagali man.* His wife depends on the eldest brother: the whole family depends on his wife.
- Bhawaji ki thaili dewara sarafi karai.* The dewar becomes a banker through the wealth of his elder brother's widow.

### 5. Polygamy

- Ek byahwalo chakravarti; Dwi byahwala ki kakurgali. Tin byahwala ki bara bhag, Dwi lijawan dandi, ek lijao ag.* A man with one wife lives the life of a king;  
A man with two wives is a poor wretched thing (literally has a dog's luck);  
A man with three wives has a fate that is dire;  
Two wives bear his coffin, the third lights his pyre.  
(*Bara bhag*, literally 'great luck', is sarcastic.)  
A second wife means death.
- Saut wa mant.*

### 6. Polyandry

- Do khasam ki joru chausar ki got.* The wife of two husbands is like a draught at backgammon.
- Ek joru sarhe kumbe ko bas hat.* One wife is enough for a whole family.

### 7. Matriarchate

- Nana ka tukra khawo, dada ka pota kahlawe.* He eats his mother's father's bread, but is called the grandson of his father's father.
- Sawan men karela phula, nani dekh nawasa bhula.* The karela flower blossoms in August; the daughter's son sees (the wealth of) his mother's mother and swells (with pride).
- Sat mama ka bhanja bhuka hi bhuka phire.* The nephew of seven maternal uncles goes hungry (i.e. too many cooks spoil the broth).
- Mama phupha ka bhai, kaka baron ka dai.* Sons of mother's brother and father's sister are brothers: sons of father's elder and younger brothers are enemies.

### 8. Cousin marriage

- Jo mama beti nahin dega to kaun dega?* If my mother's brother does not give me his daughter (in marriage), then who will give me his daughter?

## CHAPTER V

### COMMENSAL AND OTHER SIMILAR RESTRICTIONS OF CASTE

The daily life of a Hindu, from the cradle to the grave, is regulated by a code of ritual. His every act, every set of circumstances in which he may find himself, has its proper observances, which are minutely laid down. The rites at birth, marriage and death, the fashion in matters of food, dress and ornament, the course of polite conversation, the etiquette connected with the use of the chair and the greeting of the guest—'rising and sitting' (*uthna baithna*), as the Hindu calls it—all are most carefully defined, and as carefully taught to the children of every respectable family.

Many of these observances, according to Mr. Crooke,<sup>1</sup> are connected with the idea of 'taboo'. Taboo depends on the conception that in every personality there is inherent a power, or rather a potentiality, for evil, which is to be dreaded and avoided. The person in a state of taboo, and those with whom he comes in contact at such a time, are mutually dangerous to each other; as a precautionary measure he must, therefore, be carefully isolated. This potentiality for evil is specially active at the crises of life; the mother and her child in childbirth, the bride and bridegroom at marriage, the dying man, the corpse, are all dangerous, and also specially susceptible to the evil potentiality in others. It is the idea of taboo which explains many of the obscure rites connected with birth, marriage and death; it is also one of the causes of the strength of the caste system. Since every stranger is a possible enemy, a man must needs take special pains to know who are his friends, and therefore

<sup>1</sup> *Natives of Northern India*, pp. 194-5.



# THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

Thirty-six castes confine themselves to this general rule, and forbid their members to eat food cooked by anybody else. Sixteen other castes will eat food cooked by a Brahman: to which class we may add another two castes, the Khattri and Saraswat Brahman, who for a traditional reason will eat each other's *kachcha* food. Four castes will also eat food cooked by Rajputs. The remaining eighteen castes are less particular, and will eat food cooked by others than the two castes mentioned. But it is impossible to classify them accurately, for each caste has its own list of possible cooks. It can, however, be said that every caste's list consists of castes of a higher social rank than its own, or of castes equal to itself in rank. Out of the eighteen, five very low castes will take food from almost anybody.

Every caste, save the Kanaujiya Brahman, may eat *pakka* food cooked by a member of the same caste (*not*, in this case, endogamous group): a *guru*: a Halwai confectioner: or a Kahar domestic servant. The Kanaujiya will not eat food cooked by a Kahar, a Sarwariya will not eat food cooked by a Halwai. Ten castes confine themselves to the general rule. The Saraswat Brahman will also eat a Khattri's *pakka* food. Thirteen castes will eat such food if cooked by a Brahman: five will also eat it, if cooked by a Rajput. Next comes a class of some forty-five castes, each of which will eat the *pakka* food of various castes of lower rank than Brahman or Rajput, but of rank higher than or equal to its own: and of this class, eight castes will eat the food of almost anybody.

The seventy-six castes whose rules we are investigating can now be classified as follows:<sup>1</sup>

(a) *Kachcha* food. In respect of *kachcha* food, there are five main groups.  
(i) Those who will eat food cooked by a member of the endogamous group and *guru* only.

<sup>1</sup> I ignore the peculiarities of the Khattri and Saraswat Brahmans in respect of *kachcha* food, and of the Kanaujiya and Saraswat Brahmans in respect of *pakka* food.

## COMMENSAL AND OTHER SIMILAR RESTRICTIONS OF CASTE

(ii) Those who will eat food cooked by the above, and also by Brahmans.

(iii) Those who will eat food cooked by the above, and also by Rajputs.

(iv) Those who will eat food cooked by the above, and also by lower castes of rank at least equal to their own.

(v) Those who will eat food cooked by almost anybody.

(b) *Pakka* food. In respect of *pakka* food, there are also five groups. The first consists of castes who will eat food cooked by a caste fellow, *guru*, Halwai or Kahar: the other four correspond to the last four groups under *kachcha* food.

The following table shows the group in which each of the seventy-six castes falls:—

| Caste             | Group | <i>kachcha</i> | <i>pakka</i> |
|-------------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| Agariya           | ...   | 3              | 1            |
| Agarwala          | ...   | 2              | 4            |
| Agrahri           | ...   | 1              | 1            |
| Aheriya           | ...   | 4              | 4            |
| Ahir              | ...   | 2              | 4            |
| Bajgi             | ...   | 5              | 5            |
| Balahar           | ...   | 4              | 4            |
| Balai             | ...   | 4              | 2            |
| Banjara           | ...   | 2              | 4            |
| Barai             | ...   | 1              | 4            |
| Barhai            | ...   | 2              | 4            |
| Bari              | ...   | 4              | 4            |
| Basor             | ...   | 4              | 5            |
| Bhangi            | ...   | 5              | 4            |
| Bhar              | ...   | 2              | 4            |
| Bharbhunja        | ...   | 1              | 5            |
| Bhuiya            | ...   | 4              | 1            |
| Bind              | ...   | 1              | 4            |
| Brahman (other)   | ...   | 1              | 1            |
| Brahman Kanaujiya | ...   | 1              | 1            |
| Brahman, Saraswat | ...   | 1              | 1            |
| Brahman Sarwariya | ...   | 1              | 2            |
| Byar              | ...   | 2              | 5            |
| Chamar            | ...   | 5              |              |

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| Caste      | Group | kachcha | pakka |
|------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Chai       | ...   | 1       | 1     |
| Chero      | ...   | 1       | 2     |
| Chhipi     | ...   | 2       | 4     |
| Dangi      | ...   | 2       | 2     |
| Dharkar    | ...   | 1       | 5     |
| Dom        | ...   | 5       | 5     |
| Dusadh     | ...   | 4       | 4     |
| Gandharb   | ...   | 2       | 4     |
| Gharuk     | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Golapurab  | ...   | 2       | 4     |
| Gujar      | ...   | 4       | 4     |
| Gurchha    | ...   | 1       | 1     |
| Halwai     | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Jat        | ...   | 4       | 4     |
| Kachhi     | ...   | 1       | 1     |
| Kahar      | ...   | 4       | 3     |
| Kalwar     | ...   | 1       | 3     |
| Kandu      | ...   | 2       | 4     |
| Kanjar     | ...   | 5       | 5     |
| Kapariya   | ...   | 3       | 3     |
| Kasarwani  | ...   | 1       | 2     |
| Kasaundhan | ...   | 1       | 2     |
| Kasera     | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Kathiyara  | ...   | 2       | 2     |
| Kayastha   | ...   | 2       | 2     |
| Kewat      | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Khairwa    | ...   | 1       | 1     |
| Khandelwal | ...   | 2       | 4     |
| Khangar    | ...   | 4       | 5     |
| Kharwar    | ...   | 1       | 2     |
| Khatik     | ...   | 4       | 4     |
| Khatttri   | ...   | 1       | 2     |
| Kisan      | ...   | 1       | 1     |
| Koiri      | ...   | 1       | 1     |
| Kori       | ...   | 3       | 4     |
| Kumhar     | ...   | 1       | 1     |
| Kurmi      | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Lodha      | ...   | 2       | 4     |
| Lohar      | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Majhwar    | ...   | 1       | 2     |
| Mali       | ...   | 4       | 4     |

COMMENSAL AND OTHER SIMILAR RESTRICTIONS OF CASTE

| Caste    | Group | kachcha | pakka |
|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| Mallah   | ...   | 1       | 2     |
| Nai      | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Panka    | ...   | 1       | 2     |
| Pasi     | ...   | 2       | 4     |
| Rahwari  | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Rajput   | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Ramaiya  | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Ror      | ...   | 1       | 4     |
| Sejwari  | ...   | 3       | 3     |
| Sonar    | ...   | 1       | 3     |
| Tarkihar | ...   | 1       | 4     |

With the assistance of this list we can group the castes according to the severity of their taboos as follows:

Group 1. Agrahri, Brahman Kanauiya, Brahman Sarwariya, Brahman Saraswat, Chai, Gurchha, Kachhi, Khairwa, Kisan, Koiri, Kumhar.

Group 2. Chero, Kasarwani, Kasaundhan, Kharwar, Khattri, Majhwar, Mallah, Panka.

Group 3. Agariya, Banjara, Byar, Dangi, Kalwar, Kathiyara, Kayastha, Sonar.

Group 4. Barai, Bharbhunja, Brahman (other), Gharuk, Halwai, Kasera, Kewat, Kurmi, Lohar, Nai, Rahwari, Rajput, Ramaiya, Ror, Tarkihar.

Group 5. Agarwala, Ahir, Barhai, Bhar, Chhipi, Dharkar, Gandharb, Golapurab, Kandu, Khandelwal, Kapariya, Lodha, Pasi, Sejwari.

Group 6. Kahar, Kori.

Group 7. Aheriya, Balahar, Balai, Bari, Basor, Dusadh, Gujar, Jat, Khatik, Mali.

Group 8. Khangar.

Group 9. Bajgi, Bhangi, Chamar, Dom, Kanjar.

This list shows clearly that there is no relation between a caste's social position and the severity of its cooking taboo. For instance, in Group 1, there are three castes that are positively low: in Group 2, there are five: in Group 3, there are three. On the other hand, in Group 4 there are the two highest castes and five others of good









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Some castes that are themselves low are especially strict in keeping untouchables at a distance. I have examined the taboos of twenty-five such castes: the principal results are given in the following table:

| Caste name | Regard as untouchable the |        |         |       |     |
|------------|---------------------------|--------|---------|-------|-----|
|            | Bhangi                    | Chamar | Dharkar | Dhobi | Dom |
| Agariya    | ...                       | ...    | ...     | ...   | I   |
| Audhiya    | ...                       | I      | I       | ...   | ... |
| Baheliya   | ...                       | I      | ...     | ...   | I   |
| Bajgi      | ...                       | I      | I       | ...   | I   |
| Bansphor   | ...                       | ...    | ...     | ...   | I   |
| Basor      | ...                       | I      | I       | I     | I   |
| Bhangi     | ...                       | x      | ...     | I     | I   |
| Bhar       | ...                       | I      | ...     | I     | I   |
| Bhot       | ...                       | I      | ...     | I     | I   |
| Bhuiya     | ...                       | ...    | I       | I     | ... |
| Bhuiyar    | ...                       | ...    | I       | I     | I   |
| Bind       | ...                       | ...    | I       | I     | I   |
| Byar       | ...                       | ...    | I       | ...   | I   |
| Chamar     | ...                       | I      | I       | ...   | I   |
| Dangi      | ...                       | ...    | x       | ...   | I   |
| Dharkar    | ...                       | I      | ...     | ...   | ... |
| Dom        | ...                       | ...    | I       | x     | I   |
| Dusadh     | ...                       | ...    | ...     | ...   | x   |
| Gharuk     | ...                       | ...    | I       | ...   | I   |
| Ghasiya    | ...                       | I      | ...     | ...   | ... |
| Golapurab  | ...                       | ...    | ...     | ...   | ... |
| Khangar    | ...                       | I      | ...     | I     | ... |
| Kharwar    | ...                       | I      | ...     | I     | ... |
| Khatik     | ...                       | ...    | I       | ...   | ... |
| Majhwar    | ...                       | ...    | I       | I     | I   |
|            | ...                       | I      | I       | I     | I   |

Eleven castes will not touch a Bhangi, seventeen will not touch a Chamar, ten will not touch a Dharkar, sixteen will not touch a Dhobi or a Dom. These are the untouchables *par excellence*; though one or more of the twenty-five castes also regard the Basor, Bhuiya, Ghasiya, Kori, Musahar, Pasi, and Patari as untouchable. The most particular in this respect are the Basor, Bhar, Bhuiya, Bhuiyar, Byar, Khatik, and Majhwar; most of

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them, however, are not quite so low as the other castes in this list, whilst the Basor has all the intolerance of the parvenu. This caste is a branch of the Dom tribe, that has settled down to relative respectability, and now will have nothing to do not only with the Dom and Dharkar,<sup>1</sup> its close relations, the Bhangi and Dhobi which not long ago were its equals, but extends its objection to the Musahar, which always was, and still is, a respectable though somewhat primitive caste.

Of the five chief untouchables, the Dom is scarcely Hinduized at all, and the Dharkar but little more so, and the occupations of the Bhangi, Chamar and Dhobi put them outside the pale. The Bhangi is a scavenger, the Chamar deals in dead cattle, whilst the Dhobi handles dirty clothes and that ill-omened beast, the donkey.

Principal authorities.—Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh* (1896).  
*Census Report, U.P., 1901 and 1911.*  
 Crooke, *Natives of Northern India.*

<sup>1</sup> The Dharkar is also an offshoot of the Dom tribe.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SYSTEM OF CASTE GOVERNMENT

In every caste there is some authority charged with the duty of compelling obedience to customary laws. Among the 'twice-born'—Brahmans, Rajputs, and Vaisyas—that authority is often nothing more concrete than public opinion. But most castes possess a regular system of government, of which the ruling body is a council or assembly, known as a *panchayat*. The powers of this body vary both in nature and extent. In all castes it has some measure of judicial power, and investigates and punishes offences against custom: in many, it is also a licensing authority, authorizing acts or omissions which by custom require such sanction.

It is possible to make certain general statements that are true of all *panchayats*.

(a) The group which a *panchayat* rules is not the caste as such, but the endogamous group, whether it be caste or subcaste. Just as a man may eat food prepared by another if he can marry that other's daughter, so too he may meet him in council.<sup>1</sup> And the *panchayat* of one endogamous group is completely independent of the *panchayats* of other similar groups within the same caste. If two or more *panchayats* meet to consider matters of mutual interest, they meet as independent and equal powers, which are not necessarily friends, let alone allies.<sup>2</sup> The council of the caste as such is the *sabha*, which is discussed in a later paragraph.

<sup>1</sup> There are only two exceptions: the Nai (see par. 6), where the *panchayat* is a caste one; and the Rajput, where the unit is the exogamous group (see par. 17).

<sup>2</sup> Occasionally *panchayats* of two groups in different castes meet in the same way. See *Census Report, U.P., 1911*, p. 333, note 1.

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(b) But decentralization goes further still. There is not one *panchayat* only to each endogamous group, but one *panchayat* to each independent local section of that group. In other words, the *panchayat* is not of the *zat*, but of the *biradari*.<sup>1</sup> The local boundaries of the jurisdiction of each such *panchayat* are clearly demarcated: sometimes it covers part of a village or town, sometimes a whole village or town, occasionally a group of villages. These jurisdictions are called by various names—*ilaga*, *juwar* (estate), *tal*, *chatai* (mat—from the tribal mat used at meetings of the brotherhood), *ghol* (circle or group), are some of the commonest. The *panchayats* of the brotherhoods within the same endogamous group are independent of each other, but as a rule they respect each other's decrees: whilst in some castes it is customary to hold regular conferences, at which several *panchayats* of the same endogamous group meet to discuss questions of mutual interest.

(c) The word *panchayat* means 'quintette'—a group of five persons. But it is safe to say that no *panchayat* ever consists of so small a number. Generally, every adult male in a *biradari* has a right to speak and vote: less frequently, the *panchayat* consists of representatives, selected on one basis or another, but always in greater numbers than five. On the other hand, there is in most *panchayats* a committee which guides its deliberations—a sort of cabinet in this House of Commons—and this committee always consists of a small number of members, which number is, more often than not, five. And it is in the constitution of this committee that *panchayats* chiefly differ.

Though caste *panchayats* exhibit endless minor variations, it is possible to distinguish two main types. The first or 'permanent' type is a *panchayat* which possesses one or more permanent officers, whose duty it is to bring offences to its notice, and who have power to convene it whenever necessary. These officers are always members of that committee, mentioned

<sup>1</sup> See appendix to Chapter I.





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five) are chosen for the occasion, but there is a tendency always to select the same men, and their sons after their death. In Gorakhpur, the Sonkhar subcaste has a headman (*chaudhri*) and six or seven *panches*, all hereditary: the Poldar subcaste has a *chaudhri* and *padhan* (vice-president), both hereditary: the Saqba subcaste has only a *chaudhri*, elected for a single year at Dasehra. In Bulandshahr, every village has an officer known as *muqaddam*, who decides minor cases, with a hereditary *chaudhri* and two *diwans* (vice-presidents) to every hundred villages or so.

(xx) *Khumra*. Each village has a *chaudhri* of its own: the assembly consists of all *chaudhris*, some of whom form the permanent committee of the council. In Bijnor, the committee consists of the *chaudhris* of Nagina (*badshah*), who is headman: of Jamdaspur (*wazir*): Tajpur and Sherkot (*munsifs*). These two *munsifs* are elected: all other officers in the caste are hereditary.

(xxi) *Kutamali*. In Moradabad each separate village or quarter in a town has a *padhan* and *chakrayat*; the latter acts as substitute for the former during his minority. These officials decide all trivial cases. The council consists of these officials (twenty-two of each) with two headmen (*sardar*). All are hereditary.

(xxii) *Lal Begi Bhangi*. In Benares, the organization of the Lal Begis' system of government is modelled on the city and cantonment in which they are employed. There are seven administrative units or companies (*bera*), known as (1) *kali paltan*, which serves the Indian infantry: (2) *lalkurti* or redcoats, who serve the British infantry: (3) *genereli*, which dates back to the time when Benares possessed a divisional general and his headquarters staff: (4-7) *sadr*, *kothiwal*, *shahr*, and *teshan*, who are employed respectively in cantonments, civil station, city and railway settlement. Each company has four officers (*sardar*) and a messenger (*piyada*): the titles of the officers are *jamadar* (headman), *munsif* (spokesman), *chaudhri* (treasurer) and *naib* (summoner). In supreme command is the 'brigadier'. He and the company officers are elected, though there is a tendency to

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observe the principle of heredity: the messenger is selected.

(xxiii) *Lohar*. There is a hereditary committee, with a *chaudhri*: but he is merely the summoner, and the president is selected for each meeting.

(xxiv) *Nai*. In Muzaffarnagar, there is a single *panchayat* for the whole caste. In Pilibhit, there are subcaste *panchayats* as well as the caste *panchayat*. In Bulandshahr, every village has a *chaudhri* or headman. There is also a *chaudhri* for each tahsil, and a head *chaudhri* for the whole caste, who lives at Delhi.

(xxv) *Nanbai*. This occupational group (it is not yet a caste) is ruled by a single headman (*sarpanch*). The Nanbai is a baker.

(xxvi) *Tawaif*. The Tawaif are dancing-girls; they have a *panchayat* of women. The headwoman (*chaudhrain*) is elected for life, but must have been born within the jurisdiction of the *panchayat*. Other members are selected when required.

(xxvii) *Teli*. There is a permanent and hereditary committee of five, from whom the headman (*chaudhri*) is selected for each meeting.

(xxviii) *Tharu*. The village headman is headman (*sarpanch*) of the brotherhood in his own village. But there is also a hereditary headman for the whole caste (which has no endogamous subdivisions), who is known as *barbag* (great tiger). The post has been inherited in one family from time immemorial, and there is an old copper plate which is the headman's badge of office.

(xxix) *Thathera*. There are a number of hereditary headmen (*chaudhris*); as a rule there is one *chaudhri* to each village, but if the local jurisdiction covers more than one village, he can appoint assistants, known by the name of *mukhiya*,<sup>1</sup> whose duties are those of informers. A *chaudhri* may also appoint an orderly (*sipahi*).

<sup>1</sup> *Mukhiya* is also the term for the 'village headman' appointed by Government, who has certain duties under the criminal law.

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When a post is hereditary, the eldest son always succeeds, provided that he is of sound mind and good conduct. If there is no son, or the eldest son is unfit, the office goes either to the next heir, or to some selected member of the same family. A minor, till he is of age, is almost invariably represented by some elder relative: though some castes cause the minor to announce a decision taken in his name. When an office is elective or selective, the choice is made from among the persons best fitted by age or experience to hold it, subject to any other condition of tenure that may be observed (e.g. that every family should be represented): but there is a tendency to follow the principle of heredity if possible (as amongst the Khatiks and Lal Begi Bhangis). Every post is held subject to mental fitness and good behaviour. There is little information regarding the ceremonial of succession. The emblem of office in the case of a headman (and often of other officers too) is a turban, which is tied on the new officer's head in due form at a feast of the brethren. In fact, 'to wear the turban' is synonymous with 'to be a headman'. Sometimes the officer pays for his own turban, sometimes it is presented to him; it is not an expensive crown.

Panchayats meet in three different ways:

(i) *At a feast of the brotherhood.* Any person who has a complaint to make, takes advantage of the presence of the brethren<sup>1</sup> to put it forward, whereupon the assembly ceases from conviviality and turns to business. Controversial questions are seldom raised at a marriage feast, lest the harmony of the proceedings be disturbed: but funeral gatherings often resolve themselves into courts of enquiry.

(ii) *On a special summons*, which the headman issues either of his own motion, or at the desire of an interested

<sup>1</sup> And, doubtless, also of the good temper which befits a convivial gathering.

## THE SYSTEM OF CASTE GOVERNMENT

party. The meeting is convened through the official summoner if there is one; if not, the Nai barber, who works for the caste, acts as such.

(iii) *On fixed occasions*, usually a fair or religious festival, at which brethren are likely to attend in large numbers. Such meetings are sometimes monster *panchayats*, at which several brotherhoods assemble to discuss matters of general interest, such as the prohibition of liquor, the curtailment of marriage expenses, or the abandonment of such a custom as widow marriage.

The procedure closely follows that of a court of law.

The charge is made: the culprit is called on to plead guilty or not guilty. A plea of guilty is followed by immediate sentence: a plea of not guilty is followed by the hearing of evidence, discussion, voting, and a verdict and sentence. All evidence is oral: every brother who is present has the right to speak and vote. Every brother uses his private knowledge to guide him to a decision: in fact, judge and jury are all potential witnesses. Some castes require a unanimous verdict, others are satisfied with the decision of a majority: generally, the permanent officials must be unanimous, and agree with the majority of the brethren present. The permanent officials decide the verdict and sentence, which is announced by the headman. The sentence takes various forms: but if it is not, or cannot be, carried out at once, the offender is outcasted till it is carried out. And if he refuses to submit to his sentence, he is outcasted till he does.

Though the procedure of the *panchayat* is generally the same in all castes, so far as essentials are concerned, there are often minor peculiarities.

(i) *Agrahri*. If the council cannot arrive at a unanimous decision, the meeting is adjourned.

(ii) *Bhotiya*. A correspondent informed me that amongst the Bhotiyas of Kumaun, the debate is 'a babel of uproarious questions and answers'. If a decision seems remote, from discussion the council turns to 'Socratic

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questionings'—presumably, attempts to extract admissions. And if the Socratic method fails, the council has recourse to magic. A fetish called *Bharto*, which consists of a white stone tied round with a black woollen thread, is produced: for with his right hand on this, no man dare tell a lie.

(iii) *Dom*. The *chaudhri's* opinion prevails in the absence of unanimity.

(iv) *Ghosi*. In addition to other officers, this caste has an executioner, who is responsible for seeing that the sentence is carried out.

(v) *Kewat*. The offender is compelled to stand on one leg whilst undergoing examination—a position which must discourage verbosity.

(vi) *Lal Begi Bhangi*. The procedure is complicated. The brethren sit in three lines. In the first, from right to left, sit the brigadier and the company officers.<sup>1</sup> In the second and third lines are the private members. Each party is in charge of the *piyada* of his company. The company spokesmen (*munsifs*) act as counsel and examine the parties and their witnesses. After evidence has been taken, the privates vote: then the three subalterns of each company (*munsif*, *chaudhri*, and *naib*) consult, and when they are unanimous submit their opinion through the *munsif* to their company commander (*jama-dar*). The company *jamadars* then confer and when they are unanimous report their decision to the brigadier, who, if he accepts it, announces it to the meeting. A private may only vote, or 'rise to a point of order': if he does this, he must act with due respect.

(vii) *Nai*. In Bulandshahr, when a brother wishes to draw the attention of the council to an offence, and the offender is himself present, he cries '*bal makki dekhkar khana*'—look for hair and flies (in your food) before you eat. This is the signal for an enquiry.

(viii) In Garhwal there was, till quite recent times, an official called *dharmadhikari*, whose post was recognized by Government. He was a Brahman charged with the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. par. 6 (xxii) above.

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duty of purifying outcastes. The custom of official recognition has lapsed: but outcastes still occasionally petition the district authorities to send them to the *dharmadhikari*.

Reports received at the census of 1911 showed that the offences triable by *panchayats* varied from caste to caste. But when a report stated that the *panchayat* of a particular caste did not deal with a particular offence, it was not always possible to decide whether this meant that the *panchayat* could not do so, or merely that it had never had occasion to do so. The information was not derived from a written code, but from the oral evidence of members of the caste: and if no instance of the trial of a particular offence had occurred within the informant's memory, he might reasonably assert that such offences were not triable by the *panchayat*. By comparison, however, of the offences triable by different *panchayats*, it is possible to frame a specimen list, as follows:

- (i) Breaches of the commensal law, and of restrictions on eating, drinking, and smoking.
- (ii) Breaches of the marriage law.

- (a) Seduction of a wife, or adultery.
- (b) Immorality or concubinage.
- (c) Refusal to carry out a marriage after agreement (breach of promise of marriage).
- (d) Refusal to carry out the *gauna* ceremony, i.e. to send a wife to her husband at the proper age.
- (e) Refusal to maintain a wife (restitution of conjugal rights).
- (f) Marrying a widow without permission (when permission is necessary).

- (iii) Breaches of caste custom in the matter of feasts.

- (iv) Breaches of the trade custom of the caste.
- (v) Killing of certain animals—the cow, sometimes the dog or cat.



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- (2) by man,—fine and restoration of woman, or in the alternative payment of the bride price.
- (b) Adultery, extratribal,—
  - (1) if the other party is of a higher caste,—fine;
  - (2) if the other party is of a lower caste,—excommunication.
- (c) Breaches of the commensal law,—fine and a bath in the Ganges.
- (d) Cow-killing,—begging alms with the cow's tail tied to a staff: sleeping at a Kumhar's furnace:<sup>1</sup> a bath in the Ganges: a feast both to the brotherhood and to Brahmans.
- (e) Killing a dog or cat,—fine, a bath in the Ganges, and a feast to Brahmans.
- (iii) *Banjara*. The Gaur Banjaras in Bijnor, in serious cases, force the offender to give a girl of his family in marriage to the family of the complainant. This may be merely a quaint form of compensation, or it may be meant as a degradation, since by the law of hypergamy the girl comes from the inferior family. At all events, it is unfortunate for the girl, since she becomes her family's scapegoat.
- (iv) *Beldar*. In Gorakhpur, a possible punishment is five kicks. Presumably it is awarded for minor offences.
- (v) *Bhangi*. In Cawnpore, a man was found guilty of abducting a married girl who had not yet gone to her husband. This was a most serious offence: as a punishment, the hair of half his head, of one eyebrow, one side of his moustache and half his beard were shaved, his face was painted black, and he was excommunicated.
- (vi) *Chamar*.
  - (a) In Ghazipur, a *chaudhri* was outcasted for twelve years for 'showing partiality for his brother',—which seems a venial offence.

<sup>1</sup> A Kumhar's furnace is reckoned most unclean.

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- A council of several *panchayats* interfered and reduced the penalty to a fine.
- (b) In the same district, a Chamar disgraced the caste by begging, and was outcasted. Subsequently he settled down to regular labour: and after his death, his son was reinstated on paying a fine of Rs. 4 and feeding five Brahmans.
- (c) Some Chamars were convicted of cattle-poisoning in a court of law. After release, they were outcasted for twelve years: an offer to pay a fine of Rs. 500 in lieu was rejected.
- (vii) *Darzi*. In Etah, a family adopted the *dharauna*<sup>1</sup> form of marriage contrary to the custom. The caste informally outcasted them. On the suit of the offenders, a caste council assembled which sentenced them to pay a fine of Rs. 200 and to feast the brethren.
- (viii) *Dhimar*. In Muzaffarnagar, a man was guilty of a serious breach of the restrictions connected with prohibited kin: the other party was his sister's daughter. He was hung by the hands to a tree, fined Rs. 100, had to feast the brotherhood, and was outcasted for twelve years.
- (ix) *Dhobi*. In Cawnpore, a regimental Dhobi was accused of having a Bhangi woman as his mistress. He offered to stand or fall by the evidence of a clerk, whose story went against him, and he was outcasted till he had feasted the brotherhood. The introduction of a witness of another caste is most unusual.
- (x) *Dom*. In Almora, the killer of a cow, during his pilgrimage, has to display the fatal implement to all passers-by. The pilgrimage lasts from three to six months, during which he must visit three shrines.
- (xi) *Gadariya*. A wife complained that her husband had refused to readmit her to his house after she had been on a visit to her own relations. The husband's plea

<sup>1</sup> The precise nature of the offence is not clear. *Dharauna* is one of the maimed marriage rites, suitable for widows. Presumably the substitution was of one kind of maimed rite for another.

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was that she was ugly. The brethren, excessively annoyed, pointed out to him that his own looks left much to be desired, gave him some trite information on the evanescence of physical charms, and ordered him to take his wife back on pain of excommunication. An unusual incident in this curious case was the presence of some government orderlies as unofficial advisers to the council.

(xii) *Gidhiya*. The *Gidhiya*'s tariff of punishment is as follows:

(a) Adultery, intratribal,—a fine of Rs. 5.

(b) Adultery, extratribal,—

(1) by a woman,—excommunication;

(2) by a man: (i) if the woman is of a higher Hindu caste,—a fine of Rs. 5:

(ii) if she is of a lower Hindu caste, or not a Hindu,—excommunication.

(c) Cow-killing,—a course of begging, a bath in the Ganges, and a feast to the brotherhood.

(d) Breach of the commensal law,—a bath in the Ganges and a feast to the brotherhood.

(e) Breach of promise of marriage,—a fine of Rs. 2½ to Rs. 5.

(f) Assault and debt,—a fine of Re. 1 or Rs. 2.

(xiii) *Julaha*. In Sitapur, an adulterer was tied to a tree with an earthen pot on his head.

(xiv) *Kachhi*.

(a) In Hardoi, a widow had an intrigue with a Lohar. She was informally outcasted. Her relations persuaded her to give him up and summoned a *panchayat* after collecting Rs. 25 to pay the fine. The case was at this stage when it was reported: but my informant was told by one of the members of the council that the penalty would probably be a fine of Rs. 30 and the feeding of fifty brethren.

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(b) A widower had a Chamarin mistress. The council ordered him to pay a fine of Rs. 100 and to turn her out. He refused to do either. He was accordingly outcasted: and though she is dead, neither he, nor two sons he had by her, will ever be readmitted.

(xv) *Kanjar*. The cow-killer, in addition to more usual penalties, has to give a calf to a Brahman. There is an ordeal by fire in cases of doubt. Seven *pipal* and seven betel leaves are bound on the accused's palm with seven turns of a thread, and he has to walk seven paces with a red-hot spud in his hand. If this hand is burnt, he is convicted.

(xvi) *Kumhar*.

(a) In Cawnpore, a man was suspected of an intrigue with another man's wife. He was accordingly informally outcasted by the *Kumhars* of several villages. A council met, which, on his suing for pardon from each individual member, fined him Rs. 25, which was subsequently reduced to Rs. 5, as he was unable to pay the larger sum.<sup>1</sup>

(b) A *chaudhri* had an intrigue with a married woman of the same caste. He was fined Rs. 75. The husband died before the *panchayat* was held, or he too would have been fined.<sup>2</sup>

(c) A man had a wife of bad reputation, whom he could not control. This gave rise to scandal; he accordingly arranged a meeting of the *panchayat*, and explained his difficulties. He was found technically

<sup>1</sup> The fine, compared with that in the next case, was small: but here there was no proof, but only suspicion (the accused was seen leaving the house of the complainant at night).

<sup>2</sup> Presumably for not keeping his wife under better control. Compare the next case.

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guilty, and was ordered to feed five Brahmans.

(xvii) *Kunjra*. In Gonda, some Muhammadan Kunjras, being dissatisfied with the decision of their *panchayat*, appealed to a *sajjada-nashin*<sup>1</sup> in the neighbouring district of Barabanki, and settled the matter according to his advice. The case was curious, since an external authority overrode the *panchayat's* order.

(xviii) *Mali*. In Barabanki, a Mali woman who assaluted a Brahman family priest (*purohit*) was fined Rs. 10; she did not pay, and both she and her husband were outcasted.

(xix) *Nat*. The tariff of punishments is as follows:

- (a) Adultery,—fine, with restoration of the woman or payment of the bride price in the case of a man.
- (b) Cow-killing,—a course of begging for forty days, a bath in the Ganges, and a feast to the brethren and to Brahmans.
- (c) Breaches of the commensal law,—a fine of Rs. 5 to Rs. 10, a bath in the Ganges, and a feast to the brethren and to Brahmans.
- (d) Breaches of promise of marriage,—payment of the other party's wedding expenses.
- (e) Killing dog, cat or ass,—fine of Rs. 2 to Rs. 4.
- (f) Assault,—a fine of Re. 1 to Rs. 4.

(xx) *Phansiya*. The tariff of punishments is as follows:

- (a) Adultery, intratribal,—
  - (1) by woman,—fine;
  - (2) by man,—fine, with restoration of woman, or payment of bride price.

<sup>1</sup> A *sajjada-nashin* is the Muhammadan priest in charge of an endowed mosque. The appeal was from custom to religion, and so possible in a Muhammadan caste.

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(b) Adultery, extratribal,—permanent excommunication.

(c) Breaches of commensal law,—

- (1) eating *kachcha* food or smoking with the member of some forbidden caste,—fine, and a bath in the Ganges.
- (2) drinking water with the member of a forbidden caste,—excommunication.

(d) Drunkenness,—fine, and a bath in the Ganges.

(e) Breaches of custom in respect of feasts,—fine, or temporary excommunication till the feast is provided.

(xxi) *Singhariya*. The tariff of punishments is as follows:

- (a) Adultery, intratribal and extratribal,—as amongst Phansiyas.
- (b) Cow-killing,—a course of begging alms, a pilgrimage, a bath in the Ganges, and a feast to the brethren and to Brahmans.
- (c) Breaches of the commensal law,—a pilgrimage, a bath in the Ganges, and a feast to the brethren and to Brahmans.
- (d) Breaches of custom in respect of feasts,—as amongst Phansiyas.

(xxii) *Tharu*. The fine for adultery is very high, from Rs. 250 to Rs. 500: the *panchayat* receives 10 per cent of the fine.

(xxiii) *Thathera*.

(a) In Azamgarh, for an abominable act of immorality,<sup>1</sup> a man was for three days immersed up to the neck in a cess-pit, sent on pilgrimage to Puri and Benares, and made to feast the brethren.

(b) In the same district, a man who had a Muhammadan mistress escaped with a fine and the usual feast because he was able

<sup>1</sup> Which was, incidentally, punishable under the Penal Code.

to prove that he had never eaten food in her house: otherwise he would have been excommunicated. This case shows the value attached respectively to commensal pollution and extratribal immorality.<sup>1</sup>

(xxiv) *Miscellaneous.*

- (a) In some castes a culprit who is sentenced to a fine that he cannot pay, may, in lieu, place the shoes of the assembly on his head—presumably, one pair of shoes at a time. This alternative means grave degradation.
- (b) A cow-killer, when on pilgrimage, is occasionally compelled to wear a sheet which covers him from head to foot, with holes for the eyes, and to give warning of his approach by ringing a bell—treatment similar to that of the leper in mediaeval times.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes he has to drive a cow before him, which he holds by the tail.

In an impermanent *panchayat* there is no official responsible for bringing offences to its notice, and the only person likely to do so is the person offended. But it is an expensive business to convene a *panchayat*, since the convener must provide adequate entertainment. And if he lays his suit before an assembly of the brotherhood that has met for some other purpose, he is likely to become unpopular; for he is not only interfering with another's arrangements, but (since such gatherings are usually of a festive kind) he also runs the risk of marring the harmony of its proceedings. Consequently a complainant would rarely call a *panchayat*

<sup>1</sup> But this is not uncommon. I have heard of a case where a gentleman of high caste and good position, who had a mistress of another caste, was not excommunicated until he had drunk water in her house.

<sup>2</sup> In 1904, I myself met such a pilgrim in the streets of Rai Bareilly. I tried to discover his caste, but he was not locally known, and he himself would say nothing but *hatya* (guilt).

together, unless the offence were serious. But if it were, then he would seldom need to do so, since public opinion would come to his assistance. The brotherhood, individually and collectively, would send the offender 'to Coventry', cease all intercourse with him, and, in fact, outcaste him without enquiry or formality. The onus would then fall on the offender: he, or his relatives for him, must convene the *panchayat* to establish his innocence, or obtain a mitigation of sentence. And this he would not be likely to do unless he were hopeful of success. The result is that impermanent *panchayats* very seldom meet; it was recorded in 1911, for instance, that in Banda, the *panchayat* of the Hindu branch of the Chamargaur Rajputs had only met once within the memory of the oldest brother; and that the *panchayats* of the Muhammadan Chamargaur and the Baghel Rajputs had not met for at least three generations. In such circumstances, it is not surprising to find that little information is available regarding the procedure of impermanent *panchayats* when they do meet. In most cases, a *sarpanch* is selected to preside, *pro hac vice*: and the council then investigates the case and passes sentence, in much the same way as if it were permanent. Nor is it possible to give a complete list of castes that possess impermanent *panchayats*. Besides the two Rajput septs already mentioned, such *panchayats* exist among the Moradabad Chauhans, the Ghosis, Jats, Kurmis, Lodhas, Orhs, and Turks, and the Chandel and Kachhwaha Rajputs: and, in some places, among the Kayastha-Mochis, Kumhars, Luniyas and Sonars. But many of the 'twice born' groups—all Brahmans, most Rajputs and the highest Vaisyas (Agarwal, Bhat, Umar)—have no *panchayat* of any kind. They rely solely on the force of public opinion: the offender is informally ostracized in the manner already described, and remains so all his days, and his children after him. Various castes owe their existence to such ostracism: one instance is the Moradabad Chauhan group, which springs from the Chauhan Rajputs. And smaller groups of outcastes are to be found scattered up and down the country.

- (i) The Chandel and Kachhwaha Rajputs in Cawnpore have a peculiar system of their own. The offender who has been informally ex-communicated approaches a leading clansman, and requests him to take up the case.

15. *Exceptional cases*

He calls the brotherhood together, appoints assessors and makes an enquiry. As the leading clansman is usually the same person at all times in the same neighbourhood, there is a certain element of permanence in this system. On the other hand, it differs from both the permanent and impermanent types of *panchayat* in two ways. Firstly, the leader will not move on his own or anybody else's initiative, save the offender's: and secondly, the *panchayat* can only pronounce one of two decisions—a complete acquittal, or a confirmation of the informal ostracism.

(ii) Among the Moradabad Jats, the village elders deal with minor offences: but if the offence is serious, the offender calls together the elders of several villages, from twenty-five to sixty in number. They select a committee of five to ten elders from amongst themselves to investigate the case: and a majority of the votes of this committee is decisive. There is no *sarpanch*. If the meeting takes place at a fair, the offender convenes it through the secretary of the local Jat *sabha*.

(iii) In Banda, the Muhammadan Chamargours have a curious procedure of their own. The outcaste who desires to be reinstated prepares<sup>1</sup> food on a day fixed by himself, and assembles not only his own brethren, but the Hindu Chamargours and some Brahmans. If they consider that he may be reinstated, they signify their opinion by eating his food: but a single dissident among the Muhammadans, and three or four amongst the Hindus, would be enough to make his restoration impossible. Both the food ceremony, and the presence of outsiders are unusual: and in fact, this seems to be not so much a case of appeal to a *panchayat*, as a request for an expression of respectable opinion.

<sup>1</sup> Or rather 'causes to be prepared'. No Hindu would eat food prepared by a Muhammadan.

As a rule, none but a member of the brotherhood may speak or vote regarding a decision of his *panchayat*; though occasionally, when there is any doubt, an expert is consulted regarding the punishment, especially for religious offences. In Almora, for instance, there is a regular official called *dharmadhikari*<sup>1</sup> who fixes the punishment in all such cases, especially cases of cow-killing. He is a Tiwari Brahman; elsewhere any *dharmashastra* Brahman (i.e. one who is learned in the law) would serve. I know of only four instances of interference with the decision of a *panchayat*:

16. *Interference of outsiders*

(i) The revision, in cases of cow-killing, of the decision of the Ahir *panchayat* by a Goshain (Fyzabad).<sup>2</sup>

(ii) The reversion of a Kunjra decision by a *sajjada-nashin*.<sup>3</sup>

(iii) In Banda, the Brahman *purohit* (priest) is present at and advises the *panchayat* of the Baghel Rajputs. But it has not met for three generations.

(iv) In the Mahalodhi subcaste of the Lodha caste, the work of the *panchayat* is done entirely by the *guru*, or spiritual adviser.

In some parts of India, ruling princes have power to interfere in the decisions of caste *panchayats*: and the story goes that political agents have exercised that power in the raja's name. I know of no such case in the United Provinces. But two instances have been reported from Shahjahanpur of interference by rajas in caste matters. In one case, two brotherhoods of the Dhobi caste were uncertain in which jurisdiction (*thok*) a particular village lay: both *chaudhris* claimed the *chaudhri's* fee of Re. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ . One of them defeated his opponent by obtaining a written order (*parwana*) from the raja in whose estate the village lay authorizing him to collect it.<sup>4</sup> In the other case, an aspirant to the post of *chaudhri* of another Dhobi *panchayat* based his claim in a court of

<sup>1</sup> In Garhwal, the *dharmadhikari* purifies outcastes: see par. 10 (viii).

<sup>2</sup> See par. 13 (i).

<sup>3</sup> See par. 13 (xvii) and note.

<sup>4</sup> He made little by this, for he had to pay Re. 1 out of the fee to the raja.

law on the fact that his grandfather had been appointed *chaudhri* by the raja of the time.<sup>1</sup>

It has been explained above<sup>2</sup> that the group ruled by any particular *panchayat* is a *biradari*, or local section, of an endogamous group. But most 'brotherhoods' of this kind are actually exogamous groups, in the sense that their members are (as the name implies) too closely related to intermarry. It becomes necessary, therefore, to explain the connexion between the *panchayat* and the exogamous group as such. This can best be done by reference to a particular case. In Cawnpore, the Dhanuk caste has five sections, named (i) Laungbarsa, (ii) Badhik, (iii) Kathariya, (iv) Hazari, (v) Taihal.

(a) In East Cawnpore, all five groups are endogamous, and there are five *panchayats*.

(b) In South Cawnpore, groups (i) and (ii) intermarry, the other three are endogamous. There are here four endogamous groups, namely, Laungbarsa-Badhik, Kathariya, Hazari, Taihal: and four *panchayats* to correspond.

(c) In North-West Cawnpore, groups (i), (ii) and (iii) intermarry, the other two are endogamous. There are here three endogamous groups and three *panchayats*.

(d) In North-East Cawnpore, groups (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) intermarry, group (v) is endogamous. There are here two endogamous groups, and two *panchayats*. This makes it clear that the *panchayat* is that of the local endogamous group. Accordingly, if a Taihal migrated from his home in South Cawnpore to a village in East Cawnpore, he could and would become a member of the local *biradari*, whether he belonged to the same exogamous group or not, for the Taihal group is endogamous everywhere. But it would be different if a Laungbarsa made the same change. For the southern endogamous group consists of Laungbarsas only, whilst the eastern includes both Laungbarsas and Badhiks; and if he became a member of the eastern *biradari*, he would have to eat with, and meet in *panchayat*, Badhiks whose daughters

<sup>1</sup> The rajas in the two cases were different.  
<sup>2</sup> Par. 2 (a) and (b).

he could not marry. In short, though a *biradari* is in fact usually composed of persons who cannot intermarry, yet their membership depends not on that fact, but on the fact that they all belong to an endogamous group, coupled, of course, with the residential qualification.

To this there is one real and one doubtful exception. The real exception is the Rajput clan, which is always exogamous, yet if it has a *panchayat* at all, has one of its own. But these clans are derived from the most diverse racial elements; they are entities so entirely independent that, *prima facie*, one would expect them to be endogamous, and the exception is more apparent than real.<sup>1</sup> The doubtful exception is that of the Muhammadan Qalandars, the Calender of the Arabian Nights, a caste of bear and monkey showmen. It is divided into three exogamous sections, named Khokhar, Ghorawal, and Chindi. The Chindis have been outcasted by the other two groups, because they admitted to their community a Khokhar who betrayed to them the secret of certain Khokhar charms (*jadu*). None the less the three groups still meet in a common *panchayat*, of which the headman is actually a Chindi. These can scarcely be true exogamous groups, since membership of such a group obviously depends on birth alone, and such an affiliation as that of a Khokhar to the Chindis is impossible. But, apart from this, the excommunication in all probability extended only to the particular Chindis concerned in the offence, and not to the entire group, so that whilst the outcaste Chindis would form a new endogamous group, the rest would still remain in communion with Khokhars and Ghorawals.

<sup>1</sup> The usual explanation is that clan exogamy is due to the shortage of women, which makes endogamy impossible. But this shortage of Rajput women is usually regarded as due to female infanticide, itself consequent on hypergamy, which is only a form of exogamy. Possibly, since most, if not all, Rajput clans have ruled kingdoms in their time, their royalty was held to surpass racial differences: whilst matrimonial alliances between rival kings, either as a result of conquest or to secure peace, were as common in ancient India as they were in other countries.

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A *sabha* is merely an association of persons united by some bond of common interest. To mention only one instance, the Mazdur *sabha* of Cawnpore is an association of labourers. But there are a number of caste *sabhas*, which are essentially a modern product. They differ from *panchayats* in that they always have a much larger scope, and that they handle, not the cases of individuals, but questions of general interest. A few examples will serve to show the nature of their activities.

(i) The Gaur Brahman Mahasabha deals with the affairs of the Gaur Brahmans, an important and widespread endogamous group. It is a registered body consisting of a hundred delegates elected for a year, under a president, selected by the delegates, also for a year. Its jurisdiction extends nominally to the whole of India, but it has little influence where there are no local Gaur *sabhas*. It meets yearly: its objects are the reduction of expenditure on marriage and other ceremonies, the teaching of true religious principles, the observance of religious rites, and the encouragement of the study of Sanskrit.

(ii) The Dan Tyagi Brahmana Prautia Sabha is the *sabha* of the Taga caste: its objects are the diffusion of knowledge and education, and possibly the assertion of that claim to Brahmanical origin which the name indicates.<sup>1</sup>

(iii) The Vaisya Mahasabha is the executive committee of the Vaisya conference. Its objects are the spread of education, social reform and the reduction of expenditure at marriages and other festivals. There are local *sabhas* in large cities whose duties are to give effect to the resolutions passed by the conference. This Mahasabha has done excellent work in many directions—notably in advocating the raising of the age of marriage.

<sup>1</sup> The Taga claims to be a Brahman group that has taken to mundane pursuits (cultivation and landowning) and so 'refuses priestly dues' (*dan tyagi*).

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Other powerful bodies are the various Jat and Kayastha *sabhas*. They are in no sense *panchayats*; but to a great extent they supplement their work, and they can be, and usually are, a great power for good.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to officers of the *sabhas* mentioned for these details. Principal authorities.—*Census Report, U.P.*, 1911 (when a special enquiry into the system of caste government was made). Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh* (1896).

## CHAPTER VII

### SECTARIAN CASTES

Celibacy and asceticism are as a rule characteristics of the religious bodies of Hinduism. It is strange, therefore, to find that some of these bodies include sections whose members marry and live as householders. Such sections, where they exist, have all the usual caste restrictions. In the United Provinces there are four sectarian castes, which differ in certain respects from one another; the four are the Atith, Goshain, Bishnoi, and Sadh.

The Atiths as a sect are a somewhat indefinite body. The name seems to be little more than a synonym for Sannyasi. Certain Atiths are known as Sannyasi Atiths, and these are regular ascetics; others have taken to family life and are known as Gharbari. They permit widow marriage and concubinage, which shows that they are not of very exalted rank. Some of their customs point to their ascetic origin; for instance, they do not burn their dead but throw them into the Ganges; they wear clothes dyed in ochre (*geru*), carry a rosary of *rudraksha* beads and are saluted by the phrase '*Namo Narayan*'. They are Saivas.

The Goshains are spiritual descendants of Shankar Acharya. They have two branches, the ascetic, known as Asandhari or Mathdhari, and the family branch, known as Grihas-  
tha. Initiation into the sect consists of two rites, the initiation proper, after which the novice, though regarded as a Goshain, remains as it were a lay brother, following his worldly avocations and living an ordinary family life. The second rite is known as *vi-jaya homa*, and after its completion, the novice becomes a full Goshain (*vanaprasta*) and has to abandon the secular world, observe all the tenets

of the sect, and lead a celibate life. This rite is usually postponed until the novice is forty or fifty years of age, as it involves the abandonment of wife and family. Apparently it is these 'lay brethren' who are Grihasthas; many, indeed, seem never to become *vanaprastas* at all, whilst of those that do, some (even *mahants* or heads of ascetic bodies) abandon all attempt to lead a religious life. Some Goshains are traders; others are practically landholders, though nominally they are trustees for a deity of lands that have been given to his shrine.

The Sadh or Satnami sect was founded by one Birbhan in 1543. It is a sect pure and simple, recruited from all castes. As a group, however, the Sadhs are endogamous; distinctions of rank or wealth are ignored in arranging marriages and their formula of exogamy is that which forbids marriage into a family with which any previous inter-marriage is remembered. As a body, they are hard-working, industrious, and charitable to their own poorer fellows: they live in one *muhalla* and eat and drink together. The marriage rite, though based on the usual Hindu form (there is circumambulation, for instance, of the pair with clothes knotted together), is extremely simple. There is infant betrothal; marriage takes place after puberty. Divorce is permitted only as concomitant to excommunication from the sect. Their creed is unitarian: they have 112 rules of faith, inculcating

- (i) worship of one God,
- (ii) modesty and humility,
- (iii) truth and honesty,
- (iv) praise of God,
- (v) absence of covetousness,
- (vi) the abandonment of caste distinctions,
- (vii) simplicity of clothing,
- (viii) vegetarianism and sobriety:  
and forbidding,
- (ix) murder, tyranny, and violence,
- (x) polygamy,
- (xi) begging,
- (xii) the observance of particular feast days.

The Bishnoi is perhaps the most curious of all sectarian castes. Originally the Bishnois were disciples of one Jhambaji, who lived between 1450 and 1500 A.D. They were never ascetics, in this resembling the Sadhs: indeed one of Jhambaji's precepts is 'baptize your children'. They have eight endogamous sections—Jat, Baniya, Brahman, Ahir, Sonar, Chauhan, Kasibi, and Seth (or Shaikh). These, of course, correspond to the castes to which the members originally belonged. They observe the rule of *gotra* exogamy, and marry into no family so long as any tie of relationship is remembered. They have a marriage ceremonial of their own and do not burn, but bury their dead. An account of their councils has already been given.<sup>1</sup> The Bijnor Bishnois formerly used the title Shaikhji and the Muhammadan salutation '*Salam alaikum*', wore Muhammadan clothes and bore Muhammadan names. This curious custom is explained by a story that they murdered a Muhammadan qazi who prevented them from burning a widow, and compounded for the offence by pretending to adopt Islam. The custom is now dying out.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VI.

Principal authorities.—Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh* (1896).  
*Census Report, U.P.*, 1911, p. 364 (for Bishnoi).

## CHAPTER VIII

### HILL CASTES

There are only three main castes in the hill tracts, namely, the Brahman, Rajput and Dom. In 1. *Distribution* Almora in 1911, for instance, out of a total Hindu population of 518,000, 490,000 belonged to one or other of these three groups; in Garhwal, there were 459,000 out of 475,000: in the state of Tehri the figure was no less than 293,000 out of 299,000. Such other castes as are represented in the hills are not true hill castes: their members are settlers, more or less permanent, from the plains, or in the case of the Bhotiyas, from Tibet. In 1911 there were, for instance, some 3,000 Banias, 9,000 Bhotiyas, 8,000 Faqirs and 2,000 Gurkhas in Almora, of whom the last-named are troops cantoned in the district, whilst the Faqirs are attracted by its numerous holy places; but these are the only Hindu castes with over 1,000 members. Similarly, in Garhwal, the only castes apart from the Brahman, Rajput and Dom with over 1,000 members were the Bania (2,000), Bhotiya (3,000), Chamar (1,000), Faqir (3,000) and Gurkha (2,000); whilst in Tehri there were 3,000 Chamars and no other caste with over 1,000 members.

The hill Brahman and hill Rajput both differ widely from their brethren in the plains. In 1911 the Brahman caste was recorded at the census under twelve main subcastes, the Rajput under forty-three principal clans. But in 1911, in Almora, Garhwal and Tehri, out of 297,000 Brahmans only 3,750<sup>2</sup> belonged to one or other of the

<sup>1</sup> There are hill tracts in Naini Tal and Dehra Dun; but their figures are not referred to above because they also possess submontane tracts, and this fact makes it impossible to treat their figures as symptomatic of hill districts. Garhwal possesses submontane tracts, but they are of small extent.

<sup>2</sup> Gaurs 571, Kanaujias 387, Saraswatis 2,752, Panchdravids 40.

twelve subcastes, and only 139<sup>1</sup> Rajputs in all, out of 700,000, to one or other of the forty-three clans. These figures sufficiently prove that the hill Brahmans and Rajputs are *sui generis*.

'About these hills,' writes the Moghul ruler Babar, 'are other tribes of men. With all the investigation and enquiry, I could make among the natives of Hindustan, I could get no sort of description or authentic information regarding them. All that I could learn was that the men of these hills were called Kas.'

3. *Origin of the hill Brahmans and Rajputs. The Khasa race*

It struck me that as the Hindustanis frequently confound (the letters) *shīn* and *sin*, and as Kashmir is the chief . . . city in these hills, it may have taken its name from that circumstance.' Babar's shrewd conjecture is supported by more evidence than he knew, for the recurrence of the word Kas or Kash in the nomenclature of the hills is too striking to be the result of mere chance. We have, for instance, Kashgar, Kashmir, Karakash, Hindu Kush,<sup>2</sup> the Khasa tribe in Kashmir, the Khasiya Rajput and Brahman in Kumaun, and the Khas sept in Nepal. The word is usually derived from the name of the old Khasa race. The existence of this race is well established. It is referred to in the Vishnu and Vaya Puranas, and in the Mahabharata, where it is described as a northern tribe which brought presents of *paipilika* gold—that fabulous gold so frequently mentioned by classical writers<sup>3</sup> which was collected by ants (*pipilaka*)—a fact that possibly indicates that the Khasas were carriers of Tibetan gold dust. The Khasas are probably the Cesi of Megasthenes; the *Mudra Rakshasa* names them as one of the confederacy of *mlechcha* tribes arrayed against Chandragupta; and Manu puts them amongst his *vrishala* castes of degraded Rajputs.

The hill Brahmans and Rajputs are usually regarded as being partly the original inhabitants of the hills, partly as

<sup>1</sup> Panwars 102, Chauhans 36, Bundela 1.

<sup>2</sup> Others supposed Hindu Kush to be a corruption of 'Indicus Caucasus'. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (1877), pp. 181-2, note.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, III. 102-5; Arrian, *Anabasis*, V. 4, 7; Strabo, XV; Aelian, Pliny, Propertius and many others,—for list see McCrindle, op. cit., p. 96, note.

degraded Brahmans and Rajputs who have immigrated from the plains. Each caste has a branch called Khasiya, who consider themselves to be degraded immigrants, but are more probably connected with the ancient Khasas.

<sup>4</sup> In the hills and especially in Garhwal, there are three kinds of Brahman, the Sarola, Gangari and Khasiya. According to Mr. Atkinson<sup>1</sup> some 90 per cent of all Brahmans in Kumaun are Khasiyas.

(a) *The Sarola and Gangari*. It would seem that Gangari is originally a local appellation meaning 'dweller by the Ganges', applied to everybody, of whatever caste, who lives by that river. The Sarolas are Gangaris who have become differentiated by a change of function; according to one account they were the cooks of the army of a raja when in the field. At the present day many of their sections still seem to devote themselves to cooking, though some are in the civil service of the rajas, some are teachers and some domestic servants. The Gangaris are mostly priests of the village deities, and of Bhairon; the Sarolas, unorthodox though they may be in their ritual, at all events profess to worship the orthodox deities. The names of most of the Sarola sections are derived from the village of origin (*that*) of the section. Some of the chief Gangari subdivisions are attached to the service of particular temples.

(b) *The Khasiya*. Most Khasiyas are cultivators, and unlike respectable Brahmans of the plains, plough themselves. There are some 250 sections, mostly derived from the villages where they live. In recent times many Khasiyas have tried to establish connexion with the plains, claiming to be some Tiwaris, some Chaubes, others, Pantes, Pandes, Joshis, Upadhyas, Pathaks, Gaurs, and Kanaujias; but the great majority make no such pretence, and have no knowledge at all of *sakha* or *pravara*,<sup>2</sup> and very little even of their *gotra*. Some sections have functions of

<sup>1</sup> *Himalayan Gazetteer*, Vol. III, pp. 399, 428, (1886).

<sup>2</sup> *Sakha*, a body of persons following a particular school of Vedic teaching;

*pravara*, a group of *gotras* having sacrificial fires in common.

their own. The Kanseris are priests of Bibhandeswar, a name of Siva; the Rasyars are cooks (*rasiya*); the Nan-gis supply *purohits* to the Bhotiyas; the Phulrais supply flowers for the Nanda Devi temple; the Ghaibhanariyas perform funeral rites for persons who die without water. The Dobhals<sup>1</sup> are exorcists who specialize in demoniac possession; the Oliyas avert the evil effects of hailstorms (*ola*). A few may worship orthodox deities, but the great mass are servants of Bhairavas and *bhuts*—village priests, devil priests, and so on.

The marriage rules of these Brahmans are curiously lax. Sarolas as a rule intermarry, but it is not impossible for a Sarola to take a Gangari bride. If he does, the offspring are Gangari, not Sarola, and the result is that there are not only pure Sarolas and pure Gangaris, but Gangari subclans attached to Sarola clans. The offspring of a Sarola by a Gangari concubine also becomes a Gangari, but there is a difference between such children and those by a legitimate Gangari wife; for instance, the child of a Gairola (a Sarola clan) by a Gangari wife is called Sarola-Gangari; a child of a Gairola by a Gangari concubine is called Gangari-Gairola. Persons of the mixed blood can only marry with Gangaris. Offspring of Sarolas by Khasiya concubines similarly become Khasiyas. Certain of the higher Gangari sections—the Dobhal, Unyal, Dangwal, and Bughara—are strict in their marriage rules; for instance, the wife of a man of any of these clans, if belonging herself to a lower clan, is forbidden to eat with her father's family after marriage, a curious and possibly unique prohibition. Some Khasiyas have lately begun to intermarry with Gangaris, especially the Ghidwals, who pretend to be Gangari Ghildyals, and the Belwals; these latter are a subcaste degraded because they accept impure gifts, such as cows that bleed at the udder and oxen on which the shadow of a snake has fallen, though one would imagine that such animals were too rare to cause any appreciable amount of pollution.

<sup>1</sup> Of Dobha village. There is a Dobhal clan amongst Sarolas, Gangaris and Khasiya alike.

According to Mr. Stowell, there used to be three classes of Rajputs, the high caste, second class or ordinary, and third class or Khasiya Rajput; but many of the Khasiyas did not rank as Rajputs at all. Sir J. A. Baines describes the true hill Rajput as keenly jealous of his dignity, observing four maxims of conduct—never to drive a plough, never to marry his daughter to an inferior, never to accept money for his daughter's betrothal, and never to allow his women to neglect the custom of seclusion. Most of them, in consequence, were wretchedly poor, and eked out a precarious existence by hunting and hawking. Necessity has overcome the scruples of many and driven them to agriculture; the Kanet Rajputs of Dehra Dun are now all husbandmen. Other distinctions have also broken down, says Mr. Stowell. The most respectable members of the first group still as a rule intermarry amongst themselves. But even with them it is becoming more a matter of the material position of the individual than of the former status of the clan. For instance, the poorer members of the Ringwara Rawat clan (first class) have begun to intermarry with Rajputs of the second class and even with prosperous Khasiyas. A Khasiya enlisted and rose to the rank of subedar-major; he has been able to marry his daughters to high caste Rajputs. No distinction is made between the giving and taking of girls amongst these clans. Even foreigners have been able to advance successful claims to the status of Rajputs. A family of Tibetan lamas have settled down in Garhwal and been transformed into a class of Lama-Negis, who intermarry with low class Rajputs. Many of the Khasiya sections are named after the village of origin (*that*). All of them are engaged in agriculture and petty trade, occupations that the true Rajput anywhere, but especially in the hills, disdains to follow; they worship chiefly the village gods, are served by Khasiya Brahmans, and do not wear the *janeo* or sacred thread, though, according to Mr. Pauw in his Settlement Report for Garhwal in 1896, many have begun to usurp it. Their marriage rules to some extent vary from place to place.

6. *The hill Rajput*

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The origin of the 'Doms' in the hill tracts of Kumaon is, so far, an unsolved puzzle. Mr. Crooke regards them as the relics of the original inhabitants of the country, who were enslaved by the immigrant Khasiyas, and mentions the local belief that the Dom is descended from the Dasyu of the Vedas. Mr. V. A. Stowell (whose knowledge of the hill castes has been unrivalled in recent years), holds the same view. Mr. Edye, who made some special enquiries as Census Superintendent in 1921, states in his *Census Report*<sup>1</sup> that he could find no evidence to support, or rebut, this theory, and surmises that 'Dom' is merely a generic name applied to an inferior social class, composed of those sections of the people that took to degrading occupations. It seems certain that a race of that name once inhabited the hills, for the name 'Dom' or 'Dum' is found everywhere from Jammu to Kumaon : but judging from the facts observed not only in this province, but in the Punjab, it seems very likely that the name was extended to all low castes and occupations—just as Nishada, originally the name of a particular tribe, came to mean any outcaste. In the present state of our information, further speculation is useless. So much only is certain, that the hill 'Dom' has no connexion whatever with the 'Dom' tribe in the plains save the similarity of name; and it is for this reason that the hill 'Doms' dislike, and so far as they can, repudiate it.

It has long been known that the hill 'Doms' have a tendency to combine into occupational groups. Lists have been prepared at different times, which vary considerably. I have no less than five such lists before me. The earliest of these is that of Mr. Atkinson in the old *Himalayan Gazetteer*, which dates back to the eighties, and relates to the Garhwal district. The second was compiled by Pandit Jwala Dat Joshi in the early nineties, and purports to relate to the whole of Kumaun, but is certainly incomplete; it can however be completed by using the

<sup>1</sup> *Census Report, U.P., 1921, Appendix C.*

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census lists of 1891. The next two both belong to 1911, and were prepared one by Mr. Stowell for Garhwal, one for Almora by Mr. Panna Lal; the former is incomplete, for it omits groups that existed in Garhwal at an earlier date, and are still to be found. The last is Mr. Edye's list of 1921, which relates to Kumaun as a whole; it includes more groups than previous lists, and all groups which may be regarded as 'authenticated'. I give these lists below : I have completed Pandit J. D. Joshi's list by inserting names found in the census lists of 1891, and Mr. Stowell's by adding all names found both in the former Garhwal list and in later lists. (These additions are in italics.)

| Circa 1885                     | Circa 1895                     | Stowell 1911                  | Panna Lal 1911                    | 1921                                 | Occupation                                                                     |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Agari<br>Lohar<br>Tamta<br>... | ...<br>Lohar<br>Tamta<br>Tirwa | Agri<br>Lohar<br>Tamta<br>... | ...<br>Lohar<br>Tamta<br>...      | Agri<br>Lohar<br>Tamta<br>Tirwa      | Iron smelters<br>Iron smiths<br>Copper smiths<br>Tin smiths and knife grinders |
| Ruriya<br>...                  | Baruri<br>...                  | Ruriya<br>...                 | Ruriya<br>or Bairi<br>...         | Ruriya<br>Bairi<br>Dhanik<br>Auji    | Basket makers                                                                  |
| Auji or Darzi<br>...           | <i>Auji</i><br>...             | <i>Auji</i><br>...            | Auji<br>...                       | Auji<br>...                          | Tailors; drummers                                                              |
| Dholi<br>...                   | Darzi<br>Dholi<br>...          | <i>Dholi</i><br>...           | Dholi<br>Turi<br>Hurkiya<br>Damai | Darzi<br>Dholi<br>Turi<br>Hurkiya    | Tailors<br>Tailors; drummers<br>Trumpeters                                     |
| Hurkiya<br>...                 | Hurkiya<br>...                 | Hurkiya<br>...                | Hurkiya<br>Damai<br>...           | Hurkiya<br>...                       | Drummers                                                                       |
| Badi<br>Orh<br>...             | Badi<br>Orh<br>...             | Badi<br>Orh<br>...            | Badi<br>Orh<br>...                | Badi<br>Orh<br>Raj<br>Barai          | Dancers and singers                                                            |
| Chamar or Bairsawa<br>...      | Bareli<br>Chamar<br>...        | Bareli<br>Chamar<br>...       | Bareli<br>Chamar<br>...           | Bareli<br>Chamar<br>...              | Masons<br>Stone masons                                                         |
| ...                            | Sarki<br>Mochi<br>...          | ...                           | Sarki<br>Mochi<br>...             | ...                                  | Workers in leather                                                             |
| Chunyar Barhai or Orh          | <i>Chunara Barhai</i>          | Chunara Barhai                | Barhai                            | Mochi<br>Chanal<br>Chunera<br>Barhai | Turners<br>Carpenters                                                          |

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| Circa<br>1885       | Circa<br>1895   | Stowell<br>1911 | Panna Lal<br>1911 | 1921      | Occupation               |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| ...                 | ...             | ...             | Parki             | ...       | Makers of wooden vessels |
| ...                 | ...             | ...             | Hankiya           | Hankiya   | Potters                  |
| ...                 | ...             | ...             | ...               | Pauri     | Labourers                |
| Dhunar or<br>Mallah | Dhuni           | Dhunar          | Dhuni             | Dhuniya   | Labourers                |
| ...                 | ...             | ...             | ...               | Bakhariya | Labourers and menials    |
| ...                 | ...             | ...             | ...               | Jamoriya  | Cultivators              |
| Pahri               | <i>Pahariya</i> | <i>Pahri</i>    | Pahari            | Pahri     | Watchmen                 |
| Bhul                | Bhul            | <i>Bhul</i>     | Bhul              | Bhul      | Oil pressers             |
| Koli                | Koli            | Koli            | Koli              | Koli      | Weavers                  |
| ...                 | Baura           | ...             | ...               | Baura     | Sack-makers (ex-Jats)    |
| Darya               | ...             | <i>Darya</i>    | ...               | ...       | Sorcerers                |
| Dhaki               | <i>Dhaki</i>    | Dhaki           | ...               | ...       | Outcasted Khasiyas       |
| ...                 | <i>Dhobi</i>    | ...             | ...               | Dhobi     | Washermen                |

The Agari or Agri are iron smelters by tradition; but as long ago as Mr. Atkinson's time, they were already giving up an illpaid and dangerous occupation for road making and general labour. The Tamta corresponds to the Kasera of the plains. The Tirwa used to be a tin smith; he is now a sword and knife grinder. The Ruriya makes baskets, sieves, and other articles of bamboo; the group seems to have thrown off two branches, Bairi and Dhanik, of which the former in 1911 was a mere synonym for Ruriya. Auji, Darzi, and Dholi are all connected. Forty years ago Auji and Darzi were merely different names for the tailor group, whilst the Dholi was an old offshoot of that group, that had changed its occupation to drumming. It would seem as if the two functions (which make a curious pair), have not yet been fully differentiated. The Hurkiya and Badi are both wandering musicians: the latter is regarded as a Nat in the plains. The Orh, Bare or Barai, and Barhai are all related; the last two are branches of the first, which is one of the main divisions. The Chunara corresponds to the Kunera of the plains. The Dhunar or Dhuniya is an agricultural labourer: the Bhul corresponds to the Teli, and is sometimes so called. The Koli corresponds to the Kori; and

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is another of the old divisions. The Baura used to allege that he was no 'Dom', but an ex-Jat: he is now a sack-maker. The Dhaki too is not a 'Dom', but a group of outcasted Khasiyas. There is a certain mystery about the Chanal. Mr. Edye states that the group had been in existence for at least fifty years, and that it then gave up the occupation of weaving for its present occupation (shoe making and leather work). But the name is found in no previous list. On the other hand the Chamar, found in all lists till 1921, then disappeared. The hill Chamar refused to answer to that name, and called himself Baiswara or 'outcaste'. 'Chanal' is simply 'Chandal', which also means outcaste; so, in all probability, the present day Chanal is merely the Chamar under a new name.

The endogamous restrictions of the hill 'Doms' are extraordinarily indefinite; they vary not only from place to place, but from time to time. Mr. Atkinson says nothing of the matter, but arranges the occupational groups in four classes according to social precedence; and no doubt these had some effect on inter-marriage. The four classes were as follows:

1. Koli, Tamta, Lohar, Orh, Dhaki, Barhai.
2. Bhul, Chunyar, Ruriya, Agari, Pahri.
3. Dhunar, Darya, Chamar.
4. Badi, Hurkiya, Darzi or Auji, and Dholi.

Pandit J. D. Joshi is the first to tell us anything definite about the Dom's endogamous restrictions. According to him the Chamar, Dholi, Badi, and Hurkiya were endogamous groups: the rest were exogamous and intermarried, though a group that prospered was apt to become endogamous. Mr. Stowell, in 1911, arranged the occupational groups into endogamous sections. Of these, three consisted of a single group each—namely, the Koli, the Dhunar, and the Mochi; the rest consisted of two or more exogamous groups that intermarried. These were:

- (1) Agri, Lohar.
- (2) Lohar, Tamta, Ruriya, Chunara, Orh, Barhai, Pahri.

- (3) Bhul, Darya, Chamar.
- (4) Auji, Dholi.
- (5) Hurkiya, Badi, Dhaki.

The Agri intermarried only with the Lohar, but the Lohar intermarried not only with the Agri, but with all the groups in the second class.

Mr. Panna Lal supplied a similar arrangement for Almora. According to him, four occupational groups were endogamous—the Hankiya, Koli, Hurkiya, and Parki. The rest consisted of two or more exogamous groups that intermarried. These were :

1. Bare, Orh.
2. Orh, Lohar, Tamta, Barhai.
3. Bhul, Chamar.
4. Damai, Auji, Dholi.
5. Auji, Dholi, Dhuni, Ruriya, Pahari, Khaikut, Turi.
6. Mochi, Sarki.

The explanation of the overlapping, in classes (1) and (2) and in classes (4) and (5) respectively, is the same as in the case of Mr. Stowell's first and second classes; whilst the Damai is singular in taking wives not only from the Auji and Dholi, but within his own group.

Finally Mr. Edye, after stating that the endogamous rules vary from place to place, asserts that no individual occupational group is ever endogamous. He arranges these groups into five classes as follows :

1. Agri, Lohar, Tamta, Tirwa.
2. Barhai, Bhul, Bairi, Baura, Chanal, Hankiya, Koli, Orh, Ruriya, Raj, Dhanik, Dhuniya, Jamoriya.
3. Bakhariya, Chunera, Mochi, Pahri, Dhobi, Pauri.
4. Auji, Darzi, Dholi, Turi.
5. Hurkiya, Badi.

The most general rule, according to him, is that any group in class (1) can intermarry with any group in class (2) : whilst the other three groups are each endogamous.

All that can be made of such evidence as this is that though there is a tendency towards endogamy, there is as yet nothing resembling caste endogamy ; whilst the sub-caste endogamy is still extremely fluid.

• The rule of exogamy is simple ; the descendants of a common ancestor will not intermarry, so far as the relationship is known. The marriage age for girls is eight to ten years ; when a girl has passed the age of puberty unmarried, she is allowed to select her own husband. Widow marriage and the levirate are practised, whilst concubinage is permitted ; the children of a concubine apparently inherit, but are regarded as inferior to the children of a wife as they cannot join in the worship of deceased ancestors. The custom of *ghardamada*, where the bridegroom carries out a period of service before he receives his bride, is common. A wife who is an outcaste, a lunatic, or a leper may be divorced ; a divorcee, so long as she was not put aside on account of disease, may become a concubine, but may not be remarried. Commensal restrictions, as usual, follow the marital restrictions ; endogamy connotes the prohibition against eating food cooked by any but a fellow casteman.

Outside the towns such as Srinagar, Almora or Rani-khet, there appears to be no system of caste *panchayats* in the hills. Their place is taken by the village *panchayats*. Of these the *padhan* or *mukhiya* (village headman) is, *ex officio*, *sarpanch*. Members of all respectable castes belong to these councils ; lower castes are allowed to invoke them to settle their affairs, but seem to have no voice in their deliberations. These councils deal not only with social disputes, but with matters that would normally come before a law court, civil or criminal, and frequently decide them finally. In Garhwal, the councils also make the arrangements for periodical festivities. In Almora, the *panchayat* is a primitive court of justice : the accused if found guilty has to sign a *kail-nama* which is countersigned by all members of the *panchayat* and handed to the complainant. Fine is the usual punishment, but *gauhatiya* or cow-killing demands, as usual, a severer

10. The *panchayat* system in the hills

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expiation. In Garhwal, the *dharmadhikari*, already referred to,<sup>1</sup> purifies the offender who has been convicted, and so makes his reinstatement in caste possible; but in Almora he decides what the punishment shall be, after the *panchayat* has found the offender guilty, thus playing the part of a judge to their jury. Persons dissatisfied with a *panchayat*'s decision can and do have recourse to the regular courts.

Sir Richard Burn,<sup>2</sup> following Mr. Atkinson in his *Kumaun Gazetteer*, pointed out that the social system as found in the Kumaun hills is far closer to the system described by Manu than the social system found anywhere else in India. It is indeed more primitive even than that. The marriage rules of all castes are extremely lax, compared with the rules of their fellow Hindus in the plains. The various classes of Brahmans intermarry with no more unpleasant result than a certain loss of status; the Rajput clans regard rather the material position of the bridegroom than his birth and ancestry; the Dom sections are, within certain limits, exogamous. Not only so, but the Brahman often takes a Rajput woman to be his concubine without incurring social obloquy; the Khas Rajput will accept to wife the daughter of a Dom if the Dom be prosperous. In a word, caste endogamy, though it may be regarded as highly desirable, is not imperative; and that was also the state of affairs, not only in Manu's time, but in the time of Megasthenes. Occupation, too, has not yet been able to break up the Dom race into strictly endogamous groups, though no doubt the tendency is in that direction; but in Manu's time occupational castes were already in existence, and to find a parallel it will be necessary to go back certainly as far as Megasthenes, when occupational castes were beginning to take shape, and possibly even further back still. The hill *panchayat* has obviously no connexion with the caste *panchayat* of the plains; its descent is totally different. The caste *panchayat* traces its origin

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VI, par. 10 (viii).

<sup>2</sup> *Census Report, U.P.*, 1901, pp. 215-6.

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to the guild councils: there is nothing resembling a guild in the hills. The Kumaun *panchayat* seems clearly to be the modern representative of a primitive village court of justice, such as one would expect to find in a mountainous region where access to any central court would be difficult at all times, and at some times impossible.<sup>1</sup> The social system of the hills is, therefore, so far as Hinduism is concerned, in many important respects *sui generis*—much simpler, much more primitive, than the system of the plains.

<sup>1</sup> Before the United Provinces Village *Panchayat* Act was passed in 1920, village as opposed to caste *panchayats* were not commonly found in the U.P., whatever may be the case in other parts of India.

Principal authorities.—E. T. Atkinson, *Kumaun Gazetteer* (1886). Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh* (1896) (especially Gangari, Khasiya, Dom). *Census Report, U.P.*, 1911, pp. 345, 355-6 (where the information is based on communications from Mr. V. A. Stowell and Mr. Panna Lal). *Census Report, U.P.*, 1921.

Sansiyas as branches of their respective tribes: Beriyyas and Karwals intermarry; Sansiyas call themselves Bhan-tus; Sansiyas and Beriyyas have the same legendary ancestor. To this group may also be affiliated the Bengali who seems to be what in Bengal is called the Bediya (Beriya). And though the affinities are less striking, there can be little doubt that the Kanjar also belongs to this group. The Kanjar claims the Habura, the Habura claims the Kanjar as a subcaste; Kunchbandhiya and Bhains are both subcastes of both Kanjar and Beriyya, and in the latter case, also of Sansiya. Of these tribes all but the Bengali are proclaimed under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1911 (there are few Bengalis in the United Provinces). All Kanjars, however, are not criminals; many are poor but fairly respectable hunters and *shikaris*. But Beriyya, Bhan-tu, Habura, Karwal, Sansiya only differ, as regards criminality, in the matter of degree.

(ii) The Nat. The word Nat means dancer, and is an occupational term including 'a number of different clans who have been grouped together merely on account of their common occupation of dancing, prostitution and performance of various primitive industries'.<sup>1</sup> These industries are, however, all of a particular kind. Amongst Nats are found dancers, tumblers, acrobats, of every variety; makers of combs, articles of grass and straw and metal; conjurers, jugglers, snake-charmers, tattooers, musicians, thimble-riggers, quack doctors—in a word, all those non-country fair, making a living which is always disreputable and often dishonest. They are probably recruited from many strata of society and are of different racial stocks. There is a certain amount of similarity between them and the great nomad group mentioned above: Nat, for instance, is a sectional name amongst Beriyyas, Haburas, and Kanjars. Many of them are, naturally enough, petty thieves, and their women are mostly prostitutes. Nevertheless, the Nats may be regarded as forming a group of their own, though there are affinities with the

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Habura-Kanjar group on one hand, and the Banjaras on the other.

(iii) Badhik, Bauriyya, Barwar, Sanaurhiya. All these castes are tribes of mixed origin, formed originally of out-castes and broken men of all kinds, who came to them as to a sort of cave of Adullam. The Badhiks<sup>1</sup> know little of their origin, but vaguely claim a Rajput descent. The Bauriyyas with extraordinary unanimity (and the tribe is scattered all over India) claim to be connected with the Rajputs of Chithor, whose vassals and mercenaries they were. The siege of Chithor in 1305 sent them to wander about the country as thieves and robbers. There is some reason for believing that Badhiks and Bauriyyas are related. Barwars claim to be descended from some outcasted Kur-mis of Yahyapur in Saran. The Sanaurhiyas claim Brah-man descent and are a regular confraternity, formed for the commission of crime.

(iv) The Qalandar is a vagrant of the same type as the Nat, but he is a Muliammadan, and his speciality is exhibiting trained animals, especially bears, monkeys and goats.

(v) The place of the Dom in this medley of castes is obscure. Most authorities hold that Dom was probably the name of an aboriginal race, as indeed it is still in the Himalayan hills. And it is tempting to suppose that the race, of which the allied vagrant tribes (which form the first group) are branches, was the Dom race. But it is impossible to trace any connexion between these tribes and either the Dom tribe in general or the Maghaya Doms in particular. It is more probable that the Dom was not at first a criminal or even a vagrant tribe, though it was doubtless extremely primitive; that under the pressure of Aryan and other invasions, it was broken up and driven into the wilds, where certain groups of the tribe took to crime and vagrancy in pursuit of crime. It is, therefore, more nearly akin to the third group.

<sup>1</sup> Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. IV, p. 56.

<sup>1</sup> Sanskrit *Vadhaka*, murderer. One of the chief Badhik exploits was the murder of Mr. Ravenscroft, B.C.S., in Bahraich in 1823.

## CHAPTER IX

### 'GIPSY' CASTES

In northern India are to be found wandering about the country numerous vagrant tribes, true nomads, living in temporary huts and wretched tents, and for the most part criminally inclined. These tribes in ethnographical works and census reports are generically known by the term 'gipsy'. The use of this term is illegitimate, being based on a fancied connexion between them and the gipsies of Europe, which has been the object of much learned but inconclusive research. So much is possibly true, that some European gipsies originally came from India, for there are many resemblances between the Hindi and the Romany vocabularies. But that fact does not warrant the tracing of a relationship between European gipsies and the present vagrant tribes. Hindi is the general language: no important similarities have been noticed between Romany and the special dialects spoken by the vagrant tribes, which indeed are as a rule merely argot or 'thieves' Latin'. It has been suggested that the words Rom, Romany, Romnichal are variants of the Hindu caste name Dom. But the root 'ro' or 'rom' is found in other languages; whilst even if the derivation were correct, it is not certain that the Dom is akin to the Nat, the Habura, the Kanjar, *et hoc genus omne*. Apart from these linguistic similarities, the only point of resemblance between European gipsy and Indian vagrant is a general similarity of habits. The term 'gipsy', as used in these pages, connotes no

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Coptic, and (according to Herodotus) ancient Egyptian—in both cases in the sense of 'man', which meaning the root also bears in Romany. In Greek and Latin, the root means 'strength' (Greek *rōmē*, Latin *robur*). The names Rom and Romany have also been connected with Roumania and the Turkish Rōm. On the whole question see Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh* (Dom); and N.-W. *Provinces of India* (1897), p. 216.

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theory of the origin of our Indian vagrant tribes, and is merely retained because it is in general use.

But if the use of this term is illegitimate, its scope is also ill-defined. Some writers would include amongst 'gipsy' castes, groups which are compelled by their occupations to wander about the country. In one of his earlier works, for instance, Mr. Crooke described as 'gipsies' the Saiqalgar, a knife grinder, and the Baheliya, a hunter.<sup>1</sup> On the same principle one could also include the Bisati and Ramaiya peddlers, the Banjara, Belwar, and Rahwari carriers, the Kewat and Mallah boatmen, and the Aheriya hunter. Another source of confusion is due to the use of the term, still more loosely, for those tribes known to the police as 'vagrant and criminal'; yet there are many tribes, rightly branded as criminal, which are not truly vagrant, just as there are tribes truly vagrant, which are not really or entirely criminal. In this discussion, only the true vagrants are described—namely, tribes that have no settled abode and no home but their tents. Tribes that have permanent homes which they leave from time to time in pursuit of their trade or of crime are ignored.

There are fifteen castes which can be regarded as truly gipsy—namely, the Badhik, Barwar, Bauriya or Bawariya, Bengali, Beriya, Bhantu, Habura, Kanjar, Karwal, Maghaya Dom, Nat, Qalandar, Sansiya and Sanaurhiya. They fall into certain groups.

(i) The Beriya, Bhantu, Habura, Karwal, and Sansiya possess so many and such striking affinities that they may be regarded as offshoots of a single nomadic race. Their customs, traditions, and religion resemble each other. Their favourite deities are Kali, Devi, and Muhammadan saints such as Zahir Pir and Madar Sahib. The Beriyan and Haburas both trace their origin to the ruined town of Nohkhera in Etah district. Bhantus claim Beriyan, Haburas claim Beriyan, Bhantus, Karwals, and

<sup>1</sup> N.-W. *Provinces of India*, pp. 212 and 99.

The Barwar caste has three subdivisions, the Ghulam (slave), Swang (master), and Tilam. The Ghulams are kidnapped children of various castes, and their descendants; the Swangs are pure Barwars; the Tilams are children kidnapped by the Ghulams, or their descendants. Swangs are now endogamous.

4. Description of the customs of certain castes. The Barwar

Ghulams and Tilams apparently intermarry and eat together, whilst both eat food cooked by Swangs, though the Swangs refuse to eat food cooked by them. Their marriage customs are much the same as those of low caste Hindus, and may be summarized as follows. Marriage is both adult and infant. Two wives may be married at a time, and the two may be sisters, provided the elder is married before the younger. Concubinage within the tribe and divorce are both permitted; the divorcée may not be remarried, but may become a concubine. Property goes half to the legitimate children, half to the children of Barwar concubines; the offspring of outsiders have no rights of inheritance. A Swang who marries an outsider becomes a Ghulam. The levirate is permitted, but not enforced; widow marriage is allowed. There is no permanent *panchayat*, though the *sahua* or commander of the gang has certain powers and privileges in the matter of booty. Generally speaking, after a deduction of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent from the stolen property (which goes to the gods), 28 per cent is set aside, which is equally divided between the thief and the *sahua*; the remaining  $68\frac{1}{2}$  per cent is then divided equally amongst the whole gang, including the thief and the *sahua*. There are, however, different rules for gold coin, silver coin, coral beads and pearls, cloth, and arms—which last go entirely to the thief. There is also another official known as the *dhebra* who is a sort of regimental quartermaster, being responsible for feeding the gang. The caste has an elaborate thieves' Latin, which seems to be chiefly corrupted Hindi, e.g. *namut* (*manush*—man), *ban* (*man*—woman), *sahajan* (*mahajan*—merchant), *bajar* (*hazar* or *hajar*—a thousand), *songala* (*bangala*—bungalow), *dehanu* (bribe), *sithai* (*mithai*—sweetmeats), *phunk*

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(a buffalo—probably onomatopoeic) are some of the most obviously Hindi words.

The Bawariya is divided up into a number of exogamous sections called *gotras*, of the usual kind: the best known are the Turai and Pachhada, and Gola and Khagi, which as pairs are endogamous. There is a vague rule of prohibited kin to the effect that blood relations (*dudh ke natedar*)<sup>1</sup> may not marry. They admit strangers of other castes, but the newcomers do not as a rule get full caste privileges at once. The marriage rules are very lax; it is said that wives rarely live with their husbands, though the official husband is always responsible for the children. Divorce and widow marriage are permitted: divorcées can remarry by the *karao* form. Their headmen are hereditary and are known by the name *hauliya*; they receive Re. 1 per head a year as fees. They have a dialect of their own which may, however, only be the dialect of their home (Bagri or Punjabi). Its most striking peculiarity is the use of 'h' or 'kh' for 's': e.g. *hat* (*sat*—seven), *daukh* (*das*—ten), *khakhra* (*susra*—father-in-law), *manukh* (*manush*—man). The same use of *kh* reappears in a Kanjar dialect. But this dialect seems to be merely one that is unusual in the United Provinces and so not intelligible.

The Beriya has a long list of subcastes which are of the usual kind, but, owing to the peculiar marriage customs of this tribe, are quite unimportant. Regular marriages seldom occur amongst them because nearly all the girls are reserved for prostitution, and the men take concubines from other castes. Indeed in Farrukhabad, to marry a girl of the tribe involves outcasting; to marry a prostituted girl involves a fine. Connexions with women of menial castes are forbidden and involve expulsion. There is said, however, to be a tendency towards regular marriage; when they do marry the wife can be put away for infidelity. Union with a family with which there has been a former alliance is forbidden; the levirate and widow marriage are

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'milk' relations.

both permitted. They have a strong tribal council, and in Bengal at all events hereditary headmen (*sardar*). The councils are usually held once a year at Nohkhera in the rainy season.

The Habura is said to have a set of exogamous septs of the usual kind, but it is doubtful how far the fact has any effect on their marriage customs. The rules of exogamy seem to be (1) to avoid the blood relation (*dudh bachake*), and (2) to marry outside the camp or gang. Adultery is severely punished, but pre-nuptial immorality is lightly regarded. Widows and divorcées may be re-married by the married rite (*karao*). They have a very strong tribal council under a president (*sardar*) which manages all tribal affairs; the punishment for adultery in Aligarh involves outcasting. The Habura has a regular thieves' Latin which, however, is less like corrupt Hindi than usual.

The Kanjar has two endogamous subcastes, the Kunchband and the Jallad, in Aligarh; in Bijnor there are also two, the true and the Adhela Kanjars who are of mixed descent; whilst in Agra also there are various endogamous groups. There are also a number of exogamous sections, together with a vague rule which prohibits marriage between near cognates. Adult marriage seems to be usual, though in some districts they have the custom of '*pet manganiya*' (womb betrothal) by which two fathers betroth to each other their unborn children conditionally on their proving of opposite sexes. Widow marriage and the levirate are both permitted. There is a tribal council but it does not appear to be of a permanent character; it tries the usual offences and also cases where a clansman has been robbed or assaulted by another clansman. Women accused of immorality are subjected to an ordeal which consists in holding a hot iron weeding spud in her hand; if the skin is not burnt she is acquitted.

In 1911 the census returns disclosed 119 speakers of a gipsy dialect called Kunchbandhi. Specimens of this dialect were collected by Mr. W. Kirkpatrick amongst the

Kunchbandhiya Kanjars in the neighbourhood of Delhi, where they come in contact with Europeans as *shikaris* to the Delhi Tent Club. It is an argot based on ordinary Hindustani; the following are specimen words and phrases:

|                  |     |                       |
|------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| Bread            | ... | <i>dhimri</i>         |
| Caste            | ... | <i>jetheli</i>        |
| Child            | ... | <i>chookha</i>        |
| Burial           | ... | <i>khimti dubaigo</i> |
| Gold mohar       | ... | <i>khasarf</i>        |
| Man              | ... | <i>khad</i>           |
| Woman            | ... | <i>loobhar</i>        |
| Rupees           | ... | <i>rika</i>           |
| Tobacco          | ... | <i>romak</i>          |
| He has gone away | ... | <i>rardes gaogiro</i> |
| I know           | ... | <i>jando</i>          |
| There it goes    | ... | <i>woh jaogda</i>     |
| Hide             | ... | <i>jugjao</i>         |
| Snake            | ... | <i>sanpilo</i>        |
| Well             | ... | <i>dhoan</i>          |
| Water            | ... | <i>nimani</i>         |
| Father           | ... | <i>bapilo</i>         |
| Mother           | ... | <i>cha, antari</i>    |
| Ox               | ... | <i>rail</i>           |
| Moon             | ... | <i>chianda</i>        |
| Sky              | ... | <i>radul</i>          |
| Storm            | ... | <i>kandhi</i>         |
| Awake            | ... | <i>jagog</i>          |
| Dog              | ... | <i>jhukal</i>         |
| Thief            | ... | <i>khainch</i>        |

The Hindustani basis for many of these words is clear. *Jetheli* (caste) obviously refers to *jeth*, a term of relationship. *Khimti* is *matli*, altered by preposing *kh*; words similarly altered are *khad* (*admi*), *khasarf* (*ashrafi*), *kandhi* (*andhi*). Other alterations of ordinary Hindustani words are *chooka* (*chokra*), *rika* (*sikka*), *romak* (*tambaku*), *rardes* (*pardes*), *dhoan* (*kuan*), *nimani* (*pani*), *bapilo* (*bap*), *cha* (*ma*), *antari* (*matar*), *rail* (*bail*), *sanpilo* (*sanp*), *chian-da* (*chand*), *radul* (*badul*). The similarity of the verbal

roots<sup>pe</sup> also apparent—*jagog* is connected with *jagna*, *jando* with *janna*, *jaogda* and *gaogiro* with *jana* (*gaya*); *khainch* may also be connected with *khinchna*, to snatch. There are three words which resemble Romany—*jhukal* (dog—Romany *jhukel*), *mail* (horse—Romany *meila*, a donkey), *loobhar* (woman—Romany *lubni*, a wench or hussy).

The Karwals themselves say that they are Kols, who now despise them because they have given up nomadic habits. They intermarry with Beriyas, but are distinct from them because they do not prostitute their women. The people call them Haburas, which name, however, is used loosely for any criminal tribe, much as Kanjar is for any non-criminal vagrant tribe. They are vagrants under police supervision. They have lax marriage rules, for a man may take a wife of his own gang, or from another gang, or from among the Beriyas, or (on payment of a fine of Rs. 7) from any caste save the Chamar, Bhangi, Dhobi, Dom, Kori and Dhanuk. Marriages need the sanction of the tribal council and a fee of Rs. 4 is charged; there is no ceremony save the *dudhabhati*.<sup>1</sup> Widow marriage is permitted; the fee is Rs. 30, or Rs. 60 if the widow is a virgin. The levirate is also permitted, and a man may marry his younger brother's widow on payment of Rs. 24 as a fee. A Karwal can buy a wedded wife from her husband on payment of Rs. 24 to the council and Rs. 60 to the husband, plus the expenses of the original wedding. Divorce is allowed for adultery. The rape of a widow involves a fine of no less than Rs. 150—indeed one of the many curiosities of this caste is its system of fines, which all go to the council. In addition to those mentioned above, the headman or headwoman—criminal gangs frequently have female *mukhias*, thanks to the absence of the men in jail—charges a fee of Re. 1-4 for naming a child. The tribal council appears to be extremely powerful. Karwals worship Jahar (Zahir) Pir, Madar Sahib, the Panchpir and Ghazi Mian, occasionally also Kali and the Ganges. They

<sup>1</sup> Ceremonial eating together of bride and bridegroom—a sort of *con-farreatio*. The meal consists of milk and rice, hence the name.

have the Kanjar's and Sansiya's ordeal by fire, and a curious ordeal by water, in which the accused has to keep his head under water whilst a man runs 200 paces; if he can do so without taking breath he is adjudged innocent. A form of oath is cutting at the roots of the *pipal* tree. This oath, which is found amongst Haburas, the ordeal by fire, found also amongst Sansiyas, the worship of Zahir Pir, also worshipped by Haburas, and of Madar Sahib, also worshipped by Beriyas, together with the right of intermarrying with Beriyas, clearly connects this tribe with the Beriya-Habura-Sansiya group of tribes.<sup>1</sup>

There are both Hindus and Muhammadan Nats, and the customs and ceremonies of the various sections differ accordingly. The remarriage of widows and divorcées is permitted; immorality, even infidelity, is lightly regarded, being condoned by a fine. In certain sections such as the Kabutari and Kalabaz, whose women are prostituted, the girl is allowed to choose between marriage and the life of a prostitute. If they marry, they are carefully looked after. The tribal council exists in all sub-sections and has the usual powers. The deities worshipped naturally vary considerably. As regards their occupation, all that is necessary has already been said above.

The Qalandar is a Muhammadan, nominally a faqir, following the rules of the Sunni sect. They have three exogamous sections, Khokhar, Ghorawal and Chindi; but the third is now said to be outcasted because they affiliated a Khokhar. There is a joint *panchayat*, with a permanent hereditary *sarpanch*; the council meets twice a year at Nawabganj near Cawnpore, or in Bahraich. The caste is thoroughly criminal; they punish their convicts by making them feast the brotherhood on their release from jail, but as they only

<sup>1</sup> For other curious customs of this caste at birth and death, see Chapter XI. Their women are midwives and pride themselves on their obstetric skill, even pretending ability to perform successfully such operations as craniotomy and caesarian section. The account of these people in the *Census Report* of 1911 was based on information supplied by Mr. St. J. Farnon of the Opium Department who interviewed a gang of them in their own camp.

impose this penalty on convicted Qalandars, it may be deduced that the culprit is punished, not for the theft, but for being found out. They have an argot of their own.

This degraded tribe appears to be divided into two endogamous and a number of exogamous sections. The endogamous sections are the 'khare' or 'pure' and the 'malla' or 'half-breed'; existence of the latter section is due to their custom of kidnapping women. It is a curious fact that they act as bards or genealogists to certain Jat and Chauhan Rajput clans. They have the usual rule of sectional exogamy, reinforced by a prohibition of marriage between cousins to the third generation; there is also a feeling in favour of selecting a bride from another camp. The marriage ceremonial is reminiscent of marriage by capture. Widow marriage and the levirate are both permitted. Men outnumber women and the bride price consequently runs high. The tribe has an argot of its own; as criminals they are second to none.

The Sanaurhiya claims to be of Brahmanical descent and tells various tales to support a contention which is utterly unfounded. It is said that at first the laws of endogamy were strictly enforced; if so, they have since been relaxed, and at the present time quite fifty per cent of the tribe are outsiders, admitted to this criminal confederacy as children—probably kidnapped in many cases. There are numerous subdivisions, nominally endogamous; but the marriage laws are very lax. They appear to have no occupation save theft, and have strict rules on the subject. They may not use violence, or rob after dark, by the light of the moon, or within a hundred miles of their home. Gangs remain absent for as long as two or three years. They have an argot of their own.

The Badhik, Bengali, and Bhantu in all respects closely resemble the Barwar and Habura, and nothing more need be said of them. Nor need anything be said of the Dom, of whom indeed only a minor part are vagrants. A

14. Other criminal tribes

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few words may, however, be said about other similar castes:

(i) The Audhiya is on a level with other low caste Hindus in matters of custom. They are dangerous criminals, whose special 'lay' is counterfeit coin and jewellery.

(ii) The Banjara caste has several branches. Their original occupation was the carriage of grain and the sale of cattle, and they acted as commissariat to armies in the field. The Turkiya, Baid, and Bahrup subcastes are still grain carriers; the Baid is also doctors and weavers, whilst the Labana trade in salt, the Mukeri and Naik in grain, and all of them in cattle. They used to be criminals, specially addicted to cattle theft and kidnapping, as are those of them who turn to crime at the present day. But the majority are now honest, and occasionally wealthy.

(iii) The Dalera is a low Hindu caste of petty thieves, operating specially at fairs and bathing places and in bazaars.

(iv) The Gandhila is a vagrant beggar, bird-catcher, and procurer.

(v) The Gidhiya is a Bawariya offshoot that has settled down to an agricultural life in Rohilkhand.

(vi) The Bhatra or Ramaiya is ostensibly a peddler, actually a swindler; by turns astrologer, palmist, quack, and confidence trickster.

(vii) The Jogi Pathans are wandering Pathan beggars, strictly orthodox Muhammadans, usually fairly literate, who live by swindling and cheating; pretending to be long-lost relations, and transmuting base metal into gold or silver are their favourite frauds. Some of them, however, are honest and respectable agriculturists.

(viii) The Rinds are a small tribe of Muhammadan beggars, quack doctors and teachers of the Quran, who are given to petty theft of every kind.

(ix) The Kanmail (ear-cleaner) is an offshoot from the Mahawat Nat. They are settled in Moradabad and are Muhammadans.

At the census of 1911, it was noticed that many persons who obviously belonged to one or other of the vagrant tribes returned themselves by unusual names. These were all occupational—Kunchbandhiya, Rachbandhiya, Singiwala, Gidhiya, Kanmail, and Kanghigar were the most common; all are subcastes of Kanjar, Bawariya, or Nat. As we have seen above, the Gidhiya and Kanmail have both settled down permanently and given up vagrancy. There is a certain amount of evidence that the Kanghigars (who are comb-makers) have also settled down, as there is a colony of them at Kalinjar in Banda; whilst the evidence of Mr. Kirkpatrick shows that many Kunchbandhiya Kanjars must be permanent residents of the neighbourhood of Delhi. In Rohilkhand too, certain Gual Nats have given up vagrancy and taken to trade, and adopted the style and designation of Badi Banjaras. These new developments may point to a tendency to give up vagrant habits and take to honest livelihoods. The evidence at present is insufficient to warrant a definite pronouncement, but so far as it goes it appears to point in this direction.

During the last decade, the Bhantus under the leadership of one Sultana, developed into a fraternity of dangerous dacoits, and Government was compelled to create a 'special dacoity force' to deal with them. After prolonged guerilla warfare, this force under Mr. F. Young, C.I.E., of the Indian Police, succeeded in destroying or arresting the Bhanu gangs. Most of those who were not hanged have now been removed, with their own consent, as settlers to the Andaman Islands.

Principal authorities.—Hollins, *Criminal Tribes of the U.P.* (1914).  
Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh* (1896).  
Census Report, U.P., 1911.

## CHAPTER X

### CASTE AND ISLAM

From the dawn of history India has been repeatedly invaded, sometimes by kings in search of new dominions, sometimes by foreign tribes in search of new homes. Persians, Greeks, and Bactrians, Aryas, Sakas, Kushans, and Huns, each in turn carved out for themselves kingdoms in India. Some left little mark either on the country or on its inhabitants; others were ultimately absorbed into the Hindu race and the Hindu polity.

In the seventh century after Christ, the new militant religion of Muhammad arose in Arabia, which, in the fullness of time, set in motion a fresh series of invasions into India. Some of these were mere raids in search of slaves and plunder; others were directed to the conquest of fresh territories; many resulted in the permanent settlement of numerous foreigners. They introduced new races, a new civilization, and a new religion into India, and consequently produced important changes, both in the composition of the Indian people, and in their social system. Though it is unnecessary to relate the story of successive kings and successive conquests, so much of a historical account is required as will show how these changes arose.

From a very early date, the Arabs had turned covetous eyes on India. As early as 650 A.D. their ships were raiding the coasts of Bombay and Sind. Fourteen years later, an Arab army, advancing from Merv, took Kabul, and detached a force to explore the Indus valley, which sacked Multan; and then returned with much booty and many prisoners. In 711 A.D., Muhammad ibn Kasim, nephew of the Governor of Basra, led an Arab army into

Sind, and within three years was master of the country from the sea to Multan. Tradition holds that the Sumera Rajputs drove the invaders out in 750 A.D., and that the latter took refuge in Afghanistan. But this is incorrect. There is contemporary evidence to show that a Qureshi Arab was reigning as Amir of Multan in 915, and that the kingdom had been hereditary in his family 'nearly from the beginning of Islam'. Another Arab dynasty was formed in a new town called Mansura in Lower Sind. Other evidence shows that the same situation existed in 976 and in 985. In 1006, the Multan ruler allied himself with the Hindu Raja of Lahore against Mahmud of Ghazni. It is clear, therefore, that this Arab settlement did not come to an end, as usually alleged; but its hold on the country was probably feeble, there were few converts to Islam,<sup>1</sup> and in course of time all effects of the sole Arab settlement in northern India disappeared.

After the Sind adventure, India was free from Muhammadan aggression for some three centuries. But during that period, events were taking place in neighbouring countries that profoundly affected the nature of the later invasions. By 650, the Arab forces had conquered Persia as far as the Oxus; by 714 they had advanced the boundary of their empire to the Aral Sea and the Jaxartes (Syr Daria). In 820 the Arab empire began to break up; and in the process there came into existence on the north-western borders of India an independent Muslim kingdom, consisting of Khorasan, Khwarizm, Transoxiana, and the greater part of modern Afghanistan, with its capital at Bokhara.<sup>2</sup> The earlier

<sup>1</sup> Rose, *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N.-W.F.P.* (1911), Vol. I, p. 489. Lane-Poole, *Medieval India under Mohammedan Rule* (1917), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Khorasan was a large Persian province. Khwarizm corresponds roughly to the Trans-Caspian territories (Khiva and Merv). Transoxiana is that part of Turkestan between the Oxus and the Jaxartes. The parts of Afghanistan that formed part of this kingdom were Kandahar, Kabul and 'Zabulistan', i.e. the tracts round Ghazni. Rose, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 40.

rulers were Arabs or Persians. In 961, Alptagin, a Turki slave of the royal Samani family, who had risen to be Governor of Khorasan, becoming involved in a dynastic intrigue, fled for refuge to Ghazni. There he set up a small independent kingdom in the Afghan country; but the next Ghaznavide king but one, the famous Sultan Mahmud, reconquered the kingdom of Bokhara from which Alptagin had fled. The population was mainly Persian and Afghan; in Transoxiana there were also many nomad tribes of the Turki branch of the great Tartar race. All subsequent Muhammadan invasions of India came from the north-west, and this fact explains the prominence of Persian, Afghan, and Tartar blood among the Muslims of India to-day.

(i) *Sabaktagin*. Sabaktagin, successor of Alptagin, was the first to come into conflict with an Indian power. In 977, Jaipal, Raja of Lahore, harassed by constant raids from the Afghan hills, led an army to attack Ghazni. He was forced to come to terms, but on returning to his own country declined to carry out his promises, and drew together a large army with the assistance of his allies at Delhi, Ajmer, Kalinjar, and Kanauj. Sabaktagin, however, defeated him, took possession of the country up to the Indus, and left a garrison and governor in Peshawar.

(ii) *Sultan Mahmud*, the greatest king of his time, was also the first great Muslim invader of India. During his reign of 33 years (997-1030) he made numerous<sup>1</sup> expeditions into that country, in the course of which he annexed the western Punjab to his dominions, and led raids as far as Kanauj in the east and Gujarat in the south. But outside the Punjab his ventures were those of a piratical knight-errant rather than a conqueror; his object was to destroy and plunder temples,<sup>2</sup> not to acquire territory.

<sup>1</sup> Some authorities say twelve, some sixteen or seventeen.

<sup>2</sup> Notably Nagarkot, Thanesar, and Somnath.

Under Sultan Mahmud's successors,<sup>1</sup> the Seljuks, a Tartar tribe, broke into Transoxiana and gradually overran and conquered their kingdom; and by the beginning of the twelfth century the Ghaznavide dominions consisted of little more than parts of Afghanistan and the Indian provinces, whilst the court was frequently in residence at Lahore. From the ethnological point of view, the change was of the utmost importance, since it must have caused Muslims to take up their permanent residence in India. It must have been at this time that, by constant intercourse with the Hindus, the rudiments of the present Hindustani language were formed, and the national character of Indian Muslims was moulded.

The country of Ghor, in the mountains east of Herat, was inhabited by Afghans<sup>2</sup> who had been conquered by the Arabs, and converted as early as 830 A.D. From the middle of the eleventh century it had become a dependency of Ghazni; but in 1152, in revenge for a despicable act of treachery, the King of Ghor seized and destroyed Ghazni. The earlier Ghori kings succeeded in reconquering a considerable part of the former possessions of the Ghaznavide kingdom, thus reopening the road from Persia and Transoxiana into India; whilst the fourth of them, Shahab-ud-din,<sup>3</sup> between the years 1176 and his death in 1206, had conquered practically the whole of northern India from the delta of the Indus to the delta of the Ganges.

<sup>1</sup> There were twelve of these, who reigned 56 years between them. The dynasty came to an end in 1186.

<sup>2</sup> The term is used in a loose sense, 'an inhabitant of Afghanistan'. There has been much discussion regarding the ethnology of Ghor. Older writers say that its people were Afghans of the tribe of Sur. Some say they were Turks. Later authorities make them Tajiks, or Persian settlers in Afghanistan of Iranian or Arab descent. See Elphinstone, *History of India*, 2nd edition, Vol. I, p. 599; Rose, op. cit., s.v. 'Tajik.' The kings themselves were almost certainly Tajiks.

<sup>3</sup> Also called Muhammad Ghori, Muhammad-bin-Sam, and Muiz-ud-din.

Shahab-ud-din's conquests were not all effected by himself, but by his generals. One of these, Kutb-ud-din Aibak, was viceroy of the Indian provinces under Shahab-ud-din, and on the latter's death proclaimed his independence. His successor, Shams-ud-din Altamsh, sought and obtained investiture from the Khalif of Baghdad in 1229; and from that year India became a separate Muhammadan kingdom. All succeeding dynasties,<sup>1</sup> however, were none the less of foreign extraction—Turks, Arabs, and Afghans; but, save for recurring irruptions of the Moghuls (who were not, however, converted to Islam till a much later date), there were no further foreign invasions till 1526. It is unnecessary to relate in detail the doings of these Delhi kings; a general account will suffice.

At no time was Islam universally triumphant throughout India. The principal obstacle to Muslim success was the organization of the Rajput class. The Rajputs were formed into clans, the members of which were bound to their chief and to each other by many ties. The chiefs of these clans stood in the same relation to the king as their own retainers did to them, and so the king, nobility, and soldiery all formed a single united body. Further, there was sufficient coherence between neighbouring Rajput kingdoms to draw them together against an invader. Thus Lahore, Ajmer, Kalinjar and Kanauj united against Sabaktagin, and at a later date the Tomars of Delhi, the Chauhans of Ajmer, and the Gaharwars of Kanauj united against Sultan Mahmud.<sup>2</sup> But even when such an alliance had been defeated, the separate states must still be vanquished in

<sup>1</sup> Other dynasties were as follows: (1) Slave kings (Turki), so called because the earliest were slaves of the Ghori kings, 1206-1290. (2) House of Khilji (a Turki tribe long settled in Afghanistan), 1290-1320. (3) House of Tughlaq (Punjabi Turks), 1320-1414. (4) Saiyids (Arabs settled in India), 1414-1450. (5) Lodis (Afghans), 1450-1526.

<sup>2</sup> It is usually stated that the ruling dynasty in Kanauj was the Rathors, but this is wrong. See V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th edition (1924), p. 399, note 5.

detail, so that conquest was a protracted and tedious business; whilst each state remained a focus for revolt. And such revolts were frequent. A ruler that submitted was usually permitted to remain in possession of his dominions, so that at all times a considerable part of the Muslim empire was semi-independent. Such princes would remain submissive under a strong ruler; under weak rulers they rebelled, until another strong ruler succeeded to subdue them. Though the usual punishment for rebellion was indiscriminate slaughter and slavery, yet the Hindu spirit was never broken; Muslim supremacy was challenged again and again, notably in the times of Balban and Muhammad Tughlaq, and often with success. Finally, after Tamerlane's invasion in 1398, the Saiyid kings' authority ran only within a few miles of Delhi, and the rest of India was independent.

These constant revolts had two important results.

11. *Rajput migrations*

The first was a series of Rajput migrations, which were themselves to some extent the result of the Rajput feudal system. Though Rajputs are anything but nomadic, yet when compelled by circumstances to leave their home, they have often moved in a body, like a Tartar horde, to find fresh homes elsewhere. Thus we find Janwars, Dikhits, Chauhans, Raikwars, Bais, Chandels, Gaharwars, all moving eastward during the 13th century to escape the Muslim invaders, and, in the process, coming into conflict with Bhars, Pasis, Arakhs, Kols, and other Dravidian races who had ruled the land for many years, and whom the Rajputs had to dispossess before they could settle down in their present habitations.<sup>1</sup>

12. *Muhammadan settlements*

As has been explained above, Balban was one of the kings in whose time Hindu rebellion was most widespread and most serious. He suppressed successive revolts with the utmost severity, but to prevent their recurrence he also adopted the system of

building forts and blockhouses all over the country, especially along the roads, which he garrisoned with Afghan troops. Most of the Muhammadan colonies, which were planted on the Roman system to keep the Hindu population in subjection, also date from this period. Such were the Muslim colonies at Jarwal in Bahraich, at Birhar in Fyzabad, at Bilgram, Gopamau, and Mallanwan, all in Hardoi. There were of course also many considerable towns under Muslim governors, such as Saharanpur, Farrukhabad, and Ghazipur; Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, and other towns in Rohilkhand; Bahraich and Fyzabad in Oudh; and Banda in Bundelkhand. But the chiefs and governors in charge of these settlements often proved as troublesome and as rebellious as the Hindus whom they were supposed to watch. At first, they were mainly Turks; but under Muhammad Tughlaq Turks were replaced by foreign adventurers of all races—Persians, Afghans, Khorasanis, and Moghuls.

In 1221 occurred the first irruption of the Moghul hordes<sup>1</sup> into India, under the famous Changiz Khan. This irruption was 'the greatest calamity that has fallen on mankind since the deluge. They had no religion to teach, no seeds of improvement to sow . . . ; their only object was to slaughter and destroy; and the only trace they left was in the devastation of every country which they visited.'<sup>2</sup> They were, in short, the merest savages, similar to, possibly more savage than, their predecessors and kinsmen, the Huns. On this occasion they did relatively little damage, for their advance was stopped by the Indus, and they turned aside into Iraq. But though by 1240 A.D. they were masters of the greater part of western and central Asia, India offered

<sup>1</sup> The term Moghul is generally used of these invaders; but it is not always correct. For instance, Timur himself and most of his troops were Turks; whilst the invasion of 1245 into N.-E. India (if it occurred at all), was probably of Manchus. Turk, Moghul or Mongol, and Manchu are all branches of the same stock; and the first two, at all events, are often confused.

<sup>2</sup> Elphinstone, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 5.

<sup>1</sup> Crooke, *N.-W. Provinces of India* (1897), p. 86.

an irresistible attraction; and the Moghul invasions during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries numbered sixteen.<sup>1</sup> Their object was not conquest, but plunder; they caused endless loss of life, endless destruction of property, and untold misery. But even the Amir Timur (Tamerlane), who took and sacked Delhi in 1398, made no attempt to settle in India. He retreated, leaving no trace of his passage save ruined cities. But he had crushed the Delhi kingdom. The Saiyid kings (1414-1450) ruled Delhi itself and the immediate neighbourhood. The Lodis (1450-1526) managed to regain a portion of their predecessors' domains; but the rest of India was ruled by Hindu princes and Muslim governors who were practically independent.

In 1526, Babar, King of Kabul, and fifth in descent from Tamerlane, entered India, took Delhi, and dispossessed Ibrahim, the last Lodi king. By his death in 1530, he had defeated a Rajput confederacy led by the Rana of Chithor, and extended his power as far as Multan and the borders of Bihar. Humayun, his son, was deprived of Kabul and the western Punjab which passed to his brother and rival, Kamran; whilst in the east he had to face the powerful Afghan kingdom of Bengal under Sher Shah. He was forced by that king to fly for his life into Persia, and for some fourteen years was an exile, during which time, however, he succeeded in regaining the Kabul kingdom. He ultimately defeated the Bengal Afghans at Panipat in 1556. Dying the same year, he was succeeded by Akbar, who, in a long reign of 49 years, restored the Muslim dominions from Kandahar and Kabul across all India north of the Vindhya, as far east as Orissa, and as far west as Sind. Jahangir (1605-1628), added little to his father's kingdom; but Shah Jahan (1628-1658), extended his

<sup>1</sup> 1221; 1239; 1245 (two invasions, one from Tibet into N.E. India); 1253; 1279; 1292; 1295; 1296; 1297; 1303; 1304 (two invasions); 1305; 1325; 1398. The facts and dates come from Elphinstone, op. cit.

boundaries into the Deccan, whilst Aurangzeb (1658-1707), conquered Golconda and Bijapur in the south, and as far as Assam in the east. Under this emperor, the Moghul empire reached its widest limits; but its decay also began. The Marathas became a powerful military nation, which Aurangzeb never subdued; whilst his internal policy was such as to alienate the loyalty of his Hindu subjects. His six successors were all mere puppets under the control of various adventurers. The empire once again broke up into independent kingdoms. The Rajputana princes regained their freedom; the Sikhs revolted; the Marathas overran southern India, seized Malwa and Orissa, and levied blackmail on Bengal. Finally, the Moghul empire virtually came to an end, when Shah Alam II entered the British camp after the battle of Buxar in 1764, and became a pensioner of the East India Company.

During the first quarter of the 18th century, the Ghilzais, an Afghan tribe, had overrun Persia. They were defeated and driven forth by Nadir Shah, a Persian adventurer, who then conquered Afghanistan and led a host of Persians and Afghans into India, took Delhi, and, after a sack that lasted 58 days, retired with an enormous booty. He was succeeded by Ahmad Shah Abdali, who, having made himself master of Afghanistan, changed the name of his tribe to Durani. On six occasions he invaded India, pillaged and slaughtered in city and countryside alike, and then retired to his mountains. Finally, he met the Maratha forces at Panipat in 1761; and, though he defeated them, he retreated, never to enter India again.

As has already been stated, the kings of the House of Ghazni were Turks by extraction, though probably their blood was mixed by intermarriage; Sultan Mahmud's mother, for instance, was a Persian. During his reign, the civil administration was entirely in the hands of Persians; Persian was the language of the court and of literature, though Arabic

15. *Afghan invasions*  
16. *Muslim ethnology*  
(a) *The early Muslim invaders*

was used for certain important documents, and, no doubt, in religion. Lawyers, teachers, and divines were generally Arabs, or of Arab descent. The army was recruited from all parts of the kingdom; they were principally Turks and Afghans, but contingents of Arabs, Tajiks, Khiljis, and even Hindus, are all mentioned. Only the Hindus, and possibly some of the Turki soldiery, were not Muslims. Such was the composition of the Muhammadan court and army in Mahmud's time; such it remained when, under the later Ghaznavides, court and army migrated to India. The influx of foreigners continued under the Ghori and Delhi kings, for they continued to recruit their Muslim troops from the tribes across the Indus, to which, by descent, they themselves belonged.

Though the Moghul hordes invariably retired, contingents remained behind, to take service in the Muhammadan armies. As early as 1286, we hear of a massacre of Moghul mercenaries in the course of a political intrigue. In 1292, after a defeat, 3,000 Moghuls were converted, joined the army, and were assigned a suburb of Delhi for their residence, which is still called Moghul-pura. In 1297 these men, or others like them, mutinied and joined a rebel Hindu raja, being put to death when the raja was defeated. They were, in fact, the cause of constant trouble, so much so that in 1311 the King (Alauddin Khilji), as a result of a plot to assassinate him, in which some of them were implicated, caused the whole number, some 15,000, to be put to death, and their families to be sold as slaves. It would seem, however, that at a later date they were again enlisted in the army, for two other mutinies in which they took part occurred in 1347 and 1351; whilst the chiefs of these converted Moghuls were men of some position, being known as *amir jadida* (new nobility). In fact, there can be little doubt that, long before Babar conquered Delhi in 1526, numerous Moghuls had taken up their residence in the country, thus adding one more racial element to the already diversified Muslim population.

Timur, ancestor of the Moghul emperors, was not himself a Moghul, but a Turk, of the Chagatai branch. Babar, fifth in descent from Timur, was half Turk, half Moghul, being descended on his mother's side from Chagatai Khan, son of Changiz Khan, from whom the Chagatai Turks took their name, as inhabitants of the tracts in Transoxiana which had formed part of his heritage. But whatever Babar was by descent, in all other respects he was an educated Persian gentleman; indeed, he both loathed and despised the Moghuls.<sup>1</sup> Of his successors, Humayun's mother was a Persian lady of Herat, whilst Akbar's was a Syudani of Khorasan. The mothers of Jahangir and Shah Jahan were both Rajput princesses—indeed, the last mentioned king and his successor had far more Rajput than Moghul blood in their veins.

Babar, when he invaded India, was a king of much the same estate as Mahmud of Ghazni; both ruled small realms in the Afghan hills. And Babar's army was similar to that of Mahmud's, being composed of Turks, Moghuls, Afghans, Tajiks and Persians. In Humayun's time, however, the loss of Kabul closed the Afghan and Central Asian recruiting fields to the Moghul emperors, until Akbar, in the latter half of his reign, succeeded in reconquering Kabul and Kandahar. From that time onwards till the reign of Aurangzeb, fresh immigrants from Central Asia constantly entered India, and we read of Afghan, Persian, Moghul and Uzbeg contingents in the Delhi armies, as well as Saiyids, Shaikhs, Rajputs, and (among the infantry) other Indian races of lower

<sup>1</sup> As is shown by the following epigram, written by Babar himself:  
 'Were the Mongols a race of angels, it would still be a vile nation;  
 Were their name written in gold, it would still be abomination.  
 Beware you pluck not a single ear from a Mongol field,  
 For whatever is sown with Mongol seed has an odious yield.'

status, both Muslim and Hindu. The Uzbegs were a Turki clan that had risen to prominence at the end of the 15th century in Transoxiana; there was a large contingent of them at the battle of Samugarh in 1658.<sup>1</sup>

The Moghul court under Akbar and his two successors was heterogeneous to a degree. High positions were held by Persians, such as Faizi and Abul Fazl; by Rajputs, such as Man Singh and Bhagwan Das; by other Hindus, such as Birbal and Todar Mal; by converted Hindus, such as Sadullah; and by Uzbegs, such as Abdullah Khan and Khanzaman. Akbar, in the course of his religious investigations, also made friends of divines of every conceivable sect—Muslims, Hindus, Jains, Parsis, and Jesuits from Goa; whilst there were also numerous foreigners—English, Dutch, Portuguese, French, and Armenian—at his court or that of his successors.<sup>2</sup>

Until the later Tughlaq period, Islam in India remained, on the whole, an isolated community, observing strictly their rules of religious and social law. And this isolation was preserved by the constant stream of foreign immigrants who came to swell the Muslim armies. During this period, the general attitude of Muslim to Hindu was one of somewhat contemptuous, but good-natured, tolerance. From time to time, either for reasons of policy or bigotry, a sultan, such as Ala-ud-din or Muhammad Tughlaq, might oppress them by heavy taxation or more direct methods, whilst at all times Hindus were liable to

<sup>1</sup> According to Bernier, the term Moghul in common parlance was used as a general term for foreigners whose complexions were white and who professed Islam, i.e. for all foreigners from Persia and Central Asia. *Bernier's Travels*, 2nd edition, revised by V. A. Smith (1914), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the most prominent names of visitors to the court are as follows:—Jains—Hiravijaya Suri, Vijayasena Suri, Bhanuchandra Upadhyaya; Parsis—Dastur Meherji Rana; Jesuits—Ridolfo Aquaviva, Antonio Monserrate, Jerome Xavier, Emmanuel Pinheiro, and Francisco Corsi; English—Captain William Hawkins, John Mildenhall, Tom Coryat, and Sir Thomas Roe, with his chaplain the Rev. Edward Terry; Frenchmen—Bernier and Tavernier.

a capitation tax (*jaziya*), the pilgrim tax, and other invidious distinctions. Nevertheless, Hindus occasionally held important positions at court, and fought in the Muslim armies. As early as 1033, a Hindu named Tilak, the son of a barber, was a general under the Ghaznavide king Masud. A Hindu contingent of cavalry formed part of Sultan Mahmud's army. A renegade Hindu named Rihan was powerful enough to drive the future king, Balban, from court under Nasir-ud-din in 1253. But in the fourteenth century, the situation changed. When Afghan and Moghul adventurers ceased to enlist in the Delhi armies, Muslim society in India became effete; the laws of Islam were disregarded, the harems were filled with Hindu women, and Hindu converts rose to high office, both in the court, the civil administration, and the army. Under Firoz Shah Tughlaq, a Hindu convert named Maqbul Khan held the post of wazir, and the court was full of Hindus. Hindu soldiers fought for the same king; Hindu chiefs were found on both sides in the struggle for the throne that followed his death. Men of both religions entered freely into each other's armies, whilst the offices were full of Hindus.<sup>1</sup> The Muhammadan domination, in short, had become the rule of the half-caste; and Muslim, like Saka, Kushan, and Hun before him, was in danger of being absorbed into Hinduism.

For this result, the Muslim slave system was largely responsible. The slave was especially chosen for his physical and mental abilities, and could only hope to retain his position in his master's favour by hard service and constant attention to his duty; for, were he found wanting, his fate was sealed. A slave was often regarded as being as good as a son; for instance, when someone condoled with Shahab-ud-din on his lack of male offspring to carry on his line, he replied 'Have I not thousands of children in my Turki slaves?'<sup>2</sup> The very

<sup>1</sup> The authority for this statement is Babar himself.

<sup>2</sup> Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India*, pp. 64-65.

name of the third dynasty shows to what heights a slave could rise. Many Hindu slaves thus became governors or generals or wazirs. But the system had its drawbacks. In 1387, for instance, there was a formidable rebellion of the slaves in Delhi; whilst there is no doubt that the influence of converted, or nominally converted, Hindu slaves in the court of the later Tughlaq kings had much to do with the Hindu rebellions of that period. And when in 1561 Akbar prohibited the enslaving of prisoners taken in war, he removed a source of constant danger to the peace of his empire.

Secondly, the slave system had a considerable influence on the composition of the Muslim population, both by means of conversion and of intermarriage. The custom of the original Arab Muslims was to offer a foe that had submitted, the choice of conversion or the payment of tribute; a foe that had resisted was slain or enslaved. It is on record that Muhammad ibn Kasim actually dealt with the Hindus in Sind in this manner. Later conquerors, however, seem to have been as a rule less fanatical. It is said that Sultan Mahmud never attempted to make unwilling converts; though he broke the idols, he spared the idolators. Shahab-ud-din Ghori, on the other hand, did try to force Islam on the Hindus. 'Those who were wise and acute were converted to Islam, but those who stood by their ancient faith were slain by the sword.'<sup>1</sup> This statement was made of the capture of Koil, but was doubtless true of other towns. But there is nothing to show that his successors followed his example; and, since there were few bigots amongst them, we may reasonably conclude that forced conversion was unusual, or even unknown. The following quotation, which relates to the capture of Kalinjar, probably represents what usually happened:—'The temples were converted into mosques and abodes of goodness, and the ejaculations of the bead-counters and the voices of the summoners to prayer ascended to the highest heaven, and the very name of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Crooke, *N.-W. Provinces of India* (1897), p. 84.

idolatry was annihilated. . . . Fifty thousand men came under the collar of slavery.'<sup>2</sup> Here there is no mention of conversion, as there certainly would have been had any occurred. At the same time, the number of modern Muhammadan castes that are obviously composed of converts from Hinduism, the number of Hindu castes, especially Rajputs, that possess Muhammadan branches, and legends referring such conversions to high antiquity, make it plain that there must have been many changes of religion. These may have occurred in one of two ways. Many were no doubt voluntary; as Elphinstone puts it, 'the terror of the arms of the Mahometans and the novelty of their doctrines led many to change their religion'.<sup>3</sup> But there can be no doubt that the slave system accounted for the majority of conversions, for naturally Hindus who were sold into slavery after defeat were compelled, or thought it wise, to accept Islam.

Mixed marriages should have been rare, for they were as repugnant to Muhammadan law as to Hindu custom. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that intermarriage did occur. The invading Muslim armies brought but few women with them, and, on settling in the country, must have taken to themselves wives from the original inhabitants; though the process, as usual, probably ceased as soon as a sufficiency of women had been bred to supply their needs. At a later date, mixed marriages undoubtedly became more common in all ranks of society. For instance, the marriage of a Gujarat princess to Khizr Khan, son of Ala-ud-din Khilji, has formed the subject of a Persian poem by Amir Khusru.<sup>3</sup> Another case was that of a Bhatti Rajput princess who consented to marry Muhammad Tughlaq to save her people from his tyranny. But at all times, and amongst high and low alike, such intermarriages must have been mainly due to the presence

<sup>1</sup> Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. II, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Elphinstone, *History of India*, Vol. II, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> She afterwards passed to the seraglio of Khusru Khan, Ala-ud-din's successor, who was a renegade Hindu of caste so low that before his conversion he would not have dared even to have raised his eyes to her.

of Hindu slaves in the harems; and, where the union was more than mere concubinage, must usually have been preceded by conversion.

As has already been explained above, the recruiting grounds of Central Asia were for many years closed to Akbar. This was undoubtedly one of the reasons which dictated his policy of toleration towards Hindus.

25. *Relations of the Moghul Emperors to Hinduism*

As early as 1562, he married the daughter of Raja Bihar Mal of Jaipur, the mother of Jahangir. At the same time he conferred high office on Man Singh, a relation of the Raja. Shortly afterwards, he abolished the pilgrim taxes, and the *jaziya* or capitation tax on Hindus, throughout his dominion. It was about the same time that he prohibited the ancient custom of making slaves of prisoners taken in war, a reform which, though not limited to any one class, was in practice mainly beneficial to Hindus. At a still later date, after he had invented his own religion, he passed other enactments, all of which had the effect of giving Hindus and other 'infidels' the right to worship, or build temples, as they pleased. These measures reconciled the Hindus to his rule, whilst the Rajputs became his staunch supporters. His army was very largely recruited from their ranks, and they fought bravely for him in all his wars. His two successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, continued his policy. Aurangzeb, however, a fanatical puritan, reversed it. He reimposed most of the Hindu disabilities, including the special taxation which Akbar had abolished, with the result that discontent and disaffection spread amongst the Hindus. The Rajputs were alienated once and for all; whereas they had been, under Akbar and his two successors, the principal prop of the monarchy, they were from this time forward frequently at war with the Moghul emperors, and even when they were at peace, seldom furnished them with troops, or assisted them in any way. Aurangzeb, in short, in his fanaticism, undid all that Akbar had done to weld the two races into one; and the results of his policy persist to the present day.

The ethnology of the Muslim invaders of India has now been considered. It is next necessary to examine how far these different racial elements are traceable in the Muslim population of to-day. The descendants of the original invaders are now grouped into four 'castes'—Moghul, Pathan, Saiyid, and Shaikh; the composition of which will now be described.

26. *Ethnic elements in the modern Muslim population*

'One of the puzzles of Punjab ethnology is the question what has become of all the Moghul hordes which entered India long before the time of Babar.'<sup>2</sup> The same is not true of the United Provinces; for though the Moghul raids must often have crossed the Jumna, most of them seem to have been mere forays in search of booty, and only two were of importance—that in 1304 which penetrated into Rohilkhand, and Tamerlane's raid in 1398, when he sacked Meerut. Most of the Moghuls of this province settled there after Babar's conquest of 1526. Even so, however, their number, which does not reach six figures, is curiously small. Moreover, their tribal nomenclature suggests that few of the Moghuls of the United Provinces are really of Mongolian race. The principal subdivisions are Chagatai, Uzbek, Tajik, Turkman, and Qizilbash. As has already been explained, Chagatai is the Turki branch to which the Timurid family belonged. Uzbek represents Uzbek, another Turki tribe which rose to prominence in Transoxiana at the beginning of the 16th century, and supplied troops to the Moghul emperors till the time of Aurangzeb. Tajik<sup>3</sup> is the name given to the original Persian or Iranian inhabitants of Transoxiana or Afghanistan by their Turki conquerors.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'caste' is used here because it would be the term popularly used of these groups. It does not imply that they are castes in the technical sense.

<sup>2</sup> Rose, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Tajik means 'stranger'. As has already been stated, there were Tajik contingents in the armies of Mahmud and Shahab-ud-din, and most of the inhabitants of Kabul in Babar's time were Tajiks, whilst it is probable that the Ghori kings were also of that race.

India. In such circumstances, its population must necessarily be an amalgam of diverse racial elements. And there is sufficient definite proof of this assertion. For instance, as early as Sultan Mahmud, and as late as Babar, we hear of Iranian Tajiks in Afghanistan. The present Peshawar district was, at an early date, the home of an Indian tribe, the Gandhari. During the 11th and 12th centuries, both Khilji Turks and Ghuzz Turkmans were settled there. Khalil ibn Abdulla and his Arabs made a home there, when they left Kabul. Finally, Pashtu, the language of the country, is a mixture of Iranian, Persian, and Hindi, with Turkish and Arabic elements.

Pathans are found all over the province, except in the hill districts; they are most numerous in Rohilkhand, Oudh, and Allahabad, all tracts of special importance in Muslim history. Out of a total of over 700,000, more than half belong to four clans—Yusufzai, Lodi, Ghoris, and Kakar.

30. *Pathans in the United Provinces*

(1) The *Yusufzai* are considered by Ibbetson to be descended from the old Indo-Aryan Gandharis. There was a large contingent of them in Babar's army (1526); whilst they gave a great deal of trouble to Akbar, defeating one of his armies and killing his favourite Raja Birbal. At a later date, they must have frequently taken service under the Moghul emperors, for they are now to be found in every district in the province.

31. *Principal Pathan tribes*

(2) The *Lodi* are descended from the traditional ancestor, Kais Abdul Rashid,<sup>1</sup> only through the female side, which suggests that there is a large foreign, probably Tajik, element in the tribe. They have given two important dynasties to India, the Lodi kings of Delhi (1450-1526), and the Sur kings of Bengal (1540-1556). It is natural, therefore, that their numbers should be large; indeed, during the period of their ascendancy, it seems probable that many entire families emigrated. They are

<sup>1</sup> See note 2 on p. 179.

most numerous in the eastern districts, where the Sur kings reigned. A certain number of them are engaged in the carrying trade between Central Asia and Afghanistan, and India.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The *Ghoris'* descent is dubious. According to tradition, they seem to be a mixture of Arab and Gandhari stock;<sup>2</sup> at all events, they were undoubtedly a hybrid race, and contained a large Tajik element. The second Muslim dynasty belonged to this tribe; the numerous Ghoris that are found to-day all over the province are, without doubt, the descendants of the Ghoris' followers, whether Tajiks, Turks or Afghans.

(4) *Kakar*. The Kakar tribe belongs to a small group of tribes claiming descent from the traditional ancestor through his third son Ismail, nicknamed Ghorgusht. According to one theory, the tribe is of Scythian origin; according to another, Ghorgusht is only an altered form of Ghirghis, or Kirghiz, and points to a Tartar or Turki origin. Of these theories, all that need be said is that, whilst Turk is less unlikely than Scythian, there is no proof of either. The Kakars seem to have entered India mainly under the Sur dynasty of Bengal, which would explain why they are most numerous in the eastern districts.

There are representatives of many other tribes in the province, which, though less numerous, are interesting. They fall into four groups, as follows: (1) the Ghilzai, akin to the Lodis; (2) the Mohmand and Muhammadzai, akin to the Yusufzai; (3) the Tarin, Durani, Barakzai, and Barech; (4) the Afridi, Bangash, Dilazak, Khatak, and Orakzai.

32. *Other Pathan tribes*

<sup>1</sup> Their interest in trade may be due to their Tajik blood. At the present day, as in past centuries, the Tajik, whether in Afghanistan or Bokhara, freely engages in trade and industry.

<sup>2</sup> Ghor is the traditional home of the 'pure' Afghan, who claims descent from King Saul. History proves that it had a large Tajik population; there were many Tajiks in Shahab-ud-din's army. Probably, therefore, the mixture is of Arab (or other Muslim invader) and Tajik, rather than Gandhari.

Turkman is little more than a generic term for an inhabitant of Central Asia who is of Tartar descent. Finally, Qizilbash<sup>1</sup> are supposed to be a tribe of Tartar horsemen from the Eastern Caucasus, who formed the best troops in the Persian armies, and of the force with which Nadir Shah conquered Delhi. In fact, it would seem that the name 'Moghul' must be regarded as used in the wide sense, which, according to Bernier, was prevalent in the 17th century in India—namely, any foreigner who professed Islam and had a fair complexion, such as Persians, Turks, Arabs, and Uzbeks, or their descendants.

The word 'Pathan' is a Hindi corruption of a Persian word 'Pakhtana' or 'Pashtana', which means 'speakers of the Pashtu language'.

28. *Pathan* It is popularly applied to all tribes whose present or original homes are on or near the north-west boundaries of India. A synonym is Afghan, a Persian word of which the meaning is uncertain; another is Rohilla or Ruhela, which means 'highlander'. Of these three, Afghan is much the oldest term; for Pathan is not found in literature till the 16th century, and Rohilla till the 18th. Both Afghan and Rohilla are now used with restricted meanings. Afghan is a polite designation in favour with educated persons, or those who are proud of their descent; Rohilla is either a generic term for the Pathan inhabitants of the tract called Rohilkhand, or the name of a separate Pathan clan, descended from the original Pathan settlers in that tract.<sup>2</sup>

Pathan or Afghan ethnology has formed the subject of many books,<sup>3</sup> and given rise to many theories. Afghan tradition traces both name and descent to Afghana, grandson of King Saul of Israel, and relates that

<sup>1</sup> 'Red-heads' from the red caps that they wore.  
<sup>2</sup> The clan, if it really exists as a separate entity, is of recent origin. The great majority of Rohilkhand Pathans can and do claim descent from older clans.

<sup>3</sup> Bellew, *Races of Afghanistan*; Ibbetson, *Punjab Ethnology*; Malletson, *History of Afghanistan*; Raverty, *Translation of Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*; Longworth-Dames, 'Afghanistan' in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*—are only some of these.

the original tribes were transplanted from Syria by Nebuchadnezzar to various colonies in India and Persia, whence they escaped into the Ghor and Hazara country.<sup>1</sup> But these legends can safely be discarded; they are of literary origin, and date back no further than the end of the 16th century, being examples of the practice, common among Musalmans outside Arabia, of claiming descent from the Prophet or some personage in the sacred books. The genealogies which depend upon these legends have indeed a certain evidential value; for in their earlier stages they inform us of the beliefs held three centuries ago of the relationship between the various tribes, and in their later stages they may be taken as historically accurate. Further, they afford, after their own fashion, some proof of the only fact that can be regarded as certain in Afghan ethnology—namely that the Afghan race is extremely heterogeneous.<sup>2</sup> For Afghanistan lies between three widely different races—Iranian, Indo-Aryan, and Tartar. It has been included in the dominions of Persian, Greek, Bactrian, Indian, Arab, Turk, and Moghul rulers. Through it passes have poured all the armies and hordes that have invaded

<sup>1</sup> It is on this legend, reinforced by various other arguments, that has been founded the famous but fantastic theory that the Afghans represent the ten lost tribes of Israel. Unfortunately, it was not Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, but Sargon, King of Assyria, who led the ten tribes into captivity.

<sup>2</sup> It is unnecessary to give the genealogy at length; but a brief description, dealing only with the tribes represented in the United Provinces, will be of interest. Kais Abdul Rashid, lineal descendant of King Saul and ally of the Prophet, had three sons by the daughter of Khalid ibn Walid, a Qureshi Arab, and first apostle to the Afghans. The eldest, Sarban, had two sons, Sharkhbun and Kharshbun. From the former are descended Tarin, Durani, Barech, and Barakzai. From the latter are descended Muhammadzai, Yusufzai, Khalil, Mohmand, and Daudzai. The second son of Kais, by name Batan, had a daughter, Bibi Matto, who married Shah Husain Ghor, from whom descend Lodi and Ghilzai. From the third son, Ghorgusht, descend Ghorgushti and Kakar. Finally, Urmur, a son of Sharkhbun, adopted Karani, from whom descend Dilazak, Orakzai, Afridi, Khatak, and Bangash. Descent through a daughter clearly suggests mixed blood; adoption suggests affiliation of tribes of different blood. It is possible, also, that the main stocks—Sharkhbuni, Kharshbuni, and Ghorgushti—represent different racial elements.

(1) The Ghilzai, like the Lodi, are descended from the traditional ancestor through the female side only. They are usually, but wrongly, identified with the Khilji Turks. But it seems probable that some of their sections are of Turki, whilst others may be of Tajik, origin. Large numbers of them accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni into India. At a much later date many of them followed Nadir Shah. Like the Lodi, many of them are engaged in the carrying trade.

(2) The Mohmand and Muhammadzai both seem to have been engaged in the Yusufzai revolt against Akbar in 1586. It is not clear when they came into India; but, being most numerous in Rohilkhand, they were probably attracted thither when the Rohillas became powerful.

(3) Tarin, Durani, Barakzai, and Barech belong to the most senior branch in the Afghan genealogy, and are the purest of 'pure' Afghans. The Durani was the tribe to which the last invader of India belonged; Barech was the tribe of the famous Rohilla chief, Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Otherwise, they are of little importance in India. They are most common in Rohilkhand.

(4) Afridi, Bangash, Dilazak, Khatak and Orakzai are closely connected in the Afghan genealogy as Karlani or 'adopted' tribes. This, of course, suggests that they are of different blood to the rest of the tribes. For instance, the Afridi are usually identified with the Aparytae of Herodotus. If the identification is correct, they are descended from mild, peace-loving, and contemplative Indo-Aryan Buddhists, which scarcely seems a suitable ancestry for the Afridis. The Bangash claim to be Qureshi Arabs, descended from Khalid ibn Walid, the first apostle of Islam to the Afghans, whose daughter married Kais Abdul Rashid. The Orakzai are certainly of very mixed extraction—according to their own account, part Persian, part Hindu. The Afridi and Bangash seem first to have entered India about the time of Akbar, when they are found in the army. The Bangash, under the later Moghul emperors, acquired considerable estates, as Nawabs of Farrukhabad. The Khataks were prominent from the time of Aurangzeb; many followed

Ahmad Shah Durani into India. It is not clear when the Orakzai and Dilazak entered India; the former probably accompanied the Bangash, whilst there is a story that the latter caused so much trouble in their attempts to recover territory that they had lost to the Yusufzai, that Jahangir deported them *en masse* to India.

In this province, as in other parts of India, there are many families and tribes which claim to be of Arab stock. Those of them which also claim descent from the Prophet through his daughter Fatima and Ali are called Saiyids, an Arabic title which means 'prince': the others are known as Shaikhs, another Arabic title meaning 'chief'. We have first to consider how these Arab immigrants found their way into India.

The only Arab invasion of India was that which Muhammad ibn Kasim led into Sind in the 8th century; and, as has been said, its success was only partial, and its effects purely local. On the other hand, by the end of the same century, Persia, Central Asia as far as the Jaxartes, and parts of Afghanistan were all included in the Arab empire, held by Arab troops, and overrun by Arab settlers. Many of them were soldiers; we find, for instance, a large contingent of Arab cavalry in Sultan Mahmud's army. It was they, too, who provided the king with his lawyers, divines, teachers, doctors, and statesmen. These Arab settlers, of course, intermarried with the natives of the various countries in which they had made their homes: for there was nothing in the law of Islam to prevent such unions, at all events if conversion had preceded the union, whilst there is definite evidence to show that they did occur at a later date. When Turk and Afghan and Moghul invaders poured into India, the descendants of these Arab settlers followed, to carry on in India the same pursuits that they had carried on in Persia and elsewhere. An examination of the facts recorded in the various district gazetteers shows that, from the time of Sultan Mahmud to the late Moghul emperors, there was a constant influx of

individuals and families, some classed as Saiyids, others as Shaikhs, but all claiming Arab descent, and in most cases hailing immediately from Persia and Central Asia.<sup>1</sup> As a class, they rendered valuable service to the State, both in peace and in war. They, and their descendants after them, were *qazis*, and *muftis*, and *maulvis*; indeed, in some families the title, if not the post, seems to have been hereditary. There were also Shaikh and Saiyid contingents in the armies; whilst the famous Saiyids of Barha<sup>2</sup> were known for their bravery throughout India. And many of them rose to great eminence. There was a Saiyid dynasty; there were many Shaikh and Saiyid generals and governors and statesmen, of whom the greatest were the brothers Hasan Ali (or Abdulla) and Husain Ali, the king-makers, who within two years put four emperors on the throne.<sup>3</sup>

But considerable though the influx of such families has been, it is none the less astounding to find that the Shaikhs and Saiyids of this province, taken together, exceed the number of Pathans and Moghuls by fifty per cent. The principal cause is undoubtedly to be found in the process described in the well-known Persian proverb—*'peshayin qassab budem, badazan gushtem Shaikh; ghalla chun arzan shawad, imsal Saiyid meshawem'*:—'The first year I was a butcher, the next a Shaikh; this year, if prices fall, I shall become a Saiyid.' In other words, there was a tendency for the parvenu to claim a higher lineage than his own.

<sup>1</sup> The Gorakhpur Saiyids come from Bokhara and Arabia; the Amroha Saiyids from Baghdad, being descended from the Abbasid Khalifs; the Allahabad Saiyids from Medina and Persia; the Barabanki Saiyids from Ghazni, Naishapur, and elsewhere in Persia. There are Saiyids from Naishapur also in Unao and Fyzabad. There are Shaikhs from Baghdad in Barabanki, Moradabad, Sitapur, and Etawah; from Bokhara in Allahabad and Moradabad; from Arabia in Barabanki, Lucknow, Hardoi, and Partabgarh. These are mere instances; they do not exhaust the list.

<sup>2</sup> This extraordinary family claims descent from Ali and Fatima. Their proximate ancestor was Abul Farah of Wasit in Persia, who came to India about the middle of the 13th century. His descendants settled in Muzaffarnagar and Hardoi, where they are still located. Hasan Ali and Husain Ali were members of this family.

<sup>3</sup> Farrukhsiyar and his three successors (1719-20).

And this was, and is, especially marked amongst converts from Hinduism. High caste converts—Rajput, or Taga, or Jat—would keep their former caste name, or possibly substitute, for good reason, some entirely new name, such as Lalkhani or Khanzada; though certain striking variations in successive census figures suggest that during the last twenty-five years a large number of Muhammadan Rajputs have taken to calling themselves Pathans. A caste with a low or degrading occupation would not dare to change the name unless it changed the occupation too. But converts of middle rank at all times were, and are still, apt to abandon their caste name, and adopt the title of Shaikh. No convert would ever usurp the title of Saiyid; nor, I imagine, would any other Muslim at the present time. But the tribal nomenclature itself suggests that such usurpation has occurred in the past.

Four of the Saiyid divisions take their names from the towns which were their homes before they emigrated to India; these are Baghdad, Bokhara, Sabzwar in Khorasan, and Tirmiz in Persia. One is called Pirzada which means merely 'son of a saint'. The other sections all derive their names from eponymous ancestors or religious teachers, and may be arranged in the following groups.

(a) *Sections named after Fatima and her near descendants.*

(1) The Bani Fatima, or sons of Fatima; (2) the Hasani, and (3) the Husaini, named after the two martyred sons of Ali and Fatima, Hasan and Husain; (4) the Hasan-Husaini, descended from intermarriage between the two former branches; (5) the Zaidi, descended from Zaid Shahid, grandson of Husain.

(b) *Descendants of Ali by another wife.* The Alwi, or Alawiya.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Crooke explains this as meaning 'believers in Ali as a prophet'. Rose (op. cit., Vol. II, p. 392), explains it as in the text.

(c) *Descendants of other Imams than Ali, Hasan, and Husain.* These are :

- (1) the Abidi, from Ali Zain-ul-Abidin, fourth Imam.
- (2) the Baqri, from Muhammad-al-Baqir, fifth Imam.
- (3) the Jafari, from Jafar-as-Sadiq, sixth Imam.
- (4) the Kazimi, from Musa-al-Kazim, seventh Imam.
- (5) the Rizwi or Razwi, from Ali ibn Musa-ar-Raza, eighth Imam.
- (6) the Taqwi, from Muhammad-at-Taqi, ninth Imam.
- (7) the Naqwi, from Ali-an-Naqi, tenth Imam.
- (8) the Askari, from Hasan-al-Askari, eleventh Imam.<sup>1</sup>

All the Imams were direct descendants of Ali through Husain.

(d) *Descendants of other ancestors.* These are the Abbasi, the Hashimi, the Siddiqi, and the Razzaqi.

(e) *Sections named after religious teachers.* The Jalali, the Qadiriya, and the Chishti. The teachers are respectively Saiyid Jalal-ud-din of Bokhara, Saiyid Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad, and Saiyid Abu Ishaq of Chist in Khorasan.

Strictly speaking, the term Saiyid is a title belonging only to the Prophet's family (*khandan i nabuwat*), his descendants through his daughter Fatima and her husband Ali, his first cousin. And most of the Saiyid clans can rightfully use that title. The ancestry of all the clans included in the first and third groups is beyond question, as is also that of the Razzaqis, who are descended from Abdul Razzaq, son of the famous saint Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad, who belonged to the Hasani-Husainis. The four sections named after places can fairly be regarded as local sub-divisions of some primary section, such as the Bani Fatima. But the case of the Chishti, Jalali and

<sup>1</sup> According to one school of Shias, there were twelve Imams; the first three Imams were Ali, Hasan, and Husain. The last Imam, Muhammad-al-Mahdi, disappeared at a tender age, and according to the popular belief will reappear; so that he would have no descendants and no section is named after him.

Qadiriya Saiyids is not quite so clear. They take their names from three Saiyid saints or teachers, each of whom also founded a sect of faqirs, which are also called respectively Chishti, Jalali and Qadiriya. There has consequently been some confusion between sect and section; even Crooke describes the Chishti section of Saiyids as 'followers' of a Chishti saint.<sup>1</sup> But the Chishtis of Bijnor, where they are most numerous, claim not spiritual but physical kinship with Abu Ishaq, as members of the same family and consequently Saiyids. And we can probably assume that the same is true of the Jalalis and Qadiriya.

None of the four remaining clans appear to be descendants of Fatima. Abbasi, Hashimi and Siddiqi are sectional names amongst Shaikhs as well as Saiyids; but the two must not be confused. The Abbasi Shaikhs, for instance, claim as their eponymous ancestor, Abbas, paternal uncle of the Prophet, who gave his name to the Abbasid dynasty: the Abbasi Saiyids of Allahabad are descended from another Abbas, Ali's armour-bearer. We know nothing of the origin of the Hashimi<sup>2</sup> or Siddiqi Saiyids. The Alwis claim descent from Muhammad ibn-al-Hanafiya, the son of Ali by a wife of the Bani Hanifa tribe, and a prominent figure in the early history of Islam. Alwi is also the name of a Shaikh section.

Most of the Shaikh sections take their name from an eponymous ancestor. These are Abbasi, Jafari,<sup>3</sup> and Alwi, already explained; Hashimi, descendants of the Prophet's great grandfather; Siddiqi, named from the first Khalif, Abu Baqr-as-Siddiq; Bani Israil, or sons of Israel; Faruqi, from Khalif Umar,

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, he mentions the wrong saint—not Abu Ishaq the founder, but his more famous disciple, Salim Chishti of Fatehpur-Sikri. *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh*, s.v. 'Saiyyid'.

<sup>2</sup> The only person in history likely to give the name Hashim to a Saiyid clan is Abu Hashim, son of Muhammad ibn-al-Hanafiya, who was leader of the Hashimiya Shias, and recognized as their Imam after his father's death.

<sup>3</sup> The derivation here is probably not from the Imam, but from a cousin of Muhammad, well-known for his charity.

nicknamed Faruq; Sulaimani; and Usmani, from the third Khalif. Faridi are the followers of the famous saint Baba Farid of Pak Pattan. The Qidwai clan claims descent from one Qazi Qidwat, a son of the King of Rum (Turkey) who came to India *via* Arabia in the time of Shahab-ud-din Ghorî. Ansari (the helpers) was the name given to the citizens of Medina after conversion.<sup>1</sup> Qureshi was the Arab tribe to which the Prophet belonged; Bahlim was another Arab tribe. One section has a territorial name, Khurasani. Pirzada has already been explained; Milki is merely an occupational title assumed in the east of the province, which means 'a landed proprietor'. By far the largest sections are the Siddiqi and Qureshi, who account for over half of the total number of Shaikhs; after them—*longo intervallo*—the Ansari, Faruqi, and Usmani. Over 20 per cent of all Shaikhs in 1891 at the census could return no section at all; and these have certainly no real right to the name. But the proportion of pseudo-Shaikhs must greatly exceed 20 per cent, if, as is usually alleged,<sup>2</sup> the convert used to adopt as his own the section of the *qazi* or *mufti* who admitted him to Islam.

There are many occupational groups which are entirely Muhammadan; whilst many Hindu castes, also mostly occupational, have Muhammadan branches. In all such groups, there are many sections with Hindu names, which suggests that they are composed of ex-Hindu converts. But invariably there are also a certain number of sections with Muslim names. Generally, such sections would be descended from the Hindu slaves of Muslim masters, who on conversion had adopted as their own the tribe or sept to which their masters belonged. But in some cases, the sections may actually be themselves of foreign descent. There must, for instance, have been Bhishtis in the camps of the Muslim invaders, and there is nothing surprising

<sup>1</sup> As opposed to the Mecca followers of Muhammad who were called Muhajirin, or exiles.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. in the provincial district gazetteers, *passim*.

in finding a whole series of Bhishti sections, the names of which suggest foreign descent—Arab sections such as Abbasi, Bahlîmi, Faruqi, Qureshi, Saiyid, Siddiqi, and Shaikh; Afghan sections, such as Bangash, Ghorî, and Pathan; Tartar sections, such as Begi, Moghul, Turki, and Turkman. The Muslim armies, again, must have had their own carriers of grain, fodder, and other necessities; it is natural to find a 'Turkiya' subdivision of the Banjara tribe, with sections such as Alwi, Bahlim, and Shaikh (Arab), Aghwan,<sup>1</sup> and Khilji (Turk). At the present time, of course, certainty is impossible in such a matter; but so much can safely be stated, that there must be many Muslims of foreign extraction in other than the four main groups.

According to Muhammadan doctrine, all free Muslims are equal. A Muslim may marry any

40. *Islam and the caste system*

woman outside the prohibited degrees (which are much the same as in the English law), provided that she belongs to a 'scriptural' or revealed religion;<sup>2</sup> and though some kinds of food are forbidden, commensal restrictions are unknown. The Hindu caste system, therefore, is entirely incompatible with the tenets of Islam. And amongst those Muslims of foreign descent whose ancestors brought the religion of the Prophet into India, practice corresponds with theory. Saiyid, Shaikh, Pathan, Moghul, are not castes, though usually spoken of as such; they are not even tribes. They are merely names given to groups of tribes that are, or are supposed to be, of similar blood.

But the same cannot be said of Muslims that have been converted from Hinduism. 'Caste,' says Mr. Crooke, 'is not confined to votaries of the Hindu faith. On the contrary, it is in its nature much more social than religious. It has been one of the most perplexing problems which beset

41. *Caste amongst converted Hindus; Crooke's statement*

<sup>1</sup> A corrupt form of Afghan.

<sup>2</sup> *Kitabi*—follower of a religion possessing a sacred and revealed book, namely, a Muslim, Jew, or Christian; but not a Hindu, Parsi, or Buddhist.

the Christian missionary to reconcile the restrictions of caste with the perfect liberty of Christianity. Islam has boldly solved the difficulty by recognizing and adopting caste in its entirety. Not only does the converted Rajput, Gujar, and Jat remain a member of his original sept or section; but he preserves most of those restrictions on social intercourse, intermarriage, and the like, which make up the peasant's conception of caste. As Mr. Ibbetson remarks,<sup>1</sup> "Almost the only difference which the convert makes is to shave his scalp-lock, and the upper edge of his moustache, to repeat the Muhammadan creed in a mosque, and to add the Muhammadan to the 'Hindu marriage ceremony'".<sup>2</sup>

This statement requires considerable modification. In the first place, no convert could remain 'a member of his original sept or section', for his conversion would automatically involve his outcasting. He might, no doubt, retain the name of that sept or section; but he must henceforth look for his wife and his friends outside it. Secondly, the importance of these deviations from Muslim law or custom varies greatly. In many cases, they amount to little more than a preference for a Hindu mode of address, such as Thakur, or for buttoning the coat in the Hindu fashion on the left side, instead of in the Muhammadan fashion on the right. And thirdly, the statement is not universally true. There are many converts from Hinduism—especially those whose conversion is of old standing, or who have some reason for desiring to conceal their Hindu past—who are strict, and even bigoted, in their observances of the tenets of Islam. Nevertheless, it is true that many converts, when they changed their faith, did not change, or only partially changed, their social customs. In theory, Islam should not admit the validity of any alien custom which is contrary to, or in conflict with, its own doctrines.

<sup>1</sup> Later Sir Denzil Ibbetson, author of various works on Punjab ethnography.

<sup>2</sup> Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. xvii.

But in practice, Islam has accepted the situation; indeed, every proselytizing religion must be prepared to compromise in such matters with its converts, if it is to retain them.<sup>1</sup> In practice, too, the law courts have held more than once that a convert may carry his original laws and usages with him, and may be governed by them even after conversion.

It is necessary to explain the legal status of Muhammadan women, before describing the marriage customs which depend on it.

43. *The status of women in Islam*

The woman's position under Muhammadan law is infinitely superior to that of her Hindu sister. She remains under the parental roof and authority till she is of age, and during her minority her father has the power to give her in marriage without her consent. But even that power is limited, for the guardian next in order to her father has the right to object if the marriage is prejudicial to her interests; and if any other guardian than the father gives her in marriage, she has an unqualified option to ratify or annul the marriage on attaining her majority. She then acquires her own independent rights. She shares in the inheritance of her parents with her brothers. In no circumstances can she, when of age, be married without her own consent; on the other hand, she can marry whom she pleases, and unless the marriage is one of which the law disapproves, no man can interfere. A Moslem marriage is a civil contract, which gives the husband only such power over the wife's person as the law defines, and none whatever over her goods or property. The wife's identity is not merged in that of her husband. She retains her own individuality; she remains mistress of her own estate, which she can alienate or divide at will. Her earnings are her own; she can sue her own debtors, even

<sup>1</sup> Christianity has had to do so more than once—for instance, in connexion with the date of Christmas Day. The 25th December at Rome was 'the birthday of the sun, a pagan festival which the early fathers could not keep their converts from celebrating, until (in St. Augustine's words) Julius I changed 'the birthday of the sun' into 'the birthday of Him who made the sun'.

her own husband, and be sued by them. It is true that she is kept in seclusion; but the *pardah* system is not enjoined by Muhammadan law; indeed, it only came into vogue about 744, being adopted from Persia and Byzantium, as a safeguard against the habits of the Omayyad Khalif Walid II, a depraved and tyrannical debauchee. The Muslims who uphold the custom refer to the Prophet's remarks on the privacy of women;<sup>1</sup> but those were to the address of the Arab tribes with whom he was primarily concerned, and cannot be regarded as warrant for its present existence. Nor is there anything in Muhammadan law which makes its perpetuation necessary.

Since, as has been stated above, a Muslim may choose as a wife any woman outside the prohibited degrees who professes one of the three scriptural religions, it would seem to follow that there can be no endogamy within the Muhammadan social system. But that is a general proposition; the law of Islam does not necessarily approve of every marriage or other act that it permits, and has provided safeguards against those marriages of which it disapproves, which have the effect of greatly reducing the circle within which a Muslim may select a wife. Custom, too, steps in to contract that circle further still. The legal restriction exists in both branches of Islam, the Sunni and the Shia, but is important only in the former. The customary restriction exists amongst all Muhammadans alike.

The Prophet seems to have had a horror of ill-assorted marriages—as was natural in view of the high respect in which he ordained that women should be held. 'Take ye care,' said he, 'that none contract women in marriage but their proper guardians, and

44. Endogamy in Islam  
45. The legal restriction of al Kafat among Sunnis

<sup>1</sup> History shows that the women of the Prophet's own family enjoyed no little freedom. His wife, Ayesha, led her own troops at the battle of 'the Camel' in 656 against Ali. Fatima, his daughter, often took part in political discussions. And his granddaughter, Zainab, faced her assailants after the butchery of Kerbela, in an attempt to save her nephew, Husain's son (680).

that they be not so contracted except with their equals.'<sup>1</sup> On this saying the Hanafi school of Sunni law, which is the only Sunni school with a large following in this province, has built up the doctrine of *al kafat* (equality, i.e. in marriage). This doctrine provides:—(1) that if a guardian (*wali*), even a father, contract a minor of either sex in marriage to anybody who is not his or her 'equal', then the marriage is invalid,<sup>2</sup> and can be annulled by the *qazi* on the application of the mother, of the guardian next in degree, or even of a friend; or on that of the minor when he or she reaches the age of discretion.<sup>3</sup>

(2) that if an adult woman, being *sui juris*, contracts herself in marriage to a man who is not her 'equal', the marriage may be annulled by the *qazi* on the application of any relative on her father's side who would have been her guardian for marriage (*wali*) had she been a minor—provided only that no such relative has already consented to the marriage, or that no child has already been born.

(3) that when an adult man marries a bride who is his inferior, the marriage is valid, because a man always raises his wife to his own rank, so that the marriage ceases to be unequal.

Six ingredients are necessary to produce 'equality'. Both husband and wife must be (1) free; and (2) Muslims. They must be equal in respect of (3) descent or lineage (*nasab*); (4) profession; (5) character (*hasab*); and (6) means.<sup>4</sup> As regards *nasab*, certain rules of precedence are laid down, as follows:—

(a) An Arab is superior to an *ajami*, or non-Arab Muslim.

<sup>1</sup> Ameer Ali, *Mahommedan Law*, 4th edition, Vol. II, pp. 413-414.

<sup>2</sup> So Badr-ud-din-Tyabji, *Principles of Muhammadan Law*, 2nd edition, pp. 152-156. Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 414, holds that the marriage is invalid if the guardian is father or grandfather, but that if the guardian is any other relative, it is void *ab initio*.

<sup>3</sup> Which in this case is puberty, i.e. 15 years.

<sup>4</sup> Of these requisites, (1) freedom, at the present day, has no meaning; (2) a marriage with a Jewess or Christian is 'unequal'; it would be valid, however, for an adult male; (4) profession includes trade or business; on the girl's side, of course, it would be the profession of her father or nearest male relative; (5) character includes morality and piety; (6) 'means', in practice, is confined to the man, and is interpreted as capacity to pay the dower and maintain a wife.

- (b) Amongst Arabs
  - (i) the descendants of Ali<sup>1</sup> rank highest;
  - (ii) the Qureshi rank above all other Arabs, save Ali's descendants;
- (c) Descendants of the Khalifs, though born and bred in other countries, are equal to domiciled Arabs.
- (d) A learned *ajami* is the equal of an ignorant Arab, even if he be a descendant of Ali; for 'the worth of learning is greater than the worth of family'.<sup>2</sup>
- (e) Hanafis and Shafeis (another school of law) are equal.
- (f) A *qazi* or *faqih* (jurist or theologian) ranks higher than a merchant, and a merchant than a tradesman.

So stands the Sunni law. And, *prima facie*, it might be expected that the strict observance of rules which limit a man's or woman's choice of a mate to families of lineage equal to his or her own, must necessarily produce a system of endogamy as restrictive as that of Hinduism. But that is not the case. For, in the first place, the rules of *al kafat* are not peremptory, but permissive. The 'unequal' marriage is not void, but merely voidable at the option of certain persons; and if no entitled person chooses to exercise his option, the marriage stands. Secondly, the prohibition against an unequal marriage would, as a rule, only operate in respect of a man's first wife, for should he marry a second wife, he would usually be of full age, and at liberty to marry beneath him if he chose; nor would the woman's *wali* object, since a wife is raised to her husband's status.<sup>3</sup> And thirdly, *nasab* is not the

<sup>1</sup> Ali was husband of Fatima, daughter of the Prophet by his first wife Khadija.

<sup>2</sup> Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> A man could not, however, marry a woman of *higher* rank than himself.

only criterion of 'equality'. As we have seen, it was laid down in ancient times that learning could override birth, so that a low-born scholar could marry a woman of high rank;<sup>1</sup> and at the present day the *wali* who had to select a bride or bridegroom for his ward would certainly attach as much weight to the candidate's *hasab* and to his other personal qualifications as to his *nasab*. In short, the restrictions of *al kafat* are neither rigid, nor universal, nor dependent on birth alone; whilst the endogamous restrictions of Hinduism are all of these.

Nor can it be said that the rules of *al kafat* have resulted in the formation of endogamous groups. It is, no doubt, possible to arrange the existing Muslim tribes in certain groups, according to their precedence. The first group would then consist of 'descendants of Ali'—all Saiyids, and the Alwi Shaikhs. The second would include the 'Qureshi' sections—the Qureshi Shaikhs, and other Shaikh sections that are descended from individual Quresh—i.e. Abbasi, Faruqi, Hashimi, Jafari, Siddiqi, and Usmani.<sup>2</sup> The third would include all other Shaikhs of true Arab descent. The fourth would be *ajamis*—Pathans and Moghuls. The fifth would be the pseudo-Shaikhs. But though it is probably true that no member of such a group would, in ordinary circumstances, marry without it, yet it could not be asserted that he never would marry without it in *any* circumstances. Such a grouping would be purely theoretical. And, indeed, it is doubtful whether *al kafat*, at the present time, has much practical importance, except for those who strictly observe the written law. For the ordinary man, the question of a potential bride or bridegroom's suitability is decided on its merits, when the

<sup>1</sup> At the present time, learning (in the shape of a degree) would probably still have its value in the appraisalment of a matrimonial candidate's qualifications.

<sup>2</sup> Abbasi and Hashimi are descended from Muhammad's paternal uncle and great-grandfather, Jafari from his cousin (Ali's brother), the other three from the first three Khalifs.

question arises; and equality of birth is usually secured in quite another manner, which will be presently described.

Shias do not approve of marriages with any but Muhammadan women, except in the

48. *Al kafat*  
among Shias

*muta*, or temporary, form. On the other hand, they hold to the principle that all Muslims are equal, and have consequent-

ly whittled down *al kafat* to two requisites only, namely, 'Islam', and 'means'. So long as the bridegroom is able to maintain a wife, a union between any Muslim and any Muslimah is valid, however unequal they may be in rank or descent. 'It is lawful for a free woman to marry a slave, for an Arabian woman to marry a Persian, or for a woman of the tribe of Hashimi to marry a non-Hashimite, and *vice versa*.'<sup>1</sup> Amongst Shias, therefore, this doctrine has no effect on marriage, save that it makes Islam, taken as a whole, endogamous. Shias, however, form a very small minority in the province. There are under 200,000 Shias to over five million Sunnis.

Both amongst Sunnis and Shias, it is the custom to select a wife, whenever possible, from a relatively small circle of close relations, including not only a man's own family, but families with which his own has in the past intermarried. This custom is probably due to the peculiarities of the Muhammadan law of inheritance, and is very strictly observed. Any attempt to depart from it is likely to lead to family dissension; as is proved by information that I received in 1911 from a Government officer—a Saiyid and, I believe, a Shia.<sup>2</sup> His own 'circle' consisted of relatives living in a few neighbouring villages. When the time came for his daughter's marriage, he was anxious to go outside the 'circle' to find a husband; for being an educated man himself, he wanted an educated son-in-law, and none was available within the 'circle'. He was, however, compelled by family pressure to agree to his daughter's betrothal to an illiterate youth. The natural result of this custom is that the

<sup>1</sup> Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 417 note (quotation from *Sharaya*).

<sup>2</sup> *Census Report, U.P.*, 1911, p. 223.

marriage of cousins is extremely common. No sort of cousin is within the prohibited degrees; my informant himself was married to a second cousin. It may be mentioned, as a curious proof of the frequency of cousin marriage, that Muhammadans constantly address or describe their parents-in-law by the terms for the various kinds of uncle and aunt: the habit is natural because the parents-in-law so often *are* uncle and aunt. It is obvious that such a 'marriage circle' ensures equality of descent; and it is the only endogamous group of which a Muhammadan takes any account. I am informed on good authority that these restrictions on marriage, whether dependent on the law of *al kafat* or on custom, are much more closely observed in the rural areas than in the towns.

The law of Islam permits polygamy to the extent of four wives, but the permission is conditional. 'You may marry two wives, or three, or four, but not more; but if you cannot deal equitably or justly with all, you shall marry only one.'<sup>1</sup> The condition is one that an ordinary man cannot possibly carry out; in a polygamous family, favouritism of some kind is unavoidable. And as early as the 9th century, there were jurists who held that monogamy alone was lawful. At the present day, the tendency, in advanced Muslim communities, is to regard polygamy as undesirable, if not positively unlawful; and that is the case in this province, where Muhammadans rarely contract a second marriage, unless no son has been born of the first. This is proved by the census returns; the number of married women exceed the number of married men by between 2 and 3 per cent.

The remarriage of widows is not only permitted by the law but enjoined in the Koran. The first wife of the Prophet himself was a widow. And since one contract has terminated by the death of one of the contracting parties, there is clearly no reason why the other

50. *Other Muhammadan marriage customs*  
(a) Polygamy

51. (b) Remarriage of widows

<sup>1</sup> Koran. IV, 3.

should not enter into another similar contract. But such remarriage is uncommon, at all events amongst the better classes. The usual explanation of this phenomenon is that it is due to imitation of the Hindu custom; but since the interference with the widow's freedom which it involves is contrary to the principles underlying the marriage law, the explanation is not convincing.

Divorce is permitted by the Muhammadan law; that is merely the natural result of the conception of marriage as a contract. But it is one of the permitted things that are not approved. 'Divorce,' said the Prophet, 'is the most detestable before the Almighty God of all permitted things';<sup>1</sup> and accordingly it is hedged about by many legal restrictions of all kinds. In this province, divorce of a divorce. In one case, the dowry payable at divorce is most exceptional; indeed, it becomes almost impossible as a result of the custom of demanding an enormous dowry at marriage which becomes payable only as the result by a husband, whose entire income was some Rs. 700 a month, amounted to Rs. 1,50,000. Sir Richard Burn states that about 1901, in connexion with a law suit on the question of dowry, opinions were collected regarding the advisability of allowing courts to reduce excessive dowries, and that all classes of Muhammadans unanimously condemned the proposal,<sup>2</sup> which shows that, in India at all events, the opinion held by the Prophet of divorce prevails.

The Akhbari school of Shias permit *muta* or temporary marriages—i.e. marriages for a fixed period, which may be as short as a day or as long as a century. These are very unusual in the province; though they may occasionally be used as a convenient cloak for unions of a more or less disreputable kind. This custom too is subjected to many legal restrictions; obviously, if the period is sufficiently long, there is little

<sup>1</sup> Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 530.

<sup>2</sup> Census Report, U.P., 1901, p. 120.

practical difference between a *muta* and an ordinary marriage.

The marriage ceremony itself affords adequate evidence of the principles on which the marriage law is based. The terms of the contract, including the dowry, are usually settled beforehand. On the day appointed, the bridal parties assemble at the house of the bride's father. The bride's *vakil*, or proxy, who is usually an elderly relative, visits her where she sits behind the *pardah*, with a woman attendant, and in the presence of two witnesses asks her permission to contract her in marriage to the bridegroom. On receiving her reply, which is conveyed by the attendant, he returns and signifies the girl's consent to the parties. The *qazi*<sup>1</sup> then asks the bridegroom if he is content, and on receiving an affirmative reply performs the service. This consists of the repetition in Arabic by the bridegroom after the *qazi*, of the Muhammadan creed and articles of belief, and a prayer of praise (*dua-kunat*). The *qazi* next causes the bridegroom to repeat after him in Arabic the formula of the marriage contract, and explains its meaning; which done, the *vakil* of the bride and the bridegroom clasp hands, and the former says, 'The bride (naming her and her father) has through my agency in the presence of two witnesses given her gracious consent to your marriage with her, and such a dowry is settled upon her; do you consent to it?' The bridegroom replies, 'With my whole heart and soul, to my marriage with this lady as well as to this settlement upon her, do I consent', and repeats the word 'consent' thrice. In conclusion, the *qazi* pronounces a blessing on the married pair. The formal demand by the *vakil* of the bride's consent to the marriage (even if she be a minor), and the formal intimation of that consent to the bridegroom are both significant.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, the *qazi* is some man selected for his knowledge of the law; the post has been abolished. Amongst Shias, the work of the *qazi* is done by the *mujtahid*.

<sup>2</sup> Based partly on Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 623, partly on information from a private source.

Apart from the four principal tribal divisions descended from Muhammadan invaders, there are a certain number of Muhammadan 'castes', a large number of Hindu castes that have Muhammadan branches, and a still larger number which possess a few members who have embraced Islam. The census lists of 1901 showed in all 133 castes that were wholly or partially Muhammadan; the lists of 1911 only showed 94, but a good many small castes had been thrown together under a single head. Of these, 54 in 1901 and 41 in 1911, had less than 1,000 Muhammadan members and can be neglected altogether. Certain other entries of 1901 may also be neglected for other reasons; these are the Hijra, Kunera, Lakhera, Kabariya, Nalband, Nanbai, Qalaigar, Raj, Rangsaiz, and Habshi. The Hijras are eunuchs; they cannot obviously be counted a true caste. The Habshis are descendants of Abyssinian slaves of the Oudh court, now extinct. The Nalband (farrier), Nanbai (baker), Qalaigar (tinsmith), Raj (mason), and Rangsaiz (painter) are occupations, not castes. The Kunera is really a Barhai subcaste; Lakhera and Kabariya are merely other names for Churihar and Kunjra respectively.

The rest can be divided into three classes:—

(1) Castes now entirely Muhammadan, though recruited partly or wholly from Hindu converts.—These are the Atashbaz, Baidguar, Bhand, Bhathiyara, Bhishiti,<sup>1</sup> Biloch, Bisati, Dafali,\* Dogar, Gaddi, Gandhi, Gara, Ghogar,\* Ghosi,\* Hurkiya, Iraqi, Jhojha, Julaha,\* Kanmail,\* Khanzada, Khumra,\* Kingariya, Lalkhan, Malkana, Mirasi,\* Nau-Muslim, Niyariya,\* Pankhiya, Qalandar,\* Qassab,\* Ranghar and Turk.

(2) Castes with larger Muhammadan than Hindu branches.—These are the Churihar,\* Darzi,\* Dhuniya,\*

<sup>1</sup> The Muhammadan castes or branches which are marked with an asterisk possess permanent tribal councils. See Chapter VI, par. 4. The Ghogar and Kanmail are new castes; see Chapter XI, pars. 9 and 11, for notes on them. There are also notes in the same chapter on the Chik, par. 21; Khumra, par. 27; Manihar and Churihar, par. 32.

Kunjra,\* Manihar,\* Meo or Mewati, Rain, Rangrez, Saiqalgar and Tawaif.

(3) Castes with larger Hindu than Muhammadan branches.—These are the Ahir, Baghban, Baheliya, Banjara, Barhai, Bhanggi, Bhat, Chamar, Chhipi, Chik, Dharhi, Dhobi, Dom, Goriya, Gujar, Halwai,\* Jat, Kahar, Kamboh, Kumhar,\* Lohar, Mali, Mallah, Mochi, Nai, Nat,\* Rajput, Saini, Sonar, Tagh and Teli.

In the matter of marriage the customs of communities descended from Hindu converts are often a curious mixture of Hindu and Muhammadan rites. In the first place, contrary to Muhammadan custom, almost all of them are strictly endogamous; and many of them are divided into endogamous sections. Amongst the Bhands, Gujars, and Rangrez, Sunnis and Shias do not intermarry—a curious pair of endogamous sections; and in the Saiqalgar caste there are two endogamous sections, Pathan and Shaikh. The Dafali will not marry his daughter into families that reverence other saints, or godlings other than his own. Muhammadan Rajputs preserve their Hindu rules of hypergamy; so do the Iraqi and the Gujar, in the shape of refusing to give daughters to families from which they have taken wives. These two castes, with the Kunjra and Meo, also preserve the Hindu exogamous sections; whilst the Iraqi, Turk, Gandhi, Kunjra, Ghogar, and one or two more castes restrict the custom of cousin marriage—undoubtedly a reminiscence of their former Hinduism, and contrary both to Muhammadan law and custom. Many castes, such as the Dafali, the Iraqi, the Churihar, the Dhuniya, the Kunjra, the Rangrez, and the Gujar, preserve more or less completely the Hindu wedding rites, save that the *qazi* replaces the *pandit*, and Allah, the Prophet, or some saint replaces the family godlings. The Bhat goes further still; he carries out first a Hindu wedding in its fullest form, and then follows it up by a Muhammadan ceremony. Many castes still employ a Brahman *pandit* to fix an auspicious day for weddings and other ceremonies; such are the

Bhat, the Dafali, the Ghosi, the Gujar, the Iraqi, the Kingariya, the Meo, and the Ranghar. The rules of adoption amongst Iraqis and Dafalis, the rules of succession amongst Iraqis, Mukeri Banjaras, and Churihars, are much more Hindu than Muhammadan. Many castes have altered the divorce law of Islam, permitting it only for infidelity, and as a rule only with the consent of the *panchayat*; such are the Bhishti, Churihar, Dafali, Gandhi, Iraqi, Kingariya, Kunjra, and Rangrez; whilst the Bhand, if a wife is divorced for infidelity, does not allow her to remarry. Most castes permit the remarriage of widows, but in almost every case the Hindu custom of the levirate also exists to modify it; whilst the Gandhi forbids it altogether, and the Iraqi only allows remarriage, whether of a widow or of a divorced wife, with the consent of the *panchayat*. The Kunjra permits a man to marry two sisters at once, which the law of Islam forbids. In fact, most of these castes of Hindu converts preserve some trace of their former marriage customs; and many preserve a great deal.

But there are survivals of other Hindu customs too.

The Ghosi and Kingariya, for instance, will neither eat beef themselves, nor eat in the company of any Musulman who does. Many drink liquor, contrary to the law of the Prophet, and some eat forbidden food. Others maintain the Hindu taboos on the occasion of a death. Many worship Hindu deities, especially Kali, and observe Hindu festivals. The Bhand worships a deified ancestor, Saiyid Hasan; the Bhishti worships his *mashk* (waterskin). The Dafali bathes in the Ganges in connexion with important ceremonies. Finally, a distinctively Muhammadan religious rite has been modified to resemble an equally distinctive Hindu rite. The Shab Barat is a festival, when gifts are made to the poor in the name of God, the prophet, and all relations and descendants. But Indian Musulmans now hold that the ceremony confers direct spiritual benefit on deceased ancestors; and even that its omission would result in the barring of the gates of Paradise to

57. Other customs  
of ex-Hindu converts

all members of the family who had died during the previous year. This, of course, is reminiscent of the Hindu *sraddha*. Many castes of Hindu converts, not content with making this offering on the usual occasion, repeat it at one or other of the Ids, sometimes at both.

Some brief explanations may be given of the nature and origin of certain of the castes mentioned above.

58. Explanatory  
remarks regarding  
the origin of  
certain Muhammadan  
castes

- (i) *Converted Rajputs*.—(a) The Khanzadas of the United Provinces are found in Oudh; according to one account, they are the descendants of Tilok Chand and his followers, Bachgoti Rajputs to whom Babar offered the choice of Islam or imprisonment; according to another account, they were converted at an earlier date, probably in the reign of Sikandar Lodi.
- (b) The Ranghars were Bhatti Rajputs, converted in the reigns of Qutb-ud-Din (1206-1210) and Ala-ud-din Khilji (1295-1315).
- (c) The Lalkhanis are Bargujars of Bulandshahr, descended from Lal Singh, a favourite of Akbar, who was given the title of Lal Khan; his grandson was the first member of the family to embrace Islam, in the reign of Aurangzeb.
- (d) The Bhale Sultans of Bulandshahr became Muhammadans to please Khizr Khan, Timur's protégé, but previous to this they had been closely connected with the Musulman rulers both under Shahab-ud-din Ghori and Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq. Those of Sultanpur were probably converted in the time of Sher Shah, King of Bengal.

There are Muhammadan branches in the following important Rajput septs: Bais, Bargujar, Bhatti, Bisen, Chandel, Chauhan, Gautam, Panwar, Raikwar, Rathor, Sombansi, and Tomar; besides other septs of less importance.

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- (b) The *Bhishti* caste is entirely Muhammadan; the Hindu water-carrier is a Kahar. The caste, however, is largely composed of converts. The Bhishti is also known as 'Saqqā'—an Arabic word meaning 'one who gives to drink', which has recently become prominent, as a result of events in Afghanistan.
- (c) The *Iraqi* is a curious caste to find in Islam. Its special occupation is the sale of liquor, the use of which is, of course, forbidden by that religion. According to one theory, they are Persian immigrants from Iraq (Mesopotamia); whilst others derive the name from *araq*, 'liquor'. More probably they are converted Kalwars. Some of them ape Hinduism to the extent of buttoning their coat to the left, and wearing no beard, both in Hindu fashion; but this is merely because it suits their Hindu customers better.

(viii) The *Malkana*.—Malkana is the name given to a group of miscellaneous converts residing mostly in the Agra and Muttra districts. Little was known of this caste till 1923, when enquiry disclosed the following facts. The date of their conversion is unknown; it cannot be later than the reign of Jahangir, for they possess documents of that period, and may be much earlier. The name was originally a title; its meaning (*malik*=king) shows that they were of high position. Most of them seem to be of Rajput stock (Jadon, Sakarwar, Chandel, Kachhwaha): but some claim to be descendants of Jat, Agarwal, and Brahman ancestors. Their conversion has made very little impression upon them. Most of their customs are Hindu; for instance, Hindu priests perform a number of the preliminary marriage ceremonies, and are followed by the *qazi*, who performs the Muhammadan rite. Many of them also preserve the Hindu exogamous restrictions. They worship Hindu deities, observe Hindu festivals, and avoid commensal relations with other Muhammadans. They even have

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Hindu names. Almost their only Muhammadan observances are circumcision and burial of the dead.

Principal authorities.—Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh* (1896).  
*Census Reports, U.P., 1901 and 1911.*  
 Rose, *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N.-W. F. P.* (1911).  
 Elphinstone, *History of India.*  
 Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Muhammadan Rule* (1917).  
 Ameer Ali, *Mahomedan Law* (4th edition).

(ii) *Converted pseudo-Rajputs*.—The origin of the Garas, Jhojhas, and Dogars is uncertain. They are all agricultural castes belonging to the western districts. They all claim to be ex-Rajputs, but in the case of the Jhojhas, at all events, the claim is very weak. Indeed, the Jhojhas are more probably descended from converted slaves of the Moghuls. There is possibly more in the claim of the Garas and Dogars.

(iii) *Converted Ahirs*.—The Gaddis and Ghosis by occupation are dairymen and cowherds. They are mostly converted Ahirs; in fact, in 1891, both were recorded as Ahir subcastes. The Gaddis are most numerous in Oudh, and with other low-caste tribes were subdued by the Rajput immigrants from the west. The Ghosis, in the eastern districts, claim to be ex-Gujars.

(iv) *Banjara sections*.—(a) The Baidguar caste is clearly composed of converts from the Hindu Baid Banjaras. It has two endogamous sections—Baid, who carry grain on pack animals, and Guar, who tend cattle.

(b) The Turkiya Banjara (already mentioned in par. 39), assert that they came originally from Multan, whence they moved into the Deccan, and then into Rohilkhand. They are not to be confused with the Turk caste of the Rampur State (see below).

(c) The Mukeri Banjaras claim to have come originally from Mecca, which they helped Father Abraham to build; and, as a natural corollary, to belong to the Quresh tribe, which resided in and around Mecca. They have a larger proportion of Muslim sections than most similar castes, so that quite possibly they have a considerable admixture of foreign blood.

(v) *The Turk*.—The Turk is an agricultural caste found in Rampur State and the Kumaon Tarai. They deny that they are converted Hindus; they claim to be of Turki blood, and to have entered India with Shahab-ud-din Ghori. But the claim is very doubtful,

for their customs are much more Hindu than Muhammadan. They are, for instance, very strictly endogamous, and marry early—earlier even than most Hindu castes.

(vi) *Castes of singers, dancers, and musicians*.—The Kingariya, Dharhi, and Mirasi are all singers and musicians. They appear to be closely akin; the Muhammadan Dharhis and Mirasis are said to intermarry, whilst Kingariyas and Dharhis are probably the same people under different names. The Mirasi is also known as Dom Mirasi, and may spring from the Dom tribe; the Kingariyas and Dharhis are chiefly converts from the Nat and other vagrant races. The Bhand, Dafali, Hurkiya and Tawaif all belong to the same class of society. The Tawaif is the class of dancing girls and prostitutes; it recruits from all castes, whether Hindu or Muhammadan. The Hurkiya is a small class of pimps, musicians, and attendants on Muhammadan dancing girls. The Bhand is a mimic, jester, and buffoon. One of the Bhand sections claims descent from one Saiyid Hasan, a courtier of Timur, who composed a humorous poem in Arabic for his master's pleasure. The other section was imported from Kashmir by Nasir-ud-din Haidar, King of Oudh. The sectional nomenclature shows that the origin of the caste is partially, at all events, Hindu. The Dafali is a beggar, drummer, and hedge priest.

(vii) *Occupational castes connected with food and drink*.—(a) The Bhathiyara is an innkeeper and vendor of cooked meat, and tobacco. The caste consists partly of Hindu converts, but is now entirely Muhammadan. The inn (*sarai*) is a very old Hindu institution, dating back to Chandragupta at least. It is perhaps natural that the occupation has passed into Muhammadan hands; the caste restrictions on cooking and food make it difficult for a Hindu to be of much assistance to others as a cook. As matters are, a *sarai* to a Hindu is a place where he can obtain lodging, not board or attendance.

## CHAPTER XI

### NEW CASTES, AND NEW INFORMATION ABOUT OLD CASTES

In previous chapters there is ample proof that the caste system is not rigid, but mutable, and that its evolution is still proceeding: new castes and subcastes come into existence, old customs fall into abeyance.

One result of this is that no account of caste, however complete and accurate it was at the time when it was written, remains so for long. Such a book as Mr. Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh* requires periodical revision if it is to be kept up to date.<sup>1</sup>

This book is not an attempt to revise that great work: indeed its plan is entirely different. None the less, it will be useful to devote a chapter to the description of new castes which were not in existence when Mr. Crooke wrote, and to such fresh information about old castes as has come to light since his time.<sup>2</sup>

It has already been stated that the average Indian, whatever his religion or community, knows little or nothing about anybody's caste but his own. His knowledge of his own caste is more extensive: but even so, though he may know facts, he is generally ignorant of principles, and also of the origin and history of the caste itself. At the census of 1911 in the United Provinces, there were 667 Hindu caste entries, which on examination were reduced to something under 300; and even of these a certain number were sub-caste names which for various reasons<sup>3</sup> could not be

<sup>1</sup> The book was published in 1896: it has not been revised since. It is to be hoped that a revised edition will not much longer be delayed.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the facts given in this chapter have already been mentioned, but as a rule only incidentally, by way of illustration of some discussion.

<sup>3</sup> Usually because the same name was attached to subcastes in several castes.

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definitely assigned to any particular caste, or functional names which were not true caste names, though they possibly denoted new castes in process of formation.

Apart from ignorance, however, there are many cases of wilful misrepresentation, dictated by various motives. Sometimes a Hindu prefers, when asked his caste, to give, in lieu of its name, some more or less honorific title which is appropriated to it. For instance, a Kayastha may describe himself as 'Lala', a Jat as 'Chaudhri', a Bhangi as 'Mehtar'. Others may return an occupational name, or the name of a subcaste, or the name of his *gotra* or family, for no better reason than that they sound more distinguished. For instance, there were such occupational entries in the census returns of 1911 as 'zargar' (jeweller), 'nilgar' (worker in indigo), 'tikligar' (spangle-maker). The Kayastha-Mochi preferred to call himself Kayastha-Zingar (i.e. saddler instead of shoemaker). Jaiswara Chamars almost invariably describe themselves as 'Jaiswara', for that is also a subcaste of many much higher castes. Similarly the Kori-Chamar will always call himself Kori—or even by slurring the first syllable try to make himself out a Koiri.<sup>1</sup> From time to time, too, castes or particular branches of castes, who, having acquired wealth, are endeavouring to rise in the social scale, claim descent from one of the three twice-born classes of Manu; and in pursuance of their claim they call themselves by a name that conforms to it. These claims may or may not be justified: some of them undoubtedly are so, and (if the description of the growth of the caste system given in an earlier chapter is correct), there is no *a priori* improbability in any of them. But when, for instance, a Bhuinhar or a Belwar calls himself a Brahman, the result is but to increase the difficulty of classification by caste. The vanity which induces such

<sup>1</sup> A Kori-Chamar tent-pitcher once earned a severe beating from his fellow servants for playing this trick, and so inducing them to drink water at his hands.

an action is perfectly intelligible; it operates also in other races, as, for instance, when 'Smith' spells his name with a 'y' and a redundant 'e', or 'Moses' and 'Jacobson' become 'Moss' and 'Jameson' by deed-poll: but it is none the less troublesome to the investigator.

There have been many new claims to twice born descent since Mr. Crooke wrote, whilst fresh information has been collected which bears on old claims.

Bhuinhars have claimed to be Maithila Brahmans: which claim was admitted in 1911,<sup>1</sup> to the extent of allowing Bhuinhars to describe themselves as Bhuinhar Brahmans, thus making the caste a Brahman subcaste, such as Gaur, Saraswat, and others.

The Oudh Belwars have also claimed Brahman descent: here too the claim appears to be correct. Their main subcaste was always Sanadh, which is a Brahman subcaste. They appear to be in origin the same as the Naik Banjaras found in Gorakhpur, who also claim to be Sanadhs. Both are orthodox Brahmans, save that they smoke tobacco: in some places they get the special greeting reserved for Brahmans; they have or had the habit of sitting '*dharna*' at a debtor's door,<sup>2</sup> whilst in one district Sanadhs sometimes intermarry with them. (In this district, it should be explained, they have given up the un-Brahmanical occupation and customs which were the original cause of their separation.)

The Tagas claim to be Brahmans who have renounced the acceptance of gifts: the claim, though probable enough, is not, so far as I know, proved in the same sense as the claims of the Belwar and Bhuinhar. Other

<sup>1</sup> By the census authorities. All these claimants have contracted the habit of regarding these authorities as a College of Heralds, much to the latter's inconvenience. Their proper course would be to apply to some learned Brahman for a *vyavastha*, or declaration. See *Census Report, India*, 1911, pp. 379-380.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. of sitting there without food or water till the debt is paid, thus threatening the debtor with the moral guilt of a Brahman's death. The practice is, of course, ineffective except in the case of a Brahman; it is forbidden by the Penal Code.

castes that have claimed Brahmanical descent are certain Bhats, the Dhiman Barhais, and the Lohars: the former call themselves 'Brahmbhat', the two latter 'Visvakarmabansi Brahman'. In these cases, the castes have advanced elaborate, but unconvincing, arguments to prove their claims, though that does not imply that the claims are necessarily wrong.

Kurmis, Gadariyas, Karnwals, Mair and Tank Sonars, and Kayasthas all claim Kshatriya descent. None of these claims have so far been satisfactorily proved: but there is no *prima facie* improbability in the claims of the Kurmis, Sonars and Kayasthas. As is pointed out elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> all ancient authorities are curiously silent about the agricultural castes: it is not possible to believe that there were no landowners amongst the old Kshatriya clans, and the Kurmi, which is an agricultural caste of high position and high antiquity, may very well represent, at all events in respect of some of his branches, the old Kshatriya landowners, or at least their *vrishala* successors in interest.<sup>2</sup> The Sonar is an occupational caste also of high antiquity, and some of its subcastes may very well be of Kshatriya descent; for since the guild of goldsmiths must have been of high position and repute, it would be one of those that Kshatriyas would be most likely to join. The arguments by which the Kayasthas support their claim are remarkably ingenious. The ancient Kshatriyas, they say, were not merely the rulers and soldiers of the community: their traditional occupation was 'public service' generally. There were secretariats and public offices in old days, which must have been staffed by Kshatriya secretaries and clerks. It is from this ancient bureaucracy that the Kayasthas claim descent. Unfortunately, what independent evidence there is suggests that the 'civil service' of ancient India—in its upper grades at all events—was recruited rather from Brahmans than Kshatriyas.

Kalwars claim to be Batham Vaisyas, Kandus and

<sup>1</sup> Chapter XII, par. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter II, par. 10.

Halwais claim to be Madhesiya Vaisyas; and in each of these castes there is a subcaste of the appropriate name at the present day. There is, perhaps, less improbability, *prima facie*, in this than in any other similar claim. The Kandu indeed is generally admitted to be one of the 'Vaisya' branches, formerly and incorrectly called 'Baniya'.

The Khatris have long claimed to be Kshatriyas, who have taken to trade; and the claim was admitted in 1901 to the extent of putting them in the same social group as the modern Rajput clans. The fact that Saraswat Brahmins will eat either *kachcha* or *pakka* food cooked by them, as their hereditary priests, points to a very high and very pure descent. A complete list of the claims advanced in 1911 and 1921 is added as an appendix.<sup>1</sup>

In 1901 it was reported that the Baghban subcaste had split off from the Mali caste; whilst Mr. Crooke mentions Baghbans, whom he connects with the Kachhis. It has since been reported that they have four exogamous groups, the Baramasi, Sani, Chhajarwar and Karonia. 'Baramasi' in the western districts is another name for Kachhi, and means 'those who cultivate their lands all the year round'. Sani is given as a Baghban subcaste by Mr. Crooke: Karonia is a Mali section. Clearly, Kachhi, Mali, and Baghban are all closely akin; most probably the Mali is an offshoot from the Kachhi, and the Baghban from the Mali. The levirate exists, but is not compulsory. The caste is served by Gaur and Sanadh Brahmins.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Crooke described the 'Banmanus' (which means 'man of the forest') as a Musahar subcaste: but in Sultanpur they are now a separate and entirely distinct caste. Their legendary ancestor was Sewak, an Ahir, whose family, save one pregnant woman, was slain

<sup>1</sup> I am told by the Census Superintendent of 1931 that the number of these claims on this occasion is over a hundred.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Chapter VI, par. 13 (ii).

in battle with another Ahir. They worship the hero Raja Bal, a Bhar King of Dalmau, who was killed by the Muhammadans; the Banmanus, however, tell another story of his death, and incidentally make him a Brahmin. Raja Bal happened to blow his horn near the spot where some wild beast had killed a cow. Some Ahirs were attracted by the sound, concluded that the dead bones were crying out against their murderer, and put the Raja to death: then, finding that he was a Brahmin, deified him. This legend also belongs to Ahir mythology. The caste is endogamous, has the usual marriage customs, and practises the levirate. They use the Brahmin only as an astrologer. Their chief occupations are making leaf platters and collecting wild honey. Those who live in the jungle are said to be very shy and wild: those who have settled in villages resemble other low caste villagers.<sup>1</sup>

There are no less than three castes with this name: an aboriginal tribe in Mirzapur, an old caste, elsewhere called 'Orh', in Moradabad, and a new caste in the same district. The second of these is a functional caste which weaves coarse cloth and blankets: it has an impermanent *panchayat* and the usual customs of low caste Hindus. The third caste claims descent from one Raja Jagdeo, and say they got the name because they 'lost their land':<sup>2</sup> these are chiefly cultivators, but some are weavers. They have a permanent *panchayat*, and differ from the second caste in the possession of *gotras* and *gotra* exogamy, and in various customs. It is possible that these second and third groups are both offshoots of the Kori caste: if so, the second may be Orh Koris and the third Chamar Koris, for both Orh and Chamar are subcastes of the Kori caste. Bhuiyar in that case would be a mere occupational name (it is the local term for weaver). Or the third group of Bhuiyars may be Chamars that have taken to weaving.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Chapter VI, par. 5 (iv).

<sup>2</sup> *Bhuin*, land, *har*, loser.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Chapter XII, par. 9.

The Dhimar is a Kahar occupational subcaste of fishermen which for some unknown reason has separated itself from the parent stock all over the United Provinces. It has a permanent *panchayat*, and in all respects resembles the Kahar caste.

The Ghogar is a new Muhammadan caste of converts from Hinduism which is found in Moradabad, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor and Naini Tal. There are various accounts of their origin. They themselves claim variously Arabian and Kshatriya descent (according, no doubt, as the claimant attaches more importance to religion or to race). Another theory is that they descend from the union of a Dhinwar Khagi and a Bharbhunja woman, which seems to be an etiological myth explaining their occupations of digging wells and parching grain, the traditional functions of the two groups mentioned. Ghogar is then explained as a corruption of 'do ghar', or two houses—an impossible derivation. A less improbable story assigns them as ancestor one Ghogh Mallah—in which case Ghogar is a diminutive. They practise the levirate, and permit marriage with the mother's brother's daughter but with no other cousin—which amounts to a considerable restriction on the usual Muhammadan custom. They observe some Hindu festivals, but are better Muhammadans than most castes of the same social standing.

The Gidhiya caste lives in Moradabad, Naini Tal and Bijnor. Their origin is uncertain: they themselves assert sometimes that they are descended from a clan of Gujarat Rajputs called Athpahariya, sometimes that they are emigrants from a place called Harewala, though they do not know where that is. They have four endogamous subcastes—Athpahariya, Bawariya, Gandhila and Phandiya—which last, they say, is their caste name in their native land (i.e. Gujarat or 'Harewala'). They practise the levirate and marriage with the maternal uncle's daughter, but with no other cousin. A daughter

may be married into the family in which a father's sister has been married, but not a son: which is only one form of the hypergamous rule. They eat food cooked by any touchable Hindu: they will eat any kind of flesh except pork, fowls, and beef, and even such carrion as kites. They worship Kali. They are traditionally bird-catchers and derive their name from the fact that they make their nets from the sinews of the kite (*gidh*). They used to be regarded as criminals, but have now settled down to cultivation. I am inclined to regard them as an offshoot of the Western Bawariyas for the following reasons:—

- (a) Gidhiya is a name, in some places, for Bawariya.
- (b) The Bawariyas also claim descent from Rajputs of Western India.
- (c) Of the four Gidhiya subcastes, one is Bawariya and another Gandhila, a vagrant tribe akin to the Bawariya.
- (d) The Bawariyas used to be bird-catchers.
- (e) In the matter of worship, food and commensal restrictions, the Bawariyas and Gidhiyas show complete similarity, save that the former have not yet given up the use of pork and fowls.

The Kanmail is a Muhammadan occupational caste; they claim to be Siddiqi Shaikhs, though they are quite clearly converts from Hinduism. In all probability they are an offshoot from the Mahawat Nats, who are also called Kanmailiya: like these Nats, the Kanmail is occasionally called Baid, or Bindhi—a generic nickname, indeed, for all Nats, from a peculiar method of tying the turban. At all events, they have now settled down in Moradabad. They have no subcastes. They have a permanent *panchayat* under an elected *chaudhri*, with the usual social jurisdiction. The levirate exists: cousins can marry on the mother's side, but not on the father's.

The marriage customs are normal, but are rather adaptations from Hinduism than strictly Muhammadan in nature. Their occupation is the decidedly unpleasant one of ear-cleaning.

The Kayastha-Darzi is a new caste, found in Gorakhpur, Etah and Moradabad. In Gorakhpur they claim to be Srivastava, in Etah and Moradabad to be Saksena Kayasthas. The latter possess *gotras*, and have published a monograph on their ethnology. They possess a *panchayat* and tolerate, but do not approve of, the levirate. In both these respects they differ from ordinary Kayasthas: indeed these facts (coupled with the existence of the monograph mentioned, for such monographs are usually produced by castes that are endeavouring to rise in the social scale), suggest that instead of being Kayasthas who have taken to the trade of the Darzi, they may be Darzis who are claiming rank as Kayasthas. Locally, however, the opposite view is held.

The Kayastha-Senduriya exists only in Gorakhpur and is in all respects similar to the Kayastha-Darzi of that district.

The Phansiya caste is an offshoot of the Pasi tribe, which resides in Moradabad, Bareilly and Rampur State. They themselves claim kinship with the Bhils: and the claim is possibly correct, for one of the Pasi subcastes in Moradabad and the neighbouring district of Budaun is Bhil. They also seem to be akin to Aheriyas and Baheliyas, which also are Pasi subcastes in this tract. Formerly they were hunters and fowlers like their relations: but they are now cultivators and fruit-sellers. The levirate exists, and the practice of marrying outside the village is strictly followed. They imitate the food restrictions of higher castes, and are served by Gaur Brahmans. The caste affords a typical example of a rise in the social scale due to adopting a clean profession: it is also an instance of secession due to increased prosperity.

The Sainthwar was formerly a Kurmi subcaste, but was classed as a separate caste in 1911. The chief member of it is the Raja of Padrauna in Gorakhpur: and the separation is principally due to the rise of his family to prominence. There is a legendary connexion between the Sainthwars and the Bisen Rajputs. The traditional ancestor of the latter was Mayur Bhatta: the Sainthwars, or at all events the Mal section of that caste, claim to be descended from the union of this prince and a concubine, who, according to the Bisens' own tradition, was a Kurmi woman. It should be mentioned that all Kurmis claim such descent, though the Sainthwars do not admit their claim, which, considering the widespread nature of the Kurmi caste, is *prima facie* improbable. Sainthwars do not allow widow marriage; but this is more probably the result of the fission than its cause.

The only caste which has ever possessed a subcaste called Singhariya is the Kahar. In Moradabad, however, the Singhariyas claim descent from certain members of four high Rajput clans, who took to the occupation of growing ground-nuts, and they deny that there is any connexion with Kahars. This claim is certainly baseless; and their customs are not such as a Rajput offshoot would be likely to adopt. They have, for instance, a permanent *panchayat* with a permanent elected *chaudhri*: very important matters are referred to a caste *panchayat* of *chaudhris* which meets on the occasion of a fair at Kashipur in the Naini Tal district. They have the levirate custom and prohibit marriage in the lines of all four grandparents.

(i) *Bharbhunja; Halwai; Kandu*. The Bharbhunja, Halwai and Kandu castes are closely akin, though the precise nature of their kinship is uncertain. All three claim to be Madhesiya Vaisyas and certainly all three have Madhesiya subcastes.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sherring calls Kandu a subcaste of Bharbhunja: Sir

17. Fresh information about old castes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, par. 4.

Herbert Risley treats the two names as synonyms in Bihar and Bengal. In Gorakhpur the Bharbhunja caste, and in Azamgarh a Halwai subcaste are regarded as offshoots from the Kandu caste: whilst in Cawnpore the Kanaujiya Bharbhunja, so long as he follows the Halwai's occupation, is said to intermarry with the Halwai caste. In all probability, the Kandu is the oldest of the three, and has given branches to both the Bharbhunja and the Halwai, at all events in the east of the United Provinces.

The Bhoksas inhabit the Tarai, or the submontane tracts of the Naini Tal district. There are two accounts of their origin. One, a comparatively simple story, makes them Rajputs from Delhi who either voluntarily settled in, or were exiled to, the Tarai during the Moghul period. The other story is to the effect that certain Rajputs, being about to rebel against the Moghul power, sent their wives with their maidservants and an escort of Kahars to the safety of this wild tract. The rebellion failed, their husbands were all killed, and the Bhoksas were the offspring of the union of the Rajput women and their Kahar servants. In support of this story they point to certain customs of the caste which all presuppose the superiority of women over men—namely, that their women will not eat food cooked by the men: that they eat indoors, whilst men eat out of doors: that they do the marketing whilst the men attend them to carry home their purchases. All these customs are certainly most unusual in India.

In the neighbourhood of Cawnpore Boriyas are regarded as notorious criminals, which one would not gather from Mr. Crooke's account. They are obviously the same as Bauriyas or Bawariyas.

There is much confusion regarding the Chauhans of Moradabad and Bijnor. There are, first, true Rajput Chauhans, a clan of very high position, whose members in this part of the country bear the hereditary title of Chaudhri.

There are, secondly, other Chauhans, who, though they are indubitably of Rajput descent, are of much lower rank. To account for this loss of status they tell two stories. One is to the effect that in 1488, on the invitation of a *sadhu* who had been persecuted by a Muhammadan governor, they invaded the country, conquered the oppressor, and then settled down on the scene of their victory, losing status as a consequence. The other story alleges that they lost status because they crossed the Indus in 1586 with Maharaja Man Singh: the cause of the loss of status in both cases would be the same, namely, the change of home.<sup>1</sup> These Chauhans are divided into two endogamous sections—Chaudhri and Bar (or Padhan), which were originally exogamous, for Chaudhris used to take wives from, though they refused to give wives to, the Bars. The cause of this change was possibly that the Chaudhris were rich and orthodox, whilst the Bars were poor and practised widow marriage. At all events, an attempt made to effect a reconciliation at a joint *panchayat* failed, and as the Chaudhris insisted on treating the Bars as their inferiors for the purpose of marriage, whilst the Bars would not deal with them on such terms, the two sections remain endogamous. Both sections have lost further prestige because they do not wear the sacred thread, and eat *kachcha* food in the fields instead of in the privacy of the *chauka* at home: whilst it is said that in Moradabad the Chaudhris also practise widow marriage.

Thirdly, there is a Chauhan subcaste of the Khagi caste. This suggests a connexion between the true Chauhans and the Khagis: the Chauhan Khagis are probably descendants of Khagi servants of the true Chauhans.

Fourthly, there is a separate caste called Khagi-Chauhan. They claim to be true Chauhans, who lost status at a very early date because they adopted the practice of widow marriage. The cause would certainly suffice to

<sup>1</sup> Another instance of loss of status connected with a change of home is that of the Sarwariya Brahmans, outcasted by the Kanaujiyas because they crossed the Sarju to perform the *yagna* ceremony for Rama after he killed Rawan.

produce the effect: and the affiliation of these outcaste Chauhans to the Khagis might be the result of the connexion between them, mentioned above. But the claim is probably bad, for these Khagi-Chauhans have other customs which are characteristic of low castes—for instance, the levirate and a permanent *panchayat*—whilst in features they are said to resemble Chamars rather than Rajputs.<sup>1</sup> Still, it is a curious fact that the Bar-Chauhans are beginning to take their daughters as wives, which implies that they, at all events, believe in their Chauhan descent.

What with (1) true Chauhans who bear the title of Chaudhri, (2) degraded Chauhans one of whose subcastes is Chaudhri, (3) Khagi-Chauhans and (4) Chauhan Khagis, there is scope for confusion.

In Cawnpore and elsewhere, the Chik disclaims any connexion with the Khatik and the Khatik with him. This is contrary to Mr. Crooke's view: in one place he makes Chik a Khatik subcaste, in another he makes Khatik a Chik or Qassab subcaste.<sup>2</sup> Nor is Baqarqassab a mere variant for Chik: it is an entirely distinct Muhammadan group, also known as Turkiya, whilst Chiks are all Hindus. The Chik has a permanent *panchayat*: there are seven exogamous *gotras*, but no endogamous sections.

The true name of the Joshi caste in the plains is Jotishi or Jyotishi Brahmans—i.e. Brahmans learned in astrology: Dakaut is a nickname, used in Bijnor only, due to the fact that some of them accept offerings made to the idol of Sani (Saturn) in Dakaur near Bombay. They have the custom of levirate and widow marriage; these, and the presence of a remarkably well organized *panchayat*, make it improbable that they are true Brahmans.

<sup>1</sup> There is a local proverb '*Chauhan aur Chamar ki ek ras*' which means 'Chauhan and Chamar have the same horoscope'. This may mean that they have the same characteristics; but more probably it is merely similar to the proverb 'the rain falls alike on the just and the unjust'.

<sup>2</sup> *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh*, Vol. III, p. 258, and Vol. IV, p. 190.

The older and more common spelling was Jhijhotiya, which agrees with none of the usual derivations, though it could be referred to Jejaka Dhukti, a name used in inscriptions for parts of Bundelkhand. The name given in the Vishnu Dharma Purana to the country between the Vindhya, Jumna, and Narbada is, however, Judhdes, which is the tract where Jujhotiyas are mainly found: and obviously it supports the spelling Jujhotiya. The Jujhotiyas themselves, however, met some years ago to discuss caste origins, and accepted a theory that they were named after one Jujhar Singh, a ruler of remote antiquity who settled in Bundelkhand, and finding no Brahmans there, invited Kanaujiyas to cross the Jumna, whose name he then changed to Jujhotiya. This legend may conceal a real fission from the Kanaujiyas due to a change of home. But the Jujhotiyas probably had ulterior motives for accepting this theory: for it enabled them both to claim Kanaujiya origin, and also to pay a compliment to the ruler of a considerable State in Bundelkhand whose name happened to be Jujhar Singh. They are generally regarded as similar but inferior to Kanaujiyas: they will eat their *pakka* food; but Kanaujiyas do not return the compliment.

A good deal of information has been given elsewhere about the Karwal caste.<sup>1</sup> Other quaint customs are described here. They will eat goat, sheep, pig, fowls, various kinds of game birds, porcupines and lizards. They will eat food of all kinds cooked by all castes save the Chamar, Bhang, Dhobi, Dom, Kori, and Dhanuk, which are also the castes from which they may not take wives. They have customs of their own both at birth and at death. At birth, they bury the umbilical cord and placenta with a scorpion's sting, the intestines of a porcupine, and some liquor, which are believed to preserve the babe respectively

<sup>1</sup> Chapter IX, par. 9.

against feeling a scorpion's sting, an excessive secretion of bile, colds, and ill luck generally. Liquor is drunk at the usual feasts on the sixth and twelfth days after birth; but women get none, because it would be too expensive to provide it for them. At death, they distinguish between '*kachcha*' and '*pakka*' rites, so called from the nature of the food given at the funeral feast. The '*pakka*' funeral is that of a person who has had smallpox (or been vaccinated); the body, if that of a man, is wrapped in a new loin cloth and turban; if that of a woman, in a new skirt, bodice and veil, with a winding sheet in both cases; whilst a comb and needle are also buried with a woman, for 'a woman's toilet is no trifling matter', as a Karwal said when giving this information. A '*pakka*' corpse is cremated: the ashes are collected for interment in the tribal burial place, which they visit once a year for the purpose. The '*kachcha*' funeral is used for all other purposes: the corpse is buried in the clothes worn at death.

The Kayastha caste, as a whole, stands in high repute.

But the numerous class of *patwaris* (keepers of the village revenue records) consists almost entirely of Kayasthas: and as the *patwari* has a bad name for chicanery, the better class Kayasthas affect to despise this occupation. Some years ago many Srivastava families, especially in Oudh, refused to have any relations, whether connubial or commensal, with *patwari* families; and the Kayastha *sabha* had some difficulty in preventing the consequent formation of a '*patwari*' sub-caste. This is an excellent instance of how an occupation regarded as degrading can lead to secession from a caste and the formation of a new caste.

According to Mr. Crooke, this group has the same customs as ordinary Kayasthas and intermarries with them. In Cawnpore, at all events, the former part of this statement is only partially true. The rural Kayastha-Mochis possess a *panchayat* which meets once a year in Charkhari State under the presidency of

a permanent headman, called *sarmaur* (crowned head), whilst in the city it is of the ordinary permanent type, though dignified by the name of *sabha*: ordinary Kayasthas have only an impermanent *panchayat* (if they have that, for much of their business is done by their caste *sabha*). Kayastha-Mochis, moreover, have the levirate custom, which no true Kayastha permits. The latter part of the statement, in the same locality, is entirely incorrect: Kayastha-Mochis admit that they have neither connubial nor commensal relations with the Kayasthas.

Mr. Crooke said little about the Khumra, and in 1901, it was classed under Raj. The Khumras 27. (xi) *Khumra* allege that they come from Kafa in Arabia and are descended from one Kamraha, a disciple of Ali, whom Ali carried off in his waistband (*kamarband*) as a boy: whence the name.<sup>1</sup> They have no endogamous subcastes and practise the levirate without the usual restriction against marrying the husband's elder brother: their domestic customs are the usual mixture of Hindu and Muhammadan.

The Kuta-Banjara caste appears to be the same as Mr. Crooke's Dhankuta Banjara.<sup>2</sup> They assert 28. (xii) *Kuta-Banjara* that they are of Rajput descent and settled in Moradabad and the Tarai from Delhi. They have an impermanent *panchayat*, and the levirate is permitted but not compulsory. They have eight exogamous sections of which three are Rajput (Gahlot, Chauhan, and Panwar). They are carriers and cultivators.

The Kuta-Malis say that their original home was Jigangarh in Muttra. When the Muhammadans sacked that place, they forcibly 29. (xiii) *Kuta-Mali* converted most of its Rajput inhabitants to Islam and they became the Lalkhanis: the Kuta-Malis are the descendants of the

<sup>1</sup> The fact that '*kamar*' is not an Arabic word rather spoils the story.

<sup>2</sup> *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. P. and Oudh*, Vol. I, p. 157.

few who escaped. The refugees took shelter in a faqir's garden who saved them from their pursuers by calling them his gardeners: in memory of which they were called Malis. When they took to pounding grain they became known as Kuta-Malis. They have also a traditional connexion with Delhi, where there are some forty villages of them: in the United Provinces they are found in Moradabad, Bareilly, Bijnor, Naini Tal, and Rampur State. They practise the levirate, but their other customs are normal. They are a thrifty, hardworking caste, as two proverbs show. One is '*Kuta-Mali kabhi na baitha khali*'—'A Kuta-Mali is never idle': the other '*Jahan Kuta-Mali wahan uski gharwali*'—'Where the Kuta-Mali is, his wife is also', which refers to the fact that they pound and sift grain together.

The Lodhas in Bundelkhand have long claimed to be of Rajput descent. One of their subcastes, the Mahalodhis, which is found only in that region, have customs much more orthodox than other subcastes: they do not permit widow marriage, have no permanent *panchayat*, and are regarded by other subcastes as of higher rank than themselves. These facts do not, of course, necessarily support their claim: they may as well be the result of the claim.

There is a Vaisya caste called Mahajan. It is also a name appropriated by Kalwars who have given up dealing in liquor. Many prosperous Kalwars, whether they sell liquor or not, are now endeavouring to cut themselves off from their own caste, and to form a new caste under this name; they refuse to intermarry with ordinary Kalwars, who, however, do not recognize the distinction. Since there is a Vaisya 'Mahajan', this is probably an attempt to enter the ranks of the twice born by a backdoor.

The Manihar, Churihar, and Lakhera are generally regarded as three distinct castes. In Cawnpore, however, they are said to form a single caste, with none but a functional difference between them: the Manihar

32. (xvi) Manihar

31. (xv) Mahajan

30. (xiv) Lodhas

sells, the Churihar makes, glass bangles, whilst the Lakhera makes *lac* bangles.

Mina is generally regarded as a mere variant for Meo.

But in Moradabad they disclaim any connexion. They say that Jaipur is their ancestral home: they have four exogamous sections, two of which (Gahlot and Amethi) ally them to the Rajputs, whilst a third (Lalsoti) allies them to Jaipur, as Lalsot is a village in that State. They have a permanent *sarpanch*, known as *muqaddam*, and selected *panches*.

In Bijnor, the Ramaiya alleges that he originally came from Sankaldip 'beyond' Sangla (Colombo): some Ramaiyas even say that they have visited their ancestral home. From Sankaldip the caste migrated to Bijnor, via Jaipur and the Punjab. The geography leaves something to be desired, as there is not very much land 'beyond' Colombo; but Sankaldip is usually located near Kabul, so possibly some other 'Sangla' is meant.

Two or three families were found in a village in Cawnpore bearing the name Thakur-Arakh, obviously the descendants of a mixed union. These unfortunates are compelled to marry amongst themselves.

At no time has there been much cohesion in the Bhangi caste; and several authorities have thought it probable that the various subcastes would separate, all the more so that, as Mr. Crooke proves, they were clearly of different origin, and had no bond of union save that of common occupation. This expectation has been fulfilled. All subcastes, with one accord and everywhere, state that there is not now, and never has been, such a thing as a Bhangi caste. Hela, Lal Begi, Balmiki, Shaikh-Mehtar are the principal castes of scavengers, but the fission has been complete. Even such a small group as the Turaiha, which is found in Unao and Cawnpore, claims complete independence.

36. (xx) Turaiha and Bhangi

35. (xix) Thakur-Arakh

34. (xviii) Ramaiya

33. (xvii) Mina

Lord Avebury in his work *The Origin of Civilization*, quoting from a book entitled *The People of India* by Messrs. Watson and Kaye, mentions the 'Teehurs of Oudh' as possessing the custom of communistic marriage. There are, or were, two groups of the name in the United Provinces: one a Rajput clan, now extinct, which gave its name to a tract (*lappa*) called Tyar<sup>1</sup> in the Oudh district of Sultanpur, and one a section of the Mallah caste, which is resident in the eastern districts and Bengal. The former of these certainly never possessed such a custom. The latter was a group of low caste boatmen and fishermen: and the statement of Messrs. Watson and Kaye must have referred to them, though in that case they mistook the locality in which they lived. But, so far as is known, that statement was wrong of them too. It is conceivable that, in a community where men are compelled by their profession to leave their wives for long periods, marriage restrictions may become somewhat lax: but between that, and so primitive a system as communistic marriage, there is a very great difference. Nor, indeed, save this very statement, is there any ground for supposing that these eastern Tyars were guilty of such laxity. They too are now extinct, so far as the United Provinces are concerned.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this unfounded imputation, they have long suffered from an undesirable notoriety: and these facts are mentioned with the object of correcting a mistake and doing the Tyars a somewhat belated justice.

<sup>1</sup> Of which an early settlement officer wrote that it was 'like Niobe, all Tyars'.

<sup>2</sup> Only 135 were found at the Census of 1901: none at all in 1911.

Principal authority.—*Census Report, U.P., 1911.*

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XI

*Castes that claim higher status than that usually accorded to them*

| Caste         | Name claimed               |                        | Remarks                     |
|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
|               | 1911                       | 1921                   |                             |
| Bhuinhar      | Bhuinhar Brahman           | Bhuinhar Brahman       | Recognized in 1911          |
| Lohar         | Visvakarmabansi Brahman    | Dhiman Brahman         | —                           |
| Barhai Dhiman | Visvakarmabansi Brahman    | Dhiman Brahman         | —                           |
| Belwar        | Belwar Brahman Sanadh      | Belwar Brahman Sanadh  | Recognized in 1911          |
| Taga          | Brahman                    | Kokas Panchal Brahman  | Old claim                   |
| Bhat          | Brahmbhatt                 | Brahmbhatt             | Some 75 families in Aligarh |
| Barhai        | —                          | Maithila Brahman       | —                           |
| Sonar, Mair   | Mair Kshatriya             | Mair Rajput            | —                           |
| Sonar, Tank   | Tank Kshatriya             | —                      | —                           |
| Sonar, other  | —                          | Mathur Rajput          | —                           |
| Kurmi         | Kurmi Kshatriya            | Kurmi Kshatriya        | —                           |
| Kayastha      | Chitraguptabansi Kshatriya | —                      | —                           |
| Gadariya      | Kshatriya                  | Pali Rajput            | —                           |
| Karnwal       | Kshatriya                  | —                      | Partly admitted in 1901     |
| Khatti        | Kshatriya                  | Kshatriya              | —                           |
| Kachhi        | —                          | Kachhwaha Rajput       | —                           |
| Kahar, Rawani | —                          | Chandrabansi Kshatriya | —                           |
| Tamboli       | —                          | Nagbansi Kshatriya     | —                           |
| Lodha         | —                          | Lodhi Rajput           | —                           |
| Ahir          | —                          | Ahir Kshatriya         | —                           |
| Khangar       | —                          | Khangar Rajput         | —                           |
| Kalwar        | —                          | Batham Vaisya          | —                           |
| Kandu         | Batham Vaisya              | —                      | —                           |
| Halwai        | Madhesiya Vaisya           | (Yogya Saini Vaisya)   | —                           |
|               |                            | (Kanya Kubja Vaisya)   | —                           |

## THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

The claims of 1911 are discussed in general terms in the text. I append explanatory notes where necessary.

**Bhuinhar.** There can be little doubt of the claim of this caste to Brahmanical origin. They have ancient legends connecting them with that caste; they are often called 'Zamindar' or 'Grihasht' Brahmans (landowning or family Brahmans); they have Brahmanical *gotras*, wear the Brahmanical sacred thread (which is longer than that of other twice born castes), and are addressed as Brahmans.

**Lohar and Barhai.** Both castes have sections that claim Brahmanical descent, wear the Brahmanical thread, and have Brahman *gotras*. Visvakarma is their reputed ancestor and present deity—the Vulcan of the Hindu mythology.

**Taga.** What is meant by 'Kokas Panchal' Brahman, I cannot say. There is a Barai and Barhai sept called Kokas, whilst Panchala was the name of a northern Indian tribe. The Taga mythology usually affiliates them to the Gaur Brahman.

**Sonar.** The claim of Mair and Tank Sonars is of old standing in the Punjab (1901). The claim to be Mathur Rajputs (i.e. Rajputs from Muttra) is new and unintelligible.

**Gadariya.** This caste has a number of Kshatriya sections; Pali is a Punjab caste name for a cattleherd.

**Kachhi.** It seems clear that the Kachhis had some sort of connexion with the Kachhwaha Rajputs, for there is a Kachhwaha subcaste of Kachhis all over the province. It does not of course follow that there is any connexion by blood.

**Kahar Rawani.** Rawani is one of the Kahar subcastes. How it supports its claim to Kshatriya birth is a mystery.

**Tamboli.** This caste, and the allied Barai, possess a number of subcastes with Rajput names, of which Nagbansi is one.

**Lodha.** The claim to be a Lodhi Rajput (a central India caste) is an old one. It seems to be confined to Bundelkhand.

**Ahir.** Ahirs have long claimed Kshatriya descent; and they have undoubtedly been rulers of kingdoms in the past. The connexion would probably be through the Jadon or Jadubansi clan of Rajputs; there is a large Ahir section of the same name.

**Khangar.** The Khangar claim to Rajput lineage is supported by many legends. There is undoubtedly some connexion between the two; but *prima facie* it is much more likely that the Khangar should become a Rajput, than that a Rajput should become a Khangar.

**Kalwar, Kandu and Halwai.** The claim is old, as is the Kalwar subcaste Batham. It has always been held that the Kalwar, like the Kandu and Halwai, had a colourable right to be classed as Vaisyas. There are Madhesiya and Kanaujiya (Kanya Kubja) subcastes in both the Halwai and Kandu castes; but Yogya Saini is a name that I cannot trace.

## CHAPTER XII

### CASTE IN RELATION TO OCCUPATION

At all times and in all countries the social status of an individual has been affected and even determined by the nature of the occupation from which he derives his livelihood. Certain occupations and professions are regarded as suitable, others as unsuitable to the rank of life in which he is born, and should he follow one of the latter, then the esteem in which he is held is diminished, and he 'loses caste'. For instance, in England during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the only careers considered fit for a gentleman were landholding, politics, the army, and to a certain extent, the navy, the church, and the law. The mid-Victorians added to this list other professions regarded as 'learned'—medicine and education; but it was not till more recent times that the adoption of any sort of business career, except possibly banking, ceased to be regarded as involving a loss of social standing.

It is not, therefore, surprising to find that occupation has also exercised, and still exercises, a marked influence on the Hindu social system. Mr. Nesfield,<sup>1</sup> indeed, goes so far as to regard that system as based entirely on differentiation of function, which is represented as the sole cause of the origin of caste: others regard it as its principal, though not its sole, cause. In earlier chapters an attempt has been made to prove that these views are exaggerated. None the less, it cannot be doubted or denied that the effect produced by occupation on the evolution of this system has been very great.

<sup>1</sup> *Brief View of the Caste System of the N.-W. P. and Oudh* (1885).

## THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

But though that effect has been great, yet in certain, though not in essential, respects, it differs from the effect produced by occupation on other social systems: and to understand the nature of that effect, it is necessary to re-examine briefly, and from a slightly different point of view, the growth of the system as already described in an earlier chapter.<sup>1</sup> We found there that at the dawn of history, properly so called, in the Buddhist period, there were in existence certain social strata—Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras, *hina-jatiyo*, *hina-sippani*, Chandala aboriginals—with the Brahmans, to whom reference will be made later. These strata, though more clearly defined, corresponded roughly to similar social classes in modern times: Kshatriyas to nobility, Vaisyas and Sudras to our upper and lower middle classes, *hina-jatiyo* and *hina-sippani* to our labouring classes, and Chandalas to the 'dregs' of society. There was also a cross-division based on occupation: first, the Brahmans, who may perhaps be more accurately regarded as forming a 'learned' than a purely sacerdotal class, corresponding generally to our 'learned professions', especially the churchman, the lawyer, the statesman, and the teacher: secondly, the trade-guilds: thirdly, the low trades, followed chiefly by the *hina-sippani*, such as those of the barber, the potter, and the weaver: lastly, the primitive trades, followed chiefly by the *hina-jatiyo*, such as hunting, fishing, herding, basket-making, and bird-catching.

The trade-guilds were no doubt mainly recruited from the Vaisya and Sudra, i.e. from the middle classes. But there was nothing more to prevent a Kshatriya from joining a guild, or from 'becoming a Brahman', than there is at the present day to prevent a peer from joining a business firm, or from taking Holy Orders.<sup>2</sup> He no doubt 'lost caste' by so doing: but so, till a few years ago, did his modern equivalent.

<sup>1</sup> Chapter II, pars. 4 and 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter II, pars. 4 and 5, for examples.

## CASTE IN RELATION TO OCCUPATION

There were, however, already two forces at work which modified the effect produced by occupation on social status whilst intensifying it. The first of these was a tendency towards endogamy which arose from the social conditions of the time. The second was the tendency towards heredity of function, which in all circumstances is a perfectly natural, and in a system of well-organized functional guilds, an almost inevitable, tendency. The former separated the individual who adopted a new occupation from the class to which he formerly belonged: for, if the change of occupation involved a fall of status, his former associates would refuse to intermarry with him, whilst if it involved a rise of status, he would refuse to intermarry with his former associates: and in either case, he would seek for alliances in the social class which he had joined. Both forces in combination also tended to separate each individual guild from all others, and from all other social groups. The change of occupation, in fact, did not merely involve a change in social status or rank: it definitely transferred the individual or individuals concerned from one social group to another social group. And inasmuch as the function of a group was peculiar to itself and jealously reserved by each generation for the succeeding generation, the transfer once made was permanent. These two forces, which were mere tendencies in the Buddhist period, grew increasingly strong with time, till at last they became fixed and immutable customs. As will be shown later, they are still in operation to a certain extent.

Some nine centuries later we are presented with another account of the social system—the famous account of Manu.<sup>1</sup> Much had occurred in the interval: hordes of foreign invaders, one after the other, had swarmed into India, to modify, and ultimately to be absorbed into, the existing social system. These

3. The influence of heredity of function and endogamy

4. (b) The period of Manu

<sup>1</sup> Chapter II, par. 8 et. seq.

invasions had strengthened the prevailing tendency towards endogamy: and in the words of a certain inscription, the 'four castes had been mixed'.<sup>1</sup> We now find a social system which is mainly based on differentiation of occupation. The Brahmans, as of old, form the sacerdotal and learned caste: the occupation of the Kshatriyas is ruling and fighting—public service generally. The Vaisyas and Sudras are described respectively as traders and industrialists, and labourers and menials. The *varnasankaras* are almost all occupational groups. Remain the *vratyas* and *vrishalas*—the descendants of the foreign invaders, pseudo-Hindus, and in the latter case, pseudo-Kshatriyas. The various groups are all subject, to a greater or less degree, to the law of endogamy: not yet as rigid as it subsequently became, it is none the less a law to which the possible exceptions are carefully defined and regulated.

Before we pass on to examine the relations of caste and occupation in more modern times, we may pause to note one very striking omission in these two descriptions of Hindu society. India is, and always has been, pre-eminently an agricultural country. Yet in neither of these two descriptions is any prominence given to, even if there is any mention of, either land-owning or agricultural castes or the corresponding occupations, though a large part of the population must then, as now, have consisted of cultivators, and their importance in the social system must have been great. It is left for a foreign observer, Megasthenes, to put them in their proper place.<sup>2</sup> He mentions the 'husbandmen' as the second of his seven groups: he tells us that they formed the bulk of the population (as they do still), and were 'exempt from military service' (which, if true, proves that they were regarded as a class of high importance). We may possibly arrive at an explanation of this omission by examining present conditions. Firstly, whereas each

main trade is, or till quite recently was, followed by a single caste, agriculture is the traditional occupation of a large number of castes. Secondly, these castes are of varied origin; the Kurmi, for instance, claims Kshatriya descent, the Bhar, Jat, Gujar, and Lodha probably descend from aboriginal or invading tribes. Thirdly, agriculture is traditionally associated with castes which also have other traditional occupations: for instance, the Rajput, who represents the Kshatriya, the Bhuinhar and Taga, who claim Brahman origin, are also 'traditionally' landholders. These facts suggest that agriculture at all times was followed by groups of such diverse origin and social rank that it was impossible for them to form anything of the nature of an agricultural 'guild', or to unite into a single caste. Though it is possible that the Vedic Dasyu was not an agriculturist, yet undoubtedly every invading tribe in turn, from the Arya onwards, must have settled on the lands that it conquered, and taken to agriculture. In other words agriculture was an occupation too widespread to produce any effect on the evolution of the social system—except in so far as it must always have been an occupation held in some esteem (as is proved by Megasthenes' statement of the husbandmen's special privileges), and its adoption by persons who followed other trades must have tended to improve their social status.

At the present day, it is possible to assign to every caste, with few exceptions,<sup>1</sup> an occupation, or group of allied occupations, with which it is, or till relatively recent times has been, intimately associated. In the case of functional castes the asso-

6. *The relation of caste and occupation in modern times*

<sup>1</sup> These are:—

- (i) the hill-Dom, which is a race rather than a caste, or even a tribe, though its sections are functional;
- (ii) the four original Muhammadan tribes (Mughal, Pathan, Shaikh, Saiyid);
- (iii) the sectarian castes (though the Sadh has acquired a special trade of his own, viz. the manufacture of printed cottons).

The Dom in the plains, though classed with agricultural labourers, follows all sorts of occupations of a humble nature.

<sup>1</sup> Chapter II, par. 7: the date is 126 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter II, par. 6.

primitive die out, fresh trades and industries spring up to supply new demands, and differentiation or specialization of processes takes place everywhere. In the past, when the tendency towards heredity of function was still strong, such changes of occupation frequently, perhaps generally, led to changes in the constitution of the castes concerned. At the present day this result is much less common. As a rule there will no longer be any change in the caste as a result of a change of function unless either, *firstly*, the change of function involves a further change of social status: or, *secondly*, the new and the traditional occupations are so different that there is no community of interests possible between their respective followers. The change when it does occur, takes one of the following forms:—

- (a) The new group separates from the parent stock and forms a new caste.
- (b) The new group, after separation, affiliates itself to another caste.
- (c) The new group becomes a new endogamous subcaste within the caste.

The following are examples of these various kinds of changes:—

9. Examples of changes in constitution of caste consequent on change of occupation  
(i) Formation of a new caste

The Bhuinhar and Taga both claim to be Brahmans who gave up the priestly for a secular life—namely, agriculture. This involved social degradation, and two new castes were formed.

The Singhariyas are Kahars who deserted the traditional occupation of domestic service for the growing of water-nuts in particular, and for agriculture in general.

The Phansiyas are Pasis who have taken to fruit-growing. Inasmuch as this is a reputable occupation, the change involved a rise in social status.

The Dakaut astrologer and the Mahabrahman funeral priest may be of Brahmanical descent; if so, they became new castes as a result of adopting relatively degrading occupations.

The Belwars are Sanadh Brahmans who formed a new caste because they took to the carrier's trade.

The Gidhiyas are a settled group of Bawariyas who have become bird-catchers. There was here a rise in social status.

The Dhusar-Bhargava is of Brahmanical, the Khattri and Bhatiya of Kshatriya origin. They all took to trade and had, therefore, to form new castes.

The Balahar, Bansphor, and Basor are all branches of the Dom tribe that have settled down to regular occupations and have risen in the social scale, though by a very little.

The Bhuiyars, according to one account, are Chamars who have taken to weaving, and now form a new caste in consequence. By another account, they, with the Julaha and Orh, were all originally subcastes of the Kori caste and separated from that caste for reasons unknown.

The Gharuk left the Kahar caste because he took to serving Europeans.

The Kanghigar and the Kanmail are both Nat offshoots that have settled down and taken to regular occupations. Though not of an exalted nature, they have caused them to rise in social status.<sup>1</sup>

The Kayastha-Darzi, Kayastha-Mochi, Kayastha-Bharbhunja and Kayastha-Senduriya may be all groups of Kayasthas who have taken to more profitable, though less reputable, occupations than that of writing. Others hold that they are more probably, in the first three cases, Darzis, Chamars, and Bharbhunjas who are usurping the name and status of Kayasthas; or the 'Bharbhunjas' may merely be members of the Kaithiya subcaste of that caste.

The Mochi is an ex-Chamar. He has taken to the profitable trades of the shoemaker and saddler and separated from the humble leather-worker.

Affiliation was probably the method by which both the old trade-guilds and the subsequent functional castes were built up, as the various subcastes of different origin show.

(ii) Affiliation to old castes

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX, par. 15.

ciation is traditional, preceding and actually causing their formation. In the case of other castes, the association, though merely incidental (or even accidental), is quite as ancient as it is in the case of functional castes. The modern Ahirs, for instance, whose 'traditional' occupation is cattle-keeping, descend from the Abhiras, a pastoral tribe which dates back at least as far as the beginning of the Christian era. The connexion of most agricultural castes with agriculture must also date back to the birth of the caste itself.

In Appendix I to this chapter an attempt has been made to classify castes according to their 'traditional' occupations. There are twelve main groups, but where further differentiation is possible, the 'special function' is mentioned. Some explanatory remarks follow:—

7. Classification of castes by occupation

(i) Agriculture.—This is a large and very ill-defined group. It is impossible to divide it with any accuracy even into sections as large as 'landholders' and 'cultivators'—the result partly of the system of land tenures, partly of the joint family system. In practice, there are few 'landholders' who do not themselves cultivate some part of their land: there are many 'cultivators' who own a little land themselves. As a result of their social position, it is possible to class Bhuihars, Rajputs, Sainthwars and Tagas as 'traditionally' landholders: but further specialization would lead to inaccuracy. The only other castes to whom special functions can be assigned are some few who are growers of particular crops: but even in these cases it does not follow, either that they grow nothing else, or that nobody else grows their speciality.

(ii) Labourers and village menials.—This group is of a vaguer nature still: a traditional special function exists only in the case of the Beldar, Luniya, and Musahar. The rest are tribal castes, who do all sorts of odd jobs about the village.

<sup>1</sup> It was done in the census of 1911, but with unsatisfactory results, and for special reasons. See *Census Report, U.P., 1911, Chapter XII.*

(iii) Pastoral occupations.—The traditional connexion with the occupation in this small group is sufficiently close.

(iv) Learned professions.—Special functions exist in all the cases in this group, which is one of functional castes in the strict sense.

(v) Carrying and peddling.—The special function exists here in all cases: the Banjara has several which are followed by various subcastes.

(vi) Hunting.—Little specialization is possible here. Both Banmanus and Gidhiya are castes discovered in 1911: of the rest, all but the Aheriya and Baheliya are hunters principally because they are aboriginal tribes living in or near the jungles.

(vii) Boating and fishing.—The three castes in this group were probably one in origin.

(viii) Trade and industry, unspecified.—The Bhatiya, Dhusar-Bhargava, and Khattri are Brahmans or Kshatriyas who have taken to trade. The rest represent the 'Baniya' of early classifications, but claim correctly to descend from the old Vaisyas. They are true functional castes, but of a particular kind in that their traditional function is unusually indefinite.

(ix) Trade and industry specified: and

(x) Trade in articles of food and drink.—These groups are all purely functional castes.

(xi) Singers, dancers, musicians, buffoons, acrobats.—This is a group of performers of all kinds. The Nat has many occupations:<sup>1</sup> but the special functions of the rest can be defined with some accuracy.

(xii) Beggars and criminals.—This is a group of all sorts of 'gipsy' criminals. They specialize to a certain extent, in so far as each practises his own particular type of crime.<sup>2</sup>

As civilization progresses, the needs of the community grow more numerous and more complex, and the occupations which supply those needs have to adapt themselves to changing conditions. The more

8. Effect of a change of occupation

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX, par. 3 (ii).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid, passim.*

These figures prove the predominance of agriculture: not only is the proportion of persons who follow it in the agricultural castes very high, but in the non-agricultural castes also it actually exceeds the proportion of persons who follow their various traditional occupations: the figures are 430 per thousand as against 422. The latter proportion exceeds 50 per cent only in two of the three trade groups. If we exclude the Kalwar, on whose occupation the law imposes restrictions, it just exceeds 40 per cent also in the third trade group; but in all other groups the figure never exceeds 20 per cent. Of individual castes, the Baranwal shows the highest proportion: whilst the Umar, Agarwal, Kasaundhan, Bhanghi, and Sonar are all at 75 per cent or over, the Halwai, Gahoi, Bharbhunja, Dhobi at 60 per cent but less than 75 per cent, the Nai, Agrahri, Barhai, Kandu, Julaha, Teli, and Kumhar at over 50 per cent but less than 60 per cent. Of these, the seven 'Baniya' castes are in a particularly favourable position: any trade or industry is 'traditional' to them. The settled peace introduced by the British Government, with the rise in the standard of comfort, has preserved the prosperity of the Sonar's trade, and he has had less reason for deserting his hereditary occupation than many others. The conservatism of the Hindu in the matter of food accounts for the high figures of the Halwai and Bharbhunja. The Nai barber, the Barhai carpenter, the Julaha weaver, the Teli oil-presser, and the Kumhar potter, all follow trades necessary in all stages of civilization. As for the Bhanghi and Dhobi, they pursue occupations which are not only necessary, but not likely to attract competition anywhere—least of all in India. At the other end of the list, the Kewat, Chamar, and Kalwar, all show figures of under 10 per cent: the dignity attaching to the name of agriculture would help to account for the first two cases, whilst the Kalwar figure has already been explained. Many castes show a figure of 20 per cent or under: most of these are relatively low, save the Brahman. Of the occupations other than the traditional occupation or agriculture that are followed by various castes, little need be said. Agri-

culturists themselves are occasionally labourers or domestic servants. Labourers and village menials have representatives in many pursuits, notably industry (skilled artisans), domestic service and 'transport'. (A good many Dhanuk women, as midwives, appeared under arts and professions in the census tables.) The learned castes have members in almost every type of occupation. Many 'boatmen and fishermen' are labourers, or in various industries. Of the trading castes properly so called, many are in various other trades than their traditional trades, some are labourers or in 'transport'.

There can be little doubt that in the ancient trade-guilds all matters of a professional nature were strictly regulated by the guild authorities: that has always been the case where trade-guilds have existed, and it has been shown that the guilds of ancient India were both particularly well organized and extremely powerful. They tried their own lawsuits, administered their own apprentice laws, and decided their own trade disputes. At the present day, though the *panchayats* of functional castes not infrequently deal with professional matters, and when they do, their power is as great as it is in their social and domestic jurisdiction, yet the instances of interference are relatively few, and most functional castes seem to leave such matters alone altogether. The reason is no doubt the fact, made plain in the preceding paragraph, that adherence to hereditary occupation is no longer compulsory, or even rigid. Some castes, it is true, refuse to allow their members to adopt certain processes or certain methods of work. The Agrahri, for instance, separated from the Agarwal because the former section allows its women to serve in their shops. The Khatik similarly objects to his women peddling fruit: the Musahar despises a section known as Dolkarha because they carry palanquins. But these are not so much instances of interference in professional matters because they are professional, as because they involve social degradation: they are cases pertaining to the *panchayat's* domestic rather than its occupational jurisdiction.

11. Control of  
the caste over  
professional  
matters

In modern times I have only met a single instance. The Gual Nats, formerly singers and dancers, have taken to trade and now call themselves Badi Banjaras.

(iii) *Formation of new subcastes* The Bhar separated from the Raj Bhar because he took to keeping pigs. The Adham Sudra subcaste of Ahirs was formed as a result of their taking to menial service.

Many Kahar subcastes are occupational: e.g. the Dhimar (fishermen), Mahar (women's servants), Kamkar (drawers of water), besides the Gharuk and Singhariya, now castes.

The Kumhar subcastes are largely occupational: the Bardhiya use oxen in their work, the Gadhere donkeys; the Hateriya make pots by hand instead of with a wheel; the Kasgar make cups, and the Intpaz bricks.

The Baheliya subcastes are Chiryamar and Bajdhar—fowler and falconer.

The Gual Nats have divided into Gual who only allow married women to dance and sing, and Kanchan who only allow unmarried girls to follow these occupations. The Kalabaz are a branch of the Kanchan who have taken to tumbling.

A subcaste of the Dhuniya has taken to butcher's work—the Qassaiya.

The Khatiks have three occupational subcastes—Rajgar (or masons), Sombatta (or rope-makers), and Mewafarosh (or fruit-sellers). A fourth is in process of formation: they are Bikanwala (or pork-vendors).

Under modern conditions, desertion of the traditional occupation has become much more frequent than of old, and consequent changes in the caste have become much less common. For instance, the spread of education has (as we have already seen), driven the Kayastha to other pursuits, partly because there is less need for the professional writer, partly because he is now faced with competition in clerical work from the members of many other castes. The excise restrictions of modern times have in the same

10. *The traditional occupation in modern conditions*

way driven Kalwars and Pasis from their traditional pursuits of distilling and toddy-drawing to all sorts of avocations. Other occupations have lost their attractions: the mills have reduced the profits of weaving, the Teli has lost materially by the increased use of kerosene oil, the Kahar prefers independence and agriculture to domestic service, whilst betel-growers, market-gardeners, herds-men, boatmen, earth-workers, priests, and leather-workers have all for various reasons taken largely to cultivation. Appendix II, which is compiled from the census tables of 1911, shows the extent to which the traditional occupation is followed in various castes. It should be explained that the figures refer only to male workers and omit women workers and dependants, whilst all those who returned the traditional occupation as either the primary or the subsidiary occupation are shown as following it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In considering these figures, it is important to remember certain points:—

- (i) The census figures refer to the facts observed on a particular day: it does not, therefore, follow that they represent the normal state of affairs. For instance, the census of 1911 took place during the harvest period: that would mean that many odd job labourers would actually be employed at the time as agricultural labourers and would so return themselves.
- (ii) Wages of all kinds, especially agricultural wages, had risen during the ten years preceding 1911: this enabled many agricultural labourers to lease fields, and consequently to return themselves as cultivators.
- (iii) A large number of persons who are not traditionally agriculturists own or lease a few fields: and probably all those that do not, still would like to do so. And in 1910 and 1911 the crops had been particularly good. As a consequence, a very large number of artisans and traders of all kinds were making more, at the time of census, from their agricultural than from their traditional occupations, and instead of showing themselves as artisans who were also agriculturists they showed themselves as agriculturists who were also artisans. By including in the Appendix all who follow the traditional occupation at all, this error has been partly corrected: but inasmuch as there were six kinds of 'agricultural entry', it is obvious that some artisans may have shown themselves in two of these and omitted the artisan entry altogether.

See *Census Report, U.P.*, 1911, pp. 386-7.

municipal sweepers themselves struck, and were able to prevent others from replacing them: and the municipal board had to make terms.

Lohar (Azamgarh).—The Lohar *panchayat* fixes the rates of wages, and protects its members from the competition of newcomers. An employer, being dissatisfied with the work of the local Lohars, gave his work to some outsiders. The two *panchayats* met and decided that the employer's grievance was real: they accordingly allowed the outsiders to finish the job, but they had to effect an exchange of clients—an excellent instance of the transferability of *jajmani*.

Ghogar<sup>1</sup> (Moradabad).—The *panchayat* fixes the rates of wages, and outcastes anybody who works at lower rates.

Phansiya (Moradabad).—A Phansiya is not allowed to outbid a caste fellow for a fruit garden. (Orchard-owners in India usually auction their fruit.)

Mirasi<sup>1</sup> (Moradabad).—A dancing girl who dismisses her musicians during the marriage season is boycotted by the Mirasi *panchayat*.

Julaha.<sup>1</sup>—The Julahas have a loom-tax which is used to fight lawsuits with professional outsiders. They also possess a system of apprenticeship, and collect money for caste *taziahs*<sup>2</sup>—just as the old trade-guilds did. They fine Julahas whose dyes fade, and forbid the use of aniline dyes.

Barhai.—The caste preserves with great care the ancestral methods of carpentry and building.

Kathak.—These religious troubadours carefully preserve their ancient ballads, and allow nobody to tamper with them.

Darzi (Etah).—A Darzi, once he has cut into a piece of cloth for an employer, must be allowed to finish the job. Should he return the cloth with the work unfinished in consequence of some dispute, no other Darzi will be

<sup>1</sup> Muhammadan castes.

<sup>2</sup> A *taziah* is a lath and paper imitation of a tomb, carried in the Muharram procession in honour of the martyrs Hasan and Husain.

permitted to finish it, except with the leave of the original Darzi.

Bhishti<sup>1</sup> (Etah).—An employer who was building a house rebuked a Bhishti for unpunctuality. The Bhishti struck work: whereupon all other Bhishtis followed suit, and refused to resume work till the employer apologized.

Nai.—The Nai *panchayat* deals with *jajmani* disputes. On one occasion they boycotted dancing girls who refused to dance at a Nai's wedding.

Dhuniya<sup>1</sup> (Sitapur).—In this caste interlopers are outcasted.

Dhobi (Shahjahanpur).—The Dhobis of Shahjahanpur city refused to wash the Kahars' clothes in consequence of a dispute.

Murao (Fatehpur).—A Murao *panchayat* used to run a co-operative bank. If a member of the caste neglected to pay his dues to the bank, he was outcasted till he did so—an excellent instance of the adaptation of old world methods to new conditions.

The Nanbai,<sup>1</sup> Qassab<sup>1</sup> and Raj<sup>1</sup> all have guilds that deal with professional matters. The Raj is not a caste at all; it is an occupational group recruited from many castes. They have a system of apprenticeship: the apprentice when out of his indentures presents a turban to his master, and feeds the members with cardamoms.

Koiri.—Some twenty years ago, the Koiri opium-growers, being dissatisfied with the rates paid for opium by Government, decided at a monster *panchayat* to refuse to supply at these rates and to stop growing poppy till the rate was enhanced, as was ultimately done.

An examination of these cases shows that the castes which deal most with trade questions are, for the most part, those which cling most closely to their traditional occupations—the Bhangi, the Nai, the Bhishti, the Darzi. Other functional castes seem to ignore such matters, as is natural since so many of their members are now taking to other than their traditional occupations. But, as the cases of

<sup>1</sup> Muhammadan castes.

## THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

There is, however, one professional custom regarding which all castes which possess it are extremely particular, namely, the custom expressed in the word '*jajmani*'. Literally the word '*jajman*' means 'he who gives the sacrifice', i.e. the person who employs a priest to carry out a sacrifice for him: but it is now extended to include a client of any kind. The *jajmans* of a Brahman priest are his parishioners, whose domestic rites at birth, initiation, and marriage it is his duty, and right, to superintend. Similarly, Chamars, Doms, Dafalis, Bhats, Nais, Bhangis, Barhais, and Lohars all have their *jajmani*, or clientèle, from whom they receive fixed dues in return for regular service. The Chamar's clients are those from whom he receives dead cattle, and to whom he supplies shoes and other articles of leather. The Dom's and Dafali's *jajmanis* are begging beats: the Dom has also the right to steal, the Dafali to exorcise evil spirits, within his beat. The Nai has regular clients whom he shaves, and for whom he acts as matchmaker: he also performs their minor surgical operations, such as drawing teeth and lancing boils. Barhais and Lohars make or mend the ploughs, harrows and other implements of a fixed circle: Bhats are perambulating genealogists for their clients, visiting them every two or three years and bringing their family trees up to date. These *jajmanis* are valuable sources of income, both heritable and transferable: they are strictly demarcated, and the crime of poaching on a fellow casteman's *jajmani* is bitterly resented. A Dom, it is said, would not hesitate to hand over to the police such a poacher. It should be mentioned that in some castes the women have their own *jajmani*: the Dhanuk's and Chamar's wives are both hereditary midwives, and the Nai's wife is the hereditary monthly nurse.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A synonym for '*jajmanis*' is '*brit*', meaning (caste) 'dues'. '*Purohiti*' is the Brahman's '*brit*'.

## CASTE IN RELATION TO OCCUPATION

Since the occupational castes work for members of other castes, it follows that in many trade disputes one of the parties is not amenable to the discipline of the *panchayat*. In such a case the means used to bring him to reason is the boycott: the *panchayat* would forbid its subjects to work for him, and unless he succeeded in placating them, he would remain unserved. Sympathetic strikes, though probably uncommon, are possible. I have heard of no case in the United Provinces, but a case has been reported from Ahmedabad, in which a banker who happened to be re-roofing his house quarrelled with a confectioner, 'whereupon the confectioners' guild arranged with the tilemakers' guild to refuse to supply him with tiles. The use of this powerful weapon is thoroughly well understood in India. Every master knows, for instance, that if he dismisses a servant he runs the risk of finding nobody willing to take his place.

The following cases of action taken by *panchayats* in professional disputes are of interest:—

14. Instances of the interference of *panchayats* with professional matters
- Chamar (Bahraich and Ghazipur).—  
 (i) Two Chamars were fined by the *panchayat* for removing dead cattle from the premises of another Chamar's clients.  
 (ii) On a Chamar woman working as midwife for another's client, her husband was fined.  
 (iii) To handle manure of any kind, save cowdung, involves outcasting.

(Gorakhpur). A planter tried to stop cattle-poisoning by insisting that his tenants should slash the hides of all cattle that died without obvious cause. The tenants were willing, but the Chamars refused to allow their women to act for them as midwives, and the practice had to be stopped.

Bhangi.—The Bhangi *panchayat* deals regularly with *jajmani* disputes. It has more than once been able to organize an effective strike: for instance, following a decision of a municipal board to sell the night-soil which had formerly been the perquisite of the scavengers, the

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| Main Group                           | Name of Caste                                                                                                    | Special Function                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                      | Dusadh<br>Ghasiya<br>Kamkar<br>Luniya<br>Musahar                                                                 | Earth work and salt work<br>Menials                                                                                                |
| III. PASTORAL OCCUPATIONS            | Ahar<br>Ahir<br>Gadariya<br>Gaddi (M)<br>Ghosi (M)                                                               |                                                                                                                                    |
| IV. LEARNED PROFESSIONS              | Bhat<br>Brahman<br>Dakaut<br>Kayastha<br>Mahabrahman<br>Patari                                                   | Bards and genealogists<br>Priesthood<br>Astrology<br>Writing<br>Funeral priests<br>Aboriginal priests                              |
| V. CARRYING AND PEDDLING             | Banjara<br>Kuta-Banjara<br>Baidguar (M)<br>Mukeri (M)<br>Belwar<br>Ramaiya<br>Rehwari<br>Saiqalgar<br>Bisati (M) | Cattle-dealing and dealing in carried commodities: trade in salt<br>Carrying<br>Peddling<br>Carrying<br>Knife-grinding<br>Peddling |
| VI. HUNTING                          | Aheriya<br>Baheliya<br>Banmanus<br>Bhil<br>Bhuiyar<br>Gidhiya<br>Gond<br>Kanjari<br>Kol<br>Korwa                 | Collecting of honey<br><br>Bird-catching                                                                                           |
| VII. BOATING AND FISHING             | Chai<br>Kewat<br>Mallah                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                    |
| VIII. TRADE AND INDUSTRY UNSPECIFIED | Agarwal<br>Agrahri<br>Baranwal<br>Bhatiya<br>Dhusar Bhargava<br>Gahoi<br>Kandu<br>Kasarwani                      |                                                                                                                                    |

# CASTES GROUPED ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION

| Main Group                             | Name of Caste                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Special Function                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                        | Kasaundhan<br>Khandelwal<br>Khatti<br>Mahesri<br>Oswal<br>Rastogi<br>Rauniyar<br>Umar                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| IX. TRADE AND INDUSTRY SPECIFIED       | Agariya<br>Barhai<br>Balahar<br>Bansphor<br>Basor<br>Bhangi<br>Bhuiyar<br>Chamar<br>Churihar<br>Darzi<br>Dhobi<br>Dhuniya<br>Gharuk<br><br>Jatiya Chamar<br>Julaha<br>Kahar<br>Kanghigari<br>Kanmail<br>Kayastha-Darzi<br>Kayastha-Mochi<br>Kayastha-Senduriya<br>Kori<br>Kumhar<br>Lohar<br>Manihar<br>Mochi<br>Nai<br>Orh<br>Pasi<br>Sonar<br>Teli<br>Thathera<br>Turaiha<br>Gandhi (M)<br>Ghogar (M)<br>Khumra (M) | Iron-smelting<br>Carpentry<br>Drumming<br>Bamboo-work do.<br>Scavenging<br>Weaving<br>Leather-working<br>Glass bangle making<br>Tailoring<br>Washing of clothes<br>Cotton-carding, etc.<br>Domestic service (Europeans)<br>Leather-working<br>Weaving<br>Domestic service<br>Comb-making<br>Ear-cleaning<br>Tailoring<br>Shoe-making<br>Trade in red-lead<br>Weaving<br>Pottery<br>Blacksmiths<br>Glass work<br>Shoe-making<br>Barbers<br>Weaving<br>Toddy-drawing<br>Goldsmiths<br>Oil-pressing<br>Brass and coppersmiths<br>Scavenging<br>Perfume-selling<br>Well-digging<br>Millstone-cutting |
| X. TRADE IN ARTICLES OF FOOD AND DRINK | Barai<br>Bharbhunja<br>Halwai<br>Kalwar<br>Kayastha-Bharbhunja                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Betel-selling<br>Grain-parching<br>Confectionery<br>Liquor trade<br><br>Grain-parching                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

# THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

the Raj, the Nanbai and the Qassab show, the members of an occupational group often set up a permanent agency to look after their interests, just as landholders and lawyers do on a larger scale in landowners' and bar associations. Should such trade groups as bakers, butchers, hackney-cab drivers, or domestic servants consider that they have been subjected to oppression, they can, and do, take concerted action to resist it, whether the oppressor be a private person or a public body: though their union in such cases is for a particular purpose and ceases so soon as that purpose is achieved. But the tendency which leads to the formation of a 'landowners' association' or a '*mazdur sabha*'<sup>1</sup> is precisely the same tendency which led to the formation of the trade-guilds—namely, the desire of men with common interests to unite for the protection of those interests against a common aggressor. Progress killed the trade-guild: progress has already weakened and is slowly killing the functional caste, at all events on its purely occupational side. The road lies open to trade unionism.

<sup>1</sup> The name of the 'Labourers' Union' in Cawnpore, which has been very prominent of recent years.

Principal authorities.—*Census Report, U.P., 1911.*  
Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh* (1896).

## APPENDIX I TO CHAPTER XII

### Castes grouped according to occupation

(M after a name means Muhammadan.)

| Main Group                        | Name of Caste | Special Function                  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| I. AGRICULTURE                    | Baghban       | Growing of flowers and vegetables |
|                                   | Baiswar       |                                   |
|                                   | Bajgi         |                                   |
|                                   | Bhar          |                                   |
|                                   | Bhoksa        |                                   |
|                                   | Bhuinhar      | Landholding                       |
|                                   | Bind          |                                   |
|                                   | Dangi         |                                   |
|                                   | Gauriya       |                                   |
|                                   | Gujar         |                                   |
|                                   | Jat           | Intensive cultivation             |
|                                   | Kachhi        |                                   |
|                                   | Khagi         |                                   |
|                                   | Khagi-Chauhan |                                   |
|                                   | Khangar       |                                   |
|                                   | Kirar         |                                   |
|                                   | Kisan         | Poppy-cultivating                 |
|                                   | Koiri         |                                   |
|                                   | Kurmi         |                                   |
|                                   | Lodha         | Gardening                         |
|                                   | Mali          |                                   |
|                                   | Meo           |                                   |
|                                   | Murao         |                                   |
|                                   | Phansiya      | Landholding                       |
|                                   | Rajput        |                                   |
|                                   | Saini         | Landholding                       |
|                                   | Sainthwar     | Water-nut cultivation             |
|                                   | Singhariya    | Landholding                       |
|                                   | Taga          |                                   |
|                                   | Tharu         |                                   |
|                                   | Dogar (M)     |                                   |
|                                   | Gara (M)      |                                   |
|                                   | Jhojha (M)    |                                   |
|                                   | Malhana (M)   |                                   |
|                                   | Turk (M)      |                                   |
| II. LABOURERS AND VILLAGE MENIALS | Arakh         | Earth work                        |
|                                   | Beldar        |                                   |
|                                   | Dhanuk        |                                   |
|                                   | Dhimar        |                                   |
|                                   | Dom           |                                   |

# THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

| Main Group                                                      | Name of Caste          | Special Function           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                                                 | <i>Khatik</i>          | Grocery and chandling      |
|                                                                 | <i>Kunjra</i>          | Greengrocery               |
|                                                                 | <i>Kuta-Mali</i>       | Rice-pounding              |
|                                                                 | <i>Tamboli</i>         | Betel-selling              |
|                                                                 | <i>Bhathiyara</i> (M)  | Innkeepers                 |
|                                                                 | <i>Bhishti</i> (M)     | Water-carriers             |
|                                                                 | <i>Iraqi</i> (M)       | Liquor trade               |
|                                                                 | <i>Nanbai</i> (M)      | Bakers                     |
|                                                                 | <i>Qassab</i> (M)      | Butchers                   |
| XI. SINGERS, DANCERS,<br>MUSICIANS, BUFFOONS,<br>ACROBATS, ETC. | <i>Kanchan</i>         | Dancing and singing        |
|                                                                 | <i>Kathak</i>          | Singing of religious odes  |
|                                                                 | <i>Nat</i>             | Tumblers, acrobats, etc.   |
|                                                                 | <i>Paturiya</i>        | Musicians                  |
|                                                                 | <i>Radha</i>           | Musicians                  |
|                                                                 | <i>Tawaij</i>          | Dancing girls              |
|                                                                 | <i>Bhand</i> (M)       | Mimes and jesters          |
|                                                                 | <i>Dafali</i> (M)      | Drummers and hedge priests |
|                                                                 | <i>Hurkiya</i> (M)     | Musicians                  |
|                                                                 | <i>Kingariya</i> (M)   | Musicians                  |
|                                                                 | <i>Mirasi</i> (M)      | Musicians                  |
|                                                                 | <i>Qalandar</i> (M)    | Training animals           |
| XII. BEGGING AND CRIME                                          | <i>Audhiya</i>         | Religious beggars          |
|                                                                 | <i>Badhik</i>          |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Barwar</i>          |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Bawariya</i>        |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Beriya</i>          |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Bhawapariya</i>     |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Dalera</i>          |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Faqir</i>           |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Habura</i>          |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Karwal</i>          |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Sanaurhiya</i>      |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Sansiya</i>         |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Jogi-Pathan</i> (M) |                            |
|                                                                 | <i>Rind</i> (M)        |                            |

## APPENDIX II TO CHAPTER XII

### *The Traditional Occupation in Sample Castes*

Number per 1,000 of male workers following traditional and other occupations

| Caste                                              | Traditional Occupation | Agriculture | Other Occupation |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------|
|                                                    |                        |             | 104              |
| Bhar                                               | 896                    | —           | 54               |
| Bhuinhar                                           | 946                    | —           | 51               |
| Gujar                                              | 949                    | —           | 51               |
| Jat                                                | 909                    | —           | 112              |
| Kachhi                                             | 888                    | —           | 120              |
| Kisan                                              | 880                    | —           | 50               |
| Koiri                                              | 950                    | —           | 65               |
| Kurmi                                              | 935                    | —           | 111              |
| Lodha                                              | 889                    | —           | 235              |
| Mali                                               | 765                    | —           | 34               |
| Murao                                              | 966                    | —           | 81               |
| Rajput                                             | 919                    | —           | 68               |
| Taga                                               | 932                    | —           | 90               |
| Total Group I, Agriculture                         | 910                    | —           | 439              |
| Dhanuk                                             | 163                    | 398         | 140              |
| Dusadh                                             | 135                    | 725         | 83               |
| Luniya                                             | 111                    | 806         |                  |
| Total Group II, Labourers and Village Menials )    | 136                    | 643         | 221              |
| Ahir                                               | 112                    | 837         | 51               |
| Gadariya                                           | 288                    | 630         | 82               |
| Total Group III, Pastoral Occupations )            | 200                    | 733         | 67               |
| Bhat                                               | 155                    | 626         | 219              |
| Brahman                                            | 114                    | 748         | 138              |
| Kayastha                                           | 337                    | 455         | 208              |
| Total Group IV, Learned Professions )              | 202                    | 610         | 188              |
| Kewat                                              | 13                     | 896         | 91               |
| Mallah                                             | 166                    | 664         | 170              |
| Total Group VII, Boating and Fishing )             | 90                     | 780         | 130              |
| Agarwal                                            | 779                    | 110         | 111              |
| Agrahri                                            | 585                    | 337         | 78               |
| Baranwal                                           | 797                    | 170         | 25               |
| Gahoi                                              | 642                    | 240         | 118              |
| Kandu                                              | 523                    | 420         | 57               |
| Kasaundhan                                         | 779                    | 157         | 64               |
| Umar                                               | 792                    | 141         | 67               |
| Total Group VIII, Trade and Industry unspecified ) | 700                    | 226         | 74               |

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| Caste                                               | Traditional<br>Occupation | Agriculture | Other<br>Occupation |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Barhai                                              | 531                       | 393         | 76                  |
| Bhangi                                              | 767                       | 93          | 140                 |
| Chamar                                              | 48                        | 744         | 208                 |
| Dhobi                                               | 601                       | 354         | 45                  |
| Julaha                                              | 519                       | 309         | 172                 |
| Kahar                                               | 393                       | 433         | 174                 |
| Kumhar                                              | 511                       | 80          | 409                 |
| Lohar                                               | 418                       | 497         | 85                  |
| Nai                                                 | 598                       | 313         | 89                  |
| Sonar                                               | 749                       | 182         | 69                  |
| Teli                                                | 518                       | 396         | 86                  |
| Total Group IX, Trade )<br>and Industry specified ) | 514                       | 345         | 141                 |
| Barai                                               | 205                       | 753         | 42                  |
| Bharbhunja                                          | 619                       | 277         | 104                 |
| Halwai                                              | 683                       | 133         | 184                 |
| Kalwar                                              | 67                        | 539         | 394                 |
| Khatik                                              | 153                       | 294         | 553                 |
| Tamboli                                             | 467                       | 459         | 74                  |
| Total Group X, Dealers )<br>in Food and Drink )     | 366                       | 409         | 225                 |

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ECONOMIC ASPECT OF CASTE<sup>1</sup>

Every Hindu is a slave of custom. From the cradle to the grave custom regulates his every action, almost his every movement. It governs his relations alike to God and man and gives shape to his environment, whether social or religious. Finally, it exercises a profound effect on his economic condition. One of the chief factors which originally produced the caste system was the economic principle of the differentiation of function, in accordance with which the ancient trade guilds and their modern successors, the occupational castes, came into existence; and at the present day it is still the caste system which regulates the nature of a Hindu's occupation, the methods of his manufacture, the limits of his clientèle and the prices of his goods. His marriage customs, again, lead directly to extravagant expenditure on dowries and wedding ceremonies. His religion demands the punctual and accurate performance of numerous and costly rites. His personal law imposes on him the duty of taking over and discharging the debts of his ancestors. In fact, a large part of a Hindu's total disbursements, and a still larger part of his total debt, are the result, direct or indirect, of unavoidable social usages.

In an account of the Hindu social system, it is impossible to ignore its economic aspect, though the circumstances of different castes and classes vary so greatly that it can be described only in outline, and illustrated by specific instances.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based entirely on, and consists very largely of, quotation from the report of the United Provinces Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, of which the author was chairman. His thanks are due to the Provincial Government for allowing him to use this material. In subsequent footnotes, the report is quoted as 'B.E.C.'s report'.

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Of the total population of the United Provinces, 76 per cent depend primarily or solely on agriculture for a living. To another 2 per cent, agriculture is a secondary occupation; whilst yet another 11 per cent, residing in the rural tracts, are indirectly dependent thereon. No apology is needed, therefore, for concentrating attention on the economic circumstances of the peasantry, or for dismissing the urban population with a *'mutatis mutandis'*.

The principal features of the life of a peasant can be briefly stated as follows.

(1) In these provinces, outside the hill tracts, density is great, and the pressure of man on the soil is everywhere heavy and in some places intolerable. There is roughly one human being to every cultivated acre.

(2) The average holding is small. It has been calculated<sup>1</sup> that of the total number of holdings, 18 per cent are sufficiently large to enable a farmer to live in reasonable comfort, storing up in good years resources with which to tide over a period of distress. About 30 per cent of all holdings are too small to support the cultivator and his family, unless he possesses some subsidiary source of income. The majority, namely 52 per cent, are at or just above the economic level; that is to say, the cultivator who possesses such a holding can make both ends meet only in a good year and by unremitting toil. For a large majority of the peasantry of this province, life is a constant struggle between a crop and a crop; though for an appreciable number the severity of this struggle is actually mitigated by the possession of a subsidiary source of income.

(3) The province is peculiarly liable to climatic vicissitudes and peculiarly susceptible to their results. Agricultural prosperity seldom remains unbroken for long. Agrarian calamities are rarely sufficiently widespread to affect the entire province at once; allowing for this fact, it can be said that in any given part of the pro-

<sup>1</sup> B.E.C.'s report, Vol. I, p. 99, par. 192.

## THE ECONOMIC ASPECT OF CASTE

vince out of every fifteen years, three are bad and one indifferent.

(4) On the other hand, during the last 30 years and more 'the maintenance of law and order, the defining and recording of rights in land, the continuous reduction in the proportion borne by the land revenue demand to the produce, the rise in the value of that produce and the growth of transferable rights in land have all contributed to enhance the credit of the landholder'.<sup>1</sup> And the causes which have enhanced the cultivator's credit have also enhanced his material prosperity, a fact to which the quinquennial cattle census returns bear evidence. There has been a progressive increase in the number and value of the peasant's possessions, such as cattle and other animals, ploughs and carts. Another proof lies in the spread of moneylending as a subsidiary occupation amongst cultivators; nearly 40 per cent of the agricultural debt of the province was financed by landlords and nearly 14 per cent by tenants.<sup>2</sup>

(5) But whilst his credit has been increasing, the cultivator remains not only illiterate but in the broadest sense uneducated. Not only is he unable to keep accounts, but he does not understand the advantage of keeping them. He does not realize the importance of equating expenditure to income; especially he allows social custom to dictate the measure of his expenditure in many directions.

Such is the economic situation of the cultivator in the United Provinces, a situation which makes indebtedness inevitable. It is no doubt true that in no country in the world can agriculture entirely dispense with credit, or entirely avoid debt. Agriculture is an industry: like any other industrialist, the farmer who wants to increase his assets—to acquire additional land or live stock, to erect a farm building, to make a

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, p. 432. The word 'landholder' as here used includes both cultivating landlord and tenant.

<sup>2</sup> B.E.C.'s report, Vol. I, p. 105, par. 200.

well or embankment—must generally borrow the fixed capital that he requires for the purpose. Again, like any other industrialist, the farmer must borrow working capital to meet his current requirements; indeed, his need is greater than that of most industrialists, since he must spend money for months on end before he receives any return. It is only a wealthy farmer who can work without incurring debt, and in any country wealthy farmers are rare. Agricultural debt, in short, is no more deplorable than any other kind of productive debt. On the contrary, except in the most favourable circumstances, it is in every country inevitable; and India forms no exception to this general rule. But the incurring of debt is one thing, indebtedness is another. It is not the borrowing of money that brings economic misery in its train, but failure to repay the money borrowed. It is in this respect that the Indian farmer differs from farmers in other countries. To him repayment of debt is peculiarly difficult; and it is peculiarly difficult because so much of it is unproductive. Indeed, a large proportion of the Indian agriculturist's debt is not agricultural at all. Amongst the Indian peasantry the most common objects of borrowing are:

- (1) the purchase of seed, plough cattle and milch cattle, and the payment of labourers' wages;
- (2) the purchase of food, cloth and other domestic necessities;
- (3) the payment of land revenue or rent; and
- (4) the financing of social and religious functions or ceremonies, repayment of ancestral debt and more generally the maintenance of the debtor's social status. It has been calculated that about 36 per cent of the total debt of agriculturists in the United Provinces is due to the fourth class of objects, in other words to social and religious custom.<sup>1</sup> And though this figure relates only to the peasantry, the customs which produce it are common to the entire population, whether rural or urban.

<sup>1</sup> B.E.C.'s report, Vol. I, p. 84, par. 168.

Custom—social, religious, and legal—impinges on the economic life of the peasant at five different points.

4. *Various economic effects of social custom*
  - (1) Expenditure on marriages and other ceremonies;
  - (2) restrictions on trade and industry;
  - (3) caste penalties;
  - (4) repayment of ancestral debt;
  - (5) the maintenance of social prestige.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter,<sup>1</sup> marriage is a religious duty which the Hindu owes not only to himself but to his ancestors and his descendants; and as the normal form of marriage amongst Hindus is marriage by purchase, some measure of expenditure thereon is inevitable. The purchase may take the form either of a dowry or a bride price. Dowries are usual amongst castes of good social standing and, though not as high as they are in some other parts of India, are sufficiently extravagant. Bride prices are generally fixed by caste custom, and are sometimes so small that they obviously date back to a time when the purchasing power of money was much greater than it is now.<sup>2</sup> Where the amount is not customarily fixed, its size depends on the circumstances of the bridegroom and his family. Apart from dowry or bride price, however, there is always expenditure on the ceremony itself, which is often grossly wasteful. Amongst all castes of good status, the burden of it falls on the father of the bride. Apart from the dowry proper, he must provide the girl with ornaments, clothing and household utensils. He must entertain the bridegroom's party for several days; he must fee the officiating priests; he must feast the assembled brethren and Brahmans. As the result of the custom of hypergamy, the bride is generally of lower social position than the bridegroom, with the result that the bride's family, in an attempt to live up to the bridegroom's position, spend much larger

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, par. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IV, pars. 14 and 15.

## THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

belong to him. The Nai, who besides serving his clients as a barber, is often their messenger in connexion with domestic ceremonies, receives one pice for every shave or hair-cut in the case of children, and two pice in the case of adults. His customary remuneration, payable at harvest, is six seers of grain. He also assists on ceremonial occasions, as also does his wife, and both receive presents; whilst amongst Muhammadans, he receives not less than one rupee for every circumcision.

These *jajmanis*, as has already been mentioned, are both heritable and transferable. Figures collected by the Banking Enquiry Committee<sup>1</sup> showed that in three districts no less than 84 mortgages of *jajmanis* had been registered, most of which belonged to Bhangis (scavengers), some belonged to Mahabrahmans (funeral priests), whilst one was the *purohiti* of a Brahman. Finally, it seems that in some parts of the province, notably Agra, moneylenders also work on a *jajmani* system. When the *sahukar*, as he is there called, accepts a cultivator as his client (*asami*), it becomes his duty to give advances in money for any purpose whatever, and also in any kind in which he deals. The client, on the other hand, undertakes to borrow from no one else and to repay the *sahukar's* debts out of his produce before he settles the dues of any other person.

Chapter VI contains a full description of the working of caste *panchayats*. It is common for these to impose heavy fines on an offender against social custom, or to order him to give a feast, either to a specified number of Brahmans, or to the brotherhood, or to both. This too has an economic effect; for as the offender is invariably excommunicated till the sentence has been carried out, he must often find it necessary to borrow for the purpose. Naturally, villagers are reticent about debts due to this cause; and in the evidence collected by the Banking Enquiry Committee, only one instance of it was actually mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> B.E.C.'s report, Vol. I, p. 137, table 1, and p. 129, par. 1.

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A very common object of borrowing is for the repayment of ancestral debt. It is also a type of debt from which the debtor finds it peculiarly difficult to free himself effectively; and it accordingly becomes necessary to explain with some precision the nature of the obligation which makes debt heritable. The liability of one person to pay debts contracted by another depends ultimately on the principle, constantly recurring in Hindu law, that legal rights are taken subject to the discharge of moral obligations.<sup>1</sup> These obligations may arise from three completely different sources. There is, *firstly*, the religious duty of discharging a debtor from the sin of his debt; *secondly*, the heir's moral duty of paying a debt contracted by the person whose assets he has inherited; and, *thirdly*, the legal duty of paying a debt contracted by one person as the agent expressed or implied of another. The first duty arises only in the case of a debtor's immediate descendants, his son and grandson. The second arises in the case of any heir or successor in interest. The third is an incident of the Hindu joint family system, and affects the co-sharers of the managing member of such a family. In any one case, two or more of these duties may co-exist, but any one of them is sufficient to constitute the liability. This liability, however, has its limitations. The first liability does not descend beyond the grandson; whilst some authors hold that it covers payment of interest in the case of a father's debt only, and not of the grandfather's. As regards the second liability, the heirs cannot be compelled to pay debts incurred 'for a cause repugnant to good morals'. The third liability is limited by law, as now administered in all provinces except Bombay, to the extent of the assets inherited. But these limitations are not of much practical importance. Though occasionally an heir may be found willing to brand his ancestors with the stigma of im-

<sup>1</sup> Mayne, *Hindu Law and Usage*, 8th edition, p. 394, on which book this account is based.

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sums on the wedding than they can afford. The groom on his side must purchase suitable presents for the bride, and suitable wedding garments for himself and his suite; but as a rule the dowry more than covers his expenditure. Amongst low castes, on the other hand, two customs are prevalent which reduce the burden by distributing it. Firstly, wherever the dowry paid by the father of the bride is replaced by a bride price paid by the father of the bridegroom, that bride price is in practice always appropriated to the cost of the ceremony; and secondly, the brethren present at the feast are often invited to make a contribution (*takawan*) towards the wedding expenses. A brass plate (*thali*) is passed round, into which each guest drops a silver coin: and it is said that moneylenders sometimes speculate in this *takawan*, advancing a sum fixed by agreement and taking the *takawan* in full payment. Amongst such a caste as the Rajput, to whom display is almost a social duty, the birth of a daughter means the beginning of debt. The marriage expenditure of a Rajput cultivator has been estimated at Rs. 600,<sup>1</sup> but that can only be taken as a normal figure. It is often much higher than that and amongst the wealthier members of that caste sometimes runs into lakhs. Amongst low castes, as a rule, marriage expenditure is not so serious a matter, and is often repaid within a reasonable period. A Kurmi wife, it is said, costs Rs. 32. Nevertheless, even the lowest castes are occasionally extravagant. An instance is recorded of an Arakh in a village of Hardoi district who spent Rs. 300 on the wedding of his daughter, though his only sources of income were a holding of under two acres and the wages of occasional labour.

Various other ceremonies besides marriage also often lead to extravagance and debt. Amongst the most common of these are the ceremonies of birth and death, the *sraddha* and the *upanayana* or thread ceremony. Money is also frequently borrowed to enable the

6. (b) Other ceremonies

<sup>1</sup> B.E.C.'s report, Vol. I, p. 39, par. 82.

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devout to undertake a pilgrimage (*tirath*), and occasionally for *kathas* (sacred recitations).<sup>1</sup>

As has been explained elsewhere, the functional castes are the direct descendants of the trade guilds of India, and many of them are still as strict in regulating trade matters as the circumstances of modern civilization will permit. Their *panchayats* are often extremely powerful bodies, dealing with such matters as methods of sale or manufacture, the level of prices, and the limits of the workman's clientèle (*jajmani* or *brit*). Much has already been said regarding the circumstances of the functional castes, and repetition is unnecessary. It is worth while, however, to return once more to the matter of the *jajmani*. This, as has been previously explained,<sup>2</sup> is a circle of clients from whom the village artisan or menial receives fixed dues in return for regular services. The *jajmani* is undoubtedly a valuable asset, and many a villager derives at least as much of his income from this source as from his fields. The following instances show the nature and extent of such fees.<sup>3</sup> The Lohar and the Barhai, who between them make and repair all agricultural implements, receive from each of their clients at harvest time a headload of unthreshed corn; a headload is estimated to produce about 15 seers of sifted grain. After sugarcane pressing, they receive one seer of *gur*. Further, on all ceremonial occasions, they receive a present. The Chamar, in his capacity as farm servant, receives the same remuneration as the Lohar or Barhai, plus a seer of grain for every three maunds of corn that he winnows, and another five seers of grain as payment for threshing. After sugarcane pressing, at which he assists by feeding the fire, he receives one jar of juice, containing about five seers, from every cauldron (*kundi*). Dead cattle, of course, also

<sup>1</sup> Instances of debt due to all these causes are mentioned in the evidence presented to the Banking Enquiry Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter XII, par. 12.

<sup>3</sup> See B.E.C.'s report, Vol. II, p. 229, being the result of enquiries made in a village in Meerut district.

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morality to escape taking over their debts, such cases are rare; and when they do occur, have often been inspired by the original debtor himself. Again, a moneylender who is likely to be defeated by either the first or the third exception, would invariably endeavour to induce the heir concerned to execute a promissory note in his own name; and such is the force of tradition that he would generally succeed. If he does, then the debt revives as the debt of the heir himself, and both limitations are avoided. Nor is the heir's action in thus going beyond the requirements of the law itself, solely due to ignorance of the legal position. It is also due to a sentiment inspired partly by respect for the ancestor, partly by religious considerations. The effect of this sentiment may be lamentable. In the words of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, 'the people are so accustomed to be in debt, to take it over from their fathers and to pass it on to their sons, that they accept indebtedness . . . as a natural state of life'.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is a sentiment which it is difficult to condemn, and which, whether deserving of condemnation or not, yet in the circumstances of Hindu family life will pass away neither easily nor quickly.

One of the Hindu lawgivers says 'he who having received a sum lent . . . does not repay it . . . will be born hereafter in his creditor's house a slave, a servant, a woman or a quadruped'.<sup>2</sup> In other words, an unpaid debt is a sin, the consequences of which follow the debtor into his next life. It is not, therefore, sufficient for the heir *to take over the debt*; it is also necessary that he should *pay* it. From the point of view of the ancestor, that is no doubt satisfactory; from the point of view of the descendant, however, it means merely that the new debt replaces the old and one creditor replaces another. There is no doubt that a large amount of fresh debt is incurred to repay ancestral debt. The Banking Enquiry Committee collected from various sources 43 sets of figures of classified debt, relating to areas as large as

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture*, p. 434.

<sup>2</sup> *Vrihaspati apud Jugannatha Digest*, Vol. I, p. 334.

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a tahsil and as small as a few families, but mostly to single villages. The total amount involved was 33½ lakhs of rupees in round figures. The amount described as due to the repayment of ancestral debt was Rs. 4,81,000 or over 14 per cent.

The caste system is essentially aristocratic. Every caste has its appointed rank, and every individual's status in society is governed by the rank of the caste to which he belongs. That status cannot be raised. It can, however, be lowered if in any respect a man fail to obey the dictates of custom; and the higher the caste the greater the need for such observance. Some of the customs affecting social status have an important economic bearing.

(a) A high caste woman must remain in seclusion. She can give no assistance in the fields.

(b) Custom forbids a Brahman or a Rajput to handle the plough. The custom is said to be growing weaker, but is still generally prevalent. Its origin is uncertain. It appears to have no religious sanction; indeed, Manu in referring to the various means of livelihood open to a Brahman, after first mentioning the priestly and military occupations, adds 'if it be asked how he (the Brahman) must live should he be unable to get a subsistence by either of these employments, the answer is that he must subsist as a mercantile man, applying *himself* in person to tillage and attendance on cattle'.<sup>1</sup>

(c) A high caste man who comes into physical contact with a member of an untouchable caste becomes impure, and must at once wash both himself and his clothes. As we have seen elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> this taboo is weakening, and there are devices for evading it. Nevertheless it does persist to some extent. Most field labourers are 'untouchables', and it is difficult to avoid contact with them in some of the field operations in which a high caste man could assist.

The result of this taboo, and of the taboo on handling

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes*, X. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter V, par. 15.

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the plough, is that the high caste man is apt to confine his energies to supervision. The economic results of all these customs taken together is, *firstly*, to increase the cost of cultivation, for since neither the high caste man himself nor his wife can take any active part in agricultural work, they are compelled to employ far more labour than lower castes: whilst *secondly*, the high caste man is generally content to leave his cultivation to his servants and gives it little personal attention, with the result that it is rarely as skilful or productive as low caste cultivation; where the Kurmi produces wheat, the Brahman produces barley and only second-rate barley; whilst an expert eye could detect without difficulty which of two neighbouring fields of wheat, belonged to the Kurmi and which to the Brahman.

(d) Finally, expenditure on various ceremonies is much higher amongst the high castes than the low. Not only has a Brahman or a Rajput to spend more lest he lose social standing, but he must observe all the twice born rites, whilst the man of lower caste can restrict himself only to the most important; and there are sixteen of these, all of which cost money.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, members of high castes usually possess certain privileges. Both Brahmans and Rajputs, for instance, usually enjoy a rental privilege which is often as high as 25 per cent. Again, they generally possess far more than their fair share of the larger holdings. The Brahman, moreover, by virtue of his Brahmanhood has a valuable subsidiary source of income in the shape of his priestly and caste dues, which include not only fees for services rendered, but presents (usually of food) that are made either on ceremonial occasions or by way of a caste penance.

In short, the high caste agriculturist possesses certain definite economic advantages, set off by the costliness of his cultivation, inferiority of his crops and the specially high expenditure which he must incur on his social obligations. On balance the Brah-

11. Comparison  
between certain  
castes  
(a) Brahman and  
Rajput

<sup>1</sup> For a list of the rites, see appendix to Chapter XIV.

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man certainly gains. His debt is by no means as high as that of the Rajput; indeed, it is often relatively low, whilst there are many Brahman moneylenders. But the Rajput, as a class, is deeply in debt, as the result of his social obligations and his personal extravagance. 'The predominant Rajput is notorious for extravagance and bad husbandry. Proud of his birth and traditions, more accustomed to fight than to till, the Rajput is by common consent the worst cultivator of this district (Meerut) . . . He considers it below his dignity to touch the plough himself and his fields are at the mercy of hirelings. . . . His pride of birth and regard for ancient tradition make him prodigal in his expenditure on marriages and other social functions. The traditional custom of marrying his daughter to a social superior leads to reckless borrowing and ends in the mortgage and sale of his land. Yet though he is scrupulous to preserve his *izzat* (honour), he is rarely punctual in repayment of his debt.'<sup>1</sup> Other high castes are also deeply indebted, notably the Bhuinhar Brahman of the eastern districts, and the Kayastha.

Social expenditure is also high amongst low castes that have prospered, and accordingly have begun to ape their betters. They then give up their low caste customs; they prohibit, for instance, the remarriage of widows, abandon the use of intoxicants, reduce the age of marriage, pay Brahmans large fees to serve their rites, and increase their expenditure on marriages and other social ceremonies. Finally, they advance a claim to be descended from some higher group of castes, the Brahman, the Chhatti, or the Vaisya.

With the Rajput may be contrasted the Jat and the Kurmi. 'The Jat takes a high rank amongst the cultivating races of the province. He is simply a slave to his farm. . . . He never dreams of taking any service except in the army, he is thrifty to the verge

12. (b) Prosperous  
low castes

13. (c) Jat and  
Kurmi

<sup>1</sup> B.E.C.'s report, Vol. II, p. 228.

of meanness and industrious beyond comparison. If his crops fail, it is sheer hard luck. . . . His fault is quarrelsomeness; and in litigation he never knows when he is beaten.<sup>1</sup> As in litigation, so in agriculture—he never knows when he is beaten. He spends his life in quarrelling with nature. The Jat never says die: according to the proverb, '*Jat mara tab janiye jab terahwin guzar jae*' (Never be sure that a Jat is dead till the days of mourning for him are over).

As for the Kurmi, he is even more canny in money matters than the Jat, though less quarrelsome. Most moneylenders amongst the tenantry are Kurmis. It is reported from one registration office in the Basti district where the Kurmis are particularly strong in number, that of the total sum which passes from lender to borrower in a certain tahsil, the Kurmi contributes a full half. Generally, his own indebtedness is small, and he has money to put by at the end of the year. His ambition is always the acquisition of additional land. For the rest, there is nothing to choose between the Jat and the Kurmi. 'The Kurmi is always planting whether his crop lives or dies.'

The main reason for the growing poverty of the Muslims in this province is their high cost of living as compared with that of other communities. The Muslim has not adjusted himself to changed circumstances, and still adheres to the habits and ways which characterized him during the decadence of Muslim rule in India. His standard of living is infinitely more expensive than that of the Hindu, and always up to, if not beyond, his income. Hospitality, moreover, is to him almost a religious duty. 'God's angels do not visit a house where there are no guests.' The charge of thriftlessness can be more justifiably laid at the door of the Muslim than of the Hindu peasant. His economic position is also seriously affected by the Muslim law of

14. Muslim indebtedness

<sup>1</sup> Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. III, p. 40.

inheritance. In a Hindu joint family, widows get merely a life interest, daughters get nothing, and the estate is managed by a *karta* or agent. Amongst Muslims, on the other hand, the division of property after a death is inevitable, and often results in breaking up small estates into fragments which are not worth keeping. But though the heir's income is thus diminished, his expenditure remains on the same scale as it was before the property was divided; for to cut down his expenses would bring disgrace to the family. The Muslim, again, is more litigious than the Hindu. The wrath of the petty Muslim *zamindar* is easily aroused, even on matters of minor importance. If a tenant has the hardihood to refuse to work for him, he must be punished; if a neighbouring landlord has refused to allow the *zamindar's* cattle to graze in his pasture, he must be taught the wisdom of complaisance. And the result is a lawsuit, or possibly a criminal prosecution. Meantime, his family pride prevents him from taking up commercial occupations unless he happens to have been born into some trade, and even then he is rarely able to make both ends meet. Finally, the Muslim woman, unlike her Hindu sister, must observe *pardah* in all but the lowest rank of society. The natural result is that the Muslim falls quickly and easily into debt to an extent even greater than the Hindu. Yet whilst he is ready to pay the most usurious rates of interest, his religion does not permit him to lend money on interest; and thus such capital as the Muslim possesses is often rendered inoperative.

15. Figures of indebtedness by caste

Two sets of figures, collected by the Banking Enquiry Committee, are of interest. The first set shows the comparative indebtedness of various groups of castes,<sup>1</sup> and is reproduced below:—

<sup>1</sup> B.E.C.'s report, Vol. I, p. 103.

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Table showing indebtedness by caste groups

| Caste group                      | Number of persons |          | Amount of debt<br>(000's omitted) | Percentage of total<br>debt | Debt per debtor | Debt per person |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                  | Debt-free         | Indebted |                                   |                             |                 |                 |
| I.—High castes ...               | 7,420             | 9,109    | Rs. 58,87,                        | 66                          | Rs. 624         | Rs. 356         |
| II.—Good agricultural castes ... | 5,608             | 7,287    | 11,79,                            | 14                          | 162             | 91              |
| III.—Market gardening castes ... | 1,345             | 2,010    | 2,60,                             | 3                           | 129             | 77              |
| IV.—Low agricultural castes ...  | 3,443             | 4,417    | 4,26,                             | 5                           | 54              | 36              |
| V.—Non-agricultural castes ...   | 1,210             | 724      | 2,79,                             | 3                           | 386             | 144             |
| VI.—Other castes ...             | 5,938             | 6,020    | 8,15,                             | 9                           | 135             | 68              |
| Total ...                        | 24,964            | 29,567   | 88,47,                            | 100                         | 299             | 162             |

The castes included in the various groups were as follows :—

- I. High castes—Brahman, Rajput, Musalman Rajput, Saiyid, Shaikh, and Pathan.
- II. Castes of good agriculturists—Ahar, Ahir, Kisan, Kurmi, and Lodha.
- III. Market gardening castes—Baghban, Kachhi, Koiri, Mali, Murao, and Saini.
- IV. Agricultural castes of low social status—Bhar, Chamar, and Pasi.
- V. Non-agricultural castes—Kalwar, Kayastha, Khattri, and Vaisya.
- VI. Other castes.

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This table proves to demonstration how large a part of the total debt falls, and how heavy its burden is, on the high castes. The reasons are not far to seek. Not only is there the high caste man's extravagance to account for it, but it also includes by far the greater part of the debt of the big landlords. If the high castes were indebted only to the same extent as the average of the rest of the agricultural population, then their total figure would only be 10½ lakhs (round); which means that the balance of their debt, some 48½ lakhs, or 83 per cent, is due to their social position and the expenditure which it entails. The lowest figures, as might be expected, are those of the market-gardening castes and the non-agricultural castes, both of whom are relatively few in number; the lightest burden, however, for sufficiently obvious reasons, is that borne by the low agricultural castes. The cultivator belonging to the non-agricultural castes, if indebted at all, is heavily indebted; his figure stands next to that of the high castes. On the other hand, as might be expected since this class contains such professional moneylenders as are also agriculturists, only a small proportion, some 38 per cent, are indebted at all. The proportion of indebted and debt-free in the various groups is as follows :

| Caste group |     |     |     | Percentage of |          |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------|----------|
|             |     |     |     | Debt-free     | Indebted |
| I           | ... | ... | ... | 45            | 55       |
| II          | ... | ... | ... | 44            | 56       |
| III         | ... | ... | ... | 40            | 60       |
| IV          | ... | ... | ... | 44            | 56       |
| V           | ... | ... | ... | 62            | 38       |
| VI          | ... | ... | ... | 50            | 50       |
| Total ...   |     |     |     | 46            | 54       |

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Except in the non-agricultural group the variations are small.

The second set of figures show the extent to which various castes have lost or acquired land during the period 1907-8 to 1925-6. They are given in the following table which is adapted from that given in the Banking Enquiry Committee's report :<sup>1</sup>

16. Gains and losses of land amongst various castes

*Gains and losses of land 1907-8 to 1925-6*

| Caste or caste group          | Area<br>(thousands of acres : 000's omitted) in |         |                     |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------|
|                               | 1907-8                                          | 1925-6  | Difference          |
| Rajput ... ..                 | 16,341,                                         | 16,230, | - 111,              |
| Muslim ... ..                 | 8,963,                                          | 8,532,  | - 431,              |
| Brahmans, Bhuihars and Tagas  | 8,095,                                          | 8,366,  | + 291,              |
| Other agricultural castes ... | 3,762,                                          | 3,909,  | + 147,              |
| Non-agricultural castes ...   | 6,948,                                          | 7,602,  | + 654, <sup>2</sup> |

The 'other agricultural castes' comprised the Ahar, Ahir, Bishnoi, Gujar, Jat and Kurmi; the non-agricultural castes were the Goshain, Kalwar, Kandu, Kayastha, Khattri, Marwari, Sadh and Vaisya. Rajputs and Muslims have lost heavily : but though the greater part of

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, pp. 125-6.

<sup>2</sup> It will be noticed that in this table gains amount to 1,072,000 acres against losses of 542,000 acres only. The explanation is that the figures were taken out only for the castes actually mentioned and not for all castes.

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their losses is the result of their indebtedness, yet the gains have not gone entirely to the professional money-lenders. A considerable part has gone to the Brahmans and the richer agriculturists, notably Kurmis, amongst whom there are many amateur money-lenders.

Principal authority.—*Report of the United Provinces Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee (1930).*

## CHAPTER XIV

### CASTE IN RELATION TO RELIGION

Hinduism, according to Sir Alfred Lyall,<sup>1</sup> 'is not exclusively a religious denomination, but denotes also a country, and, to a certain extent, a race. . . . When a man tells me that he is a Hindu, I know that he means all three things taken together—religion, parentage, and country.' To these three qualifications, however, must be added a fourth, namely social organization; for no man can be reckoned a 'Hindu' who is not a member of a recognized Hindu caste. For present purposes, race and country can be neglected; taken together, they mean that a Hindu is a native of India who is not of European, Persian, Tartar, or other foreign descent—which description, however, is too wide, since it would include converts from the Hindu to other religions. There remain two qualifications, one social and one religious; which calls to mind Sir W. W. Hunter's statement that Hinduism 'is both a social organization and a religious confederacy'. The object of this chapter is to examine the relation between these two aspects of Hinduism.

The Hindu religion, says Sir Edward Gait,<sup>2</sup> is 'a complex congeries of creeds and doctrines. It shelters within its portals monotheists, polytheists, and pantheists; worshippers of the great gods Siva and Vishnu, or of their female counterparts, as well as worshippers of the divine mothers, of the spirits of trees, rocks, and streams, and of the tutelary village deities; persons who propitiate their deity

<sup>1</sup> *Asiatic Studies* (1899).

<sup>2</sup> *Census Report, India*, 1911, p. 114.

by all manner of bloody sacrifices, and persons who will not only kill no living creature, but who must not even use the word "cut"; those whose ritual consists mainly of prayers and hymns, and those who indulge in unspeakable orgies in the name of religion.' This description, full as it is, is still incomplete. To the list must be added worshippers of natural forces, of demons and ghosts, of ancestors, of saints and heroes. The Hindu has the choice of pantheism and animism, of polytheism and monotheism, of demonolatry and hagiolatry, of ancestor worship and animal worship, of metaphysics and magic—of every 'ism' and 'olatri' and worship known to man. Throughout the wide range of literature on the subject, there is not a single satisfactory definition of Hinduism,<sup>1</sup> which is not surprising, since it is impossible to define the indefinite. Indeed, Hinduism is not so much a single religion, as a congeries of many, and very different, religions. And it has become what it is as the result of two distinct processes; *firstly*, the evolution of an Aryan nature worship into theism; *secondly*, the continuous

<sup>1</sup> The following will serve as examples. (a) 'A hereditary sacerdotalism with Brahmins for its Levites, the vitality of which is preserved by the social institution of caste, and which may include all shades and diversities of religion native to India, as distinct from the foreign importations of Christianity and Islam, and from the later outgrowths of Buddhism, more doubtfully of Sikhism, and still more doubtfully of Jainism.' (Sir D. Ibbetson, *Census Report, Punjab*, 1881, par. 214.) (b) 'The large residuum that is not Sikh, or Jain, or Buddhist, or professedly Animistic, or included in one of the foreign religions, such as Islam, Mazdaism, Christianity, or Hebraism.' (Sir J. A. Baines, *General Report on the Census of India*, 1891, p. 158.) (c) 'The collection of rites, worships, beliefs, traditions, and mythologies that are sanctioned by the sacred books and ordinances of the Brahmins and are propagated by Brahmanic teaching.' (Sir A. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, 1899, Vol. II, p. 288.) (d) 'What the Hindus, or the majority of them in a Hindu community, do.' (B. Guru Prasad Sen, *Introduction to the Study of Hinduism*, 1893, p. 9.) (e) 'Magic tempered by metaphysics.' (Sir H. Risley, *The People of India*, 1915 edition, p. 233.) Of these, the first is inadequate, because it makes no mention of belief, but only of ritual. The second merely amounts to the statement that Hinduism is everything which is not anything else. The third is a correct definition of only a *part* of Hinduism, i.e. Brahmanical Hinduism. The fourth cannot be regarded as defining a religion at all; though it would, if 'believe', or 'worship', or (better still) both, were substituted for 'do'. The last is professedly a mere epigram; yet it is as informing as any of the others.

absorption in that Aryan religion of Dravidian and other animistic beliefs and worships.

The religion of the Aryan invaders of India, as reflected in the Rig Veda, is a worship of natural phenomena in the guise of conscious and personal beings, with powers that man cannot control, yet amenable to his invocations and sacrifices. At first, that worship was still unsettled; the functions of the deities were not yet defined, nor their relative importance and position; the greatest to each worshipper was the one whom he was at the moment addressing. Later, there was some attempt at the construction of a well-ordered pantheon; nature was divided into three regions, to each of which were assigned eleven gods, one of whom was pre-eminent—namely, Indra in the region of the sky, Agni in the region of fire, and Surya in the sun. This was pure polytheism of that particular type which Max Müller calls 'kathenotheism', which means that the deity invoked is for the time being the *only* deity.

The ancient Aryan firmly believed in the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice. By prayer, the suppliant could bend the deity to his will; by offerings, he gave him vigour to battle with their mutual enemies. This power of invocation was called *brahma* (devotion); whilst there was a special god, whose name was Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati (lord of prayer), to protect and guide the pious worshipper. The natural result was to produce a deep feeling of reverence for those who had knowledge of the various forms of ritual. The officiating priest was called Brahman (a suppliant or worshipper); and there can be no doubt that the priesthood, even at this time, had a position in society which raised him above the rest of the people, save only the royal or military class, Rajan or Kshatriya. Such was the origin of that caste which has been so powerful in Hinduism for centuries, and such the origin of its power. As master of religious ritual, the Brahman was already indispensable to a religious community; but he was not content. Already priest, he became theologian,

philosopher, lawgiver, statesman, till by sheer force of learning he raised himself to a position of pre-eminence, even above that of the Kshatriya nobility. Of his achievements in other spheres of activity more will be said in another chapter; here we are only concerned with his influence on the development of the Hindu religion.

With the advance of religious reflection, the Vedic nature worship underwent modification in two directions. On the one hand, theologians began to realize that their cosmic scheme was incomplete. The gods rule nature; but who *made* nature, including the gods? Thus they were led to the conception of a deity, superior to the nature-gods, and creator both of them and of the universe. But this conception always remained somewhat vague. The exact place of this deity in the pantheon was never definitely settled; even his name was uncertain, for he was described by epithets, which are elsewhere attributed to other gods—Prajapati (lord of creation), or Visvakarma (maker of all things). Still, so far as it went, this meant a move in the direction, not perhaps of monotheism, but at all events of henotheism—i.e. a polytheistic system in which one god is supreme.

Meantime, the metaphysicians, following another line of thought, began to perceive that all sentient beings, all forces of nature, even all gods, were directed by some hidden agency, which was, in all cases and always, essentially the same. And so they were led to the conception of an all-pervading divine energy, of which gods and men and natural forces were mere manifestations, into which they were all ultimately absorbed. To this energy, they gave the name *brahmā*. But such a conception could not possibly satisfy the religious thinker. He wanted a supreme god whom he could invoke by prayer, and propitiate by sacrifice; all that the metaphysicians could give him was an abstraction. And the metaphysician proceeded to solve his difficulty, in the manner usual amongst metaphysicians, by hypostatizing

that abstraction.<sup>1</sup> They turned the neuter *brahmā* into the masculine *Brahmā*, whom they put in the place of his real, though somewhat nebulous, predecessor Prajapati. And so Vedism became pantheism,<sup>2</sup> the product of Brahmanical thought.

When the Aryan invaders entered India, they came into close contact with indigenous Dravidian races, whose civilization was infinitely less advanced than theirs. So far as it is possible to judge on the analogy of their descendants in the more backward parts of the continent, their religion was a nature worship of a very primitive kind. Their beliefs were frankly animistic; their deities were rather ghosts than gods—'shapeless phantasms of which no image can be made and no definite idea can be formed'.<sup>3</sup> Some of them had spheres of influence of their own—cholera, smallpox, or other diseases; some had their local habitations—rock or tree or river. The Dasyu's method of worship was propitiation rather than prayer, for most of these deities were malevolent, of whom the most that man could expect was that they would refrain from doing harm; yet, if propitiation failed to move them, they could be compelled by magic. There are undoubtedly traces of supreme beings<sup>4</sup> to be found in Indian animism, who are regarded as benevolent; but for that very reason they received less attention than those who were ready and able to do mischief.

<sup>1</sup> In Bradley's trenchant phrase, metaphysicians 'call the Absolute god, because they cannot think what the devil else it can be'.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Caird has said somewhere that unless a metaphysical theory can explain religion, it cannot explain its own possibility, and so stands self-condemned. And this pantheistic system fails to solve three riddles—

(a) How, in the beginning, did gods and men and natural forces proceed forth from the pre-existing 'energy'?

(b) How could god, or man (or metaphysician), apprehend the 'energy' of which he was himself only a transient manifestation?

(c) Why did the 'energy' manifest itself both in and to any being?

<sup>3</sup> So Risley, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> These are what Andrew Lang somewhere calls the 'high gods of low races'.

There can be no doubt that, as time passed and the two new races, mainly by intermarriage, blended into one, their beliefs also became assimilated. The Dasyu wife would bring her gods with her into her Aryan husband's home; he would begin to worship them too. They were in their own country, he would argue; they might be mightily malevolent, especially to a stranger; it could do no harm, and it might be wise, to conciliate them. Meantime, the wife would teach her own religion to her children, and they would teach it in turn to theirs. Thus, in course of time, an aboriginal god would take his place with Vedic gods in the family pantheon; whence, if his worship proved sufficiently popular, he would ultimately rise into the national pantheon. Again, the Aryan soldiery no doubt brought back new gods from their campaigns with the rest of their booty, as the Roman legionaries did after them.<sup>1</sup> Or thoughtful theologians, engaged in a comparative study of religions, would notice that some Dravidian god had functions remarkably similar to those of some Vedic god, just as Julius Cæsar identified various Roman deities among the deities of Gaul;<sup>2</sup> and deciding that there was only one god under two names, they would proceed to worship him under both names. And the process has gone on through the ages. It is impossible now to trace the effects which the religions of later invaders—Yavana, Pahlava, Saka, Kushan, Huna—left on Hinduism; but it cannot be doubted that they did leave such effects. As for Islam, many of its saints and heroes have been deified, and to this day are worshipped, by many pious Hindus.<sup>3</sup> The gates of the Hindu Olympus have ever stood open to the strange gods of their neighbours, and they are open still. Nor let it be supposed

<sup>1</sup> The most striking instance of this method of acquiring a new religion at Rome is the adoption of the Mithra worship from certain Cilician pirates conquered by Pompey about 70 B.C. (Risley, op. cit., p. 243).

<sup>2</sup> *De Bello Gallico*, VI. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Instances will be given below.

that Hinduism is unique in offering hospitality to foreign deities. Precisely the same thing occurred in the religions of Greece and Rome; indeed, the Roman religion borrowed other people's gods even more freely than the Hindu religion.

There came a time, therefore, when priestly doctrines and popular beliefs became irreconcilable. Brahmanical pantheism, whose only deity was a hypostatized abstraction, wholly cold and wholly colourless, could not possibly attract worshippers who looked on their gods as personal conscious beings, both vigorous and active. It is probable, too, that the sacerdotal class had already begun to arrogate to itself authority in other spheres than that of religion, and had thus aroused the resentment of the Kshatriya nobility. Both the Brahman and the Brahmanical religion became thoroughly unpopular; and the result was that other religions arose, of which two were definite revolts against Brahmanism.

Of these revolts, the first and far the most important was Buddhism, which takes its name from its founder, Gautama Buddha, a prince of the Sakya clan of Kshatriyas, who lived in the sixth century before Christ. It ignored the existence of God, and so was rather a philosophy than a religion; but it differed from all Brahmanical systems of philosophy because it linked ethics to metaphysics by its central doctrine of *karma*, or automatic retribution. This doctrine lays down that the nature of a man's actions and desires in each life determines the form of his next life; if the bad that he has done outweighs the good, he will descend to a lower existence, if the good outweighs the bad, he will rise to a higher, until at last *karma* has run its course, and he attains to *nirvana*, the absolute extinction of individuality. The stress which this doctrine lays on the practice of virtue made it acceptable to many; Buddhism made rapid progress, and for centuries was the state religion in many parts of India, though it is less certain that it ever became the creed of

8. Revolts  
against Brah-  
manism

9. Buddhism

the people.<sup>1</sup> But for the present argument, its importance lies in the practical conclusions that are derived from it. Buddhism denies the sanctity of the Vedas and the efficacy of ceremonial and sacrifice, and rejects the claim of the priesthood to be regarded as sole masters and teachers of divine knowledge. It was, therefore, in definite opposition both to Brahmanism and the Brahmins.

Jainism, which arose about the same period, was at one time regarded as an offshoot of Buddhism, which, in respect of its philosophical doctrines, it much resembles. It is now held to be an entirely independent system. Its founder, Mahavira,<sup>2</sup> was, like Buddha, a Kshatriya. It differs from Buddhism mainly in the possession of objects of worship, namely the twenty-four Tirthankaras—deified men who have 'made the pilgrimage', i.e. have attained perfect knowledge. The two rivals to the title of founder, Mahavira and Parasnath, are respectively the last and last but one of these demi-gods.

Buddhism has long since disappeared from Northern India; Jainism is still alive. Two other new religions, which can be regarded as popular modifications of Brahmanism, arose about the same time, and are also flourishing. The first is Saivism, the origin of which is obscure. Some hold that it is an offshoot of Buddhism, in which case the god Siva represents Buddha the ascetic. It is true that by some of his worshippers he is regarded less as a god than as a devotee, all-powerful with the gods. But the theory is untenable, for it does not explain Siva's two most important attributes, i.e. destruction and regeneration. As destroyer, he is identified with, and bears the name of, the Vedic god Rudra, lord of the tempest, a fierce and destructive deity, who sends death and disease to men and

<sup>1</sup> It seems that though Buddhist (and Jain) monks acted as spiritual teachers, the services of Brahman priests were still utilized for the ceremonies at birth, marriage, and death. *Census Report, U.P., 1901*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Some hold that the founder was Parshva or Parasnath.

numerous names<sup>1</sup> was already extensively worshipped; so that there was, no doubt, a special reason for giving her a place in the Brahmanical system. It has often been asserted that the Brahman priesthood was responsible for grafting into Hinduism all that mass of primitive cults that now form part of it; or, in other words, that they deliberately exerted themselves to carry out that amalgamation of beliefs that has been described above. Some go so far as to say that they did so for their own gain. 'If to give to a Brahman is to worship God, the larger the circle of worshippers the better for the Brahman; and if new worshippers will not leave their gods behind them, it would be foolish to exclude them on that account.'<sup>2</sup> In that case, the Hindu religion would not be the result of natural evolution, but a monstrous artificial edifice. The facts do not bear out such statements. There are numerous forms of popular worship at the present day, with which Brahmans have no concern whatever. They had undoubtedly to make concessions to popular opinion; but they only did what the priesthood of every important religion has had to do in similar circumstances. But no priesthood has ever made more concessions than necessary; it is absurd to suppose that the Brahmans made as many as possible. It is, no doubt, true that Brahmans are not all of the same status, or, indeed—if the legends are to be believed—of the same descent: and Brahmans of a lower class may be willing to assist their clients in worships that Brahmans of a higher class would scorn to recognize. But the Brahmans with whom we are now concerned, the old Aryan priesthood and its descendants, are to be reckoned among the highest class.

<sup>1</sup> Durga, Kali, Uma, Mahadevi, Kalika, Bhawani, are some of the best known; perhaps the commonest is Devi. The account here given is the usual account; but it is probably more correct to say that the Brahman theologian would regard these deities, not as forms of Parvati, but as separate impersonations of the *sakti*, or female energy.

<sup>2</sup> A dictum of Sir D. Ibbetson, apud Rose, *Glossary of Punjab Ethnography*.

Such are the processes by which Hinduism has become what it is to-day—a heterogeneous mass of beliefs and practices ranging from the lowest to the highest. At one end is animism, which regards life as a chaos of terrors, brought about by a company of shadowy and generally malignant powers, which strives to reduce that chaos to some sort of order either by cajoling those powers with gifts, or compelling them with magic. At the other end is theism—a belief in personal gods; yet, because those personal gods are the result of a train of metaphysical speculation, a theism which is liable to merge into pantheism. And between these extremes, room has been found for every form of belief and practice that the human imagination can conceive. According to the popular reckoning, Hinduism possesses three hundred and thirty million deities—of whom a man may revere one, or few, or many, or none, as he pleases.

In such circumstances, it is manifestly impossible to predicate 'orthodoxy' of the religion or its adherents. Orthodoxy is defined as correct or universally accepted opinion on matters of religious belief or doctrine; but there is no opinion regarding Hinduism that can be described as 'correct', to the exclusion of all other opinions, still less as universally accepted. And when Mr. Crooke and other writers apply the adjective 'orthodox' to Hinduism, what they mean is that body of doctrines and beliefs which are supported by the highest, i.e. the Brahmanical, authority, and which are also actually held by the majority of Hindus. In other words, we get back to a modification of B. Guru Prasad Sen's definition: orthodox Hinduism is what the Brahmans teach, and the majority of Hindus believe.

Brahmanical theologians reckon five principal manifestations of the divine spirit, namely, Siva, Vishnu, Sakti, Surya, and Ganapati. Sakti, as already explained, is deity in female form, personified as wife of Brahmā, of Siva, or of Vishnu, or one of the numerous goddesses

#### 14. Modern Hinduism

#### 15. 'Orthodoxy' and Hinduism

#### 16. Brahmanical Hinduism

cattle. As regenerator he is Siva—the auspicious or fortunate one. The word is used in the Vedas only as an adjective; but in this shape, Siva has certain points of resemblance with another Vedic deity, Pushan, the giver of material blessings, and connected with the marriage ceremony, who is also called Pashupa, as Siva is called Pashupati. With these affinities, it seems certain that Siva is a deity of Vedic origin. But he has many names and many aspects, and there can be little doubt that some of them are imported from non-Aryan religions. One of his forms and names, for instance, is Bhairava;<sup>1</sup> and Bhairava is simply an adaptation of Bhairon, who is essentially a village godling, the protector of fields and cattle. Another, perhaps the commonest, of his names is Mahadeva; and Mahadeva is an object of worship to many low castes whose other deities are entirely non-Brahmanical. Again, the *linga* worship which is associated with Siva as regenerator is entirely alien from Vedism, though characteristic of animism. Saivism, therefore, is to be regarded as an Aryan religion, but overlaid with non-Aryan cults.

The second religion was Vaishnavism; of its origin, thanks to the researches of Sir R. G. Bhandarkar,<sup>2</sup> we now know something definite, though much is still obscure.

Vishnu originally was one of the lesser Vedic gods, a genial benevolent being, renowned for having crossed the universe in three steps, but otherwise of no special prominence. During the Puranic period he acquired high esteem, and possibly because his 'three steps' were connected with the rising, midday, and setting sun,

<sup>1</sup> One of the curious facts in Hindu mythology is the extreme popularity of Bhairon. As Bhairava, he is not only a form of Siva, but the protector of the Jains. He is also Kāl Bhairon, both in the Punjab and Rajputana, who drives away death. In Bombay he is Bhairoba, a destructive god. In Benares he is Bhaironath, magistrate of the city, and guardian of all Siva's temples. Finally, he is connected with Sakhi Sarwar, and is one of the many who are reckoned amongst the Panchpir. Another of Siva's epithets is Mahesh, which also means the great god.

<sup>2</sup> See his book *Vaishnavism, Saivism, and the Minor Religions* (1914).

there was a tendency to identify him with, and even to exalt him above, the great Vedic sky-god, Indra, as is proved by some of Vishnu's later names, such as Vasudeva and Vaikuntha. At the same time, the god of the Vrishni or Satvata race was Narayana, son of Dharma (right conduct) and Ahimsa (non-killing). A god of such parentage could not tolerate sacrifice; and in due course Vasudeva, a Vrishni sage, promulgated a reformed religion, which is said to be that contained in the Bhagavadgita. In some obscure way, Vasudeva was first identified with Krishna, a *rishi*, and one of the authors of the Vedas, and then deified as Narayana himself. Later, Narayana was identified with Vishnu, the link being Vasudeva, who was connected with both; and Vasudeva-Krishna is the name given to Vishnu's eighth *avatar* or incarnation, which he assumed to slay the demon Kansa. At a later date still, Vasudeva-Krishna was identified with Gopala-Krishna, the god of the Abhiras, a non-Aryan pastoral race. Vaishnavism, therefore, was, like Saivism, an amalgam of Vedic and non-Vedic beliefs.

The policy of the priesthood in dealing with these revolutionary religions was one of compromise. With the object of regaining their hold on the minds of the people, they proceeded to incorporate into their system the most important of the various objects of popular devotion. Siva and Vishnu were joined to Brahmā to form a second triad of great gods,<sup>1</sup> a triple impersonation of the universal spirit into which they would ultimately be absorbed. The male nature of this triad was then supplemented by associating with each member a female energy (*sakti*). Saraswati, goddess of eloquence and learning, was assigned to Brahmā as his consort, Sri or Lakshmi, goddess of fortune, to Vishnu, and Parvati, daughter of Himavat, god of the Himalayan mountains, to Siva. Parvati, at all events, was probably a non-Aryan goddess, and under one or other of her

<sup>1</sup> The first triad was Indra, Agni, and Surya, the Vedic deities.

that are usually regarded as different forms of the second of these. Surya is the sun-god; Ganpati is Ganesh, son of Siva, god of wisdom, and captain of the host of inferior deities; they have few followers in this province. Brahmā disappears altogether. Any Hindu, whose principal worship (though not necessarily his *only* worship), is addressed to one or more of these great gods, may be regarded as 'orthodox'. I calculate that, on this definition, some thirty-seven out of the forty millions of Hindus in this province fall into this category. Further, out of those thirty-seven millions, some four millions have been initiated into one or other of the recognized sects—Saiva, Vaishnava, or Sakta, the nature of which is sufficiently explained by their names; and Smarta, who worship equally all the five great gods. Of the sectarians of this province, nearly half are Vaishnavas; some six hundred thousand are Saktas or Smartas; the rest are Saivas. But, on the other hand, the total figure includes a number of low castes who worship, amongst a variety of non-Brahmanical deities, only one of the great gods, usually one of the more common *sakti* forms—Kali, Durga, Bhawani, Devi. In such cases, it is always possible that the single god, on whose worship the claim to orthodoxy would depend, is of aboriginal rather than of Aryan extraction. And when it also appears that in many such cases that particular caste is not served by Brahmans, there can be little further doubt on the subject.

Many castes of good social position, even though they are 'orthodox' in the sense described, pay reverence to other gods that cannot be regarded as either Brahmanical or 'great'.  
 17. The 'low gods of high castes'  
 The following are only a few instances of what (in imitation of Andrew Lang) may be called 'the low gods of high castes'. It must not, of course, be supposed that all members of these castes worship all—or even necessarily any—of these deities.

(a) The Ahiwasi is a caste of agriculturists that claims Brahmanical descent. Besides Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi, they worship Hanuman, the monkey-god;

Dauji,<sup>1</sup> a name for Baladeva, Krishna's elder brother; and Saubhari Rishi, a deified ancestor.

(b) The Bhat, another pseudo-Brahmanical caste, worship, in addition to the great gods, Mahabir, a word which means 'great hero', and is applied alike to Vishnu; to Garuda, Vishnu's steed, half eagle and half man; and to Hanuman. They also revere Bare Bir, a deified ancestor; and Birtiya, protector of cattle.

(c) Amongst Rajput clans, the Kanhpuriyas worship Mahisa Rakshasa, or Bhainsasura, the buffalo demon; the Kachhwahas' family goddess (*kuladevi*) is the Jamwahi Mahadevi of Jaipur, whilst they also worship Baladeva; the Bais worship both the snake, and a tribal goddess called Mathote, apparently a deified widow who became a *sati*.

(d) Amongst the Vaisya castes, there are many peculiarities of belief. Agarwals reverence the snake, as well as certain trees. Agrahris, Kasarwanis and Kasaundhans worship Mahabir, and also the Panchpir (of whom more below); whilst the Khandelwals have some two dozen tribal goddesses, one to each trio of their *gotras*.

(e) The Jats, as might be expected of a tribal caste, pay reverence to a host of deities of all kinds—Dauji; Guga Bir, one of the greatest of the snake kings; Lakhdata,<sup>2</sup> another name for the famous Muslim hero Sakhi Sarwar Sultan, who slew a giant and a jinn; Chamunda Devi, one of the eight 'great mothers';<sup>3</sup> Shaikh Saddo, a Muhammadan saint who found a magic lamp, like Aladdin, but, unlike Aladdin, misused it and was torn to pieces by the jinn; various ancestors and deified worthies of the tribe; and, finally, Burha Baba, the 'old master', a bad-tempered old shepherd, apt to afflict those who annoy him with boils.

(f) The Kurmis, an important agricultural caste, worship Mahabir and Sitala, the smallpox goddess; Surdhir and Babi Pir, both household godlings; whilst the turnip seems to be a totem, since they may not eat it.

<sup>1</sup> *Dau*—a term for elder brother.

<sup>2</sup> *Lakhdata*—giver of lakhs.

<sup>3</sup> *Ashta matri*.

(g) The Sonars, or goldsmiths, have a large array of gods and godlings—the Panchonpir; Hardaur or Hardeva Lala, the cholera godling; Phulmati, younger sister of Sitala; and Miran Sahib, an arch-magician, who led the Saiyid army in battle, and fought even after a cannon ball had removed his head.

Some thirty castes,<sup>1</sup> numbering some three millions of people, appear to ignore the great gods altogether, and can therefore be regarded as 'unorthodox'; of which the largest are the Bhangi, Bhar, Dharkar, Dom, Khatik, Kol, Luniya, Musahar, Nat, and Pasi. The following may be taken as average examples of the beliefs of these castes.

(a) The Baheliya is a tribe of fowlers and hunters. Their deities are Parihar, one of the Panchpir, and Kalu Bir, a deified ghost; Hardaur Lala, the god of cholera; Kala Deo, a household godling; and Miyan Sahib, the saint of Amroha, another name for Shaikh Saddo.

(b) The Bhar, one of the old aboriginal tribes, has a mixed assortment of deities. The chief is Agwan Deo, whose name is variously interpreted to mean 'the guide'; the 'fire-god'; and the 'fever-god'.<sup>2</sup> Others are Kalika, another name of Sitala, and Phulmati, her sister; Parihar, one of the Panchpir; and two deified ghosts, Banru Bir and Kashi Das Baba. The last is sometimes said to have been a Brahman, sometimes an Ahir; he may be the same as Kashi Baba, the godling of murrain, who in life was a Brahman who was slain by an Ahir.

(c) The Dharkar caste is usually regarded as an offshoot of the Dom tribe; its principal occupation is making fans, baskets, staves, and other similar articles out of bamboo, which they regard as a sort of totem. Their deities are thoroughly animistic, and many of them un-

<sup>1</sup> Agariya, Baheliya, Bansphor, Basor, Bawariya, Beldar, Beriya, Bhangi, Bhar, Bhuiyar, Dhangar, Dharkar, Dom, Domar, Ghasiya, Kanjar, Khairwa, Kharwar, Khatik, Kol, Korwa, Luniya, Majhwar, Musahar, Nat, Pankha, Parahiya, Pasi, Patari, Sansiya.

<sup>2</sup> One of the seven sister goddesses of smallpox is Agwani, where the name must mean fever; and according to one legend, Agwan Deo is brother of these seven.

common. The best known are Birtiya, who is usually a guardian of cattle, but to the Dharkar is a household godling; the ubiquitous Panchpir; and Dulha Deo, the famous 'bridegroom god', killed by lightning on the way to fetch his bride, and turned into stone. Others are Banhiya Bir and Deonath, two deified heroes of the tribe; a mountain god called Pahar Pando; Durasin, who may represent Jarasandha the demon (*asura*); and lastly Angarmati Bhawani, the goddess who sends sunstroke. In addition, they worship the village gods (*deohar*) collectively; ghosts (*bhūt*), of whom they specially fear those of people who have been drowned (*burna*), or killed by a tiger (*baghaut*); and their ancestors (*purkha log*, the old people).

(d) The Kol is a tribe of aboriginal jungle folk, akin to the Bengal Mundas. Their principal deities are Gansam, Raja Lakhan, Bansapti Mata, and Dulha Deo. The first named<sup>1</sup> is a deified hero who was devoured by a tiger, and now protects others from the same and other dangers. Raja Lakhan is the deified son of Raja Jai Chand of Kanauj, who was killed by Shahab-ud-din Ghori in 1194 A.D.; why the Kols should adopt him as a god is not clear, though a pillar near Chunar, which has an inscription in his honour, suggests that his dominions may have included the Kol country. Bansapti Mata is the 'mistress of the jungle'; it is unsafe to enter her domain unless she has first been propitiated. Other minor deities are Chithariya Bir, 'lord of tatters', who protects his votaries against disease if a rag is hung in the tree where he lives; Raksha and Phulmati; the village and jungle godlings; demons, sprites (*prêt*), and the sainted dead.

(e) The Luniyas, a Dravidian caste whose special occupation is earthwork of all kinds, are remarkable for a preference for Muhammadan deities. They worship not only the Panchonpir, but also the Prophet, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain. Their other deities are less interesting—

<sup>1</sup> An attempt has been made to hoist him into the Brahmanical pantheon under the name of Ghanasyama (black cloud), an epithet of Krishna.

Máhabir and Agwan are the chief, with Kul Deo, which, however, merely means the household god.

(f) The Musahars, another Dravidian tribe, also have a varied pantheon. They greatly fear ghosts, especially those of Brahmans and Rajputs, whom they call Daitya; Nats, whom they call Nat and Pahlwan (wrestler); Ahirs; and Telis, whom they call Masan. They worship two tribal ancestors, Deosi and Ansari; the latter was the first Musahar to carry a doolie, and, by a pun, is called Dula Deo. Another of their gods is Sadalu Lal, who may be an ancestor too. Of better known godlings, they revere Banraj, the forest king; Baghaut and Mahabir; Gansam and Bansapti, whom they regard as man and wife, and whose wedding they celebrate yearly. They also worship the village godlings collectively.

Certain types of worship are widely practised by 'orthodox' and 'unorthodox' Hindus alike; of these the most important is ancestor-worship. Brahmanical Hindus, like other Aryan races such as the ancient Greeks and Romans, have always attached the greatest importance to the worship of their ancestors. But the practice is not peculiarly Aryan; it is also widely prevalent amongst those low Hindu castes, whose beliefs, like themselves, are of non-Aryan descent. Nor can the fact be explained by supposing that in this matter these low castes have merely imitated their Brahmanical neighbours; for the Dravidian worship differs widely from the Aryan, not only in respect of its ritual, but of the conceptions which underlie it. The object of the annual *śraddha* ceremony of an orthodox Hindu is to accelerate the progress of the soul through the various stages of bliss to complete beatitude—in other words, to benefit the ancestors themselves. The ritual consists in the making of offerings not only to the *manes* of the ancestors, but also, and more importantly, to the gods. The Dravidian animist, on the other hand, worships his ancestors, because he fears them. He believes that unless he propitiates them, they will return to earth and make themselves unpleasant. In other words, he worships them for his

19. Ancestor-  
worship

own benefit, not theirs; and makes offerings to them only because they are themselves deities, or what pass for deities in his theology. A few instances will suffice to prove these statements.

(a) The Bhuiya and the Kol worship their father and mother (though not more distant relatives), because they believe that they will otherwise trouble their descendants with bad dreams, and cause disease. The annual sacrifice is a goat and a fowl, if the suppliant can afford it; otherwise rice and pulse scattered about the courtyard will serve.

(b) The Agariya offers a fowl once a year to the dead generally, and in addition a little water to the father and mother. This suggests another difference between Dravidian and Brahmanical ancestor-worship; the Dravidian practice is due principally to a general fear of ghosts, but the ancestors get additional attention because, as having special knowledge of their descendants, they are specially dangerous.

(c) The Chero is decidedly more advanced towards orthodoxy than most similar tribes; for he is served by Brahmans of respectable standing, and is beginning to adopt the regular *śraddha*. Nevertheless, he also worships his ancestors with precisely the same ritual as the Bhuiya, and holds precisely the same views of their malevolence. Much the same is true of the Dharkar.

(d) The Biyars are even more advanced than the Cheros; their worship is something like the ordinary *śraddha*, and they feed Brahmans on that occasion. Nevertheless, they still retain their old animistic fears of their ancestors' readiness to harm them.

(e) The Dhangar, on the tenth day after death, sacrifices a pig, cuts off its feet and snout, and buries them in the courtyard under a stone. Then he strikes that stone with another, and adjures the ghost of the deceased (who has in fact been cremated), to rest in peace in the grave made for him, even if a magician (*ojha*) should try to wake him. They have no further worship, because this ceremony is held sufficient to lay the ghost for ever.

(f) The Ghasiyas, though in other respects a most pri-

mitive tribe, seem less afraid of their ancestors than others like them. They offer them a meal once a year, and pray to them to be kind to themselves and their cattle. The Kanjars also regard their ancestors as comparatively well-disposed, and as a result only make an offering to them on festive occasions.<sup>1</sup>

(g) The Majhwars seem to worship their ancestors, as distinct from ghosts generally, only when a son or daughter is married, or when somebody has a dream; for dreams are sent by ancestors, and show that they need propitiation.

It may be added that this Dravidian ancestor-worship, when it is annual and not occasional, usually takes place at the Holi festival in March, not, like the *sraddha*, in Kuar (the end of August).

From the worship of ancestors to the worship of other human beings is an easy transition; and Hinduism has admitted to its pantheon many persons who were remarkable either in their lives or in their deaths. One instance of such a deified hero has already been mentioned, namely, Raja Lakhan, the god of the Kols, but there are many more. Valmiki, for instance, author of the *Ramayana*, by a strange freak of mythology has become a god of the Bhangi caste, under the name of Balmik. Others are Maheni, the *sati* goddess of the Hayobans Rajputs of Ghazipur, who died in 1528 A.D., and Hardaur Lala, the murderer of Abul Fazl in Akbar's reign, who was poisoned by his mistress in 1627 A.D., and is now the god of cholera. Even criminals have been deified; for instance, Gandak, a Dom godling, who was hanged for theft at some unknown date. And, according to Sir Herbert Risley, canonization has occurred in quite modern times. Keshab Chandra Sen, one of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, narrowly escaped deification in 1884: Sivaji, the great Mahratta chieftain of the 18th century is worshipped at Ratnagiri; whilst

<sup>1</sup> This is a striking proof of the view, advanced by Sir H. Risley amongst others, that in animism, the more benevolent the deity, the less attention he is likely to get from worshippers (op. cit., p. 226).

everybody has heard of John Nicholson's experiences—who proved, if all that is related of him be true, a somewhat irascible deity.

But perhaps the most numerous class of deified saints and heroes are the Pirs and Saiyids, who are of Muhammadan origin, but are revered both by Muslims and Hindus. The Persian word *pir*<sup>1</sup> means saint; whilst

21. Muhammadan saints

Saiyid, when used in this connexion, appears usually to be, not the title appropriate to descendants of Ali and Fatima, but a corruption of the Arabic word *shahid*, which means a martyr in the cause of Islam. The difference between *pir* and *saiyid*, therefore, is the same as between saint and hero; but the two terms seem to be used indiscriminately. Ghazi Miyan, for instance, the chief of the Panchpir, whose real name was Saiyid Salar Masaud, could not reasonably be described as a saint; but he was indubitably a *shahid*, having been slain in battle with Suhail Deo, a Bhar chieftain.<sup>2</sup> Several of these Muhammadan worthies have already been mentioned amongst the deities of various castes, for instance, Sakhi Sarwar Sultan, better known in the Punjab, whose real name was Saiyid Ahmad; Shaikh Saddo, also called the Miyan of Amroha, Aladdin's counterpart, much revered by women who desire to obtain the upper hand of their husbands; Miran Sahib, the great magician of Ajmer; Guga Pir, *alias* Zahir Pir or Zahir Diwan, the snake-king—though in this case it seems more probable that the saint was originally Hindu, with the name of Guga Bir, and was imported not from, but into, Islam.<sup>3</sup> Other famous saints, to whose shrines Hindus as well as Muslims resort, are Shah Mina (died 1478) at Lucknow, whose assistance is valuable in legal difficulties; Baha-ud-din Madar Shah at

<sup>1</sup> The similarity of *pir* with the Hindi *bir* (Sanskrit *vir*), which means hero, and is a common adjunct to the name of the deified, may have facilitated the adoption of the Muslim saint by Hinduism. See the story of Guga Pir, just below.

<sup>2</sup> And incidentally he was *not* a 'Saiyid'; he was the nephew of Sultan Mahmud, and therefore a Turk.

<sup>3</sup> According to one story, he was first converted to Islam.

Makkanpur in the Cawnpore district; and Ala-ud-din Sabir at Piran Kaliar in Saharanpur.

Of all these deified worthies of Islam, the Panchpir, or five saints, possess the largest number of adherents. Both Hindus and Muhammadans pay reverence to them; they are worshipped by some fifty-three castes, of whom forty-four are wholly or partly Hindu, whilst of that number, no less than sixteen are of good social standing, and only eight can be reckoned as 'unorthodox'. At the census of 1901, when the statistics of sects were fully recorded, the number of their Hindu followers alone was put at over  $1\frac{3}{4}$  millions; but that covered only those to whom this was the *principal* worship. I reckon that the total population of the Hindu castes who worship these five saints amounts to some  $13\frac{1}{2}$  millions.

The original five were the Prophet, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain, which suggests a Shia origin for this worship; but most modern Indian Muslims usually substitute five lesser saints, whilst some recognize only four.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the number, however, the composition of the group varies greatly. Amongst Hindus, indeed, the variations are so numerous, that it is impossible to get any consistent account of these saints. In the small district of Benares alone, Mr. Crooke discovered five different lists, with a total of eleven names between them—viz. Ghazi Miyan (five lists), Amina Sati (four lists), Suthan, Ajab Salar, and Buahna (three lists each), Parihar (two lists), and Bhairon, Bande, Kalika, Shahza, and Bahlano (one list each). Other names that are often found are Subhan, Barahna, Sah Jamal, Sahja Mai, Sahjadi, and Hathile; whilst the Kalwar caste also includes Brahma Deota and Bare Purukh. The cult centres round Ghazi Miyan, whose real name was Saiyid Salar Masaud, the nephew of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. He

<sup>1</sup> Examples are:—Panchpir: Baha-ul-Haq, Shah Shams Tabriz, and Makhdum Jahaniya Jahangashit, all of Multan, Shah Ruqn-i-Alam Hazrat of Lucknow, and Baba Shaikh Farid-ud-din of Pak Patan. Charpir: Ali, Khwaja Hasan Basri, Khwaja Habib Azami, and Abdul Wahid Kufi.

led a crescentade into Hindustan at the age of sixteen, overran the Doab and Oudh, and in 1034 A.D., before he had reached his twentieth birthday, was killed in battle near Bahraich, and buried in a spot which he had chosen for his dwelling-place. His godhead is probably due to his youth; he is a deity of the same type as Adonis and Dulha Deo, snatched away by an untimely death in early manhood. Of the rest, several are obviously of Hindu extraction. Bhairon, though a Hindu god, has a certain connexion with Islam, because he is regarded as the 'minister' of the great saint Sakhi Sarwar Sultan. Kalika is simply a form of Parvati, Siva's consort. Bande and Sahja Mai both seem to belong to the class of 'mother goddesses'; the former is worshipped singly by half a dozen castes. Brahma Deota and Bare Purukh (great old man) are both deified men, whom the Kalwars describe as respectively a Brahman follower, and the spiritual guide, of Ghazi Miyan. Parihar, by one caste, is described as the son of Ravana, king of the Rakshasa demons; what his precise connexion with the young Muhammadan hero may be, is not obvious. Others seem to belong to Islam. Ajab Salar merely means 'the wonderful leader'; but the true name is almost certainly Rajab Salar, who was one of Saiyid Salar Masaud's lieutenants, the Kotwal of the army.<sup>1</sup> Subhān is an Arabic word meaning 'praise', and might be part of a name; Suthān looks like a popular corruption of it. Buahna and Barahna seem to be different forms of the same word; one caste identifies Barahna with Father Abraham. Pir Hathile was the son of Ghazi Miyan's sister; whilst Sah Jamal is a saint with a shrine near Aligarh. Amina was the name of the Prophet's mother; and it may be, as one caste that makes a speciality of her worship believes, that she was the original of Amina Sati,<sup>2</sup> the faithful wife, though the connexion between the Prophet's mother and Ghazi Miyan is not obvious. It is impossible even to

<sup>1</sup> One caste calls him Rajab Salar. His tomb at Bahraich is considered a sacred place.

<sup>2</sup> Amina Sati, by some castes who worship her singly, is also called Amina Devi (the goddess Amina).

guess who Bahlano, Shahza and Sahjadi may be.<sup>1</sup> Some of these deities—Ghazi Miyan, Amina Sati, Parihar, Bande—are worshipped singly as well as in company with the rest of the quintette. The tomb of Ghazi Miyan at Bahraich is a place of pilgrimage.

'Every year, usually at the Sri Panchami festival in spring or the Dasahra festival in autumn, it becomes incumbent on every religious-minded person to worship the implements or insignia of the vocation by which he lives.' This statement of Sir Herbert

23. The worship  
of implements  
and weapons

Risley's is perhaps an exaggeration; but there are undoubtedly many castes, some of high position, who carry it out. Rajputs worship (or used to worship), their swords; Kayasthas worship their pens and inkstands, jewellers their pincers and blow-pipe, bankers their ledgers, grain merchants their weights, carpenters their saws and chisels, barbers their razors and scissors, cotton-printers (*chhipis*) their dies. In some cases, the practice is semi-traditional; the classical instance is the thug's worship of the pickaxe which he used to bury his victims. Similarly, the Amethiya Rajput worships a cobbler's tool (*ranpi*), because their ancestress, after a massacre, found refuge in a Chamar's hut; and the Bandhalgoti Rajput worships the *bankā*, or knife with which a Dharkar splits bamboos, because of a traditional connexion with that tribe, though it is now called a poniard, the symbol of Narwar their ancestral home. Sometimes the tool is regarded as the vehicle of a god; Barhais worship Visvakarma in the shape of a yard-measure, Lohars worship Mahadeva and Devi in the shape of their seat and their anvil. In at least one case, though there is no actual worship, there is reverence; the Tamboli carefully preserves the conservatory (*bhil*), in which he grows the betel creeper, from ceremonial impurity. In another case, the suitability of the tools is not obvious; one subcaste of Kandus, who nowadays are generally shopkeepers, worship the chisel, hammer, and T-square, because at one

<sup>1</sup> Sahjadi would be a common Hindi corruption of the Persian *shahzadi*, a princess; Shahza may also be referable to the same word.

time they were stonecutters. I myself have on one occasion come across this custom. The event occurred in Mirzapur in 1910, when having summoned a meeting of Kayastha *patwaris*, I arrived to find only one or two present. On enquiry, I was told that they were absent because it was the day on which they worshipped their pens and inkstands.<sup>1</sup>

The cow was not an object of veneration in the Vedic period; there is ample evidence in various Brahmanas<sup>2</sup> to show that the bull and cow were sacrificed, and also used for food. By the time of Manu, however, such a feeling had come into existence, and was already very strong, for he classes cow-killing among the deadly sins. Its origin, therefore, must have occurred between the Vedic period and the period when Manu's institutes were compiled; but the manner in which it originated has long been a controversial question. The cow had already been idealized in Vedic mythology as Kamadhenu, the fabulous cow belonging to Indra, which was produced at the churning of the ocean.<sup>3</sup> At a later date, cattle were closely connected with Krishna, as his epithets Gopala (cowherd) and Govinda (cow-finder) show; and no doubt the growth of Krishna-worship helped to popu-

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Risley (op. cit., pp. 235-236), has described the worship of orderlies of the Simla secretariat; an altar is set up, consisting of an office box, on which are arranged ink-pots, pen-holders, stationery, pencils, and 'all the clerical paraphernalia by means of which the Government of India justifies its existence'. The whole is 'draped with abundant festoons of red tape'—a piece of cynicism that is, I trust, unconscious. I have enquired whether a similar practice prevails in the provincial secretariat. I learn that on the *janamashtami*, or festival of Krishna's birth, a similar altar is actually set up, but it is merely for decorative effect, and is not worshipped. All secretariat officials are invited to subscribe to this ceremony. Muhammadan orderlies about the same time collect subscriptions for a *Maulud Sharif*—an account of the birth of the Prophet recited in Arabic and translated into Urdu.

<sup>2</sup> Brahmanas are prose writings, in the nature of commentaries, attached to the various Vedas. For details of the comments in these works, see R. C. Dutt, *History of Indian Civilization*, Vol. I, p. 253 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> There is a somewhat similar legend in Scandinavian mythology. Ymir, the first living being, was nourished by the milk of the cow Audhumla, which was created by the god Surtur for the purpose. Kamadhenu means the 'desire-cow', i.e. the cow that grants desires.

larize cow-worship. Again, the *pancha-gavya*, or five products of the cow,<sup>1</sup> are both useful for scaring demons and necessary as adjuncts to ritual; whilst an agricultural people would naturally respect an animal of so much utility. Her mythological importance, her close connexion with one of the most popular of Hindu deities, her ritualistic and practical usefulness, are surely sufficient to account for the great respect in which she is generally held, and even for her worship. Nor, of course, is cow-worship peculiar to India alone.<sup>2</sup> At the present day, the cow is an object of veneration to all Hindus, save a very few castes. Of these exceptions, the Chamar is the most important. As his traditional function is tanning, and one of his duties is the skinning of dead animals, especially cattle, he naturally has no objection to eating beef, and no reason for venerating the cow; indeed, he has often been known to poison cattle for the sake of their hides, though Chamar *panchayats* often take strong measures to discourage the practice.<sup>3</sup> The Dom in the plains, the Korwa, and occasionally the Bhangsi, eat beef; but the first and third of these are the lowest of the low, and the second is the least civilized of all the jungle tribes of the province. The extent of veneration differs; the minimum amounts to a refusal to kill the animal or eat its flesh, the maximum to actual worship, which is, however, uncommon; indeed, I can only find two castes, the Dangi and the Golapurab, that regard the cow as a deity, though there is a festival called Gopashtami or Gokulashtami, when cattle are decorated and fed with special food, a practice which closely resembles a sacrificial offering. At the other end of the scale, it is probable that most Hindus of education pay the cow no special reverence, and, like

<sup>1</sup> Milk, curds, butter, urine, and dung. Another of her products, used for making sectarian marks, is *gaurochana*, a yellow pigment, of which the preparation is variously explained. In 1911, 'vendor of *gaurochana*' was one of the occupations returned at the census (*Report, U.P., 1911*, p. 385). It also has certain medicinal properties.

<sup>2</sup> Apis, the sacred bull of the Egyptians, is one instance; while Aaron's golden calf is another. (Herodotus, II. 38, 153; III. 27-29; Exodus, xxxii.)

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter VI, par. 13 (vi) (c).

the members of the Arya Samaj, would justify the prohibition against her slaughter solely on the score of her economic usefulness. But the vast majority regard her as being, if not divine, at all events sacred. The *Amawas* of every month is set apart as the cattle's day of rest. The Brahmani bull, let loose after a death, like the scape-goat of the Jews, with the weight of the dead man's sins upon him, is allowed to wander where he will, and feed where he will. Many pious Hindus keep a cow in the house, and place her where the master of the house will see her when he wakes. The killing of a cow, even if accidental, involves the severest caste penalties.

Every Hindu, however primitive his other beliefs may be, has the conception of a supreme personal god, who is called Parameshwar.<sup>1</sup> According to the Puranic metaphysic, Parameshwar is the universal spirit when manifested as a person, who, according as he is actuated by apathy, activity, or goodness, becomes one of the three divine individualities, Brahma, Siva, or Vishnu. Clearly, the professed Saiva or Vaishnava has no real place for this deity in his cosmogony, and would probably explain his presence there by saying that he *was* Siva or Vishnu. But the philosophical explanation of him means little or nothing to the ordinary Hindu. He simply regards Parameshwar as a god above all other gods, the ultimate creator of the universe, who takes pleasure in good and abhors evil; but as being also much too exalted to take any active interest in the affairs of his followers. Siva, Vishnu, and all the rest of the heavenly host may be subordinate to him; but they are of much more practical importance, because they can and will render assistance to their petitioners. As an Indian friend recently put it to me, the difference between Parameshwar and other gods is the difference between the King Emperor and the district officers. But however indeterminate the Hindu's idea of Parameshwar may be, it makes of him at bottom a monotheist, or at the least a henotheist.

<sup>1</sup> Also Ishwar, Bhagwan, or Narayan.

'Worship' is, perhaps, too strong a term to apply to the relation of most Hindus to this deity. The Bhuiya, the Chamar, the Gandhila, the Gorchha, and the Nat make offerings to him; and some Hindu Banjaras are taught by their Brahman *gurus* to pray only to him. But the worship of most Hindus is restricted to an occasional recitation of the *Sal Narayan Kalha*<sup>1</sup> in his honour, or the repetition of his name in the morning and evening. They reserve their prayers and offerings for deities more accessible than Parameshwar.<sup>2</sup>

The three 'twice born' (*dvija*) divisions of the old Arya nations, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, though unequal to each other in social rank, yet shared certain sacramental rites (*sanskāra*)<sup>3</sup> connected with all the principal occasions of a man's life, from his birth to his death. Of these, the most important was the *upanayana* ceremony, when the youth was initiated into the study of the Vedas, and invested with the sacred thread (*janeu*): for it was this ceremony that constituted his second birth, and made him *dvija*. The Sudra had no part in these ceremonies; just as he was kept out of all social intercourse with the Aryan twice born, so was he kept out of the Aryan religion's doctrines and practices. And these were the rites which it was the Brahman's especial duty to perform. But the circumstances of the Aryans' environment put an end to this exclusiveness. The twice born were forced into intermarriage with the Dravidian Sudras, and an Aryo-Dravidian race arose. In later centuries, there was further mixture of blood as the result of fresh invasions, and the mixed castes—*vrishala*, *vratya*, and *varnasankara*—took the place of the old *varnas*. In theory, none of these were, or could rightfully demand to be regarded as, twice born. But many castes still hold the title. Most are those who trace direct descent

<sup>1</sup> An account of the manifestation of God to certain of his worshippers.

<sup>2</sup> The universality of the belief in Parameshwar has been officially recognized by the use of his name in the oath administered to Hindus in the law courts: 'so help me God' becomes 'so help me Parameshwar'.

<sup>3</sup> A full list is given in the appendix to this chapter.

on one side from Aryan Kshatriya or Vaisya, who on that account perform the *upanayana* rite, and wear the sacred thread. Others are those who, having in one way or another acquired or usurped the rank and name of a twice born class, have also usurped its distinguishing ceremonies. Even at the present day, a caste will occasionally, on the strength of some claim to Kshatriya or Vaisya descent, take to wearing the sacred thread. Nor is that all. As Sudras, especially those classed as clean, came more and more under the influence of Brahmanism, they too began to perform other rites than the *upanayana*. And the Brahmans who, as we have seen, had already compromised with Sudra gods, now were compelled to compromise with the worshippers of those gods. They, too, had suffered to no small extent by constant contact with lower races. They had seen the priests of low religions—Ojhas, Joshis,<sup>1</sup> and such like—appropriate their rank and title, and be recognized as Brahmans. If the legends are true, they had seen kings 'create' Brahmans out of Kurmis and Ahirs and Bhars and Lodhas. Some of their number had lost rank either by offences against social laws, or by yielding to the demands of powerful non-Aryan clients. And so they acquiesced in the claims of the new 'twice born'; whilst their lower grades sank so low as to serve the Sudra parvenus. And that is still the state of affairs at the present day.

An examination of relevant facts and figures has yielded the following results for the province:—

(1) Out of a total Hindu population (excluding the Brahmans themselves), of 35½ millions, some 19¼ millions are served as priests by Brahmans of high standing. In this total are included (a) the castes that claim Brahmanical descent—Bhuhinhar, Taga, Ahiwasi, Bohra, and others; (b) all Rajputs and castes claiming a Kshatriya lineage, such as the Khattri and the Kayastha; (c) all the castes now generically known as Vaisya; (d) all the good agricultural castes; (e) a few occupational castes connected with trade in food, or personal service,

<sup>1</sup> Astrologers, not the Joshis of the hills.

and no Brahman would ordinarily serve them; though they have sometimes attempted to induce him to do so.

(d) The fourth group consists of various gipsy tribes, the Sansiya, the Bajaniya Nat, the Bawariya, Bajgi, Bengali, and Habura. The last-named occasionally give Brahmins some uncooked grain at their funeral ceremonies; but that seems to constitute their sole dealings with them.

(e) The fifth group consists of three related tribes, the Bhuiyas, Bhuiyars, and the greater part of the Musahars. A very few of the last named, who have settled down to village life, consult Brahmins as astrologers. But the group generally will have none of their ministrations, preferring their own *baigas*; whilst the Bhuiyar caste, which, like the Patari, provides many of these aboriginal priests, affects to despise them, and even relates a ribald legend of them.

(f) The next group consists of the Beldar and Kharot castes, which belong to the same family as the Luniyas, Orhs, and Bindis. The last two castes have risen in the social scale sufficiently to receive the services of Brahmins of low degree; and no doubt their relatives will do so too in time.

(g) The last group consists of three hill or submontane tribes—the hill Dom, the Raji, and the Tharu. The last-named has occasionally made attempts to secure the ministrations of Brahmins, but so far with very little success.

The previous discussion may now be summarized as follows. As the result of various causes, Hinduism is a bewildering collection of diverse beliefs, doctrines, and practices. These can, however, be divided into two main classes. Firstly, there are those that relate mainly to the great Hindu gods in their various aspects, of whom the chief are Siva, Vishnu, and their consorts; and secondly, there are those which spring from various non-Aryan sources, and relate to minor deities of all kinds—secondary gods, godlings, ancestors, canonized saints and heroes, animals, and even natural objects. The first class

27. Summary

are always, the latter class seldom, if ever, recognized by the Brahman priesthood. The only or principal worship of a vast majority, some 87½ per cent of all Hindus, is directed to one of the Brahmanical great gods in the first class, and consequently may be described as orthodox worship; but a large proportion of the orthodox also worship deities in the second class, whilst the unorthodox minority worship only such deities. Each caste selects its own deities; outside the great gods, the Muhammadan group of saints known as the Panchpir probably commands the largest number of adherents. But though Hinduism may be, as Sir Alfred Lyall called it, 'a tangled jungle of disorderly superstitions', yet there are certain ring-fences round that jungle—certain forms of worship in which all, or nearly all, Hindus share, certain gods to whom they all pay reverence. The first of these bonds of union is ancestor-worship; practically every Hindu, whether orthodox or unorthodox, follows this practice, and though both the nature of the worship and the conceptions underlying it may vary, yet the differences are not so great that they cannot be reconciled. Every Hindu, again, has some conception, more or less definite, of a supreme personal god, whom he generally calls Parameshwar. With the exception of a very few outcaste tribes on the very fringe of society, every Hindu pays at least so much reverence to the cow that he will not kill it, or eat its flesh; and with similar exceptions, every Hindu accepts such ministrations from the Brahman priests as they are willing to give him, and admits their spiritual supremacy.

A Hindu's code of ethics is as high as that of any other civilized nation. As Sir Richard Burn says, 'He knows that it is wrong to commit murder, adultery, theft, and perjury, and to covet, and he honours his parents, in the case of the father at any rate, to a degree exceeding the customs of most nations, which have no ceremony resembling that of the *sraddha*'. At the same time, the Hindu religion neither is, nor contains, an ethical code. A Hindu, if asked why a specific action

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such as the Halwai and Kahar, who must necessarily preserve their ceremonial purity unsullied; or which claim twice born affinities, such as the Sonar and Belwar. The lowest caste of any importance included in the list is the Kalwar; but he has recently been rising in the social scale, and now claims to be a Vaisya.

(2) Some  $6\frac{3}{4}$  millions are served either by Brahmans of definitely low standing, or by Brahmans belonging to higher grades, who are, however, despised for the service that they render to such castes. Of these,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  millions are occupational or servant castes, of which the most important are the Barhai, Lohar, Bharbhunja, Kori, Gadariya, and Kewat. The rest are tribal castes of Dravidian extraction; the Bhar, the Arakh, the Pasi, and the Dusadh are the most important of these.

(3) The next group of  $8\frac{3}{4}$  millions includes 25 castes that have induced Brahmans, necessarily of low standing, to render them some sort of trivial service. The most important of these are the Chamars,<sup>1</sup> Kumhars, Dhobis, Luniyas, Bhangis, Mallahs, Khatiks, and Dhanuks. The forms of assistance which the Brahman usually renders to his humble clients is to fix auspicious dates for their important ceremonies, such as marriage; to receive gifts on suitable occasions; sometimes, to carry out the worship of one of the more important gods; or to honour weddings by his presence, though taking no part in them himself. The most pathetic case is that of the Chamar. His occupation,<sup>2</sup> the food that he eats, and some of his habits, render him abominable to every orthodox Hindu; yet the society that despises him could not do without him. He is extremely punctilious in carrying out his complicated rites, many of which are at least a colourable imitation of orthodox ceremonial. He is extremely religious; and though he worships numerous deities, yet he has a much better conception of a supreme personal god than many other castes of his own, or even of better,

<sup>1</sup> Rich Chamars can sometimes get Brahmans of a degraded kind to serve their rites.

<sup>2</sup> And his wife's occupation; she is the village midwife.

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standing. In some parts, for instance, he regularly worships Parameshwar, and, in other parts, he uses words at the funeral ceremony which show that he recognizes the existence of an all-powerful creator.<sup>1</sup> Further, it was the Chamar Rai Das, one of Ramananda's pupils, who founded the deistic sect of the Srinarayani or Sivanarayani, into which many Chamars are initiated, whilst others belong to the Kabirpanthi and Ramanandi sects.<sup>2</sup> In fact, he is as strict a Hindu as his betters will allow him to be.

(4) The last is a small group of half a million persons and thirty castes, all of them of non-Aryan extraction. They fall into seven groups:—

(a) Six tribal castes, all akin to the Central Indian Gonds; they are the Agariya, Badi Nat, Majhwar, Pan-kha, Parahiya, and Patari. So far they have evinced little or no desire to have any dealings with Brahmans; they have, indeed, priests of their own, called *baigas*, who are mostly Pataris.

(b) Five tribal castes, akin to the Mundari tribes of Chhota Nagpur, namely, the Dhangar, Khairwa, Kol, Korwa, and Sahariya. They are in much the same case as the tribes of the previous group; though a few of the more advanced Kols are beginning to call in Brahmans of an inferior kind to eat sacrificial food in their houses, paying them to do so.<sup>3</sup>

(c) A third group consists of four tribes belonging to the Dom race—the Dom of the plains, the Dharkar, Basor, and Balahar. These are all the lowest of the low,

<sup>1</sup> 'Tuhi hai; tain ne paida kiya aur tain ne mar liya.' 'Thou art He; Thou hast made alive, and Thou hast struck dead.'

<sup>2</sup> All these are Vaishnava sects. The legend of Rai Das is a good example of transmigration beliefs. One of the sect's holy books, the *Santa Virasa*, opens with the words 'the love of God and knowledge of him are the only true understanding', which shows the nature of the sect's doctrine. For a full account, see Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. II, pp. 185-189.

<sup>3</sup> In the famine years of 1907-1908 a Brahman constable, who was a noted *shikari*, took complete charge of the Kols in his circle, who provided most of his beaters; I do not doubt that at all events, rendered them many a little Brahmanical service, or of friendship for those whom he openly called 'his children'.



bill if somebody else will pay it.<sup>1</sup> To such arguments, a Hindu would probably reply that the continuance of consciousness was possible, and had actually occurred in the case of great ascetics. Rai Das, the Chamar, for instance, was, according to the legend, fully aware of his former Brahmanhood, and of the causes that had led to his rebirth as a Chamar. Such a reply is of little assistance, however, for even if the fact be true, few can claim to be great ascetics. But these arguments, though they may be valid in theory, are of no practical importance. Every Hindu firmly believes that sin will certainly entail retribution in a subsequent existence. Every Hindu born in a degraded condition will admit that the degradation is the result of evil-doing in a previous existence. In short, *karma*, though it may lack in logic, is a very real and important element in the Hindu's code of ethics.

Though neither the Hindu religion as a whole, nor any branch of it, can be regarded as a code of ethics, yet Vaishnavism inculcates one tenet which has a very real ethical value. This is *bhakti-marga*, the doctrine of personal devotion to the deity. Primarily, perhaps, *bhakti* in the Vaishnava's creed is man's duty to God; practically, however, it regulates the Vaishnava's conception of his duty to his neighbour. For he holds that he can best show his devotion to his god by helping his fellow man. It is *bhakti* which explains those numerous shrines and temples and *dharmasalas*, those wells and tanks and bathing *ghats*, which are to be found dotted about the countryside—gifts made by pious Hindus to the glory of God and the service of man. It is because of the importance which Vaishnavism attaches to *bhakti* that Professor Monier-Williams has declared it to be the

<sup>1</sup> These arguments apply with far greater force to the Buddhist than to the Brahmanical doctrine of *karma*. For Buddhism denies the existence of a soul, and the connecting link between life and life is some craving or desire, felt in the former life, which persists into the second life, when, if good, it is satisfied, and, if evil, it is frustrated. But clearly if there is no soul, there can be neither consciousness nor memory in the second life of the first.

only real *religion* of the Hindus—since religion implies devotion.

Writers of the older school hold that the Hindu religion and the Hindu caste system are inseparably connected. Professor Eggeling,<sup>1</sup> for instance, has asserted that 'the cardinal principle which underlies the system of caste is the preservation of purity of descent, and purity of religious belief and ceremonial usage'. This view is related to that old theory of the origin of caste, now generally discarded, which represents it as the artificial product of the Brahman priesthood. All that need be said here is that if the caste system was devised with the object of preserving 'the purity of belief and ceremonial usage', it has been a singular failure. For the old Vedic beliefs have been modified by metaphysical speculation, and overlaid by a mass of alien practices; and the Vedic ritual, which could be lawfully performed only by an Aryan priesthood for an Aryan people, is now in daily use amongst a people of mixed descent.

Nevertheless, caste and religion have each a certain effect upon the other. Religion, in Sir Herbert Risley's words, 'exercises a subtle influence on family ritual and domestic usages, and through these tends insensibly to modify and transform the internal structure of Indian society'.<sup>2</sup> Religion, for instance, has caused the formation of four important sectarian castes. It is also responsible for the formation of new endogamous groups within a caste. Amongst the Rastogis, worshippers of Hardaur Lala will not intermarry with worshippers of Mahabir or the Panchpir. The Muraos have two endogamous sections, named respectively Saktiha and Bhaktiha<sup>3</sup>—Sakti and Vishnu worshippers. Similar sections exist among the Bindis (Panchpiriya), Chamars (Raidasi), Nais (Senapanthi), and Chhipis (Sadh and Namdeobansi); but there are no doubt many more.

<sup>1</sup> *Ency. Brit.*, 11th edition, s.v. *Hinduism*.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> The word means 'devotee'.

is right or wrong, would never give as a reason that the gods had so ordained. If he were asked what he had to hope from virtue and to fear from sin, he would never mention divine reward or divine punishment in reply. And yet his eschatology includes sufficiently clear conceptions both of heaven and hell. Hell is the kingdom of Yama, god of death, whose duty it is to judge and punish the wicked; but his power is limited. If the dying man's eyes, in his last moments, are fixed upon a sacred stream, especially the Ganges, then he will escape from Yama, even if he be the worst of sinners. And if no sacred stream is available, then the correct ritual by the death-bed and at the funeral can keep Yama's messengers away. The Chaitanya sect of Vaishnavas go even further, for they hold that the mere mention of any of Vishnu's names by the death-bed, even if the mention be accidental, or inimical, or actually blasphemous, will save a sinner from hell, and secure his admission to heaven. On the metaphysical plane, salvation to a Hindu is absorption of the individual self into the universal self (*paramatman*); which, amounting as it does to mere emancipation from the troubles of existence coupled with the loss of personal consciousness, is no better than annihilation. But as soon as man begins to believe in a personal god, he will cease to believe in abstract salvation. For the merging of one individual self in another individual self is unthinkable, and though man may live after death *with* God, he cannot live *in* God. And so we find that Saivism and Vaishnavism each has its own heaven, called Kailasa and Vaikuntha respectively, the former situated in the Himalayas, the latter on the mythical Mount Meru. To these heavens are transported the souls of the faithful, and of those who, by death-bed ceremonial, have escaped from Yama, there to dwell in such state of beatitude<sup>1</sup> as each has deserved. But not for ever. The Hindu

<sup>1</sup> Of these states there are three; *salokya*, or dwelling in the same place as god; *samipya*, or dwelling in the presence of god; and *sarupya*, or acquiring the form of god. The last is generally held to be the highest state of beatitude; but some, under the influence of pantheism, add *sayujya*, or absorption in the universal spirit.

believes firmly in the transmigration of souls (*sansara*),<sup>1</sup> and regards heaven and hell as temporary abodes, where the soul remains in the interval between its emancipation from one mortal body and its assumption of another. Linked to the metaphysical doctrine of *sansara* is the ethical doctrine of *karma*, or automatic retribution, already mentioned as a doctrine of Buddhism, according to which a man's thoughts and actions in one existence determine the status and condition of his next existence. If the good outweighs the evil, he will rise to a higher grade of life; the virtuous Chamar may be reborn a Vaisya or a Rajput. If the evil outweighs the good, he will fall to a lower level, and the Brahman may be reborn a Chamar, as in the legend of Rai Das, founder of the Srinarayani sect of Vaishnavas. And because it is automatic, *karma* is also inexorable, affording neither room for repentance nor hope of forgiveness. But it is not a religious doctrine; indeed, *karma* lies entirely outside the sphere of divine influence, so that no god, however potent, can modify or impede its action.

The ethical value of the doctrine of *karma* has often been doubted. It is argued that since consciousness comes to an end with death, no man can remember the events of his previous existences, and therefore can form no estimate of their effect on his present existence. It is indeed possible to go further; for any given condition of life may be either a reward for virtue displayed in a lower condition, or a punishment for sins committed in a higher condition. Consequently, as Sir Herbert Risley puts it, 'the philosophic sinner . . . may . . . console himself with the thought that, though undoubtedly a reckoning awaits him, he will have become somebody else by the time the bill is presented'. And no man—at all events, no philosophic sinner—will mind running up a

<sup>1</sup> The origin of this doctrine is uncertain. There are only unimportant traces of it in the Vedas. Some regard it as the natural complement of the doctrine of the universal self (Eggeling, *Ency. Brit.*, 11th edition, s.v. *Hinduism*); some as an importation from animism, where the idea of transmigration would certainly be at home. (Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1900, p. 115; and Risley, op. cit., p. 238.)

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On the other hand, caste exercises an influence, even more subtle, though no less real, on religion, through the medium of the Brahman himself. The Brahman is socially supreme. He owes his hegemony to a variety of potent causes—his ancient lineage, his wide and varied learning, the temporal ascendancy which in the past he acquired as the all-powerful minister of puppet kings. Most of all, perhaps, he owes it to his work as legislator; for to a people who regarded custom as law, he was wise enough to declare that law was custom.<sup>1</sup> And so Hindus, though they may fear and even hate him (as much proverbial philosophy proves),<sup>2</sup> nevertheless respect him greatly; and because they respect him as supreme in society, are all the more willing to admit his supremacy in religion—a supremacy based on the fact that in a highly religious community, he is the sole repository of theological thought and ceremonial usage. That readiness finds its most obvious expression at the present day in the pathetic eagerness of castes on the outer fringe of Hinduism to receive the Brahman's ministrations, which will allow them to pass within the pale of orthodoxy.

The Hindu religion, as we have seen, has no ethical importance; it concerns itself solely with a man's duty towards God, but not with his duty towards his neighbour. And *karma* is a philosophical, not a religious, doctrine. But the caste system provides an effective substitute; indeed no dread of divine punishment could provide a moral sanction more powerful than dread of caste penalties. The efficiency of that sanction is proved by the account of the system of caste government, given in an earlier chapter, the reality of that dread can best be proved by a common saying. '*Panch Parameshwar*'—The caste council is God—says the Hindu.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XV, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> See Risley, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-307, for numerous examples.

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## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XIV

### *The sixteen Sanskaras of the Hindus*

|                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Garbhadhan <sup>1</sup>          | Consummation of marriage          |
| (2) { Punsavam<br>Simantonnayan }    | Gestation                         |
| (3) <i>Jat karma</i>                 | Delivery                          |
| (4) Nam karan                        | Naming                            |
| (5) Nishkamana <sup>2</sup>          | Taking out (of the house)         |
| (6) <i>Anna prashan</i> <sup>3</sup> | Feeding with solid food           |
| (7) Chura karma <sup>4</sup>         | Tonsure                           |
| (8) Karna bedha <sup>5</sup>         | Ear piercing                      |
| (9) <i>Upanayana</i> <sup>6</sup>    | Initiation                        |
| (10) Vedarambha <sup>7</sup>         | Study (of the Vedas)              |
| (11) Samavartana                     | Completion of study               |
| (12) <i>Vivaha</i>                   | Marriage                          |
| (13) Grihashrama <sup>8</sup>        | House and family life             |
| (14) Banprasthashrama <sup>9</sup>   | Life as a teacher                 |
| (15) Sanyasashrama <sup>10</sup>     | Asceticism                        |
| (16) <i>Anteshi karma</i>            | The last rite—<br>Cremation, etc. |

[Those in italics are the most important.]

<sup>1</sup> A rite invoking the divine blessing on the act of consummation.

<sup>2</sup> Precautionary rites to secure the wife's health.

<sup>3</sup> Also called *vahirnisarana*; usually combined with the next rite.

<sup>4</sup> Usually performed in the sixth month; the food is as a rule rice.

<sup>5</sup> Commonly called *munran* and *kanchedan*. The former takes place in the third, the latter in the fifth year.

<sup>6</sup> This is the principal rite for the twice born; it, in fact, constitutes the 'second birth'. Investiture with the *janeu* is part of this ceremony. It takes place between the eighth and eleventh year.

<sup>7</sup> Literally, 'commencement of Vedas'.

<sup>8</sup> The three stages of a man's adult life. 'Banprasthashrama' means literally 'Life in the forest', because the teacher lives as a hermit.

Other Brahmanical rites, which are not *sanskaras*, are:—

(1) *Barhai* (or *nakh katiya*)—a rite on the twelfth day after birth when the babe is shown to his male relations, and the women relatives cut their nails and make presents.

(2) *Mula santi*—a rite performed if the child is born in the asterism of Mula, to obviate its ill luck.

(3) *Pathana* or *vidyarambha*—the formal commencement of education, which takes place before the *upanayana*. It marks the end of childhood.

## CHAPTER XV

### CASTE IN RELATION TO LAW

Mr. J. D. Mayne<sup>1</sup> entitles his famous work '*A Treatise on Hindu Law and Usage*'; and his

1. *Hindu law and usage*

earlier chapters are devoted to showing that the two things, law and usage, are by no means co-extensive. As a general proposition it can be said that Hindu law is ultimately always usage, crystallized, codified, and adapted by Brahmanical interpreters; but Hindu usage—meaning thereby the actual body of customs observed by Hindus—is not always law, still less Brahmanical law. And for our present purposes this is a distinction which it is necessary to develop; for it will be found that caste is a factor of legal importance only when its custom happens to be contrary to the general principles of Brahmanical law.

Hindu law, or to be more accurate, Brahmanical law, is recorded in the Sanskrit works of

2. *The customary basis of Hindu law*

certain early sages and the commentaries upon those works. This law was never a legislative code, drawn up by lawgivers and deriving its authority from its promulgation by them. The Institutes of Manu, for instance, are not in the same category as the Indian Penal Code or the Code Napoléon. They are a description of what the author believes to be, sometimes of what he merely wishes to be, the law. And what Manu believed to be, and stated as, law, was, as a matter of fact, existing custom. This fact he fully realizes himself. 'Immemorial custom,' says he in a famous verse, 'is transcendent law.'<sup>2</sup> All that he and other Brahmanical writers did was to codify custom.

<sup>1</sup> This section is based entirely on his work. The third edition was dated 1878: the eighth, which I used, was dated 1914.

<sup>2</sup> *Institutes*, I. 108.

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But the observation of this customary law was not universal in India, either before or after its codification. Neglecting other parts of the country, we may quote Sir Henry Maine's *Village Communities* with regard to the law in North-West India: 'The conclusion arrived at . . . is first, that the codified law—Manu and his glossators—embraced originally a much smaller body of usage than has been imagined, and next, that the customary rules, reduced to writing, have been very greatly altered by Brahmanical expositors . . . Indian law may be in fact affirmed to consist of a very great number of local bodies of usage, and of one set of customs reduced to writing, pretending to a diviner authority than the rest, exercising consequently a great influence over them, and tending if not checked to absorb them.' Hindu law consists, therefore, of written (Brahmanical) law, and unwritten but legally valid custom. The former corresponds fairly enough in its general features with the broad facts of Hindu life: the latter introduces many local and sectional differences in detail. But even where the written Brahmanical law is accepted in its entirety, so far as its letter is concerned, it is not always accepted also in its spirit. And this is especially true of the religious element in the written law. Most Hindus follow, for instance, the Brahmanical law of succession and adoption, but not all of them base their acceptance of those laws on the religious principles which according to the written law underlie them.

It is not necessary to discuss Mr. Mayne's reasons for holding that the written law is not of Brahmanical origin, but is based upon immemorial customs which existed prior to and independent of Brahmanism and even of Aryanism. The discussion of the early history of caste in the preceding chapters will incline us to accept his conclusion. What the Brahmans did was to give existing customs, whether Aryan or Aryo-Dravidian, a religious significance, and to modify them, if necessary, with that purpose. In early days their position as ministers and judges enabled them to interpret custom according to Brahmanical ideas; in later times the decisions

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of our courts, based on the opinions of their pandits, carried on the tradition. At the present day the villager, when doubtful of the rule of conduct applicable in any given circumstances, consults his priest. At all times and everywhere Brahmans have been in a position to colour native uses with their own religious ideas, and to supplement, supplant, or explain them by their own doctrines. The result is that even utterly non-Aryan and non-Brahmanical customs have been influenced and modified by Brahmanism.

In such circumstances as these, it is obvious that a custom which is proved to be binding on those who observe it, should logically be able to override the written law. And the Brahmanical writers are wise enough to admit it. As we have already seen, Manu is responsible for the dictum that immemorial custom is transcendent law; he further asserts that the sages 'embraced as the root of all piety, good usages long established'.<sup>1</sup> Nor was he content with vague generalities: for he also lays down that a king must enquire into and establish the particular customs and laws of different classes, localities, trades, and families.<sup>2</sup> We have already seen that the trade-guilds had laws of their own which the king recognized. Yajnavalkya in the same way states that a conqueror should preserve the usages and laws of a newly-conquered people.<sup>3</sup> The *Mitakshara* also, lays down the antithetic proposition to Manu's principle about custom and law: for, says the author of that work, even practices which are inculcated by divine authority may be abandoned if they are or become opposed to public opinion.<sup>4</sup> And the position may be summed up thus. The law is itself codified custom. If a custom sanctioned by that law becomes obsolete, it may be abandoned despite that sanction; and if a custom not

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes*, I. 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Yajnavalkya, I. 342.

<sup>4</sup> *Mitakshara*, I. 3. 4.

expressly sanctioned by that law is found to be in force, it is valid even if it overrides the law.

• The British courts of justice, so far as was possible to them, have given effect to these principles. 'Under the Hindu system, clear proof of usage will outweigh the written text of the law,' said the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Ramnad case.<sup>1</sup> And in theory and within certain limitations, every High Court would be prepared to give effect to a custom which was proved to exist. For instance, it has been held in several cases that the Jains, though in most matters they adhere to the Hindu law, yet do not believe in the Vedas or practise the *śraddha*: and consequently are not bound by the legal principles which spring from these religious elements. Their customs, therefore, may be, and are, completely different from those of ordinary Hindus, in some respects, especially in the matter of adoption.<sup>2</sup> Again, it has been held that the Bohras, despite their Brahmanhood, may adopt a sister's son, which is totally opposed to Hindu law.<sup>3</sup>

In theory, therefore, the legal principle is quite clear: caste custom overrides the written law. In practice, however, it would not be easy for a suitor to establish the validity of any particular custom. The High Courts have defined strictly, both the kind of usage they would admit, and the kind of evidence necessary to prove it. The custom must be uniform,<sup>4</sup> of ancient origin,<sup>5</sup> continuous,<sup>6</sup> definite;<sup>7</sup> it must not be opposed to morality or public policy.<sup>8</sup> It must be fully

<sup>1</sup> *Collector of Madura v. Moottoo Ramalinga*, 12, M.I.A., 436.  
<sup>2</sup> 6, N.-W. P., 382: 1, All., 688: 3, All., 55: 23, Bom., 257. (The references are to the various series of High Court rulings—both here and in subsequent notes.)

<sup>3</sup> 14, All., 53.

<sup>4</sup> 7, Mad., 250.

<sup>5</sup> 3, Mad., 75: 10, Bom., 234.

<sup>6</sup> 7, Mad., 250: 1, Cal., 186.

<sup>7</sup> 1, All., 440: 2, All., 49.

<sup>8</sup> Many rulings, following *Institutes*, VIII. 41.

supported by evidence of cases where it has actually been followed, or where it has been accepted or upheld by the decisions of courts or *panchayats*: or by the statements of experienced and competent persons, though such statements will have little weight in the absence of proof of actual examples of the usage in issue.<sup>1</sup> Even in the most favourable circumstances it would be a difficult (and expensive), task to prove the validity of an overriding custom.

And the circumstances would rarely be favourable.

The divergences of custom from Hindu law are greatest and most important in the lowest castes: and the lowest castes are also the least educated. There is no documentary record of caste customs: the settlement *wajib-ul-arz*, which is prepared for every village and carries with it a presumption of its truth, rarely deals with the usages of particular castes though it may deal with usages special to the village. Nor is there any written record of the decisions of *panchayats*. In practice, the suitor must rely on the oral evidence of 'experienced and competent persons'—i.e. of the elders of his community. The villager's memory is long: yet, if the custom in issue, however well established, only took effect on rare occasions (and obviously this type of custom would generally form the subject of a lawsuit, since a custom of common occurrence would be too well known to admit of dispute at all), it might well happen that no example of it had come to light within memory. And in that case the evidence of witnesses, however 'experienced and competent', regarding the validity of a custom would amount to a mere expression of opinion, and according to the Madras ruling carry little weight. Nor is that all. The witnesses produced in such a suit would generally be interested and consequently unreliable: whilst any attempt to obtain independent witnesses would often be a failure, because villagers are, or pretend to be, ignorant of their own usages. 'We consult the Pandits,' they will say: and leave it at that. In

<sup>1</sup> 7, Mad., 250.

any case, such witnesses must generally be sought at a distance—which fact would at once raise a doubt whether the custom in issue were equally valid everywhere. Proof of uniformity, antiquity, and continuity of a custom, as required by the High Courts, is in such circumstances well-nigh impossible. And it is perhaps fortunate that the ordinary claimant would generally be content with the decision of his own caste *panchayat*, and rarely trouble the courts at all. Indeed, if a suitor—at all events a suitor belonging to a caste which is ruled by a permanent *panchayat*—has recourse to the courts to establish a caste custom, it is scarcely too much to say that that very fact raises a presumption against the validity of his claim: for it would suggest, either that he dare not bring it before the *panchayat*, or that he has done so without success. And either fact would be—or at all events should be—damning to his case.

‘It is much to be regretted that so little has been done in the way of collecting authentic records of local customs,’ says Mr. Mayne in his *Hindu Law*. As a matter of fact, a great deal has now been done: in the United Provinces, for instance, Crooke’s *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (though it needs some revision and a certain number of additions as the result of the lapse of time), is as authentic and full a record of the customs of most castes as could be desired. That book, or a revised edition of it, would be entirely suitable for acceptance as an authority by the courts. But it is not so regarded: and, as matters are, it is often necessary to go far afield to obtain the proof of custom that is needed.

And there are important divergences between the law and the customs of many low castes. As an instance, we may consider the forms of marriage prescribed by that law, and compare them with the forms actually found.<sup>1</sup> The forms as prescribed by Manu and other lawgivers are eight in number:—

7. Need for a record of caste customs

8. Differences between Hindu law and caste customs

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes*, III. 20-42.

- (i) The Brāhma—which is the ‘voluntary gift of a daughter, clothed only in a single robe, to a man learned in the Vedas’—i.e. to a Brahman, though this form is now regarded as admissible for all castes, so long as its essential attribute is present—viz. the absence of any payment for the bride.<sup>1</sup>
- (ii) The Asura—which is merely marriage by purchase of the bride.
- (iii) The Arsha—which is a modification of the Asura: the price (according to Manu a pair, or two pairs, of kine), paid for the bride has dwindled down to a merely nominal sum.
- (iv) The Gandharva—which is ‘the reciprocal connexion of a youth and a damsel with mutual desire’: and in so far as it can be regarded as marriage at all, means pre-marital immorality followed by some more permanent union.
- (v) The Rakshasa—which is merely marriage by capture.
- (vi), (vii) and (viii). The Daiva, Prajapatya and Piçacha—which are now all obsolete and need not be described.

Of these, according to Mr. Mayne, all but the first two are obsolete at the present day: whilst the second, it would seem, would only be legally recognized if a custom to that effect were fully proved. But an examination of caste customs makes it clear, firstly, that the third, fourth and fifth forms also survive: and, secondly, that there are some well-established and even common forms which cannot be brought under any of the eight forms without ignoring their principal characteristics, or extending to an inconvenient degree the meaning of certain texts.

The Arsha form differs from the Asura only in degree: in the latter the bridegroom ‘gives as much wealth as he can afford to the father and paternal kinsmen and to

9. ‘Arsha’ marriages

<sup>1</sup> Madras Sudder Court, 1859, 44.

the bride herself', whilst in the former the bride price is something nominal: a pair, or two pairs, of kine, in the text of Manu. There are no less than thirty-seven castes who practise marriage by purchase:<sup>1</sup> the price in every case consists of clothes, ornaments, and a sum of money. In the case of twenty-six of these, the sum of money is under twenty rupees. In these twenty-six castes, at all events, the marriage is in the Arsha form: whilst in the other eleven castes, where the sum of money paid is considerably larger, it would be in the Asura form.

The question of the validity of a Gandharva marriage has actually been before the courts: in one very old case of 1817 it was held valid for Kshatriyas,<sup>2</sup> whilst in a more recent case it was refused legal recognition as contrary to morality.<sup>3</sup> Yet in all essentials—viz. pre-marital immorality followed by a more permanent union—it still survives amongst a certain number of low castes.<sup>4</sup> The Rakshasa form, by that name, is dead: some of its essentials according to Manu's definition—'the seizure of a maiden by force from her husband, while she weeps and calls for assistance, after her kinsmen and friends have been slain in battle or wounded and their houses broken open'—have also disappeared as a result of modern prejudice against murder. But the gipsy tribes, who kidnap women from other communities, still preserve the main principle of this form, merely substituting cunning for force.<sup>5</sup>

At the present day, one of the most common of all forms of marriage amongst Hindus, even the highest, is the 'dowry' marriage, where the bride's father pays a bridegroom price in the shape of a dowry with his daughter.<sup>6</sup> That payment is neces-

<sup>1</sup> Chapter IV, par. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Hujmee Mull v. Ranee Bhadoorun* cited in Bengal Sudder Court, 1846, 340.

<sup>3</sup> 3, All., 738.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter IV, par. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter IV, par. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter IV, par. 14.

sary: without it the marriage would not take place at all. It would presumably be classed as a Brāhma marriage: in which case the dowry must be regarded as a gift to the bride, a mere token of affection, and not essential to the ceremony. But this clearly ignores the true nature of the transaction, for the dowry is really a payment to the bridegroom. How then can it be considered a Brāhma marriage, of which one attribute is that the bride brings with her only 'a single robe'? Again, marriage by exchange and marriage by service (or beena marriage),<sup>1</sup> are both special forms of marriage by purchase: in the former case the bride price paid on either side consists of another bride, in the latter case the bride price is paid by services rendered to the bride's father. Both are, therefore, special forms of the Asura marriage. But certainly Manu in his definition of that type of marriage never contemplated that the payment would be made in such coin as this. These types of marriage are essentially of non-Aryan origin, and it is difficult to see how they can be reconciled with Hindu law. Would not a court refuse legal recognition, at all events to marriage by exchange, on the ground that it was contrary to public policy?<sup>2</sup>

It will also be instructive to examine the legal position in respect of the marriage of widows and of divorced women. At the present time such marriage is absolutely prohibited by Hindu law: but it is quite clear that the prohibition is of relatively modern date, and that it arose as a logical result of a change in the popular view of marriage, when this came to be regarded through the influence of Brahmanical opinion as a sacrament the effect of which was indelible. The prohibition has no foundation in early custom, whether Aryan or non-Aryan. The marriage of widows is sanctioned by the Vedas: the remarriage both of widows,

<sup>1</sup> Chapter IV, pars. 12 and 13.

<sup>2</sup> It might be possible to rule that beena marriage was contrary to morality: for though intercourse is forbidden till the service is over, there is reason to suppose that it often occurs.

deserted wives, and wives who have abandoned their husbands for good and sufficient reasons, is sanctioned by the early lawgivers.<sup>1</sup> Manu was the first authority on the other side: though even he has texts which seem to support the earlier view, whilst he expressly permits the marriage of a virgin widow to her late husband's brother.<sup>2</sup> The marriage of widows and—under certain restrictions—of divorcees is common amongst aboriginal tribes and low castes all over India, and has been recognized as legal by the High Courts again and again.<sup>3</sup> By the Hindu Widow Marriage Act (XV of 1856) the marriage of widows has been legalized for all castes: and the question of the judicial recognition of such a marriage could not now arise.

But in respect of the married widow's rights on the family of her first husband the position is not so clear. Under Hindu law, a widow is entitled to maintenance by the family of her first husband, or, in certain circumstances, to inheritance of his property. So long as her remarriage was unlawful, it naturally involved the forfeiture of these rights, as being a bad case of incontinence. Act XV of 1856, though legalizing the marriage of widows, expressly deprived them of all rights and interests in their deceased husband's property on their remarriage.<sup>4</sup> And it is established beyond dispute that wherever a caste permits the marriage of a widow, custom insists that she shall lose all rights or claims whatsoever on her deceased husband's family—unless indeed she marries her husband's brother, when the question could not arise. The second husband must repay to the family of the first husband the bride price, if any, paid by the first husband: in fact, he *buys* the widow from her owners. The severance is so complete that the widow must leave her children by the first husband with his family: though in some castes so much of a concession

<sup>1</sup> Narada, XII. 97-101 and elsewhere: Baudhayana, II. 20: Vasishta, XVII. 13: Katyayana, 3 Dig. 236.

<sup>2</sup> *Institutes*, V. 161-163: VIII. 226: IX. 69, 70, 76, 175-6. For discussion cf. Mayne, *Hindu Law*, Chapter IV.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter IV, pars. 4, 5 and 6, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Act XV of 1856, section 2.

is made to humanity that she is allowed to keep a child that is actually at the breast.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, in Bombay and Madras, the validity of this custom has been recognized:<sup>2</sup> elsewhere a different, and (I say it with respect), an incorrect, view has prevailed. It has been held, for instance, that Act XV of 1856 does not apply to castes, which at the time when the Act was passed, already permitted widows to marry: and consequently that in such castes widows have full rights of maintenance or inheritance in the families of their first husbands. That is to ignore the validity of a custom which is much more ancient than the Act itself, and which, so far as I am aware, is absolutely universal.<sup>3</sup> And the practical consequences of this view are serious. Except in so far as it may have facilitated occasional marriages of widows amongst would-be reformers of the caste system, it is safe to say that the Act has had no result whatever. I doubt if throughout the length and breadth of India there is a single caste which has adopted widow marriage in consequence of its legalization. The natural social impulse is in exactly the opposite direction: for as a caste rises in the social scale, the first non-Hindu custom which it discards is widow marriage. It can be confidently asserted that no caste permits widow marriage at the present time which did not permit it at the passing of the Act in 1856: though there are certainly some which permitted it then and do not permit it now. It follows, therefore, that according to such rulings as I have mentioned there is no caste in existence to which section 2 of that Act, which deprives a widow on marriage of her rights on her first husband's family, now applies: and the rulings have defeated both the intention of the Act and the custom.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter IV, par. 7.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. old cases in Borrodaile's Reports (1825)—1, 431, and 2, 361, and 1, Mād., 226.

<sup>3</sup> It would be interesting to enquire why section 2 of Act XV was passed. Might it not be that the drafters of this Act knew this custom and gave effect to it in this section?

## CHAPTER XVI

### CASTE IN THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The past development of the caste system and various aspects of its present condition have now been described. It still remains to consider the possibilities of its future. But the future can only be profitably considered in the light of the past; and it becomes necessary to begin by gathering up previous discussions into a connected account.<sup>1</sup>

When the Aryan invaders first entered India, they were already divided into three social classes, similar to those existing amongst their kinsmen in Iran.<sup>2</sup> Of these classes, two, the ruling or military class, and the priestly class, were already recognized as superior to the Vish, or Aryan commonalty. At first, the names of these two classes had not been definitely fixed;<sup>3</sup> but before long they became known respectively as Kshatriya and Brahman. The priesthood at this time was definitely a profession to which were admitted recruits from other classes; and at this time, and for many years after, the priesthood was subordinate to the ruling class. The Aryan invaders brought few women with them into India, and had to seek wives from the aboriginal inhabitants, whom they called Dasyus. These were a primitive race, in every way alien to the Aryan civilization, religion,

<sup>1</sup> The previous discussions concerned are principally those in Chapters II, XII, XIV and XV.

<sup>2</sup> These were the Rathaestao, Atharva, and Vastya.

<sup>3</sup> Rajan was possibly the most common name for the ruling class; there were many names for priest—*rishi*, *kavi*, *brahman*, *brahmaputra*, are only some. It is worth noting that the first of all priests, who brought fire from heaven and instituted sacrifice, was named Atharvan, which corresponds closely to the name of the Iranian priest.

and colour. The process of intermarriage was therefore distasteful, ceasing as soon as enough women had been bred to supply the needs of the community; but as their branches pushed further into the country, it recommenced, until there were many groups of various degrees of mixed blood, all strongly averse to further intermarriage. Such intermarriage was certainly more frequent amongst the commonalty than the ruling class, and probably more frequent amongst the ruling than the priestly class, whose ceremonial purity would have been affected thereby. But it undoubtedly occurred even amongst them, as is proved by many legends.<sup>1</sup> And so arose the four famous *varnas*, or 'colours'—a significant name—; the first three called Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, after the existing Aryan social classes, the fourth called Sudra, a term of uncertain meaning, possibly the name of some Dasyu tribe. Concurrently with the mixture of blood, there had been a mixture of religions: a number of cults, practices, and deities derived from the primitive animism of the Dasyus were imported into the Aryan nature worship. The Brahman, charged with the duty of administering Aryan rites to an Aryan people, cannot have approved of either process of amalgamation; but, like the priests of other religions, he had to compromise with the worshippers whom he served. And, indeed, his own position was weak; for by dint of metaphysic, he had transformed the old Vedic religion, with its personal gods, into a new pantheism with no deity but a hypostatized abstraction, called Brahmā—a cold and colourless being that had no appeal for a warm-hearted people, used to worshipping warm-hearted gods.

The progress of civilization introduced certain important changes in the Vedic social system. It would seem, firstly, that the tendency to endogamy caused by the amalgamation of two races of different blood had sensibly weakened with the passage of time; at all events, we hear of numerous in-

<sup>1</sup> The legend of the Dusadh girl who married a Brahman is one of the best of these folk-tales: it is given as an appendix to this chapter.

The principle that customs contrary to morality or public policy will never be enforced by the courts has, of course, prevented the recognition of many widely-established usages: for instance, such as are connected with the prostitution of dancing girls, the abandonment of a husband by a wife followed by a subsequent remarriage,<sup>1</sup> an agreement to assist a man with money to obtain a wife,<sup>2</sup> a village custom that recognized the *gandharva* form of marriage,<sup>3</sup> have all been refused legal recognition. And there are doubtless many more: whilst there are certainly some more which would be refused such recognition were they to come before the courts. At the same time, as Mr. Mayne hints, it is possible to go too far in the observance of this principle. For instance, there is a distinct caste of dancing girls who live by immorality, and have special rules of adoption and succession *inter se*: there seems no reason why these facts should not be recognized and the rules made valid.

Enough has been said to show that many difficulties confront the court that must adjudicate on a question of caste custom. It cannot, however, be too strongly stated that a working knowledge of the caste system and caste customs is essential to any officer that has to deal with the people. Reference has already been made to criminal charges of adultery or enticing away a married woman:<sup>4</sup> but instances could be multiplied. In a case tried some years ago by the present writer, the prosecution was based entirely on a conversation, held *tête-à-tête*, between an elder brother and his younger brother's wife. There is the strictest of taboos on intercourse of any kind between this pair of relations: and a question how, in the circumstances, this

<sup>1</sup> e.g. 2, Bom., 124.

<sup>2</sup> 17, Mad., 9.

<sup>3</sup> 3, All., 738.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter IV, par. 20. It is not too much to say that there is always something doubtful about criminal charges under sections 497 and 498 I.P.C. For, if true, the *panchayat* will generally have done all that the complainant could possibly desire.

conversation took place at all produced a confession of perjury.<sup>1</sup> In another case, where a Brahman was accused of passing off a girl of low caste as a fit mate for another Brahman, the accused's guilt was proved to demonstration by his refusal to eat *kachcha* food cooked by the girl. It is unnecessary to give further examples: it must be obvious that the assertion made above is true, and that unless an officer knows the lines along which Indians think and the principles which guide their actions, he cannot—especially if he himself is a foreigner—understand either their thoughts or their actions.

Principal authority.—Mayne, *A Treatise on Hindu Law and Usage* (8th edition).

<sup>1</sup> This taboo is universal. It has been noticed in operation even in high caste and well-educated families.

stances of mixed marriages both at this and at a later period. Secondly, trade and industry became organized into a number of guilds or corporations of persons following the same occupation, which quickly became influential, and later were powerful enough to secure for themselves important privileges. They soon succeeded in establishing the principle of hereditary function, which predisposed them in favour of guild endogamy. And lastly, long before the end of this period, the Brahmanical order, whose original function had been confined to the expert knowledge and performance of religious ritual, had acquired a monopoly of all important branches of learning.<sup>1</sup> They had become the theologians, the philosophers, the physicians, the lawyers and judges of the age—possibly also its artists and its engineers. Not only so, but the king's family priest was able to make his voice heard in the royal councils;<sup>2</sup> and so the Brahmans became the age's statesmen, capable of making and unmaking dynasties.

These Brahman statesmen often exercised an authority greater and more real than that of their royal masters; indeed, there were times when it seemed probable that they would be able to overthrow the old aristocracy and replace it by a theocracy. But though the Kshatriya might fear and even hate the Brahman, he could not do without him; and as the whole tone of the Jataka folk-lore<sup>3</sup> proves, the relations between them became seriously embittered. This political enmity between class and class was reinforced by a religious enmity. The later pantheistic doctrines never became

4. *The Buddhist period* (550 B.C. to 650 A.D.)

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the great Brahmans of this period are Gautama, Vasistha, Baudhayana, Yama, Harita, and the older Manu. The *Institutes* of Manu that we now possess may be dated at about 400 A.D.; but they are a late recension of a much earlier work. Manu is *represented* as the proto-man, son of Brahmā or his personification, father of the human race; but he was, no doubt, a real teacher.

<sup>2</sup> See the legend of Visvamisra and Vasistha, which is dated about 700-600 B.C., in the appendix to Chapter II.

<sup>3</sup> These stories, written from the Kshatriya standpoint, never fail to exalt him above the Brahman, and even declare that the latter is lowborn (*hina-jacco*) in comparison with the former.

popular, and various religions arose, which drew away many of the Brahman's former adherents. In most cases, the priesthood were able to defeat opposition by importing the new cults into their own religious system; but one of these, Buddhism, proved an irreconcilable antagonist. Founded by a Kshatriya prince, it was adopted by the Kshatriya nobility, and so became a state religion; and though the Brahmans never entirely lost their influence with the common people, and, especially, retained control of the domestic rites (*sanskara*), yet a struggle for spiritual supremacy began between Buddhist monk and Brahman priest which lasted, with varying fortunes,<sup>1</sup> for ten centuries. Whether this struggle ever culminated in a religious war is uncertain, though the legend of Parasurama suggests it.<sup>2</sup> At all events, it ended after the death of King Harsha of Thanesar (650 A.D.) in the complete victory of Brahmanism. That victory, however, was due not so much to the Brahmans' own merits, as to the circumstances of the time. Whether the Kshatriyas ever had to face Parasurama or not, they were compelled to face enemies as dangerous from outside India. For this was the period of the foreign invasions, which began with the expedition of Alexander the Great, and ended with the inroad of the Huns in the fifth century A.D.; and constant warfare gradually weakened, and finally destroyed, the military power of the Kshatriyas. From the ranks of their conquerors, there arose a new nobility, which in course of time was absorbed in the Hindu social system, and in virtue of their position as *de facto* rulers, usurped the style and rank of Kshatriyas. This was the Brahman's opportunity. Though many of these pseudo-Kshatriyas, or *vrishalas*, as Manu calls them, imitated their predecessors in embracing Buddhism, yet, even less

<sup>1</sup> Kadphises II (85-123 A.D.), the Kushan conqueror, embraced Saivism, and Chandragupta II Vikramaditya (375-412 A.D.), was a Vaishnava.

<sup>2</sup> Parasurama, 'Rama with the axe', is represented as a Brahmanical hero, who 'cleared the earth thrice seven times of the Kshatriya caste, and filled with their blood the five large lakes of Samanta'.

than their predecessors, could they do without the Brahman's knowledge of public affairs; and his temporal power thereby increased.<sup>1</sup> And the disappearance of the old ruling class left him socially supreme, the one remaining link with the Aryan past, infinitely superior in the eyes of the people to their foreign rulers.

Of these newcomers, some were barbarians, as alien from the Hindu as the Dasyu had been from the Arya; others, more civilized, nevertheless possessed social customs that could not easily be reconciled with those of Hinduism. The intrusion of these foreigners into a fastidious and exclusive society necessarily tightened anew the endogamous restrictions which had previously been somewhat relaxed; and though these were not yet as rigid as they afterwards became, yet Manu's statements show that endogamy was a general rule that admitted of few exceptions. The prohibition against the marriage of widows was probably introduced at this period.<sup>2</sup> Function was hereditary, and any attempt to exchange the traditional for another occupation had serious consequences.<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, the caste system as described by Manu, whose account may be put at 400 A.D., resembles in all important features the system of to-day. But it is not the same.

<sup>1</sup> Great Brahmans of this period are Apastamba, Vishnu, Yajnavalkya, Narada, and the later Manu, among law-givers: Chanakya and Vasudeva (who founded the Kanva dynasty), among statesmen.

<sup>2</sup> It appears first in the later Manu. Infant marriage belonged to an earlier period (pre-Buddhist); it is referred to by Gautama, Baudhayana, and Vasistha, as well as Manu. There is no authority for communal restrictions; but they are probably very old.

<sup>3</sup> Manu mentions a long list of occupations, the pursuit of which should render Brahmans unfit to take part in a *śraddha* ceremony—physicians, temple-priests, meat-sellers, shopkeepers, usurers, cowherds, actors, singers, oilmen, gaming-house keepers, spicers, bow makers, animal trainers, astrologers, bird-fanciers, dog-breeders, architects, falconers, cultivators, shepherds, and carriers of dead bodies. Even at the present day, some of these occupations are followed by Brahman or pseudo-Brahmanical groups; e.g. Palliwal (shopkeepers), Bhat (bards), Joshi (astrologers), Ahiwasi, Bhuinhar, and Taga (cultivators), and Mahabrahman (attendants on the dead).

The final stage in the evolution of caste seems to have been reached between the death of Harsha of Thanesar in 650 A.D. and the end of the twelfth century. This was one of the darkest periods of Indian history, when the country was broken up into many petty kingdoms and states, that were constantly at war with each other and with what was left of the aboriginal and foreign tribes. Distances were, as always, great, communications were bad, travelling was unsafe: each state was compelled to be self-supporting, and so were evolved the numerous local subdivisions of widespread castes. And because no man dared go far afield in search of a bride or of customers, these local groups became perforce endogamous, and the custom of hereditary function was strengthened. Nor did the advent of the Muhammadan power ameliorate the situation, till the strong rule of Akbar and his successors brought comparative peace to the people. But after Aurangzeb's death, disorder broke out again, and only came to an end, in this province, with Lord Lake's victories in 1803. Caste law, therefore, has been fixed for the last seven centuries at least. The process of segmentation has never stopped, and still goes on; as groups, for this reason or that, have risen or fallen in the social scale, they have separated from the parent caste and become endogamous. But all these changes have taken place within the caste system, in obedience to caste law. And though there have been minor modifications, in that law under the influence of modern conditions, yet in all essential matters the caste system is still what it was seven centuries ago.

For the past thirty years there has been manifest among the better-educated classes of the community a certain feeling of resentment against the trammels of the caste system, which has grown stronger with the progress of education, and has led on occasion to acts of open rebellion. Many Hindus, especially if they have received a part of their education

6. The final stage

7. Educated opposition to caste

in England, condemn unreservedly the commensal and food restrictions. They hold that they depend on antiquated ideas that have long since ceased to have any meaning; that in so far as they keep apart persons of unequal social position, they are unnecessary, and in so far as they keep apart persons who are equal in all respects save caste, they are ridiculous. The number of those who are ready to take part in the practice known as 'inter-dining', not only with other Hindus, but with Muhammadans and Europeans, is constantly increasing; but even those who strictly observe the commensal restrictions often disapprove of them. Many, too, condemn extravagant expenditure on wedding ceremonies, or the prohibition on the second marriages of widows; those who have crossed the seas rebel against the custom which compels them to undergo a purificatory ceremony (*praya-schitta*) on their return, before they can recover caste privileges or even eat a meal with their family. As has already been explained, the educated members of many castes have deserted their traditional functions, because they prefer to put their learning to better account in some other trade or profession. Finally, few, if any, educated Hindus in this province would nowadays defend the practice of infant marriage; and there are many caste and other associations which are pledged to do their best, by precept and example, to put an end to it. But, as the figures of successive censuses show, they have had so far but a small measure of success. In 1891, the number of girls under 15 that were or had married was 239 per mille; in 1921, it was 218.

Of all reformers that have attacked the caste system in recent years, the most vigorous is the Arya Samaj, a religious body founded by Dayanand Saraswati.<sup>1</sup> Of the theology of the Samaj, no more need be said here, than that it is a bold, straightforward monotheism founded on the Vedas, with a definite creed and a simple ceremonial; and that it constitutes

8. *The Arya Samaj's opposition to caste*

<sup>1</sup> Born 1824 or 1827; died 1883. Samaj means assembly, congregation.

the most important religious movement that has occurred in India for several centuries. But the Samaj has also done valuable social work. It acknowledges no castes save the four *varnas* of Manu, and holds that membership of these is determined, not by birth, but by personal qualifications and attainments. A Sudra can become a Kshatriya if he has the necessary qualities; a foreigner (as Dayanand once told a Christian missionary), can become a Brahman if his acts are those of a Brahman. This, of course, is the very negation of the caste system; indeed, it is scarcely a social classification at all. It may be that practice in this matter does not yet fully conform to principle; but the mere preaching of such a revolutionary doctrine is already much. Nor (though it is in the forefront of the Samaj's programme), does it appear to deter converts, for their numbers are increasing steadily; whereas Aryas only numbered 5 per 10,000 of the population in 1891, they numbered 45 in 1921. As the logical result of its general views on the caste system, the Samaj countenances marriages between members of different castes; though instances of such intermarriage are still rare. But in other directions, the Samaj has been more successful. It is entirely opposed to infant marriage; and whilst the number of married or widowed Hindu girls under 10 is 61 per 1,000, the similar number of Aryas is only 21, and of those a majority were probably married before conversion. It encourages the remarriage of widows; it insists on the curtailment of wedding expenses; it has whittled down the commensal and food restrictions to the minimum. Finally, in caste as in other matters, the Samaj preaches a return to the Vedas, and by so doing greatly enhances the cogency of its social propaganda, which is thus placed upon a religious basis.

Under the pressure of circumstances, some caste customs have been materially modified. In some castes, the exogamous restrictions, grown intolerable with time, have been relaxed. The levirate has disappeared almost entirely; the old bride-prices have been stereotyped, and, as a result of the decreased pur-

9. *Modern conditions and caste*

chasing power of money, have thus been reduced. An abandonment of the traditional occupation is no longer regarded as calling for social ostracism, and the principle of hereditary function has ceased to be universally recognized as binding. The caste councils have been shorn of a part of their power. Especially, the commensal restrictions are no longer as rigid as they used to be. They have, indeed, always admitted of exceptions; ever since the time of Manu, it has been fully recognized that the hungry traveller may obtain food as best he can, whether he thereby infringes caste regulations or not.<sup>1</sup> The distinction drawn between *kachcha* and *pakka* food forms another exception, and is an excellent example of practical casuistry. The incidents of railway travel have further relaxed these restrictions. It is obviously impossible to build a cooking place (*chulha*) in a railway compartment, or even on a station platform; it is inconvenient to make searching enquiries regarding the caste of a platform food vendor, especially if the wait is a short one. 'Having drunk water from his hands, it is foolish to ask about his caste', says the proverb; and the wise traveller avoids trouble by making no enquiries at all. Similarly, he will ignore the possibility that his next door neighbour in a crowded railway carriage may belong to a caste whose touch is pollution; for he knows that if he does not pocket his caste scruples, he may have to pay the difference in fare, and finish his journey in a higher class compartment.

10. The present position of caste

It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that the efforts of social and religious reformers, or the disintegrating force of modern ideas, have impaired in any serious degree the vitality of caste. All the customs principally attacked—infant marriage, virgin marriage, the commensal and food regulations, even heredity of function—are caste customs, as it were, by accident. In the case of infant and virgin marriage, the sanction is religious; the former depends on the belief

<sup>1</sup> It is the duty of all Hindus to give hospitality to any hungry traveller who asks for it.

that the birth of a son at the earliest possible date is desirable to save his father from hell by performing the *sraddha*, the latter depends on the character of marriage as a sacrament. Commensal and food restrictions are the result of animistic taboos, reinforced by the Brahmanical doctrine of ceremonial purity; and they too are customs of a quasi-religious kind. Heredity of function is a commercial and not a social principle. All these, in fact, are not true social customs, but customs, the observance of which society has, for various reasons, chosen to enforce; and they could all be wiped out of existence without affecting the essential principle that underlies caste—namely, the principle of endogamy. It is true that some reformers would abolish the marriage restrictions, and, in fact, the Legislative Assembly has recently passed an Act<sup>1</sup> which legalizes intermarriage between castes. It is also true that from time to time a marriage is announced in the press which contravenes the caste law; but the very pæan of triumph which accompanies the event is sufficient proof of its infrequency. And the reformers are few, the orthodox are many. The mass of the people have no desire to relax their marriage rules, they cannot even conceive the possibility of anybody feeling such a desire. And so long as the marriage rules remain as they are, so long will the caste system endure.

A problem which, in recent years, has engaged the attention both of social reformers and politicians is the 'raising of the depressed classes', with the object of improving both their social status and their civil position. That problem in the United Provinces neither presents the same difficulties, nor has the same importance, as in other parts of India. The province has no caste so low that its members cause pollution at a distance,<sup>2</sup> or by the mere fall of a shadow; that they may not enter the high caste quarter of a village, that they must leave a public road on the approach of a Brahman,

<sup>1</sup> The Hindu Civil Marriage Act.

<sup>2</sup> The pariah's distance is 64 feet—nearly the length of a cricket pitch.

and give notice of their own proximity by a particular cry.<sup>1</sup> There are untouchables, but they convey pollution only by contact; whilst the superstition is now moribund, few take any account of it save the Brahman, and even he deals with a case of pollution in a practical manner that suggests that he will before long ignore untouchability altogether.<sup>2</sup> The low castes can always get land for cultivation, or employment; and if the lowest of them usually have to live in a quarter or a hamlet of their own, the reason is not so much their own personal impurity, as the unpleasant nature of their occupations, and of the animals, especially pigs, that they generally keep. Indeed, the initial difficulty in this province is to decide what castes should be classed as 'depressed'. Some would so class all castes from the members of which the twice born will receive neither food nor water. As has been explained elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> the question whether a high caste man can accept a gift of cooked food depends not on the caste of the donor, but on the caste of the cook,<sup>4</sup> whilst he can accept uncooked food from anybody. Apart from that point, however, this criterion is inconclusive, for a caste's food and water restrictions vary from place to place; whilst it would also lead to absurd results. The Kalwar, for instance, would be reckoned a depressed class, though he is a well-to-do trader, with a percentage of literacy higher than that of the Rajput, and a long-standing claim to be classed as a Vaisya. Similarly, the Belwar would be 'depressed', though he claims to be a Sanadhi Brahman, and in some places the Sanadhis themselves admit the claim; whilst the Banjara, Orh, and Ramaiya would all be 'depressed', though they are served in their domestic rites by Brahmans of good status. Others regard 'depressed' and 'untouchable' as synonymous terms; but untouchability can scar-

<sup>1</sup> The Chandalas in early times announced their approach by striking two pieces of wood together.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter V, par. 15.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter V, par. 4.

<sup>4</sup> In the case of *kachcha* food, the number of possible cooks is so limited, that in practice no high caste man could eat *kachcha* food cooked by anybody but his own relatives; but the principle holds good.

cely be used as a criterion now, when the idea itself is fast disappearing; whilst it was never a satisfactory criterion at any time, for a caste may be regarded as untouchable by some of the twice born, and not by others; a caste may be untouchable in one district and not in the next; and there are untouchable castes with touchable sections.

Nor is untouchability the lowest possible depth of degradation. Some untouchable castes—the Kori, the Bhar, the Pasi, the Dusadh—are none the less served by Brahmans as their family priests—Brahmans of low status, no doubt, but still Brahmans. They are obviously superior to those untouchables for whom no Brahman, however low, would carry out a domestic ceremony; and it is they, I suggest, that constitute the 'depressed' classes. The suggestion agrees with the historical facts. At all stages of the evolution of Hinduism, there have been, on or just outside the border-line of Hindu society, a certain number of aboriginal tribes and low castes, following all sorts of primitive or unsavoury professions. At all times, the Brahman priesthood has endeavoured to keep them segregated, not only from Hindu society, but from the Hindu religion and the Hindu ceremonial. They were not allowed to hear, much less study, the Vedas; they must not enter the temples; they must carry out all ceremonies without using the *mantras* (sacred texts), and no Brahman would carry out any domestic ceremony (*sanskara*) for them. And that is still the position. The depressed classes are those castes who are not served by Brahmans, yet have shown by their attempts to secure some trivial service from Brahmans, that they are desirous of receiving their recognition, and of being admitted full members of Hindu society. And the initial step necessary to raise them out of their degradation is obviously the removal of these religious disabili-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XIV, par. 26 (3) and (4). There are 25 castes in the first of the two groups numbering some 8½ millions; and all the castes in the second group except those mentioned under sub-pars. (a) and (e)—twenty in all, numbering possibly 450,000 people.

## THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

ties.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter—if they are provided with the educational facilities that they require—they can, and they will, raise themselves to a respectable position in society, as other low castes have done before them. The process will take time—two or three generations; the mental, moral, and even physical characteristics which are the result of many centuries of depression are not so easily put away. But though the process may be slow, it will be sure.

There are critics, Indian as well as foreign, who regard caste as the root of all Hindu evils, an antiquated system fit only for the rubbish-heap of worn-out superstitions. It is essentially aristocratic; how can it be reconciled with modern democratic ideas?

Its archaic taboos, its primitive customs—how can they be reconciled with modern civilization? Its separatism, rending the nation asunder into thousands of sections and sub-sections—how can it be reconciled with national unity? That, indeed, is the gravest charge. Caste and nationality are regarded as incompatible; the presence of the former must impede, if it does not actually prevent, the growth of the latter. And at first sight, it would seem that the critics are right; for caste embodies a principle of separation, nationality a principle of consolidation.

History suggests another point of view. The primitive bonds of union between man and man are community of descent, and community of material interest; the former brings men together in the tribe or social class, the latter in some kind of occupational group—merchant guilds, or *collegia opificum*, or trades unions. To unite these groups into a nation, further bonds are required—a common language, a common government, common political interests, and common historical traditions. In India, till comparatively recent times, most of these elements of unity have been wanting; there have

<sup>1</sup> I feel all the more justified in making this statement, because one of the greatest Indians of this province, himself a Brahman, who has taken up this problem assiduously, has said much the same thing.

## CASTE IN THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

always been many languages, many governments, and many political divisions; and though the constant alliances of independent rulers against a common enemy created a certain community of historical traditions, that by itself was not sufficient to arouse a national spirit. Accordingly, the primitive groups of society remained in existence and multiplied; and under the stress of circumstances, each group hardened into a closely compacted entity, separate from, occasionally antagonistic to, other groups. But through the diversity of Hindu society, there has always run a thread of unity; there has always been one bond to keep its many component parts together. This bond was the Brahman hegemony. Dynasties might rise and fall, but the Brahman remained supreme; kingdoms might expand or shrink, but Hindu society, indifferent to changes in political boundaries, remained one and undivided under its natural leaders. There has always been a Hindu people, there has always been a Hindu civilization; and it is the caste system that has preserved the distinctive unity of the one, and the distinctive nature of the other.

Caste in the past has made for internal separatism, but it has also made for external unity. There seems no reason to suppose that, in the future, it will have any different effect. Every nation must have its social system; surely it is advisable that it should maintain a system that is suited to its people. And as Sir Herbert Risley has remarked, caste is more than 'a mere mode of grouping the loose atoms of humanity'; it is 'a congenital instinct'. There may be times when national and caste interests will clash, when somebody may cry 'I am a casteman first, and an Indian afterwards'. That has often happened, in many nations; it is seldom a dangerous cry, for—*ex hypothesi*—the rest of the nation is on the other side. And it should be even less dangerous than usual in India, since the leaders of society will also be the national leaders. Much, indeed, will depend upon the Brahman. It is the fashion of the people to jeer at him in proverbs, of critics to

14. Caste in the past and the future

decry him as a parasite on society. But it is as unfair to judge of a caste by the conduct of its least important members, as it is to judge of the doctrines of a religion by the practice of the mass of its adherents. And, meantime, there are in Benares and Allahabad, Brahman scholars whose names are a household word, in East and West, wherever two or three Sanskritists are gathered together; and at the present time every single Hindu political leader of first class importance in this province is a Brahman. In the days that are coming, the Brahman will have the greatest chance that he has had for two thousand years. And he will take it.

It seems probable that, in the course of time, the nation will swallow up the caste, that the customary restrictions will be gradually modified till the social system becomes again one of classes, as it was in Vedic times. So be it. One thing, however, is certain, that any attempt to hasten the processes of evolution would be fraught with danger. Suddenly to remove the caste system would, in Sir Herbert Risley's phrase, be 'more than a revolution: it would resemble the removal of some elemental force like gravitation or molecular attraction'. There are no doubt customs that should go—customs that are definitely harmful, customs that in modern conditions have become ridiculous. But, as has been shown, these are mere accidental excrescences that can be removed without harming the substance of the caste system. What is required is a pruning knife, not an axe.

#### 15. Conclusion

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XVI

### *The clever Dusadh girl and the Brahman*

There was a Dusadh living in Rajgir, whose daughter used to take the household pigs out in the field to feed. It happened that as she was so engaged on the day of the full moon of a certain great festival, she saw a Brahman walking on very rapidly. On questioning him he replied that he was going to bathe in the Ganges on the full moon. The girl replied 'You cannot possibly reach the Ganges in time; but if you believe me and your mind be full of faith, this is the exact moment of the full moon, and here is a pool (in which her pigs were wallowing); dip into it and you will realize the full fruits of bathing in the Ganges at this auspicious moment'. The Brahman did as she desired and when he was in the pool, she said 'Now is the exact moment. Dive in and see what you get.' The Brahman did as desired and found the bottom full of valuable gems, of which he clutched a handful and came up. 'Dive again,' said the girl. He dived again and found only mud at the bottom. 'You see,' said the girl, 'that I told you only the truth, when I said you will be too late if you go to the Ganges, for at the moment of your first dive the moon was at its exact full and you got your reward.'

The Brahman was astonished and seeing her as lovely as she was wise, proposed marriage. She referred him to her father who refused, saying he could not presume to ally his daughter of low caste to a high caste Brahman. The Brahman thereupon threatened to kill himself, and the Dusadh, fearful of incurring the guilt of Brahmanhatya,<sup>1</sup> consented after consulting his friends; the marriage was duly solemnized, and the girl then taught her husband to ask no dowry of her father except a particular cow, a particular pig, and a particular parrot. The Dusadh, on bidding his daughter good-bye and God-speed when they were departing, desired his son-in-law to ask for any gift he chose. The Brahman refused, but being pressed, he bound the Dusadh by a promise to grant his request, and then asked for the cow, the pig and the parrot, as he had been taught. The Dusadh being taken aback, was bound by his promise to give them up.

The parrot was an extraordinary one, as he would daily go to Indra's palace and bring the news of what took place there to his mistress; the pig was the leader of all the pigs in the country, and the cow was no other than the famous Surabhi. One day the parrot told his mistress that Indra had given orders that during the approaching rainy season, it should rain nowhere in the district except on the sterile valleys and stony slopes of Rajgir. The girl on hearing this immediately called her pig and directed him to dig up the whole of his subject pigs did and hill slopes of Rajgir; the pig with the aid of his subject pigs did as she desired. She then directed her husband to go and scatter paddy in all these places, explaining the object to her husband. He did as desired. When it rained the paddy seed sprouted and the whole of

<sup>1</sup> Causing the death of a Brahman.

# THE CASTE SYSTEM OF NORTHERN INDIA

stony Rajgir was full of paddy, while outside not a blade of paddy was to be found owing to want of rain. It being reported to Indra that within Rajgir enough of paddy had been grown to stave off famine, he ordered an army of mice and rats to be sent to destroy the crops; but the girl, informed of this order by her parrot, got her husband to procure an army of cats as guard; when it was reported to Indra that this plan of destroying the crops had failed, he directed that when cut, each load of the paddy sheaves should produce only one-and-a-quarter seers of clean paddy. The girl informed by her parrot of this order, directed her husband to make bundles of only two stalks of paddy each tied end to end. The order of Indra having gone forth and become irrevocable, each of these bundles produced one-and-a-quarter seers of paddy. Indra informed of this and seeing himself outwitted, ordered a furious storm to blow and scatter all the paddy which had been threshed out ready for storing. The girl informed of this and aware that no wattle hut would resist the storm should he store it in such, directed her husband to dig the deep moat now seen round Rajgir. When the storm blew it naturally carried all the paddy into these trenches where it lay safe till the storm had blown over, and thus was the country saved from famine through the cleverness of this girl, in memory of whom the pool where her pigs used to wallow was named Bawan Ganga or the fifty-two Ganges.

(Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh*, Vol. II, pp. 347-8.)

## APPENDIX I

### List of Caste Names found in the text

|                 |                                                                                     |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abbasi          | Section, both of Saiyids and Shaikhs                                                |
| Abidi           | Saiyid section                                                                      |
| Adham           | Ahir subdivision                                                                    |
| Adham Sudra     | Ahir subcaste                                                                       |
| Adhela          | Kanjar subcaste                                                                     |
| Afghan          | Synonym for Pathan                                                                  |
| Afridi          | Pathan tribe                                                                        |
| Agari or Agri   | Iron smelters; a section of hill-Doms                                               |
| Agariya         | (1) Caste of iron smelters in Mirzapur;<br>(2) Caste of salt-workers in Bulandshahr |
| Agarwal         | Vaisya caste of traders and bankers                                                 |
| Agastwar        | Rajput sept                                                                         |
| Agnikula        | Lit. 'fire-born'; name of a group of Rajput septs                                   |
| Agrahri         | Vaisya caste of traders, mostly provision dealers                                   |
| Agri            | Sec Agari                                                                           |
| Ahar            | Pastoral and cultivating caste                                                      |
| Aheriya         | Caste of hunters and fowlers                                                        |
| Ahir            | Caste of herdsmen; also agriculturists                                              |
| Ahiwasi         | Brahmanical caste                                                                   |
| Ajudhyabasi     | 'Living in Ajudhya'; a subcaste name in various castes                              |
| Alwi or Alawiya | Section, both of Saiyids and Shaikhs                                                |
| Amethiya        | Rajput sept                                                                         |
| Amisht          | Subcaste name in various castes                                                     |
| Ansari          | Shaikh section                                                                      |
| Arakh           | Caste of cultivators and labourers                                                  |
| Asandhari       | Branch of the Goshain sectarian caste                                               |
| Askari          | Saiyid section                                                                      |
| Athpahariya     | Gidhiya subcaste                                                                    |
| Atith           | Sectarian (Saiva) caste                                                             |
| Audhiya         | Tribe of criminals                                                                  |
| Auji            | Tailors and drummers; section of hill-Doms                                          |

LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                      |                                                                        |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Bachgoti</i>      | Rajput sept                                                            |
| <i>Badhik</i>        | (1) Vagrant tribe, originally dacoits;<br>(2) Subcaste of Dhanuks      |
| <i>Badi</i>          | Dancers and singers; section of hill-Doms                              |
| <i>Badi Banjara</i>  | New caste, formed from the Gual Nats                                   |
| <i>Baghban</i>       | Caste of gardeners                                                     |
| <i>Baghel</i>        | Rajput sept                                                            |
| <i>Baheliya</i>      | Caste of fowlers and hunters                                           |
| <i>Bahlm</i>         | Shaikh subdivision                                                     |
| <i>Bahlmi</i>        | See <i>Bahlm</i>                                                       |
| <i>Bahmangot</i>     | 'Of Brahman lineage'; subcaste name                                    |
| <i>Bahmaniya</i>     | See <i>Bahmangot</i>                                                   |
| <i>Bahrup</i>        | Subcaste of Banjaras                                                   |
| <i>Baid</i>          | Subcaste of Banjaras                                                   |
| <i>Bairi</i>         | See <i>Ruriya</i>                                                      |
| <i>Baidguar</i>      | Subcaste of Banjaras                                                   |
| <i>Bairsawa</i>      | Group of hill-Doms                                                     |
| <i>Bais</i>          | Rajput sept                                                            |
| <i>Baiswar</i>       | Tribe of agriculturists                                                |
| <i>Bajaniya</i>      | Nat subcaste                                                           |
| <i>Bajdhar</i>       | Baheliya subcaste                                                      |
| <i>Bajgi</i>         | Caste of musicians                                                     |
| <i>Bakhariya</i>     | Group of hill-Doms                                                     |
| <i>Bal</i>           | Subcaste of Arakhs and Khangars                                        |
| <i>Balahar</i>       | Dom subcaste of village menials and trumpeters                         |
| <i>Balai</i>         | Caste of weavers and labourers                                         |
| <i>Balmiki</i>       | Bhangi subcaste                                                        |
| <i>Bangash</i>       | Pathan tribe                                                           |
| <i>Bani Fatima</i>   | Saiyid section                                                         |
| <i>Bani Israil</i>   | Shaikh section                                                         |
| <i>Baniya</i>        | Generic term for trader; formerly used as caste name for Vaisya castes |
| <i>Banjara</i>       | Tribe of cattle dealers and carriers                                   |
| <i>Banmanus</i>      | Subcaste of Musahars                                                   |
| <i>Bansphor</i>      | Dom subcaste, who work in bamboo                                       |
| <i>Baqarqassab</i>   | Group of Muhammadan butchers; lit. 'goat killers'                      |
| <i>Baqri</i>         | Saiyid section                                                         |
| <i>Bar or Padhan</i> | Section of the lower Moradabad Chauhans                                |
| <i>Baraghar</i>      | Lit. 'twelve houses'; a caste section                                  |

LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                       |                                                                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Barai</i>          | (1) Caste of betel growers; (2) another form of Barele                      |
| <i>Baraksai</i>       | Pathan tribe                                                                |
| <i>Baramasi</i>       | (1) Name for Kachhi; (2) section of Baghbans                                |
| <i>Baranwal</i>       | Subcaste of Vaisya traders                                                  |
| <i>Bardhiya</i>       | Subcaste of Kumhars                                                         |
| <i>Barech</i>         | Pathan tribe                                                                |
| <i>Barele or Bare</i> | Section of hill-Doms                                                        |
| <i>Bargahi</i>        | Caste of domestic servants                                                  |
| <i>Bargujar</i>       | Rajput sept                                                                 |
| <i>Barhai</i>         | Caste of carpenters                                                         |
| <i>Bari</i>           | Caste of domestic servants                                                  |
| <i>Baruri</i>         | See <i>Ruriya</i>                                                           |
| <i>Barwar</i>         | Criminal tribe                                                              |
| <i>Basor</i>          | Dom subcaste of bamboo workers                                              |
| <i>Baura</i>          | A group of hill-Doms                                                        |
| <i>Bauriya</i>        | See <i>Bawariya</i>                                                         |
| <i>Bawanjati</i>      | Lit. 'fifty-two families'; a caste section                                  |
| <i>Bawariya</i>       | Tribe of hunters and criminals                                              |
| <i>Bazigar</i>        | 'Acrobat'; subcaste name                                                    |
| <i>Bediya</i>         | See <i>Beriya</i>                                                           |
| <i>Bekawala</i>       | Khatik subcaste (bacon-vendors)                                             |
| <i>Beldar</i>         | Caste of diggers and earthworkers                                           |
| <i>Belwal</i>         | See <i>Ghidwal</i>                                                          |
| <i>Belwar</i>         | Caste of grain-dealers                                                      |
| <i>Benbansi</i>       | 'Descended from Ben'; subcaste name                                         |
| <i>Bengali</i>        | Vagrant tribe                                                               |
| <i>Beriya</i>         | Vagrant tribe                                                               |
| <i>Bhains</i>         | Subcaste both of Kanjars and Beriyan                                        |
| <i>Bhaktiha</i>       | Murao subcaste                                                              |
| <i>Bhale Sultan</i>   | Sept of Muhammadan Rajputs                                                  |
| <i>Bhand</i>          | Caste of jesters                                                            |
| <i>Bhangi</i>         | Scavenger caste (or group of castes)                                        |
| <i>Bhantu</i>         | Dangerous criminal tribe, now broken up, and mostly settled in the Andamans |
| <i>Bhar</i>           | Non-Aryan tribe of agriculturists and labourers                             |
| <i>Bharbhunja</i>     | Grain parchers                                                              |
| <i>Bhat</i>           | Caste of bards and genealogists                                             |
| <i>Bhathiyara</i>     | Caste of innkeepers                                                         |
| <i>Bhatiya</i>        | Small caste of traders                                                      |
| <i>Bhatnagar</i>      | A Kayastha subcaste                                                         |

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                      |                                                                        |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Bhatra</i>        | Another name for Ramaiya                                               |
| <i>Bhatti</i>        | Rajput sept                                                            |
| <i>Bhil</i>          | Old aboriginal tribe                                                   |
| <i>Bhishti</i>       | Caste of water-carriers                                                |
| <i>Bhoksa</i>        | Tribe resident in the submontane Tarai                                 |
| <i>Bhotiya</i>       | Tribe of agriculturists (Hinduized Tibetans)                           |
| <i>Bhuhinhar</i>     | Caste of landowners and agriculturists who claim Brahman descent       |
| <i>Bhuiya</i>        | Jungle and labouring tribe                                             |
| <i>Bhuiyar</i>       | Tribe of woodcutters and jungle dwellers                               |
| <i>Bhul</i>          | Oil-pressers; a section of the hill-Doms                               |
| <i>Biloch</i>        | Muhammadan tribe, frequently criminals                                 |
| <i>Bind</i>          | Agricultural caste                                                     |
| <i>Bisa</i>          | 'Twenties'; Agarwal endogamous section                                 |
| <i>Bisen</i>         | Rajput sept                                                            |
| <i>Bishnoi</i>       | Originally a Vaishnava sect, now a sectarian caste                     |
| <i>Brahman</i>       | The priestly caste; also an Aryan <i>varna</i> or social class         |
| <i>Brajbasi</i>      | 'Living in Braj', i.e. the country near Agra and Muttra; subcaste name |
| <i>Bughara</i>       | Section of hill-Doms                                                   |
| <i>Bundela</i>       | Rajput sept                                                            |
| <i>Byahut</i>        | 'Wedded' (i.e. marrying only virgins); subcaste name                   |
| <i>Byar</i>          | Tribe of agriculturists                                                |
| <i>Chagatai</i>      | (1) Turki family name (2) Moghul section                               |
| <i>Chai</i>          | Caste of fishermen                                                     |
| <i>Chamar</i>        | Caste of curriers and tanners                                          |
| <i>Chamargaur</i>    | Rajput sept                                                            |
| <i>Chamar-Julaha</i> | Another name for Bhuiyar                                               |
| <i>Chanal</i>        | Another name for Chunara                                               |
| <i>Chandel</i>       | Rajput sept                                                            |
| <i>Charghar</i>      | Lit. 'four houses'; caste subdivision                                  |
| <i>Chattri</i>       | Synonym for Rajput                                                     |
| <i>Chaube</i>        | Brahman title                                                          |

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                          |                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Chaudhri</i>          | Lit. 'headman': (1) common title for (a) headman of a caste; (b) a Jat; (2) a subcaste of Nats           |
| <i>Chauhan</i>           | Rajput sept                                                                                              |
| <i>Chauhaniya-Misr</i>   | Subcaste name                                                                                            |
| <i>Chero</i>             | Caste of labourers                                                                                       |
| <i>Chhajarwar</i>        | Section of Baghbans                                                                                      |
| <i>Chhipi</i>            | Caste of calico printers                                                                                 |
| <i>Chik</i>              | Caste of Hindu butchers                                                                                  |
| <i>Chiryamar</i>         | Subcaste of Baheliyas; fowlers                                                                           |
| <i>Chishti</i>           | Saiyid section                                                                                           |
| <i>Chunara, Chunera,</i> | Section of hill-Doms                                                                                     |
| <i>Chunyar</i>           |                                                                                                          |
| <i>Churihar</i>          | Caste of makers of glass bangles                                                                         |
| <i>Dafali</i>            | Caste of drummers, beggars and hedge priests                                                             |
| <i>Dakaut</i>            | Caste of astrologers                                                                                     |
| <i>Dalera</i>            | Caste of pickpockets                                                                                     |
| <i>Damai</i>             | Drummers; group of hill-Doms                                                                             |
| <i>Dangi</i>             | Caste of agriculturists                                                                                  |
| <i>Darya</i>             | Section of hill-Doms                                                                                     |
| <i>Darzi</i>             | Caste of tailors                                                                                         |
| <i>Dasa</i>              | 'Tens'; Agarwal endogamous section                                                                       |
| <i>Daudzai</i>           | Pathan tribe                                                                                             |
| <i>Dhaigar</i>           | Lit. 'two and a half houses'; (1) a hy-pergamous division amongst Khat-tris; (2) a subcaste of Gadariyas |
| <i>Dhaki</i>             | Outcasted Khasiyas; section of hill-Doms                                                                 |
| <i>Dhangar</i>           | Tribe of agricultural labourers                                                                          |
| <i>Dhanuk</i>            | Menial caste                                                                                             |
| <i>Dhankuta Banjara</i>  | See <i>Kuta Banjara</i>                                                                                  |
| <i>Dharhi</i>            | Caste of singers and dancers                                                                             |
| <i>Dharkar</i>           | Dom subcaste; workers in cane                                                                            |
| <i>Dhiman</i>            | Subcaste of Barhais                                                                                      |
| <i>Dhimar</i>            | Caste broken off from the Kahar                                                                          |
| <i>Dhinwar</i>           | Subcaste of Khagis                                                                                       |
| <i>Dhobi</i>             | Washerman caste                                                                                          |
| <i>Dholi</i>             | Tailors, drummers; section of hill-Doms                                                                  |
| <i>Dhunar or Dhuni</i>   | Labourers; section of hill-Doms                                                                          |
| <i>Dhuniya</i>           | Caste of cotton carders                                                                                  |

LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                        |                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Dhusar-Bhargava</i> | Caste of Brahmanical origin                                                                                                       |
| <i>Dikhit</i>          | Rajput sept                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Dilazak</i>         | Pathan tribe                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Dobhal</i>          | Section of Khasiya Brahmans (exorcists)                                                                                           |
| <i>Dogar</i>           | Punjab tribe                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Dolkarha</i>        | Section of Musahars; palanquin bearers                                                                                            |
| <i>Dom</i>             | (1) In the plains, a non-Aryan tribe of menials and scavengers; (2) in the hills, generic racial name for low castes of all kinds |
| <i>Domar</i>           | Dom subcaste                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Durani</i>          | Pathan tribe                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Dusadh</i>          | Menial caste                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Dwijat</i>          | 'Twice-born'; Ahir subcaste                                                                                                       |
| <i>Faruqi</i>          | Shaikh section                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Gadariya</i>        | Caste of shepherds and goat-herds                                                                                                 |
| <i>Gaddi</i>           | Caste of Muhammadan cow-herds                                                                                                     |
| <i>Gadhere</i>         | Subcaste of Kumhars                                                                                                               |
| <i>Gaharwar</i>        | Rajput sept                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Gahlot</i>          | Rajput sept                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Gahoi</i>           | Subcaste of Vaisya traders and merchants                                                                                          |
| <i>Gairola</i>         | Section of Brahmans in hills                                                                                                      |
| <i>Gandharb</i>        | Caste of singers and prostitutes                                                                                                  |
| <i>Gandhi</i>          | Caste of scent manufacturers                                                                                                      |
| <i>Gandhila</i>        | (1) Subcaste of Gidhiyas; (2) vagrant tribe                                                                                       |
| <i>Gangari</i>         | Subcaste of Brahmans in hills                                                                                                     |
| <i>Gara</i>            | Tribe of cultivators                                                                                                              |
| <i>Gaur</i>            | Subcaste of Brahmans, Kayasthas, and many other castes                                                                            |
| <i>Gauriya</i>         | Caste of fishermen and cultivators                                                                                                |
| <i>Gautam</i>          | Rajput sept                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Ghaibhanariya</i>   | Brahman subcaste in hills                                                                                                         |
| <i>Gharbari</i>        | Branch of Atiths                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Gharuk</i>          | Caste of domestic servants, who serve Europeans                                                                                   |
| <i>Ghasiya</i>         | Tribe of menials                                                                                                                  |

LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                      |                                                         |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Ghidwal</i>       | Section of Khasiya (hill) Brahmans                      |
| <i>Ghilzai</i>       | Pathan tribe                                            |
| <i>Ghogar</i>        | A newly formed caste; well diggers                      |
| <i>Ghorawal</i>      | (1) Subcaste of Qalandars; (2) subcaste of Khatiks      |
| <i>Ghorgushti</i>    | Pathan tribe                                            |
| <i>Ghori</i>         | (1) Pathan tribe; (2) a Muslim dynasty                  |
| <i>Ghosi</i>         | Caste of herdsmen                                       |
| <i>Ghulam</i>        | Lit. 'slave'; subcaste name of Barwars                  |
| <i>Gidhiya</i>       | New caste of hunters                                    |
| <i>Gola</i>          | Subcaste of Bawariyas                                   |
| <i>Gola Agariya</i>  | 'Bastard Agariya'; a Luniya subcaste                    |
| <i>Gola Thakur</i>   | 'Bastard Rajput'; another name for Gola Agariya         |
| <i>Golapurab</i>     | Caste of agriculturists                                 |
| <i>Gond</i>          | Aboriginal tribe of Central India                       |
| <i>Gorchha</i>       | Caste of cultivators                                    |
| <i>Goshain</i>       | Sectarian caste                                         |
| <i>Grihastha</i>     | Lit. 'householder'; branch of Goshains                  |
| <i>Gual</i>          | Nat subcaste                                            |
| <i>Gujar</i>         | Agricultural and pastoral tribe                         |
| <i>Habshi</i>        | Descendants of Abyssinian slaves, now extinct           |
| <i>Habura</i>        | Tribe of criminal vagrants                              |
| <i>Halldiya</i>      | Subcaste name; connected with turmeric ( <i>haldi</i> ) |
| <i>Halwai</i>        | Caste of confectioners                                  |
| <i>Hankya</i>        | Subcaste of Kumhars                                     |
| <i>Hasan-Husaini</i> | Saiyid section                                          |
| <i>Hasani</i>        | Saiyid section                                          |
| <i>Hashimi</i>       | Section of both Saiyids and Shaikhs                     |
| <i>Hateriya</i>      | Subcaste of Kumhars                                     |
| <i>Hayobans</i>      | Rajput sept                                             |
| <i>Hazari</i>        | Subcaste of Khatiks                                     |
| <i>Hela</i>          | Bhangi section, probably a separate caste               |
| <i>Hurkiya</i>       | Caste of attendants on dancing girls                    |
| <i>Husaini</i>       | Saiyid section                                          |
| <i>Intpaz</i>        | Subcaste of Kumhars                                     |
| <i>Iraqi</i>         | Caste of Muhammadan liquor sellers                      |

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                           |                                                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Jadon</i>              | Rajput sept                                          |
| <i>Jadubansi</i>          | Subcaste name                                        |
| <i>Jafari</i>             | Section both of Saiyids and Shaikhs                  |
| <i>Jaiswala, Jaiswara</i> | Lit. 'residents of Jais'; subcaste name              |
| <i>Jalali</i>             | Saiyid section                                       |
| <i>Jallad</i>             | Subcaste of Kanjars                                  |
| <i>Jamoriya</i>           | Group of hill Doms                                   |
| <i>Jaunpuriya</i>         | Lit. 'residents of Jaunpur'; subcaste name           |
| <i>Janwar</i>             | Rajput sept                                          |
| <i>Jat</i>                | Agricultural tribe                                   |
| <i>Jatiya</i>             | Subdivision of Chamars                               |
| <i>Jauhari</i>            | 'Jeweller'; subcaste name                            |
| <i>Jhijhotiya</i>         | Subcaste of Brahmans                                 |
| <i>Jhojha</i>             | Caste of converted Hindus; cultivators               |
| <i>Jogi Pathan</i>        | Vagrant Muhammadan swindlers                         |
| <i>Joshi</i>              | Class of Brahmans in the hills; caste of astrologers |
| <i>Julaha</i>             | Caste of weavers                                     |

|                   |                                                         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Kabariya</i>   | See <i>Kunjra</i>                                       |
| <i>Kabutari</i>   | Lit. 'pigeon like'; subcaste name                       |
| <i>Kachhi</i>     | Caste of market gardeners                               |
| <i>Kachhwaha</i>  | Rajput sept                                             |
| <i>Kadhera</i>    | Tribe of cultivators                                    |
| <i>Kahar</i>      | Caste of domestic servants                              |
| <i>Kakar</i>      | Pathan tribe                                            |
| <i>Kalabaz</i>    | Subcaste of Gual Nats                                   |
| <i>Kalwar</i>     | Liquor distillers and sellers and general traders       |
| <i>Kamboh</i>     | Caste of cultivators                                    |
| <i>Kamchor</i>    | Lit. 'loafer'; subcaste name                            |
| <i>Kamkar</i>     | Caste of domestic servants                              |
| <i>Kanaujiya</i>  | (1) Subcaste of Brahmans; (2) subcaste of Bharbhunjas   |
| <i>Kanchan</i>    | Singers, dancers and prostitutes; subcaste of Gual Nats |
| <i>Kandu</i>      | Caste of shopkeepers                                    |
| <i>Kanet</i>      | Rajput sept                                             |
| <i>Kanghigar</i>  | Combmakers; subcaste of Nats                            |
| <i>Kanhpuriya</i> | Rajput sept                                             |
| <i>Kanjar</i>     | Vagrant tribe                                           |

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                            |                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Kanmail</i>             | Caste of 'ear-cleaners', broken off from the Nats                                                  |
| <i>Kanseri</i>             | Section of Khasiya Brahmans in hills                                                               |
| <i>Kanya-Kubja</i>         | See <i>Kanaujiya</i>                                                                               |
| <i>Karonia</i>             | Subcaste of Baghbans                                                                               |
| <i>Karwal</i>              | Vagrant tribe                                                                                      |
| <i>Kasarwani</i>           | Caste of traders, mostly grocers                                                                   |
| <i>Kasaundhan</i>          | Caste of merchants and money-changers                                                              |
| <i>Kasera</i>              | Brass founders                                                                                     |
| <i>Kasgar</i>              | Subcaste of Kumhars                                                                                |
| <i>Kasibi</i>              | Section of the Bishnoi caste                                                                       |
| <i>Kathak</i>              | Caste of musicians                                                                                 |
| <i>Kathiyara</i>           | Caste of bricklayers                                                                               |
| <i>Kausik</i>              | (1) Rajput sept; (2) name of a <i>gotra</i>                                                        |
| <i>Kayastha</i>            | Caste of writers                                                                                   |
| <i>Kayastha-Bharbhunja</i> | New caste, of Kayasthas who have taken to grain-parching                                           |
| <i>Kayastha-Darzi</i>      | New caste, of Kayasthas who have become tailors                                                    |
| <i>Kayastha-Mochi</i>      | New caste, of Kayasthas who have taken to saddlery                                                 |
| <i>Kayastha-Senduriya</i>  | New caste, of Kayasthas who sell red lead                                                          |
| <i>Kayasthbans</i>         | 'Of Kayastha stock'; subcaste name                                                                 |
| <i>Kazimi</i>              | Saiyid section                                                                                     |
| <i>Kewat</i>               | Caste of fishermen and boatmen                                                                     |
| <i>Khagar</i>              | See <i>Khangar</i>                                                                                 |
| <i>Khagi</i>               | (1) Caste of agriculturists; (2) exogamous section of Bawariyas                                    |
| <i>Khagi-Chauhan</i>       | Mixed caste of cultivators                                                                         |
| <i>Khaikut</i>             | A section of hill-Doms                                                                             |
| <i>Khairwa</i>             | Tribe of catechu makers                                                                            |
| <i>Khalil</i>              | Pathan tribe                                                                                       |
| <i>Khandelwal</i>          | Caste of Vaisya merchants and traders                                                              |
| <i>Khangar</i>             | Caste of village watchmen and menials                                                              |
| <i>Khanzada</i>            | Sept of Muhammadan Rajputs                                                                         |
| <i>Khapariya</i>           | Beggars and pedlars                                                                                |
| <i>Kharadi</i>             | 'Turner'; subcaste name                                                                            |
| <i>Khare</i>               | 'Pure' as opposed to 'half-breed'; used as sectional name in various castes (e.g. <i>Sansiya</i> ) |
| <i>Kharot</i>              | Caste of mat makers                                                                                |
| <i>Kharwar</i>             | Agricultural tribe                                                                                 |

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                                  |                                                          |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Khas</i>                      | Section of Kayasthas                                     |
| <i>Khasiyu</i>                   | Subcaste of Brahmans and Rajputs in the hills            |
| <i>Khatak</i>                    | Pathan tribe                                             |
| <i>Khatik</i>                    | Caste of cultivators, vegetable sellers and butchers     |
| <i>Khatkul</i>                   | Endogamous section amongst Kanaujiya Brahmans            |
| <i>Khatttri</i>                  | Trading caste                                            |
| <i>Khilji</i>                    | (1) Subcaste name; (2) Turki tribe; (3) a Muslim dynasty |
| <i>Khokhar</i>                   | Subcaste of Qalandars                                    |
| <i>Khumra</i>                    | Millstone cutters, a small caste                         |
| <i>Khurasani</i>                 | Shaikh section                                           |
| <i>Khwaja-Mansuri</i>            | Subcaste of Khatiks                                      |
| <i>Kingariya</i>                 | Caste of singers and dancers                             |
| <i>Kirar</i>                     | Agricultural caste                                       |
| <i>Kisan</i>                     | Caste of cultivators                                     |
| <i>Koeri</i>                     | Caste of cultivators, mostly market gardeners            |
| <i>Kol</i>                       | Jungle and labouring tribe                               |
| <i>Koli</i>                      | A group of hill-Doms                                     |
| <i>Kori</i>                      | Caste of weavers                                         |
| <i>Korwa</i>                     | Jungle tribe                                             |
| <i>Kshatriya</i>                 | A <i>varna</i> ; the Aryan ruling and military class     |
| <i>Kumhar</i>                    | Caste of potters                                         |
| <i>Kunchband, Kunch-bandhiya</i> | Subcaste name ( <i>Kanjar</i> and <i>Beriya</i> )        |
| <i>Kunera</i>                    | Caste of turners                                         |
| <i>Kunjra</i>                    | Caste of greengrocers                                    |
| <i>Kurmi</i>                     | Important agricultural caste                             |
| <i>Kurmiya</i>                   | Ahir subcaste                                            |
| <i>Kuta</i>                      | Banjara subdivision                                      |
| <i>Kuta-Banjara</i>              | A newly formed caste of carriers and cultivators         |
| <i>Kuta-Mali</i>                 | Caste of rice pounders                                   |
| <i>Labana</i>                    | Subcaste of Banjaras                                     |
| <i>Lakhera</i>                   | See <i>Churihar</i>                                      |
| <i>Lal Begi</i>                  | Section of Bhangis, probably now a caste                 |
| <i>Lalkhani</i>                  | Caste of Muhammadan Rajputs                              |

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

*Lalsoti*  
*Lama-Negi*

*Laungbarsa*  
*Lodha*  
*Lodi*  
*Lohar*  
*Luniyu*

*Mudhesiya Vaisya*  
*Maghaya Dom*  
*Mahabiriyi*  
*Mahabrahman*  
*Mahajan*

*Mahalodhi*  
*Mahar*  
*Mahesri*  
*Mair*  
*Maithila*  
*Majhwar*  
*Mal*  
*Mali*  
*Malkana*

*Malla*  
*Mallah*  
*Manihar*  
*Mansuri*  
*Mathdhari*  
*Mehrtariya*  
*Meo*  
*Mewafarosh*  
*Milki*  
*Mina*  
*Mirasi*

*Mochi*  
*Moghul.*

*Mohmand*

Exogamous section of Minas  
Sept descended from Tibetan lamas settled in Garhwal  
Subcaste name of Dhanuks  
Caste of agriculturists  
(1) Pathan tribe; (2) a Muslim dynasty  
Blacksmiths  
Caste of cultivators, earthworkers, and makers of saltpetre

Name claimed by Kandus and Halwais  
Branch of the Dom tribe  
'Followers of Mahabir'; subcaste name  
Brahmans who receive funeral gifts  
Subcaste of Vaisyas, usurped as a caste name by Kalwars  
Subcaste of Lodhas  
Subcaste of Kahars  
Caste of Vaisya merchants  
Subcaste of Sonars  
Subcaste of Brahmans  
Jungle and labouring tribe  
Section of Sainthwars  
Caste of gardeners  
Group of converts to Islam, resident around Agra  
Section of Sansiyas  
Boating and fishing caste  
See *Churihar*  
Khatik section  
Branch of Goshains  
Subcaste of Dhuniyas  
Tribe of cultivators  
Subcaste of fruitsellers  
Shaikh section  
See *Meo*  
Caste of singers and musicians. Also called *Dom Mirasi*  
Caste of cobblers and shoemakers  
(1) Class of Muhammadans; (2) name given to the Tartar invaders of India;  
(3) dynasty founded by Babar  
Pathan tribe

LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                                |                                                          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Muhammadzai</i>             | Pathan tribe                                             |
| <i>Mukeri</i>                  | Subcaste of Banjaras                                     |
| <i>Mula</i>                    | New Muhammadan caste                                     |
| <i>Murao</i>                   | Caste of cultivators                                     |
| <i>Musahar</i>                 | Tribe of jungle dwellers                                 |
| <i>Nagar</i>                   | Subcaste of Brahmans                                     |
| <i>Nai</i>                     | Caste of barbers                                         |
| <i>Naik</i>                    | Subcaste of Banjaras                                     |
| <i>Namdeobansi</i>             | Subcaste of Chhipis                                      |
| <i>Nanakshahi</i>              | Subcaste name                                            |
| <i>Nandbansi</i>               | Subcaste name                                            |
| <i>Naqwi</i>                   | Saiyid section                                           |
| <i>Nat</i>                     | Vagrant tribe of acrobats, dancers, etc.                 |
| <i>Nikhad</i>                  | Subcaste name                                            |
| <i>Nikhar</i>                  | Gadariya subcaste                                        |
| <i>Niyariya</i>                | Caste of refiners of precious metals                     |
| <i>Ojha</i>                    | Subcaste of Brahman diviners and exorcists               |
| <i>Orakzai</i>                 | Pathan tribe                                             |
| <i>Orh</i>                     | Caste of weavers and petty tradesmen                     |
| <i>Oswal</i>                   | Caste of Vaisya merchants                                |
| <i>Pachhada</i>                | Exogamous section of Bawariya castes                     |
| <i>Pachhami</i>                | 'Western'; subcaste name                                 |
| <i>Pachpiriya</i>              | 'Followers of Panchpir'; subcaste name                   |
| <i>Pahari, Pahariya, Pahri</i> | Caste or tribe of watchmen; group of hill-Doms           |
| <i>Panchdravid</i>             | One of two large groups of Brahmans (the southern group) |
| <i>Panchgaur</i>               | One of two large groups of Brahmans (the northern group) |
| <i>Pande</i>                   | Brahman title                                            |
| <i>Panka</i>                   | Caste of weavers                                         |
| <i>Pankhiya</i>                | Group of Muhammadan cultivators                          |
| <i>Pant</i>                    | Lit. 'religious order'; class of Brahmans in the hills   |
| <i>Panwar</i>                  | Rajput sept                                              |
| <i>Parahiya</i>                | Jungle tribe                                             |

LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                         |                                                                                          |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Parihar</i>          | Rajput sept                                                                              |
| <i>Parki</i>            | Makers of wooden vessels; group of hill-Doms                                             |
| <i>Pasi</i>             | Tribal caste: formerly toddy-drawers, now labourers, agriculturists, menials and thieves |
| <i>Patait</i>           | Exogamous section amongst Bhars                                                          |
| <i>Patari</i>           | Tribe of aboriginal priests                                                              |
| <i>Pathak</i>           | Lit. 'a preceptor'; class or title of Brahmans                                           |
| <i>Pathan</i>           | Class of Muhammadans                                                                     |
| <i>Paturiya</i>         | Caste of singers and dancers                                                             |
| <i>Patwa</i>            | Caste of braid makers                                                                    |
| <i>Pauri</i>            | A group of hill-Doms                                                                     |
| <i>Phandiya</i>         | A group of hill-Doms                                                                     |
| <i>Phansiya</i>         | New caste of fruitsellers                                                                |
| <i>Phulrai</i>          | Section of Brahmans in hills                                                             |
| <i>Pirzada</i>          | Section of both Saiyids and Shaikhs                                                      |
| <i>Poldar</i>           | Subcaste of Khatiks                                                                      |
| <i>Purabi</i>           | 'Eastern'; subcaste name                                                                 |
| <i>Qadiriya</i>         | Section of Saiyids                                                                       |
| <i>Qalandar</i>         | Caste of vagrant bear and monkey leaders                                                 |
| <i>Qassab, Qassaiya</i> | Caste of butchers                                                                        |
| <i>Qidwai</i>           | Shaikh section                                                                           |
| <i>Qizilbash</i>        | Moghul section                                                                           |
| <i>Qureshi</i>          | (1) Arab tribe to which Muhammad belonged; (2) Shaikh section                            |
| <i>Rachbandhiya</i>     | Subcaste of various gipsy tribes                                                         |
| <i>Radha</i>            | Caste of singers and dancers                                                             |
| <i>Rahwari</i>          | Caste of camel drivers                                                                   |
| <i>Raikwar</i>          | Rajput sept                                                                              |
| <i>Rain</i>             | Caste of cultivators                                                                     |
| <i>Rajbhar</i>          | Subcaste of Bhars                                                                        |
| <i>Rajgar</i>           | Subcaste of Khatiks                                                                      |
| <i>Raji</i>             | Jungle tribe                                                                             |
| <i>Rajput</i>           | Warrior and landowning caste                                                             |
| <i>Ramaiya</i>          | Caste of pedlars                                                                         |
| <i>Ranghar</i>          | Sept of Muhammadan Rajputs                                                               |
| <i>Rasoiya</i>          | Section of Khasiya Brahmans                                                              |

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                       |                                                                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Rastogi</i>        | Subcaste of Vaisya merchants                                             |
| <i>Rasyar</i>         | Subcaste of Khasiya Brahmans                                             |
| <i>Rathor</i>         | Rajput sept                                                              |
| <i>Rauniyar</i>       | Caste of traders, mostly in sugar and salt                               |
| <i>Rind</i>           | Criminal tribe                                                           |
| <i>Ringwara-Rawat</i> | Sept of hill Rajputs                                                     |
| <i>Rizwi or Razwi</i> | Saiyid section                                                           |
| <i>Rohilla</i>        | Lit. 'hillmen'; Pathan tribe, or group of tribes, resident in Rohilkhand |
| <i>Ror</i>            | Caste of cultivators                                                     |
| <i>Ruhela</i>         | See <i>Rohilla</i>                                                       |
| <i>Ruria</i>          | Basket-makers; group of hill-Doms                                        |
| <i>Sadh</i>           | Originally a unitarian sect, now a sectarian caste                       |
| <i>Sahariya</i>       | Tribe of jungle dwellers                                                 |
| <i>Saini</i>          | Caste of cultivators                                                     |
| <i>Sainthwar</i>      | New caste of cultivators, separated from the Kurmis                      |
| <i>Saigalgar</i>      | Caste of armourers and knife grinders                                    |
| <i>Saiyid</i>         | Division of Muhammadans, descendants of Ali and Fatima                   |
| <i>Sakarwar</i>       | Rajput sept                                                              |
| <i>Saksena</i>        | Subcaste of Kayasthas                                                    |
| <i>Saktina</i>        | Murao subcaste                                                           |
| <i>Sanadh</i>         | Subcaste of Brahmans                                                     |
| <i>Sanaurlhiya</i>    | Criminal tribe                                                           |
| <i>Sani</i>           | Subcaste of Baghbans                                                     |
| <i>Sansiya</i>        | Vagrant criminal tribe                                                   |
| <i>Saraswat</i>       | Subcaste of Brahmans                                                     |
| <i>Sarki</i>          | Workers in leather; a group of hill-Doms                                 |
| <i>Sarola</i>         | Group of hill Brahmans                                                   |
| <i>Sarwariya</i>      | Subcaste of Brahmans                                                     |
| <i>Satnami</i>        | Another name for the Sadh caste                                          |
| <i>Sejwari</i>        | Caste of domestic servants                                               |
| <i>Senapanthi</i>     | Subcaste of Nais                                                         |
| <i>Seth</i>           | Section of Bishnois                                                      |
| <i>Shaikh</i>         | (1) One of the principal Muhammadan divisions; (2) Seth, q.v.            |
| <i>Shaikh-Mehtar</i>  | Subcaste of Bhangis                                                      |

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

## Shershahi

*Siddiqi*  
*Singhariya*  
*Singiwala*  
*Soiri*  
*Solanki*  
*Sombansi*  
*Sombatta*  
*Sonar*  
*Sonkhar*  
*Srivastava*  
*Sudra*

*Šulaimani*  
*Swang*

*Taga*  
*Taihal*  
*Tajik*

*Tamboli*  
*Tamta*  
*Tank*  
*Taqwi*  
*Tarin*  
*Tarkihar*  
*Tawaif*  
*Teli*

*Teliyabans*  
*Thakur-Arakh*  
*Tharu*

*Thathera*  
*Tilam*  
*Tirwa*

*Todar Mali*

*Tomar*  
*Turai*

Subcaste name, from the Afghan king Sher Shah  
 Section of both Shaikhs and Saiyids  
 New caste of groundnut growers  
 Subcaste of Nats  
 A caste of labourers  
 Rajput sept  
 Rajput sept  
 Subcaste of Khatiks  
 Caste of goldsmiths  
 Subcaste of Khatiks  
 Subcaste of Kayasthas and other castes  
 A *varna*. The Aryan labouring and menial class  
 Shaikh section  
 'Master' (slang); subcaste of Barwars

Caste of landowners and agriculturists  
 Subcaste of Khatiks  
 (1) A Moghul section; (2) name given to original Persian inhabitants of Afghanistan by the Muslims  
 Caste of betel growers and sellers  
 Coppermiths; a group of hill-Doms  
 Subcaste of Sonars  
 Saiyid section  
 Pathan tribe  
 Caste of makers of ornaments  
 Caste of dancers and prostitutes  
 Caste of oil-pressers and general traders  
 'Of Teli stock'; subcaste name  
 Mixed caste in Cawnpore  
 Tribe residing in the Tarai; agriculturists  
 Caste of brass workers  
 A Barwar subcaste  
 Tinsmiths and knife grinders; a group of hill-Doms  
 Subcaste name, from Akbar's minister, Raja Todar Mal  
 Rajput sept  
 Subcaste of Bawariyas

# LIST OF CASTE NAMES

|                |                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Turaiha</i> | Bhangi subcaste, probably now a caste |
| <i>Turi</i>    | Trumpeters; a group of hill-Doms      |
| <i>Turk</i>    | A caste of agriculturists             |
| <i>Turkiya</i> | Subcaste of Banjaras                  |
| <i>Turkman</i> | Moghul section                        |

|                       |                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Umar</i>           | Caste of Vaisya dealers and traders   |
| <i>Unyal</i>          | Section of Gangari hill Brahmans      |
| <i>Upadhya</i>        | Brahman title                         |
| <i>Usmani</i>         | Shaikh section                        |
| <i>Uttam</i>          | Ahir subdivision                      |
| <i>Uzbek or Uzbek</i> | (1) Turki tribe; (2) a Moghul section |

|               |                                         |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <i>Vaisya</i> | A <i>varna</i> ; the Aryan middle class |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Yusufzai</i> | Pathan tribe |
|-----------------|--------------|

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Zaidi</i> | Saiyid section |
|--------------|----------------|

## APPENDIX II

### Glossary of Vernacular Terms

|                     |                                                                                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Abba</i>         | Father                                                                         |
| <i>Adala badala</i> | (Marriage by) exchange                                                         |
| <i>Aghwān</i>       | Afghan (corrupt form)                                                          |
| <i>Ajami</i>        | Foreigner                                                                      |
| <i>Akhbari</i>      | A school of Shia law (Muhammadan)                                              |
| <i>Al</i>           | Lit. a 'family name'; used as name of a section of a caste                     |
| <i>Amir jadida</i>  | New nobility                                                                   |
| <i>Araq</i>         | Liquor                                                                         |
| <i>Arsha</i>        | A form of Hindu marriage                                                       |
| <i>Asami</i>        | Client; usually, tenant of land                                                |
| <i>Asura</i>        | A demon                                                                        |
| <i>Aurat</i>        | Woman, wife                                                                    |
| <i>Avatar</i>       | Incarnation (i.e. of Vishnu)                                                   |
| <i>Badshah</i>      | Lit. 'king'. Term for caste headman                                            |
| <i>Baghaut</i>      | Ghost of person killed by a tiger                                              |
| <i>Bahu</i>         | Son's wife                                                                     |
| <i>Baiga</i>        | The priest of certain low castes                                               |
| <i>Ba'isi</i>       | Lit. 'twenty-two' (villages). Jurisdiction of a caste council                  |
| <i>Bāni</i>         | Lit. 'fabric'; used by Halwais as name of their sections                       |
| <i>Bani Hashim</i>  | Sons of Hashim; the section of the Qureshi tribe to which the Prophet belonged |
| <i>Bankā</i>        | Knife (for splitting bamboos)                                                  |
| <i>Bans</i>         | Lit. 'genealogy'; used as a name for a section of a caste                      |
| <i>Barachha</i>     | See <i>Barrekhi</i>                                                            |
| <i>Barrekhi</i>     | Exchange; the payment of money at marriage among certain castes                |
| <i>Batua</i>        | Cooking pot                                                                    |
| <i>Bera</i>         | Lit. 'enclosure'. Jurisdiction of a caste council                              |

GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                                    |                                                             |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Beta</i>                        | Son                                                         |
| <i>Bhai</i>                        | Brother                                                     |
| <i>Bhaiband</i>                    | See <i>Biradari</i>                                         |
| <i>Bhaiya</i>                      | See <i>Bhai</i> (diminutive)                                |
| <i>Bhakti</i>                      | Devotion                                                    |
| <i>Bhakti-marga</i>                | Vaishnava doctrine of personal devotion                     |
| <i>Bhauji</i>                      | Brother's wife                                              |
| <i>Bhit</i>                        | Conservatory, where betel is grown                          |
| <i>Bhut</i>                        | Ghost                                                       |
| <i>Bir</i>                         | A Hindu hero                                                |
| <i>Biradari</i> or <i>bhaiband</i> | Brotherhood                                                 |
| <i>Bitlhai</i>                     | See <i>Rakhni</i>                                           |
| <i>Brahmā</i>                      | Prayer                                                      |
| <i>Brahmā</i>                      | The universal spirit                                        |
| <i>Brahmana</i>                    | Commentary to the Vedas                                     |
| <i>Brit</i>                        | Caste dues                                                  |
| <i>Burna</i>                       | Ghost of a person drowned                                   |
| <i>Byah</i>                        | Marriage                                                    |
| <i>Byaha, Byahi</i> (fem.)         | Married                                                     |
| <i>Chacha, Chachi</i> (fem.)       | Father's brother or sister                                  |
| <i>Chachera</i>                    | Descended through the paternal uncle                        |
| <i>Chakrayat</i>                   | Derivation uncertain. (Query, servant?)<br>A caste official |
| <i>Chandala</i>                    | Outcaste tribe (Puranic)                                    |
| <i>Charhawa</i>                    | Form of marriage                                            |
| <i>Charidar</i>                    | Lit. 'wand-bearer'. A caste official                        |
| <i>Charpir</i>                     | Four <i>pirs</i> , or Muslim saints                         |
| <i>Chatai</i>                      | Lit. 'matting'. Jurisdiction of a caste council             |
| <i>Chauka</i>                      | Cooking place                                               |
| <i>Chela</i>                       | Disciple or spiritual heir                                  |
| <i>Chhota bhaiya</i>               | Lit. 'little brother'. A caste official                     |
| <i>Chobdar</i>                     | Lit. 'mace-bearer'. Term for caste official                 |
| <i>Chulha</i>                      | Fire-place, oven                                            |
| <i>Chupatti</i>                    | Griddle cake                                                |
| <i>Dada, dadi</i> (fem.)           | Father's father or mother                                   |
| <i>Daiva</i>                       | Form of Hindu marriage (obsolete)                           |
| <i>Darogha</i>                     | Lit. 'superintendent'. A caste official                     |

GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                        |                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Dau</i>             | Elder brother. A name for the god<br>Baladeva                                                                      |
| <i>Deohar</i>          | The village gods collectively                                                                                      |
| <i>Deorani</i>         | Husband's younger brother's wife                                                                                   |
| <i>Dewar</i>           | Husband's younger brother                                                                                          |
| <i>Dharauna</i>        | Form of marriage, used for widows                                                                                  |
| <i>Dharewa</i>         | Form of marriage, used for widows                                                                                  |
| <i>Dhari</i>           | Lit. 'upholder'. Term for caste official                                                                           |
| <i>Dharmashastra</i>   | Learned in the law                                                                                                 |
| <i>Dharmasala</i>      | Charitable institution; usually a rest-house for travellers and pilgrims                                           |
| <i>Dharna</i>          | Sitting at an enemy's door without eating to extort something from him; an old Brahman habit, now forbidden by law |
| <i>Dhebra</i>          | An official in a Barwar criminal gang                                                                              |
| <i>Diwan</i>           | Lit. 'minister'. Term for caste official                                                                           |
| <i>Dola</i>            | Lit. 'a swing'. A form of marriage                                                                                 |
| <i>Dua-kunat</i>       | Prayer of praise                                                                                                   |
| <i>Dudh bachake</i>    | Lit. 'avoiding the milk', i.e. avoiding blood relationship                                                         |
| <i>Dudh ke natedar</i> | 'Milk' (i.e. blood) relations                                                                                      |
| <i>Dudhabati</i>       | Lit. 'rice and milk'; see <i>Khichari</i>                                                                          |
| <i>Dviya</i>           | Twice born                                                                                                         |
| <i>Faqih</i>           | Theologian                                                                                                         |
| <i>Faqir</i>           | Beggar, religious mendicant                                                                                        |
| <i>Gagara</i>          | Pot                                                                                                                |
| <i>Gandharva</i>       | Form of Hindu marriage (obsolete)                                                                                  |
| <i>Ganw ka bhai</i>    | Lit. 'village brother'; fellow villager                                                                            |
| <i>Gauhatiya</i>       | Cow-killing                                                                                                        |
| <i>Gauna</i>           | The bringing home of the wife to her husband                                                                       |
| <i>Gaurochana</i>      | Yellow preparation derived from the cow                                                                            |
| <i>gar</i>             | Ochre                                                                                                              |
| <i>Geru</i>            | See <i>Gharjanwai</i>                                                                                              |
| <i>Ghardamada</i>      | See <i>Gharjanwai</i>                                                                                              |
| <i>Gharjayan</i>       | Lit. 'son in law at home'; marriage after payment of dowry by service                                              |
| <i>Gharjanwai</i>      | Bathing place                                                                                                      |
| <i>Ghat</i>            |                                                                                                                    |

GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                                               |                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Ghi</i>                                    | Clarified butter                                                                                       |
| <i>Ghol</i>                                   | Lit. 'a company'. Term for a section of caste                                                          |
| <i>Gidh</i>                                   | Kite                                                                                                   |
| <i>Gilas</i>                                  | Glass or cup                                                                                           |
| <i>Got</i>                                    | See <i>Gotra</i>                                                                                       |
| <i>Gotra</i>                                  | Lit. 'race, family'. Used as a name for an exogamous section of a caste, especially a twice born caste |
| <i>Gurawat</i>                                | Marriage by exchange                                                                                   |
| <i>Guru</i>                                   | A spiritual preceptor                                                                                  |
| <i>Haldi</i>                                  | Turmeric                                                                                               |
| <i>Hanafti</i>                                | A school of Sunni law (Muhammadian)                                                                    |
| <i>Hasab</i>                                  | Personal qualifications                                                                                |
| <i>Hatya</i>                                  | Killing, especially killing of a cow or a Brahman                                                      |
| <i>Hauliya</i>                                | Name of the Bawariya headman                                                                           |
| <i>Hijra</i>                                  | Eunuch                                                                                                 |
| <i>Hina-jacco,—jatiyo,</i><br><i>—sippani</i> | Low-born, low caste, low trade                                                                         |
| <i>Hom</i>                                    | Burnt offering                                                                                         |
| <i>Ilaqa</i>                                  | Lit. 'estate'. Jurisdiction of a caste council                                                         |
| <i>Isai</i>                                   | Christian ( <i>Isa</i> = Jesus)                                                                        |
| <i>Izzat</i>                                  | Honour, prestige                                                                                       |
| <i>Jadu</i>                                   | Magic, charms                                                                                          |
| <i>Jagiya</i>                                 | Purificatory ceremony                                                                                  |
| <i>Jaini</i>                                  | Follower of the Jain religion                                                                          |
| <i>Jajman</i>                                 | A client, patron                                                                                       |
| <i>Jamadar</i>                                | Arabic term. Lit. 'leader of an assembly'. Term for caste headman                                      |
| <i>Janamashtami</i>                           | Festival of Krishna's birth                                                                            |
| <i>Janeo</i>                                  | Sacred thread of the twice born                                                                        |
| <i>Jataka</i>                                 | Buddhist folk tale                                                                                     |
| <i>Jaziya</i>                                 | Muslim poll-tax on Hindus—abolished by Akbar                                                           |
| <i>Jeth</i>                                   | Husband's elder brother                                                                                |
| <i>Jethi mehraru</i>                          | Senior wife                                                                                            |

GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                    |                                                                                    |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Jumala</i>      | Lit. 'aggregate, total'; a meeting                                                 |
| <i>Juwar</i>       | Derivation uncertain. Jurisdiction of a caste council                              |
| <i>Kachcha</i>     | Lit. 'uncooked, raw'. Food cooked with water. Also used in figurative senses       |
| <i>Kailnama</i>    | Agreement                                                                          |
| <i>Kalchhal</i>    | Spoon                                                                              |
| <i>Kamarband</i>   | Broad belt (cummerbund)                                                            |
| <i>Kanva</i>       | Name of a dynasty                                                                  |
| <i>Kanyadan</i>    | Giving away the bride                                                              |
| <i>Karao</i>       | See <i>Dharewa</i>                                                                 |
| <i>Karma</i>       | Law of automatic retribution                                                       |
| <i>Karta</i>       | Managing member of a Hindu joint family                                            |
| <i>Katha</i>       | Sacred recitation                                                                  |
| <i>Katora</i>      | Saucer                                                                             |
| <i>Khichari</i>    | Ceremony where the bridal pair eat together                                        |
| <i>Kitabi</i>      | Follower of a revealed religion, i.e. a religion with a sacred book                |
| <i>Kohabar</i>     | Retiring room (in the marriage ceremony)                                           |
| <i>Kotwal</i>      | Lit. 'keeper of a city'; chief police officer or magistrate. A caste official      |
| <i>Kul</i>         | Lit. 'assembly'. Used as a name for a section of a caste, in its sense of 'family' |
| <i>Kuladevi</i>    | Family goddess                                                                     |
| <i>Kunchbandhi</i> | Dialect of the Kunchband Kanjars                                                   |
| <i>Kundi</i>       | Cauldron                                                                           |
| <i>Kūri</i>        | Lit. 'a class or branch'. Used by Agariyas as a name for their sections            |
| <i>Lagan</i>       | Marriage season                                                                    |
| <i>Lala</i>        | Kayastha title                                                                     |
| <i>Lota</i>        | Drinking vessel                                                                    |
| <i>Mahajan</i>     | Merchant                                                                           |
| <i>Mahant</i>      | Head of an ascetic body                                                            |

GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                      |                                                                     |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Mahati</i>        | See <i>Mahto</i>                                                    |
| <i>Mahto</i>         | Lit. 'headman'. A caste official                                    |
| <i>Malik</i>         | A king                                                              |
| <i>Mamera</i>        | Descended through the maternal uncle                                |
| <i>Manro</i>         | Wedding shed (in the marriage ceremony)                             |
| <i>Mantra</i>        | Text from the Vedas; a sacred formula                               |
| <i>Mashk</i>         | Water bag of leather                                                |
| <i>Matmangara</i>    | Collection of earth (a marriage rite)                               |
| <i>Maulvi</i>        | Muhammadan doctor of law                                            |
| <i>Mausera</i>       | Descended through the maternal aunt                                 |
| <i>Mazdur</i>        | Labourer                                                            |
| <i>Mehraru</i>       | Wife                                                                |
| <i>Mehtar</i>        | Lit. 'prince'. Term (1) for caste headman; (2) for a Bhangi sweeper |
| <i>Mehtarani</i>     | Female sweeper                                                      |
| <i>Mlechchha</i>     | Foreigner, barbarian, outcaste                                      |
| <i>Mufti</i>         | Muslim lawyer or jurisconsult                                       |
| <i>Muhajirin</i>     | Exiles—name given to the Prophet's followers from Mecca             |
| <i>Muhalla</i>       | Quarter (of a town)                                                 |
| <i>Mujtahid</i>      | A superior in religious matters, priest (usually Shia)              |
| <i>Mukhiya</i>       | Lit. 'headman'. A caste official                                    |
| <i>Mukhtar</i>       | Lit. 'attorney, delegate'. A caste official                         |
| <i>Mul</i>           | Lit. 'root'. Used as name of a section of a caste                   |
| <i>Muni</i>          | A saint or sage; a title applied to the Rishis                      |
| <i>Munran</i>        | Shaving of the head: a Hindu family rite                            |
| <i>Munsif</i>        | Lit. 'arbitrator'. Term for caste official                          |
| <i>Muqaddam</i>      | Lit. 'preceding'. Term for caste headman                            |
| <i>Muta</i>          | 'Temporary', of marriages under Shia law (Muhammadan)               |
| <i>Naib</i>          | Lit. 'substitute, lieutenant'. A caste official                     |
| <i>Naib-sarpanch</i> | Lit. 'substitute headman'. A caste official                         |

GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                         |                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Naik</i>             | Lit. 'headman, overseer'. A caste official                                                        |
| <i>Nalband</i>          | Farrier                                                                                           |
| <i>Narial</i>           | Lit. 'cocoa nut'; used as a pipe                                                                  |
| <i>Nasab</i>            | Lineage                                                                                           |
| <i>Nau-Muslim</i>       | Generic term for a convert to Islam; lit. 'new Muslim'                                            |
| <i>Nikas</i>            | Lit. 'origin'; used as a name for a section of a caste                                            |
| <i>Nilgar</i>           | Worker in indigo                                                                                  |
| <i>Nishada</i>          | An outcaste tribe (Puranic)                                                                       |
| <i>Niyoga</i>           | Lit. 'authorized', i.e. to raise up seed upon a wife. Name of this custom                         |
| <i>Nukh</i>             | Name of section of Bhatiya caste                                                                  |
| <i>Ola</i>              | Hail, hail-storm                                                                                  |
| <i>Padhan</i>           | Corrupt for Pradhan, lit. 'chief'. Term for caste headman                                         |
| <i>Pahlwan</i>          | Wrestler, champion                                                                                |
| <i>Pakhtana</i>         | Pushtu language                                                                                   |
| <i>Pakka</i>            | Lit. 'cooked, ripe'. Food cooked with ghi or milk                                                 |
| <i>Pāl</i>              | Lit. 'a tent'; used by Jats as name of their sections                                             |
| <i>Panch</i>            | Member of a panchayat                                                                             |
| <i>Pancha-gavya</i>     | Five products of the cow                                                                          |
| <i>Pandit</i>           | Lit. 'learned'; title of a Brahman                                                                |
| <i>Pangat</i>           | Lit. 'a line or row'; used by Bansphors as name of their sections                                 |
| <i>Panwpuja</i>         | Lit. 'worshipping' (i.e. washing) the feet of the bridegroom by the bride's father                |
| <i>Paramatman</i>       | Universal self                                                                                    |
| <i>Parida or purdah</i> | 'Curtain'; the custom of seclusion of women                                                       |
| <i>Parwana</i>          | Written order                                                                                     |
| <i>Pashtana</i>         | See <i>Pakhtana</i>                                                                               |
| <i>Patwari</i>          | Keeper of village revenue records. Also, a caste official                                         |
| <i>Pet manganiya</i>    | Womb betrothal, i.e. betrothal of unborn children, conditionally on their being of opposite sexes |

# GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                       |                                                                  |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Pheri bhaunwar</i> | Circumambulation of the marriage shed                            |
| <i>Phuphera</i>       | Descended through the paternal aunt                              |
| <i>Piada</i>          | Lit. 'footman'. Term for caste official                          |
| <i>Pir</i>            | Muhammadan saint                                                 |
| <i>Piçacha</i>        | Form of Hindu marriage (obsolete)                                |
| <i>Pipal</i>          | <i>Ficus religiosa</i> , the holy fig tree                       |
| <i>Pota</i>           | Grandson                                                         |
| <i>Pravara</i>        | Group of <i>gotras</i> having sacrificial fires in common        |
| <i>Prêt</i>           | Sprite                                                           |
| <i>Purka log</i>      | Old people                                                       |
| <i>Purohit</i>        | Family priest                                                    |
| <i>Purohiti</i>       | Priesthood, priestly dues                                        |
| <i>Qalaigar</i>       | Tinsmith                                                         |
| <i>Qaum</i>           | Tribe or caste (Arabic)                                          |
| <i>Qazi</i>           | The (Muhammadan) judge who acts as marriage registrar            |
| <i>Rai</i>            | Lit. 'prince'. A caste official                                  |
| <i>Rakhni</i>         | Concubine                                                        |
| <i>Rakshasa</i>       | (1) Form of Hindu marriage; marriage by capture; (2) demon       |
| <i>Randua</i>         | Widower; also used of an old bachelor                            |
| <i>Ranpi</i>          | Cobbler's tool                                                   |
| <i>Rasbarag</i>       | Comparison of horoscopes                                         |
| <i>Rishi</i>          | Lit. 'a sage or poet'; a mythological being                      |
| <i>Rudraksha</i>      | Berry of the tree <i>eleocarpus janitrus</i> , used for rosaries |
| <i>Sabha</i>          | Association                                                      |
| <i>Sadhu</i>          | Ascetic                                                          |
| <i>Saga</i>           | Own or full relative                                             |
| <i>Sagai</i>          | See <i>Dharewa</i>                                               |
| <i>Sahua</i>          | Headman of a Barwar criminal gang                                |
| <i>Sahukar</i>        | Lit. 'honest man'; banker or money-lender                        |
| <i>Saiva</i>          | Worshipper of Siva                                               |
| <i>Sakha</i>          | Body of persons following a particular school of Vedic teaching  |

# GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                      |                                                                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Sakti</i>         | The principle of female energy; personified as goddess                            |
| <i>Salam alaikum</i> | Peace be with you (Muslim greeting)                                               |
| <i>Salokya</i>       | Dwelling in the same place as God; a form of bliss                                |
| <i>Samaj</i>         | Association                                                                       |
| <i>Samipya</i>       | Dwelling in the presence of God; a form of bliss                                  |
| <i>Samnyasi</i>      | Ascetic                                                                           |
| <i>Sansara</i>       | Transmigration                                                                    |
| <i>Sanskāra</i>      | Domestic rite (birth, marriage, etc.)                                             |
| <i>Sapinda</i>       | Lit. 'having the same pinda or funeral cake'; a relative within seven generations |
| <i>Saqqa</i>         | Water carrier                                                                     |
| <i>Saqui</i>         | Derivation uncertain; term for caste headman                                      |
| <i>Sarai</i>         | A caravansary                                                                     |
| <i>Saraogi</i>       | Synonym for Jaini, q.v.                                                           |
| <i>Sardar</i>        | Lit. 'leader'. A caste official                                                   |
| <i>Sarmaur</i>       | Lit. 'crowned head'. A caste official                                             |
| <i>Sarpanch</i>      | Lit. 'head of the council of five'. Generic term for caste headman                |
| <i>Sarupya</i>       | Acquiring the form of god; a form of bliss                                        |
| <i>Sati</i>          | Lit. 'the faithful wife' (who burns herself with her husband's corpse)            |
| <i>Sayujya</i>       | Absorption in the universal spirit                                                |
| <i>Sendurdan</i>     | Marking the bride with red lead                                                   |
| <i>Shafei</i>        | A school of Sunni Law (Muhammadan)                                                |
| <i>Shahid</i>        | Witness to the faith; martyr (Muhammadan)                                         |
| <i>Shahzadi</i>      | Princess                                                                          |
| <i>Shia</i>          | One of the two principal divisions of Muhammadans                                 |
| <i>Shikari</i>       | Hunter                                                                            |
| <i>Shin</i>          | The letter 'sh'                                                                   |
| <i>Sin</i>           | The letter 's'                                                                    |
| <i>Sipahi</i>        | Lit. 'soldier'. A caste official                                                  |
| <i>Sirwai</i>        | One-fourth extra                                                                  |
| <i>Sraddha</i>       | Hindu sacrifice for the benefit of ancestors                                      |
| <i>Sufi</i>          | Free thinker (Muhammadan)                                                         |

# GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS

|                     |                                                                    |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunni</b>        | One of the two principal divisions of Muhammadans                  |
| <b>Takarwan</b>     | (Silver) contribution at a wedding                                 |
| <b>Takht</b>        | Lit. 'throne'. A caste headman                                     |
| <b>Thali</b>        | Dish                                                               |
| <b>Thāt</b>         | Lit. 'frame work'; a name used by hill Brahmans for their sections |
| <b>Thok</b>         | Lit. 'company'. Jurisdiction of a caste council                    |
| <b>Tikligar</b>     | Spangle maker                                                      |
| <b>Tilak</b>        | Gift of the dowry                                                  |
| <b>Tirath</b>       | Pilgrimage                                                         |
| <b>Vadhaka</b>      | Murderer (Sanskrit)                                                |
| <b>Vaishnava</b>    | Worshipper of Vishnu                                               |
| <b>Vakil</b>        | Lit. 'attorney or delegate'. A caste official                      |
| <b>Vanaprasta</b>   | Hermit                                                             |
| <b>Varna</b>        | Lit. 'colour'; one of the four Aryan social classes                |
| <b>Varnasankara</b> | One of Manu's 'mixed' castes                                       |
| <b>Vijaya homa</b>  | Name of a Goshain rite                                             |
| <b>Vyavastha</b>    | A declaration of law, a Brahmanical ruling                         |
| <b>Vratya</b>       | Name given to certain castes by Manu                               |
| <b>Vrisala</b>      | Name given to certain castes by Manu                               |
| <b>Wajib-ul-arz</b> | Record of village customs                                          |
| <b>Wali</b>         | Guardian (especially in respect of marriage)                       |
| <b>Wazir</b>        | Lit. 'minister'. A caste official                                  |
| <b>Zargar</b>       | Jeweller                                                           |
| <b>Zat</b>          | Lit. 'breed'; used for 'caste' (Arabic)                            |

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[N.B. 1. References are to pages. 2. As there is a separate list of caste names found in the text (pages 341-356), only those castes are mentioned here regarding which some important statement is made. 3. The glossary of vernacular terms, similarly, makes it unnecessary to show them here. 4. As 'caste' is mentioned on almost every page in the book, there is no separate entry of the word here.]

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