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CASTE DOMINANCE AND DISPUTES IN A VILLAGE IN WEST BENGAL

GOURANGA CHATTOPADHYAY

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Abstract : Caste is also Class in the Marxian sense. Upper castes enjoyed power and privileges in the past by their ritual and economic position. Conditions have been changing through economic and political reorganization, as well as by changes in educational or employment opportunities. These have led to shifts in the power enjoyed by different castes in the social hierarchy.

The author has analysed in detail how things have been changing in a village in West Bengal, and how the hitherto dominant castes have been struggling to retain their former positions of superiority. In the particular village in question, changing conditions have not clearly brought about a decisive victory to any one of the several competing groups. Tensions have resulted ; and both status and role have been in a state of flux.

Incidentally, the author also examines the relation between the caste system and *Varna* ; and the part played by the institution of untouchability in West Bengal.

Introduction

THIS essay is based on a part of the data collected during my field-work in a village of West Bengal between 1956 and 1959. I shall call this village Ranjana. It is situated in the Ghatal Sub-division of the Midnapur district. To reach it one has to travel 100 miles from Calcutta, via. Kharagpur

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and Midnapur, and then go by bus another 28 miles, from where a 3-mile walk brings the visitor to Ranjana. I did not have in my mind the question of competition between castes for dominance when I was collecting data. As a result, the data, from this point of view, are not as complete as they could have been otherwise.

The concept of dominant caste was developed by Srinivas (1955 and 1959). According to the concept, a caste is termed as *dominant* in a given area because of its preponderant numerical strength over other castes, as also because it wields greater economic and political power. Further, this caste must not be too low in the ritual hierarchy, for otherwise it cannot easily utilize its strength and wealth to dominate over others in the local power structure. Finally, the number of educated persons in the caste (*Westernization*) also determines its domination over other castes. Along with these, we must also remember that the ritual position of a caste is not static. Sometimes a caste which is not too low in the local hierarchy consolidates its economic and political power, and then attempts to raise itself up in the ritual hierarchy. This is done by generally giving up certain ways of life which are locally considered as polluting or lowly (for example, eating meat in the South or drinking liquor all over India) and imitating the ways of life of the locally highest caste, usually the Brahmin. This process has been termed as *Sanskritisation* (Srinivas 1955). The process of Sanskritisation has been shown very effectively also by Bailey in the Phulbani district of Orissa for two DISTILLER castes (1958). Finally, obviously in every area it is not necessary or even usual for one caste to possess all the elements of dominance. If any caste does have all or even a good many of them to make them very powerful, the caste is said to be decisively dominant. The two concepts of *Sanskritisation* and *decisive dominance* of a caste are important for us here. In the present context, the importance lies in the absence of decisive dominance and the presence of mobility through Sanskritisation. In a situation where several castes share various elements of dominance, obviously all or a number of them will compete with the rest for acquiring the elements which will make

their dominance decisive. And each caste in its turn will also fight tooth and nail for preventing such elements of dominance as they possess from slipping away from their hands. Out of these elements, almost nothing can generally be done about numerical strength. But the ritual position, economic (land-holding, occupational specialization, etc.) and political power (positions in the village council, or more recently alliance with the local leaders of the party in power) and the number of Western-educated men are all sought to be kept at a level higher than among other castes, who also possess all these elements in greater or lesser degree. This means then, that in areas where the dominance is not decisive in favour of one caste, we may expect to find competition among castes. Inversely, wherever we come across castes competing for dominance we may expect to find that this is so because none of these castes possess all the elements of dominance. Moreover, the presence of such competition will also mean several things. Firstly, that each caste possesses only a few of the elements of dominance. Secondly, that each competing caste aims at increasing these elements. Thirdly, that each competing caste tries to incorporate the elements it does not yet possess.

In course of this struggle, the competing castes would naturally come into conflict with one another. These conflicts sometimes come into the open in the shape of disputes. * These disputes may be of two types. Firstly, during ritual occasions two castes may fall out over a question of precedence for offering worship etc.; or again an entire caste may fall out with one or a number of other castes if the former feel that they are being debarred from exercising some rights.* Secondly, an individual, usually the leader, of a caste may get involved in disputes with other caste-men and the dispute takes an inter-caste shape because the members of the caste feel that in the dispute their leader has actually brought in the question of rights of the caste itself.

* I have here in my mind cases like the one Bailey (1956) describes where the untouchables were physically held back by WARRIORS from entering the local temple in Bisipara.

I propose in the following pages to deal with some of these aspects of dominance, particularly that of the absence of decisive dominance and its implications, namely, caste conflicts and their manifestation through disputes.

Hierarchy and caste dominance in Ranjana

In 1957, there lived 958 persons in Ranjana. Ranjana includes the village proper and one of its major hamlets which has a name of its own, Khanjana. Both from the administrative point of view, as well as from the point of view of the villagers, the two constitute a single unit. This village is inhabited by Hindus, Muslims and Santals, and a table is given below showing the distribution of the population according to caste and religion.

TABLE 1

Ethnic distribution of population

Caste/ Religious group	Brahmin	Sadgopa	Bagdi	Muchi	Muslim	Santal	Dom	Tanti, *Napit, Teli, Goala	Total
Number	141	304	382	35	25	53	8	10	958
%	14.70%	31.70%	39.90%	3.70%	2.60%	5.50%	0.80%	1.10%	100.00%

Ritually, the Brahmins, of course, occupy the highest position. There are no caste in this village which claims to belong to the Kshatriya *varna* and no caste which claims to belong to the Vaisya *varna*. So some of the castes who belong to the Sudra *varna* follow the Brahmins in the

* Since each caste is represented by less than 4 persons, all of them have been taken together.

ritual hierarchy. Among the Sudras, there are two broad categories—the 'pure' Sudras and the 'impure' Sudras. This classification is made on the basis of two criteria. The first is that a Brahmin priest officiates in the house of 'pure' Sudras and yet retains his own purity. Secondly, barring the most orthodox Brahmins, the majority are prepared to accept food fried in clarified butter (but not food boiled in water like rice) from their houses. These 'pure' Sudras are locally known as *Lobsagori*, which is a broken form of Navashayaka or 'the 9 pure Sudra' castes. Actually traditionally the Sadgopas are not included in this list of nine castes, but through Sanskritisation they have attained this status. This means that their claim of belonging to the Navashayaka group is conceded to by other castes. They are a peasant caste. The Napits also have the same ritual status as the Sadgopas. The Telis, Tantis and the Goalas are also considered to be 'pure' castes, but ranking slightly lower than the Sadgopas and Napits. But a good deal of controversy exists in the village about the order of ranking of these three castes with reference to each other.

After these 'pure' Sudra castes come the Bagdis. They are considered to be 'impure' Sudras. Brahmins who officiate at their rituals are considered to have a much lower status than other priests, and as such interdining or intermarriage with them is forbidden. But the Bagdis may enter a temple to offer worship. These people were traditionally WARRIORS; they are famous for their prowess with the quarter-staff. But now they are either whole-time agriculturists or agriculturists who do a little fishing to add to their income. The Bagdis are followed by the Muchis, who are considered as 'untouchables' due to their practice of eating carrion. They are traditionally LEATHER-WORKERS and musicians. But now they too have largely taken to agriculture. But it should be noted here that the concept of untouchability is quite loose in this region. The Muchis freely go about in Brahmin areas, and during festivals, when they traditionally supply music, little effort is made to avoid coming close to them while the ceremonies last.

The Doms* here occupy a peculiar position. Normally they are considered as untouchable, and their traditional occupation is the manufacture of basketry. But sometimes an individual Dom gives up his 'unclean' habits, including the traditional occupation, and takes up the 'clean' habits of the Brahmins, i.e. gives up drinking, eating pork etc., and takes a bath every day. He also starts wearing either a copper armlet or even a sacred thread. The Doms of Ranjana wear the sacred thread. Such Doms are then termed *Dom Pandits* (not in jest but quite seriously, and this term is accepted by the others too), and by virtue of Sanskritisation they consolidate their position. Although they are not allowed to eat with the upper castes, or even participate in domestic festivities in which fellow upper castes join, they are accorded some significant privileges. The most important of these is that the Dom Pandits serve as priests at temples of the deity Dharma. And as such, even if a Brahmin wants to offer worship in such a temple, he has to do it through a Dom Pandit and accept the blessings in the shape of water with which the images have been washed (*charanamrita*) from the hands of the Dom priest.

There is an old temple in Ranjana which is known as the Kali temple, though originally it used to house only Dharma images. Two generations ago, a Sadgopa gentleman had a dream and acting upon it had his household Kali deity installed in this temple. This deity is supposed to be very powerful and 'alive' and the temple has since her arrival become known as the Kali temple. The Dom Pandits used to be the priests of this temple originally when only Dharma images were there and enjoyed some rent-free land attached to the temple. In spite of the installation of Kali, they continue to serve as priests and enjoy the older privilege of rent-free land.

* Bailey has claimed (Bailey 1958) that Sanskritisation does not help the untouchables to raise themselves up in the ritual hierarchy. In his own words, untouchability and localisation are the two irreducible factors. The case of the Doms seems to contradict this thesis and as such I have devoted the last section of this essay to this question, though it is not strictly relevant to the subject of this essay.

Apart from these Hindu castes, some Muslims and Santals also live in this village. The former reside in a group of huts a little distance away from the Hindus. They never participate in Hindu festivals, and rarely visit or are visited by the Hindus. The general opinion of the villagers is that the Muslims should be ranked either with or just below the Sadgopas. The educated villagers, by which is meant a handful of those who have read up to or beyond the School Final stage, do realize and state that such ranking carries no sense, the Muslims being of a different religion.

The Santals, on the other hand, are classed along with the lowest Hindu category, namely, the Muchis. This is due to their practice of eating pork and drinking, particularly by their women.

This ritual ranking is also reflected to some extent in the behaviour pattern and the terms of address of the villagers. The villagers are broadly classed into two categories: the *bhadralok* and *chhotolok*. Those who belong to the 'pure' group, including the Brahmins, are called *bhadralok* (henceforth I shall refer to this group as the upper castes). When they visit each other, they are offered seats and they are addressed by collateral kinship terms according to age and generation. Thus a young man is termed as an elder brother, a middle aged man as father's younger or elder brother, an old man as grandfather and so on. But a Bagdi or a Muchi is never offered a seat. They are addressed either by name or at the most as elder brother. Sometimes a Bagdi leader may be addressed as an uncle, but never so a Muchi. A Santal is always addressed by name. The Muslims are addressed as brothers, uncles or grandparents in their presence. But in their absence they are just referred to by name.

The above ritual and social ranking is closely supported by the economic position of the castes and religious groups, which is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Land-holding

Land-holding is expressed in bighas where 1 acre = 2.5 b.		Brahmin	Sadgopa	Bagdi	Muchi	Muslim	Santal	Napit, Tanti	Teli, Goala
0-6	Number of families	11	26	83	9	3	10	1 of each	
	%	44	42.2	97.6	100	60	100	100	
6.1-15	Number of families	7	28	2	0	2	0	0	
	%	28	43.7	2.4	0	40	0	0	
15+	Number of families	7	11	0	0	0	0	0	
	%	28	14.1	0	0	0	0	0	

If we consider the groups as a whole, as has been done in Table 3, we also get a similar picture.

TABLE 3*

Per family and per capita land-holding

	Brahmin	Sadgopa	Bagdi	Muchi	Muslim	Santal	For the village as a whole
Per family	21.88 bighas	9.39 bighas	0.75 bighas	0.65 bighas	5.00 bighas	0	6.18 bighas
Per capita	3.6 bighas	1.95 bighas	0.16 bighas	0.16 bighas	1.04 bighas	0	1.29 bighas

* The castes of Dom, Teli, Tanti, Napit and Goala have not been included as they have only one family each.

Tables 2 and 3 show how closely the ritual hierarchy is followed by the economic hierarchy in terms of land-holding. The only deviation is found in the cases of the Napit, Teli and Goala families. Each of the castes is represented by only one family. The Tantis are WEAVERS by occupation and they never possessed much land. Their wealth came from the sale of handloom products. But the present weaver's father had to sell his loom and take to agriculture because of the competition offered by mill-made cloth. The Telis face an even worse predicament. They are traditionally OIL-PRESSERS. But now only two women are left and so with no man to work the press they have taken to other subsidiary occupations like rearing goats for sale, as well as preparing and selling puffed rice. The Goala-MILKMAN family has migrated to this area very recently and is landless.

It is difficult to explain the case of the Napits. They are BARBERS by caste and there is not enough reason why they should become impoverished all of a sudden. Both the Santals and Muslims belong to other religions. Yet we find that while the Muslims are treated at par with the Sadgopas, the Santals are accorded the lowest position. The Muslims are slightly worse off than the Sadgopas, but they are placed economically at a higher level than the Bagdi, Muchi and Santal. The Santals do not own any land. They have settled here during the last fifty years. Every year during the weeding and the harvesting seasons a large number of labourers are required by the land-owning villagers and many Santals from the adjoining districts come to offer their services. They come with their entire families and put up temporary thatched shelters in the fields of their employers. In the course of these visits, some of these Santal families took the verbal permission of their seasonal employers and settled down in fallow lands owned by these wealthy gentlemen near the boundary of the village. By and by they influenced their benefactors and saw to it that their cognates and affines in need of work also settled down near them. This has given rise to a small Santal colony, all of whom are related to one another through ties of kinship and marriage. But their position is

precarious, since they can be driven away by the land-owners at will. Perhaps that is why they are treated by the villagers as the 'lowest' group living within the boundary of the village.

I shall append one more table (Table 4) to show the economic hierarchy formed by the caste and religious groups of Ranjana. This table is concerned with the size of the house in terms of the number of rooms and cattle owned by each group.

TABLE 4

Number of rooms/cattle per family

	Brahmin	Sadgopa	Bagdi	Muchi	Muslim	Santal
Rooms	3.72	3.18	2.04	1.87	2.0	1.66
Cattle	1.52	2.07	0.77	0.87	1.50	0.50

The above table shows how the castes which are ritually higher have built for themselves larger houses with more rooms than the lower castes. This result has been arrived at by simply adding up all the rooms in the houses of each group and then dividing this total by the number of families in that group. The same procedure has also been followed in regard to the ownership of cattle. In this case it is seen that the Sadgopas possess more cattle than the Brahmins. The explanation for this apparent deviation is that while all or 'most of the Sadgopas actively practise agriculture, the Brahmins seldom engage in labour directly. More often they give land over to share-croppers, who supply both cattle and implements. Hence the number of cattle is also less in a Brahmin's house.

I shall now consider the number of educated or Westernized persons in each of the groups present in Ranjana. The figures given in Table 5 show the number of persons who have at least read up to the Middle School standard and the figures within brackets show the number of college-educated persons.

TABLE 5

Education

	Brahmin	Sadgopa	Bagdi	Muchi	Muslim	Santal
Men	35-(7)	91-(9)	14	0	1	0
	65.6%	61.7%	7.1%	0	7.6%	0
Women	9	18	0	0	0	0
	11.6%	12.4%	0	0	0	0

Table 5 shows that by virtue of putting an emphasis on education the Sadgopa are almost equal with the Brahmins in the field of men's education, and even lead the Brahmins in women's education. On the other hand, the Muslims, who own nearly as much land and cattle wealth as the Sadgopas, lag far behind them in this respect. It should be noted here that in spite of having very few educated men among them, the Bagdis have a sizeable minority of school-educated people among them.

Finally, we shall briefly discuss two important aspects of the occupational distribution of the groups residing in Ranjana. It may be noted in this connexion that the two most coveted occupations are those of teaching and trading. A teacher has a fixed income, however low it may be (most people here are primary teachers). Moreover, to-day a teacher is in great demand for subsidiary jobs like holding an office in the co-operative society which has its office in Ghatal, but requires an agent in the village, or a part-time 'Manager' in the newly-opened cinema house in Uttarkut (a small town situated 2 miles away from Ranjana) and so on. The trader is economically better placed than the teacher. Usually the traders in Ranjana not only run shops selling stationery articles, general provisions and rice etc., but also serve tea, biscuits and snacks during recess of the local school or on festive occasions. In Ranjana there are 15 local teachers of whom 9 are Brahmins and 6 are Sadgopas. In so far as traders are concerned, out of a total number of 9 shopkeepers, 5 are Brahmins and 4 are Sadgopas. No other caste-men or Muslim or Santal have succeeded in becoming either teacher or trader [See Table 6(a)].

The second aspect of distribution of occupation concerns the work of landless labourers [Table 6(b)].

TABLE 6(a)

	Brahmin	Sadgopa
Teaching	9	6
Trading	5	4

TABLE 6(b)

Caste	Number of labourers
Sadgopa	2
Bagdi	45
Muchi	0
Santal	All

A man becomes a landless labourer when he has reached the end of his tether and there is no other way of earning left, or if he is born into a very poor landless labourer's family. The Brahmins, of course, can never become labourers in agriculture, since wielding the plough is ritually tabooed for them. But for the other castes, the number of agricultural labourers is an index of their economic position. Table 6 (b), therefore, supports our earlier socio-economic hierarchy. Only the Muchis, who are economically very backward, appear to be an exception in this respect. There are two different conclusions which may be arrived at for explaining the absence of landless labourers among them. The first one is that the Muchis are not hired by other castemen as day-labourers for the following reason. An agricultural labourer has to come in close contact with his employer several times a day. A substantial meal and tiffin have to be given him daily. Also, in most cases, the employers use them to perform one or two arduous household tasks, such as, carrying firewood or carrying paddy to the rice mill for husking and so on. These tasks cannot be given to an untouchable. And the serving of food to an untouchable entails taking so many precautions that they are never preferred as labourers. This explanation was given to me by some non-Muchi informants and some of the Muchis too supported this. But this explanation does not seem to fit in with the other facts. In South India, where the concept of pollution has a much stronger hold, untouchables are employed as servants (Srinivas 1955). There they even fondle the children of their peasant patrons and masters. In Bengal an untouchable freely moves about in the village. He even visits the houses of Brahmins during the Charak festival as a

member of the party that collects subscriptions (Chattopadhyay 1961). Therefore a more satisfactory explanation has to be found. Now, the Muchis are also professional music-suppliers for all village festivals and as such they enjoy some rent-free land. So they are employed in their own field for a part of the agricultural season. When labourers are in maximum demand, these people can ill afford to leave their own fields. So instead of serving as labourers, they try to become share-croppers and thus divide their time according to their own convenience between their own fields and the fields that they take on a share-cropping basis. There are only about a dozen families of Muchis and the land-holding per family in Table 3 shows the average amount that is actually held by all the families. But the Sadgopas and Bagdis are numerically much more preponderant and in their cases the land-holding per family denoted in Table 3 shows only the average land-holding where some families own much more than this average, while some are almost or totally landless. So although as a group both the Sadgopas and the Bagdis are economically superior to the Muchis, all the members of the latter caste own at least some land and have to devote some time to their own fields, which makes them ineligible for the role of a field-hand however much their need is for supplementary income.

We have so far considered all the major elements of dominance and their distribution in Ranjana among the various castes and other groups. Before we can present the emergent picture on a single piece of canvas instead of looking at it piece by piece, we have to deal with another aspect of caste dominance, namely, regional dominance. It may so happen that a particular caste A may be dominant in one or two villages, while a different caste B is decisively dominant for the whole district or sub-division, within which the two villages fall, where A dominates. Obviously, in such a district or sub-division, as the case may be, B will be regionally, the decisively dominant caste. This will necessitate some kind of adjustment between A and B within the one or two villages where the former caste dominates. This aspect

of caste dominance for Ranjana and the region in which Ranjana is located will now be taken up.

In dealing with regional dominance, we deliberately ignore all other castes and ethnic groups barring the Brahmins, Sadgopas and Bagdis. This is because the Telis, the Tantis, the Napits, the Goalas, the Muchis, the Santals and the Muslims are numerically so insignificant that there can be no question of their competing for dominance in the near or even slightly distant future. This is true of the Doms also. Of these eight groups, only the Santals and Muchis have over 30 persons in their groups. But apart from being numerically handicapped, they are ritually and economically too so depressed, that I doubt if this slight advantage in numbers over the six other groups gives them any special chance of competing for dominance. They also lack the presence of educated men among them. We are therefore left with only the three castes of Brahmin, Sadgopa and Bagdi. If we compare the different elements of dominance enumerated earlier that are present among these three castes in Ranjana, we find that ritually the Brahmins are held as supreme. Economically, too, they are the best placed caste in Ranjana. From the point of view of the Western element, they more or less share the top position with the Sadgopas. By virtue of their education they have entry into prestigious occupations like teaching; but the Sadgopas too do not lag significantly behind. Numerically the Brahmins fall far below the Sadgopas and the Bagdis. In the village political structure (the village council, locally termed *Majlis*) too the Brahmins have hardly any power at all. This is dominated by the Sadgopas. Although on an average the Brahmins are economically better off than the Sadgopa, one thing should be noted here. The population of Sadgopas in Ranjana is more than double that of the Brahmins. As such a greater number of poor men brings down the Sadgopa average of land-holding below that of the Brahmins. But nonetheless this is counter-balanced to some extent by the presence of a number of very rich men in the ranks of the Sadgopas. These men are village patrons who hold sway over a number of share-croppers,

landless labourers and other people who would not like to antagonize a powerful man for nothing. So that really speaking Brahmins are dominant only ritually and are at par with the Sadgopas in economic and educational/employment, i.e. Western fields. But the former lag behind the latter numerically and politically. The Bagdis, whom we have not considered so far, are both economically and ritually depressed. But numerically they are the most preponderant caste in the village and, as has been pointed out earlier, they have a sizeable minority of schooleducated men among them.

Village dominance versus regional dominance

It is well known that sometimes a village may have a concentration of a single caste and as such that particular caste may be decisively dominant within the village. But in practice, this decisive dominance is deceptive, because regionally other castes may be dominant (Srinivas 1955). Therefore, in order to see if the picture of distribution of the elements of dominance in Ranjana is consistent with the regional pattern or not, data were collected from four neighbouring villages of Ranjana. Some of these data are presented in Tables 7(a) and 7(b) below :

TABLE 7(a)

Land-holding

	Brahmin	Sadgopa	Bagdi
Average family land-holding	8.56 bighas	10.26 bighas	1.6 bighas

TABLE 7(b)

Population

	Brahmin	Sadgopa	Bagdi
Population	49	459	213*

* Actually this figure is misleading, because I have included here only those villages which have a mixed caste population, whereas there are whole villages in the neighbourhood which are inhabited only by Bagdis.

Table 7(a) shows that in the field of economic dominance the Sadgopas dominate regionally while Table 7(b) shows that numerically the Bagdis continue to preponderate.

Thus, it is obvious from the regional and local distribution of the elements of dominance that while the Sadgopas are almost the decisively dominant caste in Ranjana, they are in no position to completely keep the Bagdis under control since the latter are numerically very strong. This situation has been reflected in the life of Ranjana over the last thirty years. The Bagdis and the Sadgopas dispute with one another every now and then. The Brahmins generally do not directly participate in these disputes since they stand to gain nothing. But when the Bagdis tried to challenge the ritual hierarchy, which we shall describe presently, the Brahmins toed the line of the Sadgopas. They did this because ritual supremacy is about the only element of dominance left to them. If any caste challenges the existing ritual hierarchy and successfully gets away with it, it is the Brahmin who will be the most affected party, since the undermining of ritual hierarchy will ultimately lead to the end of ritual supremacy as well.

Earlier we have stated that conflicts between castes start in two ways. Individual caste-men, particularly the leaders, may get involved in disputes and then drag in the entire caste into the dispute. Also castes may clash in a body in certain circumstances. In Ranjana we find that both types of disputes occur mainly between the Sadgopas and the Bagdis, and my interpretation of this phenomenon is that this is the manifestation of competition for decisive dominance. There is a general tendency to consistency. If one has one element of caste dominance, one tends to acquire others. Here they possess one element, namely, numerical preponderance. They have been consistently attempting to acquire other elements of dominance. The Sadgopas who possess most of the other elements of caste dominance, have also been consistently opposing the Bagdis and thwarting their attempts.

Firstly, we shall consider the disputes between individuals. Individuals in most cases come into conflict with each other to

safeguard their respective economic interests. The Bagdis being mainly either share-croppers or landless labourers have been serving the landed upper castes for generations. They have expressed their anger against their masters in various ways over the past half a century. It was customary for the village headman, locally called the *Moral* of the *Majlis*, to demand a day's free ploughing of his land from any member of the 'impure' or untouchable castes. This custom was followed till some years ago when one family of Bagdis, who not only share-crop a very large tract of land but also earn money through fishing, decided to rebel. When they refused to plough the headman's land, the latter went over to the Bagdis with some friends and threatened them. The Bagdis in question promptly went to the Police Station in Ghatal and filed a case under Section 107 Cr. P. C. against the headman, who is a Sadgopa leader. This created ill will between the two castes, and when in 1957 the Government directed all share-croppers to register their names against the plots they till, the Sadgopas in a body started hindering the Bagdis from doing so. This registration involves mentioning the plot number, and it costs Rs. 5 to get the number of each plot from the Land Records Department of the Government. The plots being sometimes very small, a large number of share-croppers till more than a dozen plots. They could not afford to pay the requisite fee to secure the plot numbers from the Government and the Sadgopa land-owners would not divulge the plot numbers. This was a serious situation for the 107 families of Bagdis who were then share-croppers in Ranjana. Fortunately for them, a large amount of land in and around Ranjana is owned by some wealthy men, all Sadgopas, of the neighbouring small town of Uttarkut. These wealthy men had been quarreling with the Sadgopa leaders of Ranjana over the location of a hospital to be set up by the Government with public help. This had resulted in indefinite postponement of the establishment of that institution. Secondly, they are also contestants for membership of the governing body of the local school and the Government-run free dispensary. The land-owners of Uttarkut gave all help to the Bagdis to spite

the Sadgopa land-owners of Ranjana, and allowed them to remain share-croppers on their lands. So out of 107 share-cropping Bagdi families of Ranjana, only 23 lost their land. This instance is important from a point of view that should be noted. The wealthy land-owners of Uttarkut are also mostly Sadgopas, but here the caste tie meant nothing for them. I think such an absence of strong regional caste ties in West Bengal occurs due to the non-existence of any kind of functioning caste council. This does not rule out the existence of cases where caste-men of several villages combine to gain common ends or to help one of their caste-men in distress. In such cases, usually bonds of kinship and affinity or personal friendship bring together the core of the united group.

A second example of interaction of caste-men on the individual plane will be given in a different situation. It was customary in Ranjana for poor people to collect brushwood and dry branches from every garden all through the year for use as fuel. In the event of death, in addition to brushwood, rich land-owners allowed poor men to cut large branches of trees too for use as fuel for the pyre. The Sadgopas started refusing these customary privileges to Bagdis after the 1957 General Elections. During this election, two important events took place. Actually, one event led to the other. Before the election, politicians from Ghatal and Calcutta came to Ranjana and held group discussions and public meetings. As a result, educated Bagdis organized study circles for discussing political questions. They even made an attempt to draw in the Muchis and Santals into their study circles, which met with very little success. During the election, the Bagdis lined with the Leftist parties while the Sadgopas almost in a body went over to the Congress party. It is well known that the political parties in power use the leaders of the dominant castes as vote banks (Srinivas 1955). Thus the election, which carries with it ideas of democracy and power politics, gave the Bagdis a tool and the organization which enabled them to use their numerical strength effectively. At the same time this also worsened the Bagdi-Sadgopa relations. This can be

seen from the two incidents cited above, namely, the denial of old privileges of the poor people to collect brushwood for fuel and secondly the refusal to divulge plot numbers to poor share-croppers.

Caste interactions also take place quite intensively during ceremonies and festivals. At every marriage and funeral, if not the whole village, at least a cross-section of it is invited. The actual number of invitees depends on the economic condition of the family concerned. A feast is an essential part of these ceremonies, because participation in these feasts denotes the approval of the village. During these feasts, the Brahmins and the Sadgopas used to be served with food in an enclosed verandah or on an elevated courtyard. The others were served food outside such enclosures and on the open ground. The Bagdis felt humiliated at being treated in this manner, and about thirty years ago, they started agitating that they should be served food in the same way as Brahmins and Sadgopas. This agitation became serious as the Bagdis started boycotting all ceremonies, including the village festivals. It should be remembered here that the bulk of the subscriptions come from them. Then the leaders of upper castes discussed the matter with the Bagdis. The Bagdi leaders realized that if the upper castes did not want to eat with them, the Bagdis certainly could not force the Brahmins and Sadgopas to do so. So they compromised by saying that the Bagdis must be served food in rooms or in enclosed verandahs like the upper castes. After several years of opposition, during which the Bagdis boycotted village social ceremonies, this concession was granted ; but the feeding was done at a separate time or on a separate day (Chattopadhyay, K. P. 1961). This incident shows that even three decades ago the Bagdis were not prepared to accept the Sadgopas as ritually higher. Even then they had been struggling to assert their equality. During the past thirty years this struggle for gaining a better position by the Bagdis on the one hand, and the struggle to retain dominance by the Sadgopas on the other, have led to much bickerings between the two castes. This was followed by the elections which enabled the Bagdis to convert their numerical

strength into political dominance. This may perhaps be regarded as the result of universal franchise. As a result, they brought the issue to a head at the first available opportunity. I am referring here to one of the village festivals. The festivals require the participation of all castes and here the allotment of roles and the procedures followed clearly show which caste is dominant. So, a brief description of the general pattern of the village festivals will first be given to point out the reflection of the caste hierarchy in it, and then indicate how the Bagdis, in their attempt to snatch the elements of dominance away from the Sadgopas, precipitated a new situation during a particular festival shortly after the 1957 General Election.

Festivals and castes

A study of the annual cycle of village festivals shows that during these occasions almost all the castes have some function or other to perform. Brahmins have to provide a priest during the festivals. Though usually in the Kali temple of Ranjana Doms act as priests, even there a Brahmin priest separately offers worship during festivals only on behalf of the upper castes after the Dom priests have performed their puja. A number of festivals are also held in the Siva temple where only Brahmins officiate as priests. But what is significant is that in the Siva temple, the festival priest is different from the everyday priest. The latter is a native of Ranjana while the festival priest comes from a neighbouring village. And in none of these festivals do the Brahmins as a caste participate. They justify this by saying that all the festivals have some Puranic* elements, and as such these do not form part of the orthodox Brahminical practices. This appears to be only an excuse for hiding something else, which will be obvious in the light of the following. In Ranjana there are altogether six annual festivals,

* The Puranas are non-Sanskritic in origin and the earliest one is believed to have been written round the 11th century. Orthodox Brahmins of Bengal consider the Puranas as 'non-Aryan' and therefore those festivals which celebrate occurrences mentioned in the Puranas are looked down upon by them.

out of which two are held in the Siva temple. Like the Kali temple, the Siva temple also has a certain amount of rent-free land attached to it, the produce of which goes to meet the expenses of daily rituals as well as of the festivals. This rent-free land is enjoyed by a Brahmin family. The present head of the family is a young man who is the daughter's son of the most orthodox Brahmin of the village. This young man bears most of the expenses of the two annual festivals, though the entire village participates in them and the village council looks after the arrangements.

Now, out of these two festivals, Charak is the most popular village festival, and Charak has obvious elements of Puranic traditions in it (Chattopadhyay 1961). Yet this Brahmin family does not come under even the mildest censure from the other Brahmins of the village. This shows that whatever be the reason for the non-participation of the Brahmins in the village festivals, it is not because these festivals have Puranic elements in them. This is further supported by the fact that the Brahmin who officiates as priest during festivals in the Kali temple on behalf of the upper castes also does not suffer from any social handicap.

A reasonable interpretation is that, since the Brahmins realize that they would not be able to dominate the life of the village, they assiduously dissociate themselves from the other castes in the field of ritual; because this is one field where they are theoretically supreme, where their dominance is supposed to be unquestioned. In other words, Brahmins try to be exclusive in rituals to show off their superiority to other castes who are superior in other areas of dominance. But ritual dominance cannot stand by itself. Therefore, if this dominance is put to test in hard reality, perhaps even this will be shattered, since the Sadgopas will not easily allow the Brahmins to take away their superior role in organizing and controlling the festivals. Actually the Sadgopas control these festivals through the Village Council there they hold all the eight posts of representatives of the various divisions of the village (*at potir Mukhia*) and the headmanship (*Morol*). But with regard to the two festivals that are held in the Siva

temple, the control rests fully in the hands of the Brahmin family who are the hereditary priests. This Brahmin family controls the finances of the temple and therefore they are not financially dependent upon the Sadgopas or upon any one else for that matter for conducting the two annual festivals. That is why these Brahmin priests need have no fear of their ritual supremacy being challenged on these occasions. But what should be noted here is that even during these two festivals the other Brahmins absent themselves. The superior position of the organizing Brahmin family is restricted to themselves only and does not pervade the Brahmin caste as a whole. This is, we believe, the reason why the other Brahmins absent themselves from these two festivals.

With the Brahmins out of the picture, let us see how the other two important castes interact during the festivals. Since the Sadgopas monopolize all the offices in the Village Council, they not only decide the amount of subscription to be levied for the festivals but also control the purse-strings throughout these occasions. It is also worth noting here that the Council retains its control over a considerable sum of money throughout the year, since the entire amount realized through subscriptions is never spent during the festival. Some of it is kept as a special fund which will eventually be used by the Council for making the main village road pukka. But the Sadgopas never try to participate actively in these festivals. Generally all the festivals, barring Charak, start with the worship of the deities by the priest; at the end of worship the priest distributes the sacred *prasad* and water consecrated by being offered to the deities to those who are present there immediately after the worship. This is followed by what is known as *puspanjali* or offering of flowers to deities. Here the Sadgopas assert their superior position by offering flowers separately from the Bagdis. For this part of the ceremony they hire a Brahmin priest to officiate on their behalf. Only after they have finished offering the flowers do the Bagdis follow, but under the guidance of Dom priests. This is followed by a procession that goes round the village. This procession is made up of Dom priests who carry the image

in small decorated palanquins, the Muchis who act as musicians and the Bagdis. One or two Sadgopas remain with the procession, but they have no major role to play. The Bagdis drink country liquor, dance and from time to time let off fireworks purchased in shops at Uttarkut and Ghatal. The Sadgopas being no match for the Bagdis in dancing and merry-making during these processions, it is during this part of the festival that the Bagdis take up the principal role while the Sadgopas perforce play the second fiddle.

During the Charak festival a number of persons have to offer themselves as devotees of Siva and go through painful rites for seven days. Here also the Bagdis prevail over the other castes in the sense that they become devotees in the greatest number, while only a few stout-hearted Sadgopas do so and go through all the painful rites.

We therefore find that the two castes which vie with each other for dominance avoid direct clash where they have to interact closely, by separating their fields of action. While the Sadgopas have the final say in the field of financial control and over the entire organization, the Bagdis try to make their importance felt through active participation. But in spite of this separation of activities, the Sadgopas obviously emerge as the dominant caste since their control over the finances and organization of the Village Council and festivals reflect their possession of most of the elements of dominance, namely, economic, political, Western and ritual dominance. The role of the Bagdis only reflects their numerical preponderance which is only one, though a very important one, element of dominance.

Thus, here we find a situation where a kind of dynamic balance has been achieved between two castes, neither of whom is decisively dominant, but still one of them, namely, the Sadgopas, by virtue of possessing a greater number of elements of dominance, are placed in a superior position to the Bagdis. This kind of situation may, in theory at least, continue indefinitely provided the Bagdis are unable to utilize their numerical strength to wrest from the Sadgopas some other elements of dominance. As soon as they attempt to do so,

obviously in spite of separating their fields of action, they would come to a clash. This is bound to happen, since it is expected that the Sadgopas also will in such a case try to thwart the Bagdis' attempt to take away their elements of dominance.

Castes come to a clash

This balance, as has been indicated, was upset during and after the last General Election when the faction-ridden Bagdi caste became better organized. This, of course, does not mean that the Sadgopas were or are not faction-ridden. But due to the presence of several powerful Sadgopa leaders, who are also wealthy patrons in the village, these factions could rally round these leaders and override faction loyalties when the dominance of the whole caste was threatened from outside. The Bagdis did not have such patrons. Political leaders from Ghatal and even Calcutta, as has been noted earlier, came here during the election and helped the Bagdis to organize themselves at least for the time being and rise above small factionalism. Now the Bagdis tried to wrest some concessions during the festivals, preliminary to an attempt at rising in ritual hierarchy. As a result, the tensions increased and culminated in an outbreak during one of the festivals, namely, the Muktosnan in 1957. The Bagdis demanded that either the 'pure' castes should allow them (the Bagdis) also to offer flower to the deities along with the 'pure' castes when a hired Brahmin priest officiates, or the custom of hiring a Brahmin priest should totally be done away with. They argued that since during the daily worship any one was prepared to accept blessings and consecrated food and water from Dom priests, why should they not do so during festivals as well? Members of the 'pure' castes left the temple-yard in a huff, and called a Council meeting where it was decided to levy a collective fine on the Bagdis. The latter decided not to pay the fine. The 'pure' castes boycotted the annual festivals, since the Dom priests would not hear of debarring any caste as a whole from participating in festivals. This boycott did not last long.

Shortly after the boycott, individual Sadgopas started joining the festivals and their number increased with the passage of time, though their leaders still avoided the temples and festivals. It appeared as if the Bagdis would be proved to be the decisively dominant caste in the village. But two things that the Bagdis lacked never gave them this position. This was the absence of a local patron or leader and the absence of Westernized men in their community. So, when after a time the headman of the Village Council convened a meeting of the whole village and insultingly threw down the account books and challenged any one to pick these up and take up headmanship in his stead, none came forward. Here was a chance for the Brahmins to try to gain some dominance. Actually an old Brahmin, who not only owns land in the village but also runs a printing press in Calcutta tried to make some Bagdi elders name him as the future headman. But this was not to be since the Bagdis probably realized that such an arrangement would not work. So the Sadgopas retained their power in the Council, and the stalemate continued.

The Sadgopas then decided to bring economic pressure on the Bagdis. We have earlier noted that the Bagdis own very little land. Most of them are share-croppers. In Ranjana there were 107 share-croppers in 1957, prior to this dispute. By the middle of 1958, 23 of these share-croppers had lost their rights over share-cropping land. Out of these 23, some lost because of this dispute, when some Sadgopa landed peasants took away land from Bagdi share-croppers. But some of them lost their share-cropping rights because of another reason which is discussed below. When the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act was being implemented, even well-educated villagers thought that under it the actual tiller of the land would become the owner. Two examples will help to explain what is meant.

A young graduate of the village, who is an employee of the State Bank of India and is posted in a far-away town, took leave, came home and purchased two plough bullocks. This he did in order to prove that he himself was the tiller should the

Government officials come for enquiry. In another case, a retired postmaster suddenly took to ploughing and the unaccustomed strenuous work almost ruined his health. As a result of such an interpretation of the Act, those landowners who were able to wrest their land from their share-croppers did so, and tried to get it cultivated through hired labourers. Since the law also states that no registered share-cropper may be debarred from cultivating unless he is found to be inefficient or lazy, the bulk of the share-croppers remained unaffected. Only the very poor peasants who could never afford to pay the necessary fees to get themselves registered, suffered. So that, out of 23 share-croppers who lost their rights, not all suffered due to caste conflict, but some people lost their right because the landholders had wrongly interpreted the Estates Acquisition Act as a law that transfers land rights to one who tills it. This clarification is necessary, because we could not find out the actual number of persons who lost their rights of share-cropping as a result of caste dispute only out of the total of 23 persons.

We have also seen earlier how the quarrel between the landowners of Ranjana and Uttarkut saved a number of share-croppers from losing their rights.

Among the richest landowners of Ranjana to-day are two Brahmins. One of them, as noted earlier, covets the post of headmanship and so does not want to antagonize the Bagdis. The second person is a youth who is also a clerk in the local school. He has married the daughter of the elder brother of the local assistant headmaster. The latter is a non-local man who owns plenty of land in his home village. He is a sober man and is the Vice-President of the Municipal Committee in his locality. Possibly his influence as also good nature and his lack of interest in village conflicts have stopped this youth of Ranjana from taking away land from the Bagdis. This is yet another reason why more Bagdis did not lose their right of share-cropping the land of 'pure' castes in Ranjana.

The stalemate which began in 1957-59 suddenly ended in 1960 when a new situation arose centring around the local high school. This high school was being reorganized during

the Second Five-Year Plan. Actually it was being converted into a Multipurpose or Higher Secondary School. As such not only had new teachers to be recruited, the buildings too had to be expanded and laboratory equipment installed. All this expansion meant scope for self-advancement by various people in different ways. The contractors thought of getting more contracts, the educated thought of getting employment locally and the poor people thought of temporary extra employment. These things depended on the governing body, most of whose members (including the headmaster) are not local men. The old headmaster retired in 1957 and a new man replaced him shortly after. He was a taciturn outsider with urban habits. Towards the end of 1960 it suddenly came to light that this headmaster was quietly using his powers behind the scene to increase his bank balance. Further, he had been regularly corresponding with the local member of the State Legislature. Those correspondences mainly consisted of complaints against various local men of importance. At once there was a rift among the members of rich upper castes. Some of them started campaigning for and some against the headmaster, the governing body and the local M. L. A. who had been their candidate during the election. To add to the confusion, the headmaster one morning went away without handing over charge. The assistant headmaster took over charge temporarily and discovered that the school clerk who was related to him was involved in what looked like defalcation of cash. This resulted in his abandoning his former neutrality. He started siding with the local rich landowners to institute an enquiry into the matter and to clear his relative whom he found to have been used as a cat's paw. In such a situation both the groups of upper caste-men have made up their differences with the Bagdis in order to secure more local allies. In the meantime, with the fever of the last General Election forgotten and all organization gradually reduced to shambles, the Bagdis were also finding it very difficult to raise the necessary subscription in order to conduct the festivals without the official help of the Sadgopas and the Village Council. So

they have again started rallying round their old upper caste patrons. The question of offering flowers together has been tacitly dropped at least for the time being.

Summary and Conclusion

We have thus seen that in a multi-caste village where no caste can be termed as decisively dominant, two or more castes may compete for achieving dominance and this results in a chronic state of tension, which occasionally sparks off into disputes. In Ranjana, the Sadgopas form the dominant caste, but their dominance is not decisive. Through owning large tracts of land and sending the caste members to lucrative occupations by virtue of the presence of the Western element in their ranks, the Sadgopas dominate economically. This has led them to capture the big positions in the Village Council too, and thus they dominate the political life of the village as well. Ritually the Brahmins are supreme; but because they lag behind the Sadgopas in most other elements of dominance, the latter hold a better position in the village than the former. The Bagdis possess an important element of dominance, namely, numerical superiority which has acquired a new significance on account of adult suffrage. Thus dominance is divided in Ranjana with the Sadgopas possessing most of the elements. But the Bagdis realize their strength and are not prepared to allow the Sadgopas to dominate. Inversely, the Sadgopas are also not prepared to allow the Bagdis to gain any other element of dominance and become a threat to their dominance. The General Election of 1957 provided the Bagdis with an organization through which they asserted their rights and it seemed that they gained a better position in the immediate post-election period. But this gain could not be retained by them because of their depressed economic position and the lack of the Western element in their ranks. So when, in the post-election period, by and by their organization became defunct they ultimately ceded the dominant position to the Sadgopas.

At the same time, it is also clear that the village community retains its integrity through a cross-cutting relationship of

vertical and horizontal ties, i.e. through the existence of various kinds of bonds between persons belonging to different castes as well as between persons belonging to the same caste respectively. When the horizontal ties become much stronger than the vertical ties, the community is threatened by disintegration. In Ranjana such a situation was imminent in the immediate post-election period in 1957-58, but due to lack of durability in the horizontal ties, this disintegration did not materialize. This does not necessarily mean that the village communities have an inherent mechanism for retaining integrity. In another situation the vertical ties may be permanently ruptured. Bailey's study of Bisipara (Bailey 1958) shows this, where the Untouchables are to-day going completely out of the village community.

The above summary once more leads us to assert that the concept of dominant caste can become useful in determining the causes of many disputes in rural areas.

On the other hand, and this is what appears to me to be of greater importance, a systematic study of disputes over a moderately long period of time in small communities will not only give us an idea of such phenomena as cross-cutting relationships through the alignment of individuals during conflicts, but these would also allow us to build up a picture of the positions of different castes in different areas in terms of dominance.

To-day the conditions prevailing in India are changing more rapidly than ever before. The Five-Year Plans are bringing in economic changes. Legislation is being directed towards many social changes. The spread of the idea of parliamentary democracy even to remote rural areas is bringing about changes in the distribution of power. How far are the changes effective? What is the direction of these changes, especially with regard to the distribution of power? These questions may be very effectively dealt with through the study of shifts in the field of dominance of castes. This last mentioned phenomenon, in its turn, may well be studied through the procedure of collection and analysis of cases of disputes.

A Note on Sanskritization and Untouchables :

Bailey (1958) has claimed that untouchability is one of the irreducible factors in social mobility of castes. I would like to put it in another way. The *varna* scheme contains only four categories and the Untouchables are outside its fold. This has been the case right from the time when the *varna* scheme became crystallized (Ghurye 1950, Srinivas 1954). Obviously the *varna* scheme could never take into account the real and effective units (for detailed discussion see Srinivas 1954), and for that purpose the *varna* scheme remained only as a model and extra-*varna* relations (i.e. relations with Untouchables) were also recognized and systematized. The nature of these relations within the *varna* scheme and without it varies from region to region. The fact that needs to be emphasized here is that untouchability is not the main criterion due to which the Outcastes cannot rise in the ritual hierarchy. Rise in their case will mean their inclusion in the *varna* scheme. And this is what stops them from rising. The *varna* scheme, because it is a model, is far more rigid than the caste system itself. By this is meant that the model clearly maintains its identity as a whole amidst the total social structure of India. This model originally had two categories (Ghurye 1959), and then gradually it was modified to fit into the prevailing conditions and four orders were created. Only by further modifying it and creating a fifth order could the Untouchables be made a part and parcel of the *varna* scheme. But this was never done. The *antyajas* of Manu's time were kept outside the *varna* scheme and they have remained so even to-day in most regions of India. As a result, although other castes can and do improve their ritual positions in various ways through consolidation of economic and political power and then Sanskritizing their way of life, those castes which are outside the *varna* scheme cannot in any way do so, since there is no tradition of five orders in the *varna* scheme. As such those who are outside the scheme must remain there. Thus untouchability is the mere expression of the fact of being outside the *varna* scheme here,

and the irreducible factor in ritual mobility is the line dividing those castes that are within the *varna* scheme from those which are outside of it. So that, instead of it being 'absolutely necessary for the sociologist to free himself from the hold of the *varna* model if he wishes to understand the caste system' (Srinivas 1954), the sociologist must realize the nature of the *varna* model and its relationship with the caste system of which it is a small part.

It has already been stated that inter-caste relation vary from region to region. This is important when we consider the position of the Untouchables of West Bengal. First, these Untouchables are never segregated as much as their counterparts in other regions of India. In the village of Ranjana, although they have built houses in one particular area, the road that runs by it is freely used by every one in the village. Moreover, during the village festivals the Muchis (Untouchables) have to supply the music ; it is they who beat the drums and gongs. This they do in front of the temples, sometimes while standing on the covered platform on which the upper castemen of the village sit while the worship goes on. Secondly, in Bengal sometimes an Untouchable caste may become an impure caste, i.e. *ajalchal* or those from whom water is not acceptable by any other caste. The Bagdis are an example of this process. Originally they were Untouchables. But by force of arms they succeeded in getting recognition as an ordinary 'impure' caste but not Untouchables. Other examples can also be cited. Thirdly, some individuals and their families belonging to an Untouchable caste can become 'pure' in certain cases. We have in mind the case of Doms in Ranjana mentioned earlier. This seems to be a contradiction of what has been stated in the previous paragraph. But it is not, as will presently be shown.

This discussion thus shows that first, untouchability is not the 'irreducible factor' as Bailey puts it, but rather the line dividing the castes who cannot be fitted into the *varna* scheme is what matters when a caste tries to improve its ritual status by Sanskritization. Secondly, even this cannot be taken as a general condition in India, since in regions like West Bengal the so-called Untouchable castes can and do improve their ritual

status. What is of special significance in this case is that in Bengal the *varna* scheme is very different from what it is in other areas. In Bengal instead of there being four *varnas*, as the all-India model holds, there are only two accepted *varnas* of Brahmins and Sudras. The Kayasthas claim that they are Kshatriyas, and some groups in Midnapur district claim that they are *Khotrio*, i.e. they are a *jati* that belongs to the Kshatriya *varna*. The position of both these castes is controversial. And Vaishyas are totally absent in Bengal. That is to say, in Bengal even the *varna* model has lost its rigidity, and this is also the area where we find Untouchable castes rising above the line of pollution. This further supports our earlier contention that the Untouchables are outside the caste system as defined by the *varna* scheme, and they cannot rise in ritual hierarchy because the *varna* scheme is a rigid model. But they can become a part of the caste system where the *varna* scheme has lost its rigidity—a rigidity that models usually have.

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PROBLEMS IN TRIBAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract : The author describes the kind of changes which took place among the Scheduled Tribes of Chotanagpur as they were confronted by the Hindu social and economic system in the past. This was different from what is happening to-day, when education has spread, political reforms have taken place, and new employment opportunities along non-caste lines have also been thrown open.

These have been leading to the growth of a new phase of 'nationalistic' reorganization among the tribes. Often this has been in opposition to the reorganization taking place among the non-tribal population, instead of being complementary to it.

With wise guidance, this 'nationalism' or 'sub-nationalism' may help to strengthen the cause of India's national integration instead of weakening it.

THE distinctive features of the different tribal communities of Chotanagpur consist of their ownership rights on land, their culture and their languages which do not belong to the Indo-Aryan family. According to S. C. Roy, these tribes took refuge in Chotanagpur at different periods of history either under the pressure of Brahminical peoples or of Muslim invaders from the north-west of Chotanagpur. In this comparatively inaccessible region, secluded by hills and forests, they formerly followed their simple means of livelihood and lived according to their own social and political systems.

As time went on, suitable farming land became scarce in the adjacent districts. The Hindu farming castes of the latter districts migrated into the tribal area and the pressure on land

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went on increasing. This brought the tribes into closer contact with the technologically more efficient Brahminical society. The latter are divided into a hierarchy of castes based on occupation which interlock with one another by traditional service relations.

During the reign of Jehangir, the Nagbansi king of Chotanagpur built a new capital in Dosai in the present district of Ranchi. Along with a new palace, temples were also built in and around the city. New posts were created in the court for Brahmins and Kshatriyas. The newcomers were granted jagirs for support. The tribes were subjected to the Jagirdari system and were virtually converted into tenants of zemindars. Later, about 1822 A.D., Hindu, Muslim and Sikh traders flocked around the court of the king of Chotanagpur. As the means for payment of costly goods were lacking, the king granted the traders zemindari rights on land in payment of their merchandise.

The comparative affluence of Brahminical society attracted the tribes. Gradually they adopted the arts and crafts of the former, but along with it they also accepted the hierarchy based on occupation. For example, those who lived by smithery or tended cattle began to be considered lower in status than the farmers within the same tribe. Ideas governing caste thus began to permeate tribal society.

A gradual process of Hinduization continued among the tribal communities. The degree of Hindu influence varied from place to place. It was evident to a greater extent among the Mundas of the Panch Parganas. According to S.C. Roy, the custom of fasting on the day of marriage by the bride and the groom, the use of vermilion and turmeric during marriage, and the use of *baran dala* were borrowed by the Mundas of this area from the Hindus. Vaishnava influence can also be traced in the songs of this tribe, and some of them even professed the Vaishnava faith. The worship of Lakshmi and other gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon was incorporated into the Munda religion in this area. The clan-name *Sandi* was converted into *Sandilya*, which is the designation of a Hindu *gotra*,

Similar trends are noticeable among the Oraon tribe also. Successive messianic or millenarian movements took place among the Oraons from about the seventeenth century till the first decade of the present century. This led to the formation of a number of reformatory sects. Bhuiphut Bhagat, Nemha Bhagat, Bishnu or Bachhidan Bhagat, the Kabirpanthis, the Tana Bhagats etc. furnish such examples. Almost all these were based on *Bhakti*, and their followers tried to adopt practices as far as possible in accordance with the Brahminical conception of purity with regard to food, drink and behaviour. Some of these sects like the Bachhidan Bhagats, the Kabirpanthis and the Tana Bhagats abstained from liquor and took to vegetarianism. They forbade music, dance and the free mixing of young men and women, along with magical practices common to practically all Chotanagpur tribes. Widow re-marriage and divorce were discouraged, and so on.

These movements slowed down when it failed to help the tribes in the face of growing poverty and exploitation.

The first Christian missionaries of the G. E. L. Mission arrived in Chotanagpur in 1845 A. D. They were followed by the S. P. G. Mission in 1869 A. D. and the Roman Catholic Mission in 1873 A. D. The Christian missionary movement gained impetus from about 1881 A. D. With their sympathetic understanding of their material problems, the missionaries extended a helping hand to the tribals in order to extricate them from the oppression of tyrannical landlords, usurious and unscrupulous money-lenders and from persecution at the hands of their own fellowmen in cases of suspected witchcraft. This help was readily accepted and the tribes in villages or groups of villages entered the Christian fold. The Missions gave them legal help in their agrarian cases in court, and also helped them through educational institutions, co-operative societies, medical institutions and by providing better living conditions and opportunities for economic development.

All socio-cultural practices which did not conform to the Christian ideology were forbidden to the converts by the Missions, but they were allowed to retain others which were not against the tenets of Christianity. Communication between

the converted and the unconverted was very little. The Christians received encouragement and help from the Missions for progress. They were better educated while their non-Christian brethren lagged behind. In the Census Report of 1911, we find that in a total population of 607, 820 who were non-Christians the number of literates per mille figured at 13 for males and 2 for females. But among their fellow Christians it was 93 for males and 25 for females per mille in a total population of 177, 473. Among the Christians again there were divisions based on the different Churches. Each had its own institutions and there was an undercurrent of rivalry between the different Missions.

I may cite here the case of Mr. Kartik Oraon, Deputy Chief Design Engineer of the Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi. He filed an election appeal in the Patna High Court on 14 November 1963 stating that his opponents had no legitimate right to stand as a candidate for the seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes in the Parliament, since they were converted to Christianity. The case was reported in A. I. R. 1964 Patna 201 (V 51 C 54). Mr. Kartik Oraon gave the following reasons.

'Oraon is a religion like Hinduism or Islam and after conversion one ceases to be Oraon just as one ceases to be a Hindu or Muslim after conversion to Christianity. The beliefs, practices and rites of passage of the converted differ from that of the un-converted tribals. Before Independence the former identified themselves with the Indian Christian community and they were entered as such in the Census Reports instead of being designated as tribals. After becoming Christian a tribal did not write the name of his tribe after his first name like "so and so Munda" or "so and so Oraon" as is customary among the un-converted. He wrote the clan name instead, like Thomas Horo or Paulus Kujur and sometimes these were translated into English. For example, instead of *Kakha* (crow) they used Raven. Within the same tribal village, Christians had their separate organizations like the Panchayat, the Catholic Sabha, the Co-operative Credit Society etc. They never actually participated in the village dance or

festivals except as observers. Marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian is not possible even within the same tribe till either party adopts the religion of the other.'

Mr. Kartik Oraon lost in his election appeal; but his arguments point to the fact that there was already a fission on the basis of Christian and non-Christian, and the tendency of those who embraced Christianity was to identify themselves with the larger group of 'Indian Christians' which cut across race before 1947.

Before Independence (i.e. before 1947), tribes were thus drifting towards either Hinduism or Christianity till the late thirties of the present century. Things however suddenly changed after the passage of the Government of India Act of 1935; the change was toward increasing tribal consciousness when a demand arose for tribal solidarity. This process of change is reflected to some extent in the growth of the Chotanagpur Improvement Society from a social welfare institution to a full-fledged political party called the Jharkhand Party. A brief outline of this development is given below.

About 1911-12 a few graduates of the Lutheran, S. P. G. and R. C. Missions belonging to the Munda and Oraon tribes decided to start an institution for the upliftment of tribal communities. This was named the Chotanagpur Improvement Society and Mr. Peter Hurad of the Lutheran Mission was its Secretary. In the year 1928 this Society was renamed Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj. It tried to bring about social reform among the tribals. Temperance movements were also undertaken. S. C. Roy, the anthropologist, was its President for some time. It was composed of tribal members chiefly. Although 99% of its membership was confined to the Christian converts, the authorities of the Roman Catholic Mission objected to this kind of inter-denominational grouping. There is the case of Mr. Junus Surin, a member of the Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj. He was a Catholic and was a teacher in the Mission H. E. School. He was ex-communicated and dismissed from service for joining the Unnati Samaj, or more particularly because of his close association with the German Evangelical Lutheran Church through work in the Samaj.

In the meantime the nationalist movement for the independence of India gradually grew in strength. In 1936, Provincial Autonomy was granted by the British Parliament and it was enforced in eleven Provinces of India. Orissa became a Province separate from Bihar. All this had its repercussion on the minds of the educated Adibasis. It dawned upon them that the way to political power and progress lay in the formation of a separate Adibasi Province. It was necessary to have an organization which would represent tribal interests to the Government. In response to this, the Unnati Samaj assumed a political character. It was reorganized and renamed as the Chotanagpur Adibasi Sabha in May 1938 under the Presidentship of Mr. Theodore Surin. In the same year there appeared an article in the May number of *Gharbandu*, a Hindi periodical of the G. E. L. Mission, which gave details regarding the aims and objects of the Adibasi Sabha. It stated that Mr. N. N. Rakshit of Jamshedpur, who was an influential Bengali industrialist and a friend of the Adibasi community, had taken great pains to champion the cause of the Adibasis for a separate province of Jharkhand combining Santal Parganas and Chotanagpur. In the annual conference of the Adivasi Sabha, the subject was discussed and the leaders of all the different Adibasi groups, both Christian and non-Christian, participated in this meeting. It was decided unanimously that the Adivasi Sabha should serve as the only political party to represent tribal interests. An English translation of a portion of the article reads as follows :

‘In spite of our having a culture and civilization we are losing our identity because primary education is imparted through the medium of Hindi and not in our own language.

‘The physical type, mental make-up, manners, customs, nature, basic values, occupation etc. of the Adibasis are different from that of all other peoples. Their country, the climate, the environment, food, drinks, the colour of the soil and vegetation are different from those of other parts of the country.

‘According to the existing law, if a people inhabit an area for a long time, it becomes their motherland and if a people

inhabiting an area forms a majority community then that community is entitled to form the government of that Province.

‘According to History and Science it is essential for a nation to pass three characteristics :

- (i) Common physical characteristics
- (ii) Distinctive language and
- (iii) Cultural tradition

All three are present among the Adibasis.

‘We have a language through which ideas regarding history, science, logic, law, politics, art etc. can be expressed and there are corresponding terms also.

‘From the days of the Hindu kings and all through the Muslim rule attempts have been made to destroy our entity and assimilate us into other nations. The same policy is being followed by the Western powers to-day. But the Adibasis have not lost their identity and will continue to remain distinct. It is rare in the history of the world that a nation has withstood centuries of oppression like the Adibasis.

‘We have a cultural heritage of our own. We never had to depend on any other nation in the past for our existence, nor shall we have to do so in future. The present provincial administration and the system of education is harmful to our culture.

‘The proportion of welfare work for the Adibasis is negligible compared to the income from mineral wealth and forest produce in our area.

‘In relation to the population of Bihar, we Adibasis are a minority community, and therefore it is detrimental to our interest to remain within Bihar.

‘Considering us as a dead nation we have been deprived of Regional (Provincial) Autonomy by the Government in the new Constitution. Democracy is going to be established soon when the Adibasis will be doomed. We will be put aside as a Backward Race under the new Constitution.

'No Adibasi heart will be at rest till the weight of oppression which has been there for centuries is lifted. It is contrary to the canons of humanity and religion to weigh down the unwilling hearts of a people with burdensome laws. Our conscience is being suppressed continuously.

'If the Santal Parganas is merged with Chotanagpur, we will not be deficient either in area, population or education for the formation of a separate province. It is with these weapons that Orissa has won victory.'

This trend of thought and feeling went on growing among the Adibasis. In 1946, the Adibasi Sabha changed its name to Jharkhand Party. Under the Presidentship of Mr. Jaipal Singh, it became a full-fledged political party and carried on the Jharkhand movement. This movement gained in impetus after the establishment of a democratic government, particularly with adult franchise after India's independence.

The Government of India have adopted several measures for tribal welfare and the development of tribal areas. The Scheduled Tribes are entitled to special benefits like scholarships, hostel grants, reservation in services and legislatures etc. This has made the tribal people more conscious of their separate tribal identity which cuts across religion. One can see the growth of 'nationalism' within them which expresses itself in different spheres of life. Education has partly helped in this growth.

After independence, there has been a sharp rise in the spread of education. The increase in the number of scholarships over a decade is as follows. It shows a rise of 61% per cent.

TABLE 1

Year	No. of applications for scholarships	No. scholarships awarded
1953-54	644	553
1962-63	2,973	2,841

The comparative figures for students reading in Catholic Mission Schools alone for the years 1924, 1944 and 1964 is as follows and is given in Annexure 'A'. The lines in the graph from top to bottom indicate Males, Females and Teachers.

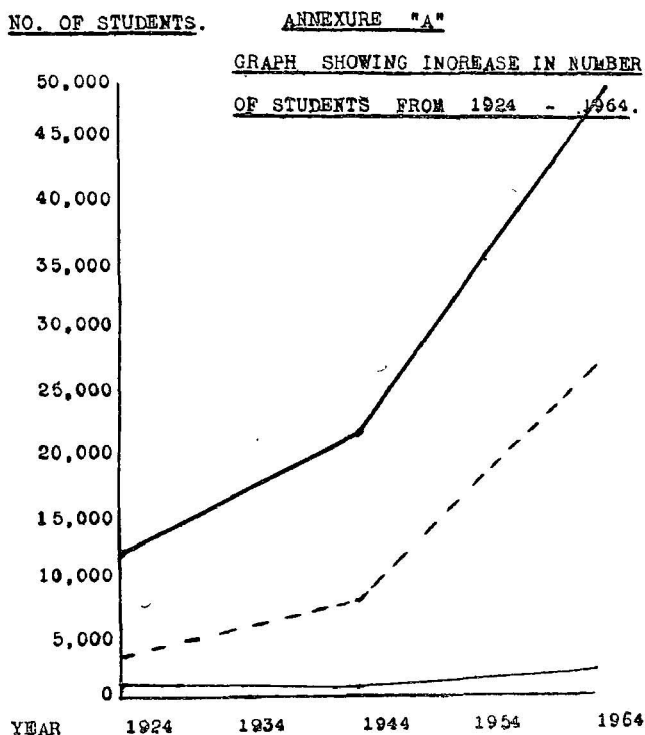


TABLE 2

Percentage of increase

Students	1924-44	1944-64
Male	72%	121%
Female	116%	236%

The above figures include both Christians and non-Christians.

An idea can be had of increase in the number of Adibasi College students from the figures of St. Xavier's College in Ranchi. In 1955, 23% of the students were Adibasi. In 1960, their number rose to 31% and in 1966 they are 39% of the total number of students in that college.

With the growth of education there is an increasing demand for bureaucratic jobs. The comparative figures from the Employment Exchanges in Bihar (given in Annexure 'B') as well as from the records of the G. E. L. Mission testify to the above facts. They are as follows.

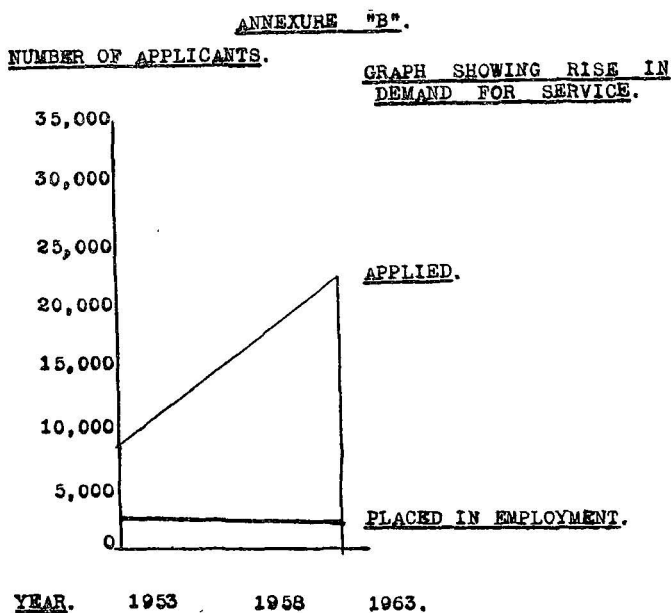


TABLE 3

Employment Exchanges in Bihar

Year	No. of applications received	No. placed in employment
1952—53	8,850	2,567
1962	22,476	2,473

TABLE 4

Records of the G. E. Lutheran Mission

Year	Number in government services from Class I to Class IV
1954	692
1964	1,312

According to the Rector of St. Xavier's College, the majority of the Adibasi students from this institution have entered Government service either in the Railways, Police, Forest Departments or the P. W. D. etc. Thus we see that with the spread of education there has been diversification of occupation. People do not flock into the hereditary occupational structure of the caste system, but have found a new freedom in the occupations made available by urbanization.

Along with the diversification of occupation there has grown up a new stratification along lines of economic class rather of caste as in former times. An elite has gradually grown up among the educated section, who are not only politically conscious but also very proud of their cultural heritage, of their separate 'national' identity. From 1950 onwards there have been various attempts to revive the traditional culture in various ways. Journals were published in the Mundari and Oraon languages like the *Jagar Sada* (The Voice of Language) and *Kurkhan*. Sometimes periodicals bore tribal names like *Turtung* (Ray of Light), *Abua Jharkhand* (Our Jharkhand); but the contents are written in Hindi. Institutions were also opened to revive tribal music and dance. *Mundari Sasang Kiran Jumba* and the *Dhumkuria* furnish such examples.

Along with these revival movements whose purpose seems to be to build up a national solidarity among the tribes of Chotanagpur, one notices a growing antipathy towards the non-tribal residents of Chotanagpur. This is expressed in gatherings and meetings where the non-tribal is described as an oppressor. The editors of *Adibasi*, a journal in Hindi, were prosecuted for writing a poem titled 'Bihari Bandar' (The Bihari Monkey) in 1941. In a Seminar organized by the Department of Anthropology, Ranchi University, in 1964, a few responsible members of the Adibasi community publicly expressed the views that all non-tribals are exploiters. Similar expressions were noted in other meetings also.

But with this growth of 'national' consciousness, it has also been observed that all tribes like the Munda, Oraon, Kharia, Bhumij or Santal have not been able to take advantage of the new political opportunities to the same extent. The number of educated or politically conscious among them varies

considerably ; and this has given rise in some cases, to a competition for power between tribe and tribe or between one person and another even if they belong to the same tribe. The split in the G. E. L. Mission in 1961-62 furnishes one such example. In this case the competition for power was between two individuals belonging to the same tribe. But one of them was mainly supported by the Munda converts and the other by the Oraon converts. Fortunately the split was quickly repaired. The Jharkhand Party itself is split up now into three different groups each claiming that it is the original Party. Happily there are other leaders who are wisely trying to prevent these local conflicts and are making an attempt to smoothen out differences as this will seriously weaken the political solidarity of the Adibasis in contrast to the rest of the population of Chotanagpur.

After the Ecumenical Council of 1963, the different Churches have come together in many of their secular activities. They joined hands in their work among the youth or among industrial labour. They have sent a joint petition to the Government for a burial ground for the Christians in the Greater Ranchi Scheme. Not only have the Churches come together but they are extending their welfare activities more and more even to the unconverted Adibasis, although formerly this was confined to their own congregations only.

According to the Constitution of the Jharkhand Party one of its aims and objects is to promote the social, political and economic advancement of the people of the Chotanagpur Plateau ; but its membership has been limited chiefly within the Adibasi population hitherto. Very recently, we note the admission of non-tribal members also, some of whom hold quite important positions like the General Secretary or membership of the Working Committee. If this continues, there is every hope of the exploited people of Chotanagpur coming together irrespective of race, religion or caste in the promotion of the interests of the Party. It is yet too early to predict ; otherwise this growing tribal consciousness and separatist tendency may lead to a problem of separatism of the tribal people in relation to the rest of the Indian population.

INTER-COMMUNAL STEREOTYPES IN A PLURAL SOCIETY

S. C. PANCHBHAI

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Abstract: The author made certain observations among students belonging to different language and religious groups in Assam, Bengal and Orissa. Some of these belonged to the Scheduled Tribes, others were folk from the plains. His findings regarding inter-communal stereotypes show interesting features of in-group and out-group feeling prevalent among the subjects. The author then tries to evaluate which of these in-group feelings tend to help 'national integration' and which do not.

Introduction

IT has been demonstrated by many researches in the field of reference groups that though generally our attitudes or behaviours are regulated by the norms, values etc. of our actual membership groups, in some cases prediction or interpretation of attitude or behaviour may not be correct without ascertaining the reference groups 'which provide the main anchorages for experience and behaviour' (Sherif & Sherif 1956 : 175). It has also been found that reference groups are not always the membership groups and also that the distinction between the two is not always clear. The problem becomes more complex when the regulating forces of primary and secondary membership reference groups are not easily distinguishable or come into conflict with each other.

Ordinarily one does not face any difficulty in adjusting one's thinking or behaviour in accordance with the demands made by any of the various groups to which one belongs at a particular moment. Conflict, however, arises when more than one group operate simultaneously and present incompatible

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demands. It has been suggested that the resultant behaviour of an individual from such conflicting attitudes is 'a function of the relative potencies of his various group memberships' (Charters & Newcomb 1952: 415) at a particular moment or in a particular situation. And 'the closer a group is identified the more dominant reference group it becomes under a given situation' (Panchbhai 1966 : 1).

The purpose of the following two studies is to find out which of the national, regional or religious variables is most closely identified or is the most dominant reference group in an inter-group situation. We shall start with the hypothesis that the more one identifies with one's regional, linguistic or ethnic group and less with the religious one, the more harmonious will be the intra-regional relations between any two religious groups belonging to the same region, and the closer will be their 'national identification'. We have also made an attempt to assess the degrees of marginality among the minority groups and the conflict arising in a multiple group membership situation.

I

The Non-Tribal Study

Subjects :

Though the main study is concerned with Assamese samples, a few other Muslim subjects from Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal have also been included for comparison. The Assam samples consist of 180 Ss—Hindus in bureaucratic employment and students, 50 each, and Muslim bureaucratic employees and students, 40 each. Except religion, all other variables, namely, age, social or economic status etc. are very similar in each of the two comparable groups. The three other regional samples are formed by Muslim student Ss only. The number of individuals in the Bihar sample is 50 and that in Orissa and West Bengal samples, 20 each. Students from all the four States belong to the final year class in school, and come from middle or lower middle economic classes. Excepting for the

Bihari students, all Ss in the other three samples entered the respective regional languages, namely, Assamese, Oriya and Bengali, as their mother tongue. In Bihar, though both Hindus and Muslims generally speak local dialects like Bhojpuri, Magadhi etc., they gave their mother tongue as Hindi and Urdu respectively.

Procedure :

In addition to applying the Katz and Braly type of questionnaire (Katz & Braly 1933), which in this case contained the commonly used 25 favourable and 25 unfavourable traits, with freedom to use any more of one's own choice, the Ss were required to arrange all the groups in order of preference for association. Ss were instructed to use ten most appropriate stereotypes for each group. Attribution of stereotypes to and preferences towards different groups have been termed as the Trait Method and Preference Method respectively.

In the Assam study though seven groups, namely, Assamese, Bengali, Other Hindu, Muslim, Adivasi (Scheduled Tribes), Tea-garden labourer and Indian, were provided in the questionnaire, responses only towards the Assamese, Muslim and Indian have been taken into consideration for the present study. To a Muslim Assamese, these three are his regional (or linguistic), religious and national identification variables respectively. Similarly, in the studies of Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal, though other groups were mentioned in the questionnaires, responses towards the regional group (Bihari, Oriya or Bengali), Muslim and Indian only have been taken into account.

The Unfavourable-ratio (U-ratio) for a stereotyped group has been obtained by dividing the total number of unfavourable stereotype frequencies by the favourable ones given to that group by a sample. The Favourable-marks (F-marks) are found out by a scoring process in which the most preferred group gets as many marks as the number of groups being arranged on the preference-scale, and with a gradual reduction by one mark so that the least preferred or last placed group secures only one mark (Panchbhai 1964 : 171). The

degree of identification with a group or favourability towards a group is supposed to be directly related with the F-marks and inversely with the U-ratios given to it.

Results :

Stereotypes which have been selected for a group by at least one-fourth of the population of a sample have been included in the first two tables. It is observed that all the 13 attributes given to Assamese by the Hindu and Muslim Ss are favourable and most of them have been attributed by more than 50 per cent of the Ss (Table 1). It is however noticeable that except for a few stereotypes, Muslim Ss compared to their Hindu counterparts have, on the average, selected these favourable traits less frequently. Though this may be taken as an indicator of a closer identification with the Assamese in general by the Assamese Hindus than by the Assamese Muslims, the picture of the Assamese in the minds of the two groups is almost the same. Stereotypes attributed to Muslims by these two religious populations show a quite different picture. It presents a contrasting image of the Muslim in the two minds. Out of the 11 traits selected for the Muslim by more than 25 per cent of Hindu Ss only Courageous and Gentle are favourable (Table 2). Though, on the whole, this unacceptable image of Muslim in the Hindu mind evidently shows that the Muslim is considered as an unfavourable out-group, it is nevertheless clear that the picture is not as gloomy as anticipated in other States. Most of the favourable traits have been selected by less than half of the Hindu Ss. And moreover as a distinction is generally made between Assamese Muslims and non-Assamese Muslims in Assam, one cannot at this stage conclude that these unfavourable stereotypes regarding the Muslim are necessarily a pointer to Hindu-Muslim relations or, more particularly, an attitude of unfavourableness towards Assamese Muslims by the Hindus of that State. At the same time, it is not suggested that one should be unnecessarily apprehensive about these relations. What is emphasized here is that there is a difference in the degree of unfavourability towards these two categories of Muslims.

There are 17 auto-stereotypes of the Muslims, and except for the categories of Fanatic and Conservative, all are favourable. It is interesting to note that except for these two negative stereotypes and for the categories of Self-respecting and Co-operative all the other stereotypes are the same as have been attributed by these Muslim Ss to the Assamese also. More remarkable is the difference between the frequencies of such common stereotypes when applied to the Assamese and the Muslim. Though, out of these 13 traits, 7 have been more frequently used for Muslim and 6 for Assamese, those used for the former are at the lower end of the list and the total frequencies of all these traits are higher for the Assamese than for the Muslim. But as, sometimes, we do not reach a valid conclusion by taking into account only the most frequently used stereotypes and neglecting others, the remaining frequencies of other traits that fell short of the 25 per cent level are pooled with the frequencies of the traits above this level (Panchbhai 1964 : 171) in order to find out the U-ratio for each group. It is no wonder that Hindu Ss have attributed many times more U-ratios to Muslims than to Assamese, but it is quite unexpected to note that Muslim Ss have given more U-ratios to Muslims than to the Assamese (Table 3). Similar is the result according to the Preference Method. Favourable marks given to Muslims by both Hindu and Muslim Ss are less than those given to the Assamese (Table 4).

This tendency which we marked in Assamese Muslims is, however, absent among Bihari, Oriya or Bengali Muslim Ss. It is invariably seen in the latter case, that all these three regional Muslims have attributed less U-ratios and more F-marks to their religious group than to their regional or linguistic groups (Table 5). It is also observed that whereas the Assamese have accepted only about one-tenth unfavourable traits for themselves, other regional Ss have not hesitated to apply even half of the unfavourable stereotypes for their in-groups. Basing our conclusions on the U-ratios we can say that the Assamese are least critical of themselves and hence show a more marked tendency towards ethno-centrism.

The Indian has been assessed variously by the different

groups. Though the Assamese students, in comparison to what they have given to their regional or religious in-group, have attributed a little more U-ratio to the Indian, it is nevertheless far below that attributed to him by the other regional students (Table 5). And though all the four student groups have ranked Indian third on the preference-scale, F-marks by the Assamese, compared to what others have allotted to him, are definitely higher. Bengali Ss, in comparison to what they have attributed to their regional or religious group, have attributed least U-ratio to Indian. Oriya Ss have, on the other hand, ranked him second by the Trait Method and Bihari Ss have placed him last.

The U-ratios and F-marks given by Assamese and Bihari Ss to their respective groups are perfectly correlated; the difference being that while the former ranked the regional group first, the latter gave the religious one the same position. Compared to the differences in scores of regional and religious groups given by the other two samples under both tests, the scores by the Bihari and Oriya samples show more difference. This may be taken as indicative of their weaker regional orientation. But the one positive indication which we notice in Oriyas having less unfavourable image of Indian than of their regional group—U-ratio for Indian being less than for Oriya—is not observed in the Bihari Ss' responses. And on the contrary it is seen that the latter have attributed maximum U-ratio and minimum F-marks to Indian.

Discussion :

Hindu-Muslim relations in India should be viewed in the light of a majority—minority problem. It is now known that whenever there is a great majority pressure against a minority group the cohesion within the latter initially increases and may remain so if the minority members are strong enough numerically, politically and culturally to resist the force. But in the case of increasing pressure and subsequent conflict the minority members, for adjusting themselves in the larger social order, may either completely disown their primary group membership or find out some way of compromise. The former

situation may give rise to some unhealthy trends such as a feeling of inferiority and self-hate. In the latter event, one may not directly attack one's primary group but enlarge upon those aspects of his group which provide a meeting ground with the larger frame of society. To combat the religious discrimination the minority members in such a situation become more vocal and put more emphasis on the secular bonds of language or nation. Muslims try to minimize their difference with the Hindus. They do not remain orthodox about their traditional language and religion and try not to emphasize their distinctive physical features or peculiarity of dress etc. as far as possible.

The diminishing majority pressure which may be causative or resultant, also makes identification with the larger social order easier. In the case of the Assamese Muslims, for example, it becomes easier for them to think of themselves as more Assamese than Muslim. By affiliating themselves with the Assamese closely, they assimilate their sentiments and develop a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude formation which conforms to the values of the Assamese as a whole. It is due to this absence of such fusion of religious and regional (or linguistic) reference groups in the case of Muslims other than Assamese, that their attitudes towards out-groups do not, to the same degree, conform to the attitudes held by their regional Hindu counterparts.

Conclusion :

It has been found that both religion and language provide the 'main anchorages for experience and behaviour'. But in the present Indian set up the intra-regional relations may possibly be more harmonious if the linguistic or regional group, and not the religious one, becomes the dominant reference-group in an inter-group situation. In short, it may be said that as the linguistic group in a region is usually equated with the majority religious group, the degree of difference in identification with the regional and religious social-self is directly proportional to the degree of antipathy between the two religious groups within that region. And though it may

sound odd to persons who are afraid of the growth of 'regional patriotism', it is seen that when language provides the dominant frame of reference national identification is closer.

A similar phenomenon has also been reported in the two studies (Panchbhai 1964, 1966) among tribes. It has been observed that the Christian tribes do not have so much favourable disposition towards the regional (Bihari) or national (Indian) group as the non-Christian tribes have. It may be added here in parenthesis that in India inter-group conflict on the language front (in the sense in which it has come to mean to-day) is not historically so ancient and psychologically so deep as is the conflict among the religious communities. And, as is natural, the less chronic symptoms are likely to be cured more easily.

II

The Tribal Study*

In the present study for identification variables, namely, national, regional, ethnic and religious were presented to the Ss.

Subjects :

Data were collected from 150 Adivasi Under-graduate students belonging to the Santal, Oraon and Munda tribes of Chotanagpur, Bihar. Seventyfive of them were Christian and an equal number non-Christian. Each of the Christian and non-Christian groups consisted of 25 Santal, 25 Oraon and 25 Munda students. All of them came from a very similar socio-economic background.

Procedure :

Both the Trait and Preference Methods were applied to get the U-ratios and F-marks. Ss were asked to mention 10 stereotypes of each of the following nine groups : Bihari, Bengali, European Christian, Indian Christian, Muslim, Santal Oraon, Munda and Indian. The procedure was the same as in the previous study.

* Reprinted in part from *Indian Journal of Psychology*, 1966, Vol. 41.

Results :

It is invariably seen and quite naturally, that to Indian Christian, non-Christian Ss have attributed less F-marks and more U-ratios than Christian Ss (Table 6). Christian Ss, on the other hand, have assessed more favourably their religious identity than their ethnic identity. They have allotted more F-marks and less U-ratios (Table 7) to the Indian Christian than to their respective ethnic groups, i.e. Santal, Oraon or Munda. The case is similar with the European Christian. This category of stereotyped group has been more favourably evaluated by Christians than by non-Christians under both scales. It is remarkable that except for the average ranks (in both methods) given to the European Christian and Indian Christian, ranks given to all the other groups by non-Christians are higher than those given by Christians.

As regards the Ss' identification with Indian as a whole, there are some peculiar points to note. Not only are the F-marks given to the Indian by all the six groups invariably less than those given to their own primary groups; there is also much difference between their U-ratios given to Indian and to their own primary groups. Further, compared with Christians, non-Christians have generally given more F-marks and less U-ratios to Indian. In short, it may be said that though all these Adivasi Ss have, in general, viewed Indian less favourably than their own respective in-groups [this was not generally the case with non-tribal population (Panchbhai 1962)] the image of the Indian in the Christians' mind is less likeable than that in the non-Christians' mind.

Some difference is also noticed between their attitudes towards Bengalis and Biharis. Though there is no significant fluctuation between the U-ratios given to the Bengali and the Bihari there is a marked trend in the F-marks given to these two stereotyped groups. And this is in line with the trends marked in the tribal population's attitude towards the regional linguistic majority group (say, Assamese in Assam) and towards Bengalis living in those areas (Panchbhai 1962). F-marks given to the Bengali by all the experimental categories in this case are higher than those given to the regionally identifiable

group, Bihari. And though not very definite, a slight indication is that non-Christians have preferred the Bengali more than Christians have (Table 6).

Ranking all the stereotyped groups in the order of consistency or definiteness of traits (traits required for perfect consistency being 2.5) it is observed that, on the average, Christian Ss of all the three ethnic categories ranked the Indian Christian first (3.2 traits) and Santal second (3.3 traits). Non-Christian Ss, however, ranked Santal first (3.4 traits) and Indian Christian last (5.8 traits) of all the stereotyped groups. And due to this disparity, rhos between ranks of consistency of Christian and non-Christian Ss when including and when excluding Indian Christian from the ranks came around .29 (not significant) and .82 ($p < .01$) respectively.

It is interesting to note that in spite of their different ethnic identities, groups belonging to the same religion have generally shown more positive correlation under the Trait Method than under the Preference Method (Table 8A). One's opinion in regard to different groups, rather than one's likes or dislikes towards them, seems to be more influenced by religious belongingness. Compared to the Santal, Oraon and Munda Ss belonging to the same religious categories are found to be more definite about their opinions of and preference towards different stereotyped groups. When scores of the same ethnic group but of different religions, under both methods, are considered for comparison (Table 8B), the picture looks somewhat different. In this case, we find that Santal and Oraon Ss' responses under both methods are more correlated; Munda Ss' responses, though pointing towards a positive correlation, do not prove to be statistically significant. It is however found that Christian Ss, compared to the non-Christians, of all the three ethnic groups show a more definite and consistent pattern of responses under both the Trait and Preference Methods (Table 8C). Though the non-Christians' responses under these methods correlate positively they do not reach the confidence level.

Conclusion :

It has been demonstrated that one's own ethnic group is

not so much closely identified as one's religious group. By this it is not however suggested that religion alone, irrespective of race or ethnic considerations, will be more effective in guiding the thinking or behaviour of a people. What is emphasized is that the sense of belonging to one religion is more valued than belonging to an ethnic group. Had religion alone been a dominating factor in one's group-relatedness, all other groups of people belonging to the same religion, but of different ethnic identities, would have also been taken within the total concept of 'reference group'. Though a Christian Santal relates himself more closely to the 'Indian Christian' than to 'Santal', he does not identify himself more closely with, say, Christian Munda (who is also an Indian Christian) than with Santal, his own ethnic group.

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TABLE I

Stereotypes attributed to Assamese by Assamese Ss

(Numbers indicate percentages)

C1=Hindu employees ; C2=Muslim employees ;
C3=Hindu students ; C4=Muslim students.

	C1	C2	C3	C4
Liberal	82	90	92	85
Peace-loving	78	78	92	90
Simple	92	75	86	85
G e n t l e	78	80	84	75
Patriotic	62	70	84	95
Courageous	60	68	84	90
Hospitable	72	68	88	55
Faithful	66	53	82	80
K i n d	56	65	84	65
Accommodating	54	45	66	60
Dutiful	48	48	60	55
Friendly	50	50	48	40
H o n e s t	50	25	54	40
Ave.	65.23	62.92	76.61	70.38

TABLE 2

Stereotypes attributed to Muslim by Assamese Ss.
(Numbers indicate percentages)

C1=Hindu employees ; C2= Muslim employees ;
C3=Hindu students ; C4= Muslim students.

	C1	C3		C2	C4
Courageous	38	78	Liberal	93	85
Fanatic	56	46	Hospitable	83	95
Cruel	56	42	Courageous	85	85
Rowdy	52	38	Faithful	65	85
Aggressive	42	38	Gentle	65	80
Hostile	44	34	Simple	55	77
Gentle	26	50	Peace-loving	70	55
Selfish	44	26	Dutiful	53	70
Opportunistic	44	26	Patriotic	48	65
Luxury-loving	38	26	Accommodating	50	60
Conservative	26	36	Friendly	53	50
Ave.	42.4	40.0	Honest	33	50
			Fanatic	50	30
			Kind	55	25
			Self-respecting	38	40
			Co-operative	48	25
			Conservative	25	30
			Ave.	57.0	59.2

TABLE 3

Frequencies of stereotypes and U-ratios attributed to Assamese, Muslim and Indian by Assamese Ss under Trait Method

1. Total frequencies ; 2. Unfavourable frequencies ;
3. Favourable frequencies ; 4. Unfavourable ratio.

By / To	Assamese				Muslim				Indian			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
C1	613	58	555	.10	541	342	199	1.70	567	71	496	.14
C2	473	55	418	.13	489	73	416	.17	475	67	408	.16
C3	662	59	603	.09	593	220	373	.58	684	74	610	.12
C4	536	38	498	.07	504	52	452	.11	480	52	428	.12
	C1=Hindu employees ;				C3=Hindu students ;							
	C2= Muslim employees ;				C4= Muslim students,							

TABLE 4

Favourable marks attributed to Assamese, Muslim and Indian by Assamese Ss under Preference Method

MM. maximum possible marks ; (1) marks obtained ; (2) per cent marks.

By / To	Assamese		Muslim		Indian		
	MM	1	2	1	2	1	2
C ₁	350	322	92.00	167	47.71	107	30.57
C ₂	280	242	86.43	227	59.50	123	43.93
C ₃	350	346	98.85	191	54.57	231	66.00
C ₄	280	254	90.71	230	82.14	214	76.43

C₁=Hindu employees ;

C₂=Muslim employees ;

C₃=Hindu students ;

C₄=Muslim students.

TABLE 5

U-ratios (1) and % F-marks (2) attributed to regional, religious and national categories by the Muslim students of the four States

By / To	Assamese		Bengali		Bihari		Oriya		Muslim		Indian	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Assamese	.07	90.71							.11	82.14	.12	76.43
Bengali			.52	79.17					.43	85.83	.31	62.50
Bihari					.56	75.33			.35	92.44	.66	56.00
Oriya							.53	71.87	.30	90.00	.39	56.87

TABLE 6

F-marks (%) attributed to different groups by the Christian and Non-Christian Santal, Oraon and Munda subjects

To / By	Christian			Non-Christian			Ave. rank by Christian	Ave. rank by non-Christian
	Santal	Oraon	Munda	Santal	Oraon	Munda		
Bihari	49.8	40.0	42.2	42.9	37.3	62.7	7.3	7.0
Bengali	61.0	46.6	42.7	64.4	62.7	69.3	7.7	7.3
Euro. Christian	61.8	51.1	62.2	44.4	32.3	45.3	3.2	6.0
Ind. Christian	83.0	93.3	84.4	59.5	59.6	50.2	1.0	5.3
Muslim	30.7	35.5	31.1	30.7	37.3	23.5	9.0	9.0
Santal	80.9	42.2	51.1	88.0	45.3	59.1	5.0	3.0
Oraon	48.4	82.2	62.2	54.2	92.4	60.0	3.7	2.5
Munda	46.2	66.6	83.5	50.7	78.2	81.8	4.5	2.3
Indian	37.3	40.9	29.0	51.8	51.1	48.0	4.0	2.1

TABLE 7

U-ratios attributed to different groups by the Christian and Non-Christian Santal, Oraon and Munda subjects

To / By	Christian			Non-Christian			Ave. rank by Christian	Ave. rank by Non-Christian
	Santal	Oraon	Munda	Santal	Oraon	Munda		
Bihari	1.10	0.40	1.80	1.00	0.63	0.77	6.7	5.2
Bengali	0.72	0.81	1.01	0.69	0.65	0.97	5.0	2.3
Euro. Christian	0.20	0.26	0.15	0.42	0.57	0.81	3.5	8.3
Ind. Christian	0.12	0.11	0.14	0.51	0.55	0.53	1.3	4.3
M u s l i m	1.18	3.00	2.00	1.66	2.71	2.72	9.0	8.5
S a n t a l	0.18	0.47	0.52	0.13	0.28	0.21	4.3	4.0
O r a o n	0.35	0.18	0.43	0.33	0.17	0.20	3.8	3.0
M u n d a	0.38	0.26	0.30	0.30	0.26	0.18	3.7	3.2
I n d i a n	0.36	0.20	0.38	0.29	0.21	0.19	7.7	6.2

TABLE 8

(A, B, C)

Correlation (rho) between groups and between methods

A

Between diff. ethnic groups of the same religion

	Trait Method		Preference Method	
	Christian	Non-Christian	Christian	Non-Christian
Santal and Oraon	.65 ⁺	.82 ⁺⁺	.43	.44
Santal and Munda	.73 ⁺	.79 ⁺⁺	.58	.51
Oraon and Munda	.80 ⁺⁺	.93 ⁺⁺	.91 ⁺⁺	.64 ⁺

B

Between same ethnic groups of the two religions (Christian and Non-Christian)

	Trait Method	Preference Method
Santal	.60 ⁺	.66 ⁺
Oraon	.73 ⁺	.73 ⁺
Munda	.48	.44

C

Between Trait Method and Preference Method

	Christian	Non-Christian
Santal	.63 ⁺	.30
Oraon	.63 ⁺	.58
Munda	.68 ⁺	.42

$++ p < .01$

$+ p < .05$

THE LAMA

NIRMAL CHANDRA SINHA

(Received on 17 September 1966)

Abstract : The author traces the origin of the Tibetan word 'Lama'. He also describes historically what part the Lama played in both the religious and political life of the community in Tibet, Manchuria, Mongolia and China.

I

'TIBETAN or Mongolian Buddhist monk'—that is how the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* explains the word 'Lama' and this no doubt reflects the current English (or European) usage. Phrases like 'Land of Lamas', or 'Lamasery' are coined on this meaning of the word. Yet in Tibet, as in any other Land of Lamas, the word Lama (properly transcribed 'Blama') is restricted to a few categories of monks and priests and is not used indiscriminately for all monks and priests.

The word Lama means the 'superior one' or 'the one who has no superior' and is taken to correspond to Guru or Uttara in Sanskrit; a specific connotation is that one who can administer initiation (Skt. Diksha = Tib. Dbang) is a Lama. A Lama is thus not necessarily an incarnate (Tib. Sprulsku = Skt. Nirmanakaya), while any incarnate is not *ispo facto* a Lama. Both Tibetan religious literature and Mongol/Manchu regulations testify to the spiritual authority and temporal immunities of the Lamas. Not unoften these immunities were claimed and enjoyed by other ranks of monks and priests and this added piquancy to the politics of Inner Asia.

II

The word Lama meaning preceptor or priest was in currency in Tibet before the advent of Buddhism and the

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priest in the pre-Buddhist Bon religion was, and is still, called Lama. Thus no new coinage was needed to render into Tibetan the Indian term Guru abounding in the Mahayana literature, particularly the treatises and tracts on Tantra. There are numerous examples in *Kanjur* and *Tanjur* authenticating Lama for Guru. A historic example, and perhaps the first such, designating an Indian master as Lama is noticed in the grammar of Thonmi Sambhota, the reputed author of the Tibetan script (circa 640). In his grammar Thonmi makes obeisance 'to all the Lamas' (bla-ma rnam-la). Who are all these Lamas? They would no doubt include the Indian masters with whom Thonmi studied Indian script, Indian grammar and Indian metres. Shalu Lotsava in his commentary on Thonmi's grammar identifies two of these Lamas as Devavidya Simha and Lipidatta and calls them Thonmi's 'own Lamas' (bdag-nyid kyi bla-ma).

The label of Lama for a Buddhist priest in Tibet commenced with Padmasambhava (circa 750). Appropriately known as Mahaguru or Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava not only vanquished the priests of Bon religion in encounters of miracle and polemic but also instituted an order of native priests for the preservation and propagation of the Dharma. The seven Tibetans ordained as monks by the Mahaguru are the first Lamas of Buddhism. They and their successors became the First Estate of the country and even monarchy took precedence after the Lamas. A royalist reaction allied itself with the Bon and launched a most cruel persecution of Buddhism. In desperation and against heavy odds the Lamas engineered a regicide (842). The monarchy was discredited; the royal house was divided and got dispersed while the Lamas grew in popularity and strength,

Without a spiritual guide an esoteric system (Skt. Tantra = Tib. Rgyud), as was the form of Dharma propagated in Tibet, cannot succeed. Thus Buddhism in Tibet begins with Guru (Lama); and the saviour of Buddhism in Tibet, Padmasambhava, goes down in history as the Guru. In the two centuries following the regicide (842) and the Buddhist priests' return to the Court, the formula for 'Refuge in Three

Gems' came to be prefixed with 'Refuge in Lama'. At the outset the refuge in Lama was for purely spiritual or moral needs. Being the custodian of the script (an import from the Land of Enlightenment) and being the organizer of the educational system (all schools were monastic), the Lama was destined to be the refuge in a much wider sense. On the break-up of centralized monarchy and on the dissolution of ancient land-holding, the abbot of a well-organized monastery would be the natural refuge for the common people in the neighbourhood. It is thus appropriate to note that the government of the Sakya Lamas for about a century (1200—1350) was as much due to the internal forces calling for monastic leadership as to the support of the Mongol Emperors. The Karmapa Lamas also, though to a lesser extent, wielded political power in parts of Tibet before the rise of the Gelugpas (Yellow Sect) at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The Dalai Lamas ruled as kings over all Tibet for roughly three centuries (1642—1950); it was admittedly the reign of Lamas. It is not necessary in the present context to detail the events of the Sakya, Karmapa and Dalai Lamas. Besides, the complexities and niceties of the Lamaist polity cannot be handled in the space of this essay. It is however necessary to note here that much of the sectarian wars sprang from indisputable privileges and immunities of the Lamas.

In Mongolia propagation was first made in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that is, during the period of the Great Khans. Kubilai promulgated 'a decree of two principles' laying down the relations between Church and State thus: 'the Lama is the root of the High Religion and the Lord of the Doctrine; the Emperor, the head of the Empire and the master of the secular power. The Laws of the True Doctrine, like the sacred silk cord, cannot be weakened; the Laws of the Great Emperor, like the golden yoke, are indestructible.' The *White Annals*, a contemporary chronicle obviously compiled under the Emperor's blessings, records this decree. (The excerpt is made from Zamcarano: *The Mongol Chronicles of the Seventeenth Century*, tr. Loewenthal, Wiesbaden

1965). Several Mongol chronicles and the Tibetan chronicle *Hu-lan deb-ther* (*The Red Annals*, Gangtok 1961) refer to the decrees of Jenghiz Khan and his successors confirming the special prerogatives of the Lamas. All priests were exempted from taxes, military service and manual work for non-monastic purposes while the top ones enjoyed precedence over nobles and secular dignitaries. The Church—State relations in Mongolia, under the Great Khans, recall the Brahmanical theory of the relations between the Purohita (Brahmana) and the Raja (Kshatriya) as in the colourful portrait of Coomaraswamy: *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power In the Indian Theory of Government* (New Haven 1942).

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed the second propagation and the final victory of the Dharma in Mongolia. This propagation was made by the Gelugpas (Yellow Sect) and all temples and monasteries in Mongolia eventually subscribed to the Yellow Sect. By the middle of the seventeenth century the Yellow Sect became the central temporal authority in Tibet and shortly afterwards the head of the Yellow Sect, the Dalai Lama, became the priest and ally of the Manchu Emperor. In Mongolia, thus, the Lamas soon became the First Estate *par excellence*.

The Manchu Emperor Ching-lung (1736-96) in his famous Dissertation of Lamaism (1792), which he got inscribed on a marble stele in the Lamaist cathedral in Peking, said: 'Buddhism originated in India and spread eastward...Its barbarian priests are traditionally known as Lamas. The word Lama does not occur in Chinese books...I have carefully pondered over its meaning and found that *la* in Tibet means "superior" and *ma* means "none". So *la-ma* means "without superior"...Lama also stands for Yellow Religion.' (From Lessing's translation in *Yung-ho-kung*, Stockholm 1942.)

The Lama was indeed 'without superior' both in Tibet and Mongolia and the head of the Yellow Religion was the supreme 'without superior'. The head of the Yellow Sect—the incarnation of Avalokitesvara (Tib. Spyan-ras-gzigs)—was the temporal ruler of Tibet. In Tibet he was known as Skyab-mgon Rin-poche (Precious Prime Refuge) or Rgyal-

wa Rin-poche (Precious Conqueror). The Mongols addressed him as Dalai Lama. It is of historic significance that the Mongol form gained currency all over the steppes of Eurasia and the Mongol expression *dalai* (ocean) formed a prized loan-word in the Tibetan language.

At the opening of the twentieth century the relations between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperor had deteriorated due to fuller Confucianization of the Manchu House and the imperialistic designs of China. On the Expulsion of the Manchu (1911-1912), Dalai Lama XIII formally declared himself sovereign of Tibet by command of the Buddha (summer 1912.) Even then the Lamaist Buddhists in China continued to adore the Dalai Lama as the Refuge or Protector because the priest-disciple relations transcended secular or territorial loyalties.

In their first memorandum to the Tripartite Conference between Britain, China and Tibet, the Tibetan Delegation described the situation thus : 'Firstly, the relations between the Manchu Emperor and the Protector, Dalai Lama the fifth, became like that of the disciple towards the teacher. The sole aim of the then Government of China being to earn merits for this and for the next life, they helped and honoured successive Dalai Lamas and treated the monks of all the monasteries with respect... Gradually the Chinese Emperor lost faith in the Buddhist religion, and he treated the precious Protector, the Dalai Lama, with less respect... At last the Tibetans, driven by sheer desperation, had to fight, which ended in the defeat of the Chinese... The people of Mongolia and China send monks to the different monasteries in Tibet and also pay vast tributes to the monasteries. The Buddhist monasteries and other religious institutions in Mongolia and China recognise the Dalai Lama as their religious head...' (English text as that of Lonchen Shatra reproduced on pages 1-6 of *The Boundary Question Between China and Tibet : A Valuable Record of the Tripartite Conference held in India 1913-1914*, Peking 1940.)

III

Tibetan scholars with knowledge of Hindu society would

liken the word *bla-ma* to Sanskrit *brahmana* and *brahma*. The literary and historical evidence culled above no doubt indicates that the Lama's status was not inferior to that of the Brahmana in Indian society.

The present writer is not a student of linguistics but would venture to point out a few facts in this connexion. It is not possible to transcribe satisfactorily in Tibetan *brahmana* or *brahma*, as in Tibetan *br* has the sound *d*. A Brahmana (who usually came from Nepal) was called *bram* (pronounced *dam/dram*) and oftener *bram-ze* (pronounced *damje*) after (Nepalese) Baje (cf. Sarat Das : *Dictionary*, p. 896). On the other hand, Skt. *brahma* could change into Tib. *blama* through dialects of eastern India. In the eastern dialects, *r* often changes into *l* as Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee amply demonstrated four decades ago. (*Origin and Development of Bengali Language*, Calcutta 1926, pp. 484-5.) So *brahma* to *blahma* would be natural for the Mongoloid groups not adequately 'Aryanised'. These were groups living in and around Bengal and Assam. In parts of Bengal and Assam *h* is not pronounced, with the result that in common speech *brahma* and *brahmana* are pronounced as *bamma* and *bammon*. (On the loss of *h* and aspirates in Nepali and Bengali see Chatterjee : op. cit., pp, 444, 557 and the same author's *Indo-Aryan & Hindi*, Calcutta 1960, pp. 111-113.) If we add to this the fact that in Tibetan there is no short *a* and that every *a* is long *a* it is not difficult to accept *bla-ma* as the Tibetan for *brahma*.

[In Tibet itself change of *r* into *l* would not be unusual. When Ra-sa (place of goats) became the cathedral city the change of name was no problem. It was called Lha-sa (place of gods).]

[It is relevant to cite here the suggestion of an Assamese scholar, Mr. Bishnu Rabha, that the name of the river Brahmaputra is derived from Mongoloid Bhullam-buthur (making a gurgling sound). Vide Chatterji : *Kirata-jana-krti*, Calcutta 1951, pp. 47-48. It was not a one-way traffic ; if Sanskrit *r* could change into Mongoloid *l*, Mongoloid *l* could change into Sanskrit *r*.]

IV

The present paper notices any similarity between the status (and role) of the Brahmana and that of the Lama and does not suggest any identity in the charisma sported by both. That question entails investigation into (i) the respective theories of salvation in Brahmanism (Hinduism) and Buddhism (Mahayana) and (ii) the mechanics of living among predominantly agricultural and settled peoples as in the plains of India and among predominantly pastoral and nomadic peoples as in the highlands of Tibet. While this task will take considerable time to complete, it may be stated in conclusion here that a Brahmana is born with the status while a Lama is not born with such status.

THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS

A. K. GHOSH

(Received on 2 July 1966)

Abstract : The author gives us a geographical and historical account of the Andaman Islands. He then presents a picture of the problems which face the indigenous and immigrant populations.

KALAPANI! what fears, what dread of the unknown the word evoked but a generation ago. And so when my appointment as Chief Commissioner of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was announced our friends in Calcutta commiserated with us, and asked what I had done to deserve such a fate. 'The water is not fit to drink,' said one, 'you will have to live on tea.' 'The place is most unhealthy,' said another, 'polio, kalazar and malaria are rampant.' Cheerful news to give the parents of two very young children going to a remote group of islands accessible only after four days at sea, in a ship that called but once in three weeks; and with medical facilities about which the same friends could give no information. It was therefore with considerable misgivings that we boarded ship in Calcutta one July morning in 1949 to sail into the unknown.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, though forming one administrative unit, consist of two separate groups of islands with entirely different populations living under very dissimilar conditions, each with its own problems. The Andamans consist of a chain of islands stretching from Landfall Island in the north to Little Andaman in the south in an arc stretching over 200 miles of sea. There is then an open stretch of water for 80 miles until Car Nicobar is reached, the northernmost of the Nicobar Group of Islands, which continue

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in the same arc for another 200 miles to Great Nicobar, which is only about a 100 miles from the northern tip of Sumatra—less than the distance between Agra and Delhi.

The Andaman Islands consist of five major islands lying close together and forming for all practical purposes one land mass, with Little Andamans some 40 miles to the south, but connected to the main group by a chain of little islands which form stepping stones across the sea. From time immemorial the Andamans have been inhabited by a small Negrito people divided into three main tribes (the Andamanese, Jarawa and Onge), all hostile to each other. They are an extremely ancient people who probably occupied the whole of South-East Asia in prehistoric times; and recent anthropological studies show that they have cultural connexions with the Semang of Malaya and the Aeta of the Philippines. For an immense period of time these people remained isolated from the rest of the world except for sporadic raids by Malays and Chinese (and later, Arabs) who came to collect slaves, and as a result of their activities made the aboriginal inhabitants of the Islands implacably hostile to strangers. The first recorded attempt to colonize the Andamans was made in 1789, when Cap. Archibald Blair, R. N., established a settlement under the orders of the East India Company at the site now known as Port Blair. A few years later this colony was moved to the north, to Port Cornwallis; but the colony could not prosper because of malaria, and was closed down in 1796.

These Islands lie athwart the main trade routes to the East Indies and China, and have always been a great hazard to shipping. And as the islanders looked upon all strangers as enemies, to be destroyed at sight, shipwrecked sailors had little chance of survival. And so, about the middle of the 19th century the question of opening a naval station in the Andamans to protect the crews of ships wrecked off these inhospitable islands was again mooted. While this proposal was under discussion, and papers and dispatches were travelling between London and Calcutta, the people of India made their first major effort to throw out their rulers, in 1857. One of the problems raised by the ruthless suppression of the rebellion

was what to do with the vast number of prisoners; and the solution adopted was to send the men to a penal settlement to be opened in the far-away Andaman Islands. Port Blair was selected for the purpose, and the first batch of prisoners arrived in 1858. The new-comers immediately came into conflict with the original inhabitants, who naturally resented the coming of these strangers into their country, and there were numerous affrays between the tribal people and the new settlers. But the result was a foregone conclusion: bows and arrows have little chance against modern weapons. In course of time one tribe (the Andamanese, who dwelt in the coastal belt and lived mainly on what the sea had to offer) was won over and encouraged to come into the settlement, where the people were given clothes and food. They could not, however, be induced to take to cultivation or a settled life for they much preferred their nomadic ways, free to wander where they pleased in search of food, which nature provided so bountifully in these tropical islands. But contact with modern civilization proved disastrous; and the Andamanese have decreased from an estimated four or five thousand in the 1860s to only a dozen in 1961. Such are the effects of the gifts of civilization (tobacco, alcohol, venereal and other diseases) on these primitive peoples! The other tribe, the Jarawas, fortunately for themselves, remained at war with the colonists, and have been consistently hostile ever since the establishment of the settlement over a hundred years ago. They dwelt inland; and the islands being densely forested, they were able to withdraw into their impenetrable forests. Their unending war with the invaders has been their salvation; and although no accurate estimate of their numbers is possible, it is generally believed by Forest Officers of long experience that the Jarawas number perhaps four hundred in all today. As Sir Richard Temple estimated their total at about 600 in 1901, it appears that their numbers are more or less stationary.

The third tribe, the Onge, live in Little Andaman, and have so long escaped interference because of isolation. They, as well as the Jarawas, continue to be in the same stage of culture as they were perhaps ten thousand years ago. Dr. Cipriani,

an Italian anthropologist who lived with the Onge for several months during 1952 and 1953, estimated their total number at about 500. According to him these people are still living in the Palæolithic (or Old Stone) Age. They do not know how to work metal, have no agriculture, and live entirely by hunting, fishing and collecting wild fruits and roots.* Unfortunately for themselves, the Onges have recently acquired the habit of coming from Little Andaman to Port Blair in their little canoes to obtain tobacco, sugar and other luxuries not to be found in their native forests. In course of time they will inevitably go the way of the Andamanese, unless it is thought worth-while to preserve them as they are, and means found to keep them in isolation. They are simple, kindly people with few possessions and fewer needs. They have absolutely no idea about money, nor about working for payment ; all work for the common needs and share the results of their labours. Food gatherers must of necessity live in small groups ; and the Onge usually number thirty to forty in a group, which breaks up into smaller family parties of six or seven during the fair weather to go hunting and fishing within their allotted territories. But during the monsoons, which are heavy in these Islands, the entire group collects together in the communal hut—a large dome-shaped structure of thatch, inside which each family has its own platform and fire for cooking. Until the other day the men wore nothing at all ; but today they wear a narrow strip of cloth, while the women wear a large tassel of fibre. They are skilled in the handling of their outrigger canoes and seem to be able to find their way from island to island without any apparent knowledge of navigation. Strangely, for a people living next to the sea, they dislike salt and do not use it at all in their food. And, in spite of all that Conan Doyle has said in *The Sign of Four*, none of the Andaman Islanders use poisoned arrows.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are not coral islands, but consist of a sunken range of mountains only the tops of

* For an account of Onge food-habits see Boae, Saradindu, 'Economy of the Onge of Little Andaman', *Man in India*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Pp. 298—310.

which are above water the mountains are in places over 14,000 ft. high ; but 12,000 of these are under water, the highest point in the Andaman Islands being Saddle Peak which is 2,500 ft. above sea level. Fine natural harbours are to be found in both groups of Islands, which are largely covered by magnificent forests. The resulting scenery is breath-taking: green mountains sloping down to dark blue seas, with a strip of golden sand separating the two. I need hardly add that under these conditions sailing, swimming and fishing can be enjoyed throughout the territory.

The fine forests, the chief wealth of the islands, remained untouched until 100 years ago, when modern development began with the establishment of the penal settlement in 1858. This settlement reached its zenith towards the turn of the century, and thereafter gradually declined until it was abolished in 1945. During these years convict labour was largely used to work the forests, make coco-nut plantations, and cultivate paddy and other crops, the convicts usually being released after two years in the jail, and allowed to work for wages in the settlement. But political prisoners were not given this privilege of working outside, and had to spend their entire period inside the notorious Cellular Jail. The Andaman Islands are largely deficient in food and rice had to be imported, first from Burma and later from India ; and the effects of this unbalanced economy were seen during the three and a half years the Islands were under Japanese occupation, from March 1942 till October 1945, when in addition to the normal population there were perhaps some 20,000 soldiers to be fed. As the Japanese lost the control of the seas they were unable to import paddy and rice from Burma and the East Indies, and the food position gradually deteriorated in spite of the drastic measures taken by the military authorities, who ordered all able-bodied persons irrespective of age, sex or position to put in several hours a day in gardens and plantations, this in addition to their normal day's work. Food continued to be inadequate ; and by the end of the war the position had become desperate, several thousand persons (out of a total population of about 20,000) having died of

starvation. Had the victorious Allies not landed in October 1945 with food, clothes and medical supplies, many more would have succumbed. It is interesting to note that although Japan surrendered on the 15th of August, the Andaman Islands were not reoccupied by our troops until two months later. The Japanese Commander could not believe that his country had been defeated, and treated all news about Japan's surrender as enemy propaganda, until an emissary came from the Emperor himself. It was only then that he capitulated, and handed over the Islands to the victors in a most disciplined and orderly manner.

With the reoccupation of the Islands in October 1945 the penal settlement was abolished, and a free pardon granted to all convicts, who were given the option of returning home if they so wished. Some 4,000 accepted this offer, though many of them soon came back from homes and villages which had either forgotten them or were not at all pleased to see them return ; and they with those who had remained on in the land numbered about 14,000 in 1946. Since 1949 displaced persons, chiefly from East Bengal, have been settled in increasing numbers in the Andamans, so that by 1961 the population had risen to 49,000. Resettlement will continue, according to the present plans, until the population rises to about 1 lac, which is perhaps the maximum rural population the Andamans can support.

Before 1949 the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands (apart from the aborigines) formed an amalgam of all the peoples of India, with no divisions into castes or creeds. This is understandable when we consider that in 1921 the population consisted largely of convicts, and the ratio of men to women in the age group 15-54 was about 8 : 1. With the odds weighted so heavily against them the men had little choice in the selection of their life's partners, and had perforce to marry any woman available, regardless of her race or religion. Marriages between Muslims and Sikhs, Sikhs and Hindus, and Hindus and Muslims were common, the children choosing the religion of either parent according to preference. Where their scarcity value was so high, women not surprisingly enjoyed a great deal

of freedom ; and divorce was easy : all that was necessary was for the husband and the wife to inform the Deputy Commissioner that they wished to separate, and he thereupon registered their divorce.

This imbalance between the numbers of men and women sometimes had odd effects. I found that one of the clerks in my office was running a flourishing matrimonial bureau as a side business : for a total payment of Rs. 800 he would take the prospective bridegroom to Calcutta, find him a bride, provide her with a trousseau, give them a week's honeymoon in the great city (while the ship discharged her cargo, and took on a fresh load) and then bring the happy couple back to Port Blair. As the entire business could not have cost him more than Rs. 500, one match brought him more than he earned in a month as a clerk. On another occasion I received alarming reports that a gentleman in the town was involved in the 'white slave traffic', his business being to import girls into the Andamans, and then sell them at a large profit. Hearing of three such cases I had the young women produced in my court. They readily admitted that they had come to the Islands with the man in question, but added that they were now married to three young school teachers in the villages. On being further questioned, the women stated that they were quite happy, with homes of their own, and had no intention whatever of returning to Madras, where they were formerly starving. But conditions are gradually changing with the influx of the settlers : by 1951 the ratio of men to women had improved to 3 : 1 ; and perhaps by the end of this century the sexes will be more or less equal. It is, however, a pity that the newcomers are bringing with them from home their old ideas about caste and creed, so that the interesting experiment of producing a casteless society where all men are born equal, and religion is one's personal affair is coming to an end.

CALORIFIC VALUE OF FOOD IN RURAL U.P.

MUHAMMAD FAROOQ SIDDIQI

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Abstract . The author tries to ascertain the calorific value of the food available to the inhabitants in the village of Jariha in Banda district in Uttar Pradesh. It is approximately 2,300 calories.

THE energy value of the nutrients in food are measured in terms of calories. It is true that the calories alone cannot form a correct yardstick to assess an individual's diet, because a nutritionally adequate diet should contain proportionate amounts of major nutrients, *viz.* carbohydrates, fats and proteins together with adequate mineral substances and vitamins. But as the calories are obtained mainly from the major nutrients of food, their total consumption can reveal the level of an individual's standard of nutrition.

In order to assess the calorie intake on the basis of correct production statistics, the writer carried out an intensive field-to-field survey of existing cropland use in village Jariha situated in *tahsil* Karwi, district Banda, U. P., at Lat. 25°19' N and Long. 81°0' E. The yield of various crops was ascertained by repeated interrogation of the villagers themselves, and then production was worked out by multiplying the yield per acre with the acreage occupied by the crops. With the help of the actual production thus obtained and the total population dependent on the village produce, the Food Balance Sheet was prepared to find out the per capita calorie intake in the village. As grains are the major source of calories in the village and meat is not one of the items of their diet, because the villagers are generally vegetarian, the calculation of actual calorie intake indicate the general nutrition standards in the village.

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In preparing the Food Balance Sheet, export figures as extracted from the villagers by careful inquiries and the amount stored for seeds next year were deducted from the total production. Extraction rates published in the Food and Agriculture Organization's *Food Balance Sheets*, 1955, were then applied to obtain Food (net) available for direct human consumption. The net quantities of food were converted into kilograms and the figure thus obtained was divided by the total population actually dependent on the village produce. This shows the per head consumption for the whole year, which after being divided by 365 gives the per head daily consumption. The daily figure was converted into calories at the rates published in the *Food Composition Tables for International Use* by United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, Washington, 1949.

The yield of different crops which are grown in the village is given in Table 1. The total production and the calorie consumption of the villagers is given in Table 2.

TABLE 1

Yield of Crops in Village Jariha

Crops	Yield in lb. per acre
<i>Jowar</i> mixed with <i>arhar</i>	656
<i>Bajra</i> mixed with <i>arhar</i>	410
Rice (broadcast)	738
Wheat mixed with gram in medium quality I land	738
Wheat mixed with gram in medium quality II land	574
Wheat mixed with barley and gram	574
Gram	410
Pulse (lentil)	200
Potatoes	5,000

It will be seen from Table 2 that *khari*f crops provide 37 per cent of the total calories while *rabi* crops provide 63 per cent in this village. Wheat mixed with gram and big millets (*jowar* : *Sorghum vulgare* and *bajra* : *Pennisetum typhoideum*) mixed with pulses (*arhar* : *Cajanus indicus*) are the major sources of calories, followed by wheat mixed with barley and gram (locally known as *bejhar*) and rice.

The total calorie consumption in this village is 2,099 per head per day. The gross cultivated area (total of both *khari*f and *rabi* seasons) in the village is 403.54 acres in which the per capita share comes to 1.30 acre. It is therefore 1.30 acre of cultivated land that provides 2,099 calories to the villagers.

The figure, however, does not include the calories obtained from milk and milk products, vegetables and fruits and oils and fats. Since no careful survey of the consumption of these important items of diet has been conducted in the village, an allowance can be made on the basis of the daily average food supplies in India. It has been estimated by P. V. Sukhatme, in his book, *Feeding India's Growing Millions* (Bombay 1965, p. 34) that in the year 1958-60 out of a total calorie intake of 1,970 per head per day, 243 calories were obtained from fruits, vegetables (excluding starchy roots), meat, eggs, fish, milk, oils and fats. In the village under study, meat, eggs and fish constituting 12 calories (*vide* Sukhatme 1965) are not included in the diet. Hence, after their exclusion, 231 calories or 12 per cent of the total average consumption is supplied by fruits, vegetables, milk, oils and fats. However, if we take 10 per cent as a convenient round figure for the consumption of these items, it will not make greater difference as the main source of calories in the village are only grains.

The addition of 10 per cent to the total calorie intake from cereals, pulses and starchy roots may, therefore, be granted for the consumption of milk and milk products, vegetables (excluding starchy roots), fruits, fats and oils. It makes the total intake $2,099 + 210 = 2,309$ calories per head per day. Thus, 2,309 calories are consumed by each person in village Jariha, Banda district, U. P.

BOOK REVIEWS

Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion. Edited by Michael Banton. Tavistock Publications, London, 1966. 30 shillings.

This is the third monograph published by the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth in the series 'New Approaches in Social Anthropology.' Clifford Geertz, one of the contributors to the volume is of the opinion that studies of religion are in a state of general stagnation as there has been no theoretical advance of major importance. 'In this field anthropologists have been "living off the intellectual capital" of their ancestors and their concepts are drawn from a very narrowly defined intellectual tradition.' This castigatory statement is not wholly justified if we consider the acute and complicated analysis of religious phenomena made by anthropologists in the last two decades. His plea for a wider treatment of cultural dimensions of religious analysis is, however, welcome. By explaining the role of religion in social relations we do not explain the whole of religion. For a better understanding of a set of phenomena so complicated as religion, better techniques of investigation derived from more than one discipline are surely needed. Sociological explanation has to be supplemented by psychological explanation.

Both Geertz and Spiro grapple with the problem of giving a suitable definition of religion. Geertz defines it as 'a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in man by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.' He goes on to elaborate the definition with a penetrating analysis of the specific situation in Java. He feels that anthropologists have neglected the analysis of the system of meanings embodied in the symbols which make up religion proper.

Spiro defines religion as 'an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings.' According to him most studies of religion are concerned with its role in the explanation of society; its contribution to societal integration by its satisfaction of sociological wants. This, however, does not provide an explanation of religion. The three other contributors to this volume Turner, Bradbury and Winter have discussed such topics as ancestor cults, initiation ceremonies,

political rituals and the social context of myths with reference to the three African societies they have studied.

Sachchidananda

Social Anthropology of Complex Societies. Edited by Michael Banton. Tavistock Publications, London 1966. 30 shillings.

This is the fourth and final volume emerging from the labours of a conference on 'New Approaches in Social Anthropology' sponsored by the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth. The contents of the volume bring home the fact that Social Anthropology is no longer confined to the study of pre-literate simpler societies but embraces in its span such communities as Italian peasants, African townsmen, Indian village politicians, Welsh villagers and the smaller colonial or ex-colonial territories, such as Fiji and Mauritius. This raises new questions on the methodological plane. Trained as the anthropologists are in observation and interview and with a predisposition for the study of small societies or areas, are they duly equipped to deal with the problems of more complex societies? This volume attempts, by implication, to find an answer to these questions.

Wolf finds the anthropologists' justification in the study of complex societies in the fact that some of such societies are not quite well organized and tightly knit. The formal framework of economic and political power is intermingled with various other kinds of informal structure which are interstitial, supplementary and parallel to it. How the informal structure ties up with the formal may also be explored by the anthropologist. Wolf has analysed kinship, friendship and patron-client relationship with reference to his data from Middle America.

Burton Benedict examines the sociological characteristics of small territories and their implications for economic development. He analyses the relation between the scale of society and the number, kinds and duration of social roles; types of values and alternatives, magico-religious practices, jural relations, political structure and economic development.

Mitchell distinguishes between 'historical' or 'processive' change which includes over-all changes in the social system and 'situational change' which covers changes in behaviour following participation in different social systems. He also emphasizes with Wolf the importance of studying the 'network of personal links which the individuals build around themselves.'

Drawing on his data on the village electoral struggle in Central India, Adrian Mayer brings out the importance of networks and action-sets of relations as against groups and tries to clarify and refine these concepts. He hopes that social anthropologists of the future would have to deal more adequately with ego-centred entities such as action-sets and quasi-groups rather than with groups and sub-groups.

The essays in this volume as in others illustrate a drive towards the breaking up of established concepts in order to examine more meticulously the framework of social relations and the interaction between individuals. Mayer analyses closely the concept of network given by Barnes (1954) and Bott (1957) and clarifies different kinds of networks and action-sets. In the same way, Mitchell makes a distinction between structural and categorical relationships; i.e. relationships set in associations and institutions and relationships based on common attributes such as race, tribe and class.

The search for broad hypotheses or theory is illustrated by Loudon in his essay on 'Religious Order and Mental Disorder.' While social anthropologists are ready to turn to other disciplines in search of explanations, the British confine themselves to a narrower range than the American.

It is unfortunate that none of the essays in the present volume deals with the growing importance of tradition in the study of complex societies in the East and the strong links forged between social anthropology and history as a consequence.

Sachchidananda

Kacty v Indii. *Chief Editor, G. G. Kotovsky, Nauka, Moskva, 1965, Pp. 348.*

The book under review is a collection of seventeen articles out of which fifteen are devoted to the study of various aspects of the caste system in India from ancient to modern times. Of the remaining two, one deals with the Varna system, as it prevails in the island of Bali today. The remaining paper discusses the Varna system in Angkor (Kamboj) in the IX-XIIth Centuries. At the outset there is a long introduction by the editor wherein various theories with regard to the Varna and the caste system have been critically examined. One cannot, however, agree with the sweeping remark of the learned contributor that law framed against untouchability by the Government of India has remained a dead letter in the villages.

Mrs. Maretina's article on Varna system in the island of Bali is significant because it provides a new perspective on the problem. The first three Varnas in Bali cover about 10% of the population, which incidentally forms the upper crust of the society. The remaining citizens who include the working and the professional classes are dubbed there as Sudras. The Kshatriyas exist only in name as they have been almost completely assimilated by the Vaisyas. Mrs. Maretina rightly does not call this system by the name of 'Caste' as understood in India because some of its important characteristics are missing. Similarly, Sedov shows on the basis of contemporary epigraphic evidence that in the kingdom of Angkor in 974 A. D. there existed seven Varnas and in the same year their number rose to nine when the king created two new ones. Caste as such did not exist there. One only hopes that Indian scholars will realize the necessity of studying the social, economic and cultural institutions of the neighbouring

countries at least for the sake of better and deeper understanding of indigenous institutions.

There is an excellent study of Nehru's views on the caste system by A. H. Wafa. An independent article on Mahatma Gandhi's struggle against untouchability would have made the book more purposeful.

Surendra Gopal

Narody yuzhnoi Azii (Peoples of South Asia), *General Editor, S. P. Tolstov, Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, Moskva, Pp. 964.*

The Institute of Ethnography, Academy of Sciences, USSR, has been publishing comprehensive monographs on different countries with a view to acquainting the readers with the way of life of the people concerned, not only as it is today but also how it has evolved over the centuries since the time man made his appearance. This approach implies the description of diverse forces, ethnographic, economic, social and geo-political etc., which have moulded the way of life. Hence, it is a task which can be undertaken only with the support of specialists in different fields. The book under review is the result of the joint efforts of two institutes of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, of Ethnography and of the Peoples of Asia. In the latter, more than hundred scholars are presently engaged in research on varied problems of Indian History, Economics, Languages and Literature and Philosophy etc.

The book covers the Indian subcontinent, the Maldivé Islands, Ceylon and the Andamans. The first part of the book gives some general information about the geography, population, language and anthropological composition of the area and an outline of the history, society, religion and culture of India and Pakistan. The second part takes up the important regions and segments of population one by one, and the guidelines of the first part are repeated and supplemented by details on present-day economy, society, customs, manners and religious beliefs etc. In this way the reader is presented with the important facts not only of the contemporary life of the people but also of the past. The author rightly stresses the significance of the study of the ethnic history of ancient Bihar because it can throw a flood of light on the ethnic history of contemporary India (p. 282).

However, a book of this type, dealing as it does with a country like India, where rapid changes in all branches are taking place, has an obvious drawback. Facts, even before they can appear in print, get out of date. But the authors are hardly to be blamed.

The publication is useful, both to the average reader as well as the specialist. Some errors of detail have crept in but they do not in any way detract from the merit of the book.

Surendra Gopal

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