

THE SANTAL VILLAGE HEADMAN: A STUDY OF
LEADERSHIP AND CONTINUITY IN AN EGALITARIAN
SOCIETY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

THE SANTAL VILLAGE HEADMAN: A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP AND
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By

George E. Somers

This thesis focuses on the Santal peasants who reside in their own landed villages in the Santal Parganas of Bihar, India. The underlying theme is cultural continuity in the face of innumerable and varying forces of change exerted on the traditional Santal way of life. The primary focus is on the village headman who is recognized by his people as both the manjhi haram (village father) and the political leader of an egalitarian community. In this basically egalitarian society, the headman, as primus inter pares, emerges as the major agent in the process of cultural continuity.

The Santal villages located primarily in the Santal Parganas, but also in Bengal, Orissa, Assam and Bangla Desh, are characteristically populated by 150--400 people. They are nucleated villages which are distinguished by a traditional form of patrilineal primogenitorial inheritance of land and offices. The villages are not a series of physically isolated communities.

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Rather, in an area of about 50 square miles in the Santal Parganas, it is common to find 55 or 60 villages. The population of the Santal Parganas is about three million people according to the 1970 Census of India, nearly one-third of which were Santals. Their villages are sometimes clustered together, but such arrangement is not an uninterrupted pattern. The pattern of village settlements frequently involves a heterogeneity of ethnic groups among contiguous villages and sometimes within single villages.

The small region under observation, including the two specific villages referred to in detail, has well-defined residential areas located inside territorial village boundaries. In spite of these villages being considered political and economic units in their own right, there is a definite overlapping of political administration. The traditional Santal village headman is the highest ranking local official among his fellow villagers. The headman and five or six other selected elders function as the administrators of each village which has its own complete council of household heads. However, the Santal society is an encapsulated society. For more than a century the headman has been a subordinate appointee of the Sub-Divisional Officer who represents the government administration of the state. In more recent years another government plan has been superimposed in the area.

Since the mid 1950's the Panchayat system of locally elected representatives to compose village government has been enacted. The modern Panchayat system has not had the effect of cutting across the

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local caste hierarchy among the Santals because no such caste system is known to them. The modern Panchayat system has linked the Santal villages to each other and in many instances has linked them to other non-Santal villages located in the demarcated "block areas". This modern system places the Santal villages within heterogeneously composed administrative units beyond the local village and opens new avenues of influence and control over the people from a political system unknown to their traditions.

The overlapping of village watchmen and the mercantile police force of the government's Anchal police is also a departure from the village law-and-order system. The courts which parallel the police system with its hierarchy also overlap the traditional village council system. However, these overlapping instrumentalities do not necessitate multitudinous disputes between the traditional and the modern. The systems of government simultaneously in operation tend to vacillate between mutual economy of function and reciprocal assistance, which are not always free from conflict. The village headman is in a unique position in what appears to be a complex system incorporating the traditional and modern into an enduring society which values cultural continuity. Cultural continuity appears to be inextricably related to the role fulfillment of the headman in keeping with the ways of the ancestors. However, in order to fulfill this role, the headman is dependent upon his people as they are dependent upon him to keep the traditional system in balance. Because this is an encapsulated society, having overt political and economic relationships with non-Santals and being

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involved in new forms of government organization, the headman is also dependent upon the constitutional rights of the "aborigines" carried over from British India and enunciated in the constitution of modern India.

The approach of this study seeks to combine a description of social structure and organization with the narration of selected case studies in order to elucidate both the static and dynamic aspects of Santal life today. This technique has been influenced by the method of inquiry employed in the respective studies of F. G. Bailey in Orissa and R. W. Nicholas in West Bengal. The first half of the presentation emphasizes the social system in which the village headman lives; the second half the actual involvement of the headman in what I have labeled a series of enactments. The thesis begins and ends with the hypothesis that the headman is the primary agent of cultural continuity in the Santal village communities of the Santal Parganas.

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By

George E. Somers

A THESIS

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1975

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strength when the needs were the greatest. Dr. Harry Raulet has stayed with me over the years and remains faithful to his student on the graduate committee.

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AN ORTHOGRAPHIC GUIDE

The Santali language was not written prior to the introduction of Sanskritic text. The phonetic and phonemic composition of the Devanagari script has been used by Indian scholars as one written form of Santali. However, P.O. Bodding and other Western missionaries have contributed much to the orthographic accuracy of reproducing the oral Santali in written form with the use of diacritical marks. Culshaw and others have employed the system of romanization developed by Bodding which is used in this presentation (Bodding 1930). The following diacritical marks have been used:

1. A circumflex above a vowel, as the o in bos, indicates a nasal tone.
2. A dot below an "a", as the a in paris, indicates a resultant vowel. The pronunciation is not uniform. It sometimes resembles the pronunciation of the vowel in the first stressed syllable and sometimes the second syllable of such an English word as worker pronounced in the southern English way, the r's being silent.
3. There are four checked consonants indicated by an apostrophe; k', c', t' and p' which are not found in any form in regular English usage.
4. Bodding uses a dot below the consonants "t" and "d" to indicate a hard dental sound. I do not use these dots in the text of this presentation.
5. Bodding uses an accent with the "n" on occasion to indicate the palatal n, and a dot above the "n" to indicate the guttural n. I have not used either of these indicators but have added a "g" to such words as marang instead.
6. A dot below an "r", as the r in hoṛ, indicates a retroflex consonant which is not regularly used in English.
7. All "a's" are pronounced as the "a" in father rather than the usual English pronunciation, as in cat.

(Culshaw 1949:IX)

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM, THE SETTING AND THE METHODOLOGY

The Problem

Culture change has long been one of the major concerns of ethnological studies. The processes and agencies of cultural continuity have often been a focal interest in the study of such changes, especially for students of the more isolated and non-literate societies. This study is a contribution to the understanding of cultural continuity in the midst of change, as it is found in the society of one of the relatively isolated and until recently non-literate people in the Indian sub-continent. The Santals of the Santal Parganas, Bihar have been subjected to highly aggressive assimilative pressures during the past century and a half. The factors which have served to preserve their cultural identity deserve the close attention of the student of culture continuity and change.

Assimilative pressures have been exerted on Santal culture by at least three major traditions. Redfield would have labeled them "Great traditions" (Redfield 1956). The pan-Indian rural tradition has been the most immediate in its effect. Its influence has been pervasively exerted to incorporate the Santal people

into the village community life and peasant economy which were developed in their final form under the laissez faire policies of the British administration, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century. Sanskritic elements in the rural tradition have tended to bring the Santals into assimilated villages as a subordinate, possibly untouchable, caste rather than treat them as an ethnic group with their own cultural heritage. Islamic elements in the rural tradition have tended towards a greater racial amalgamation than Sanskritization permits. Both have had similar economic effects in their tendency to incorporate the Santals as menials and landless laborers into the rural economy, with inevitable weakening of social and religious elements in Santal culture. The effect of contact with the Christian religious tradition from Europe and America, where it has won converts, has deprived Santal society of important supports in ritual and mythology. The modernizing tradition, with its scientific approach to problems and its industrial and technological aspects, has had relatively little influence on Santal village life in the Santal Parganas. There will undoubtedly be an increase of this type of influence in the future. The migration of Santals to employment opportunities outside their rural communities has brought some modern influences into the consciousness of those who have remained in the village. The opportunities for upward mobility offered by the modernizing school systems of government and mission have attracted numbers of Santal youth to leave their villages, at least for a few years; to experience a different environment.

In spite of these assimilative influences, Santal villages continue to maintain much of their traditional way of life. The Santals of the Santal Parganas have developed some seemingly successful agencies of cultural continuity. At the present juncture in India's political and social development, it appears quite possible that these agencies will function to preserve the Santals as a distinctive people among India's varied and heterogeneous population.

One agency for cultural continuity which appears to play a critical role in the ability of the Santal communities to maintain their cultural integrity is the Santal village headman. This study deals specifically with Santal headmanship.

The problem of this study has not been to place the Santal village headman in some typology of leadership. The Santal headman performs his duties in a complex variety of activities and in many different ways, and no single category realistically characterizes his part in Santal social life. For instance, in Chapter IV it is shown that the headman is neither purely an "authority" nor specifically a "leader"; he exerts both authority and provides leadership. In Chapter VII it is pointed out that he enjoys the "legitimacy" of all the three forms suggested by Weber, "traditional", "charismatic" and "rational". Leadership studies performed in laboratory settings have suggested a distinction between "authoritarian" and "democratic" leaders, but observing the Santal headman as he actually functions in the village-centered world it becomes apparent that at times he resorts to "unqualified 'power'", and at other times his goals and

his decisions are formulated through consensus with his peers; this has been indicated by the analysis attempted in Chapter VII. In the same chapter the work of the headman is shown to include both "the preservation of the headman's authority" and "the ensuring of public benefits", terms which may be compared to the functions of "social-emotional specialists" and "task specialists" found in the classic studies of Bales (1950).

Numerous attempts have been made by social scientists to develop typologies of use in the study of leadership. They have contributed to the development of a vocabulary of terms useful in describing the activities of such leaders as the Santal village headman, but as typologies they have limited use for the Anthropologist. Even in the survey of representative societies given us in African Political Systems, the editors in their analytic introduction do not attempt a typology of leadership. The nearest approach they make to a typology is their typology of the whole political system: they find that some have "centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions--in other words a government"; others lack such centralization and have "no sharp divisions of rank, status and wealth" (Fortes 1940:5). It is indicative of the almost anomalous nature of Santal headmanship that it operates in a political system which is subject to a highly organized, centralized government in the non-Santal world while village decisions are conducted where there are "no sharp divisions" and a general egalitarianism. It becomes futile to attempt to place Santal village headmanship in any inclusive typology.

Instead, a descriptive goal has been set for this study. Two problems are involved in such a study. First is the problem of focus: what aspects of the headman's activity or functions should be examined and described? The major alternatives available for study are the "social" factors and the "cultural" factors. The distinction between these has great theoretical value, but in the field and in an understandable description of what has been actually observed the inclusion of both factors is inevitable. In describing "relationships" the work is impoverished if norms and values are ignored, and in descriptions confined to the norms and values the results are highly abstract and appear to lack realism. In this study the focus is largely on the actual behavior of the Santal village headman, but pertinent cultural factors have not been ignored. To put it in another way, the focus is on the actual role of the headman; this has required attention both to structural elements which accord status and those elements of culture which define the role of the headman for the people.

The second problem in a descriptive study is raised by the need for a consistent and adequate vocabulary, in this case a vocabulary of role-descriptive terms. No such vocabulary has been developed which has been either widely used or generally accepted. In the final chapter, Chapter VII, where a systematic description of the headman's role has been attempted, terms have been borrowed from a variety of scientific sources as well as from general English usage. It is hoped that these successfully serve to provide the comprehensive descriptive work intended in this study.

The Setting of This Study

The area in which the field work was carried out provided several advantages. First, it may be regarded as the heart-land of the Santal people where the characteristics of Santal culture are overtly displayed in the continuity of village life. This area is not the original homeland of the Santals; that is found some three hundred miles to the southwest near the Chota Nagpur plateau now inhabited by Mundari-speaking cultural-kinfolk of the Santals. The geographic area under study here is the setting in which Santal communities have developed and maintained their status as a dominant and readily identifiable population.

The specific area of this study is a part of the Santal Parganas. It is significant to note that the Santal Parganas are located at the extreme eastern end of that "Central Belt" of forested hills and uplands in which a number of India's minority cultures have found "refuge areas". Among the several minor regions included in the Santal Parganas district, the part referred to as the Damin-i-koh is the setting of the most vigorous preservation of Santal culture. It is a rolling upland along the southern edge of the Rajmahal Hills (hence its name, meaning in Persian "the skirt of the hills"); the Rajmahal Hills form a group of rugged ridges which press northwards against the mainstream of the Ganges River at the point where it is about to turn sharply southwards into the Bengal delta. The Santal villages in the Damin-i-koh have enjoyed a freedom for the continuation of their traditional life unequalled

by any other area where Santals live, even by other sections of the Santal Parganas.

A second advantage found in this particular part of Bihar has been the presence of two contrasting, although contiguous villages. Five villages were first selected for study and all five were frequently visited, but the most useful data were collected from the two villages of Manjhipur and Dangrajolha.¹ Manjipur is a "pure" Santal village; Dangrajolha includes, with its Santal minority, both Hindi-speaking and Bengali-speaking ethnic groups, religiously both Hindu and Muslim, and, to symbolize the operation of assimilative forces, a government school, a sub-Post Office, a Hindu temple, a Muslim mosque, a Christian church and an assortment of shops operated by merchants and moneylenders.

The third advantage gained in selecting this area for study is the absence of previous community studies in these villages. The pioneering studies of the Norwegian missionary scholars, Bodding and Gausdal were made, in large part, in this area, but Bodding's massive five volume work--his Dictionary of the Santali language--published between 1932 and 1936, belongs in the field of linguistic studies, while the present study is concerned with the social organization and cultural milieu of Santal communities. Gausdal's The Santal Khutiā, referred to in Chapter V, is restricted to religious aspects of Santal society and is general in its source of data. The early work of the Englishman, Archer, published largely in periodical form, was done among Santals outside the Damin-i-koh, and the work of Culshaw, The Tribal Heritage, reporting his findings

in the field of festivals and folklore, was done among Santals living outside the Santal Parganas. The first work published by an Indian Anthropologist on the Santals, Mukherjee's The Santals appearing in 1943 incorporates data from a variety of publications including the Census of India Gazetteers on the Santal Parganas rather than personal observation and participation among the people. In 1962 Mukherjee revised and expanded his work to include further data collected by various scholars in the intervening years.

Datta-Majumdar's The Santal, a Study in Culture Change was presented in 1956. It describes kinship, polity, economics and ritual as found among Santals in Bengal who had already experienced considerable loss of traditional culture before he worked among them.

Santals of the Santal Parganas, published also in 1956, by P. C. Biswas, provides an informative account of Santal life in an area not far from the Damin-i-koh. Shorter summaries of Santal culture have appeared in a number of works, each covering several of India's "schedule tribes", but these have tended to be highly generalized in their statements and not the product of intensive field work.

The American Anthropologist, Martin Orans, whose 1965 publication described political trends in a highly industrialized population of Santals, did his work in southern Bihar, at the southern extremity of the area outside the Santal Parganas. Santal Social Organization was published by Kochar in 1970 as a result of his field work in the late 1950's near Shantinikatan in Bengal where the people no longer depend on the cultivation of land. The Santals described by Kochar have also been greatly influenced by the dominant presence of

Bangalis. Nevertheless, the social structure described by Kochar is similar to that found in the Damin-i-koh and offers a reliable comparative study.

The fourth advantage in selecting this area for study is personal. I have lived in the area for seven years. I speak Santali with facility and I have achieved numerous intimate personal relationships with individuals from whom reliable information has been derived.²

Methodology

The data presented in this study were gathered in an eighteen-month residence, from January 1970 to June 1971, in the more concentrated area around Manjhipur and Dangrajolha. Although I did not live in either village per se I spent two or three days each week there, while my Indian research assistant, his wife and children lived in Manjhipur throughout the period. It was not necessary to employ paid informants from among the villagers because of my facility with the language. I was free to move among the people, sometimes participating in ritual ceremonies as well as casual conversations, in personal discussions as well as in meetings with village elders. Recorded notations on each day's findings, together with extensive notes made by my research assistant, have provided the basic data used in this report.

The methodological focus of this study has been eclectic rather than limited to any one procedure or interest. To observe behavior in its total setting has been the ideal toward which I

have striven. But behavior tends to be meaningless much of the time unless the norms, values and motives of the actors are known; therefore both the structural and the normative aspects of Santal behavior have been the focus of attention.

The fact that this study has been confined to observations in only two villages, for the most part, may seem to limit its value as a general examination of Santal culture. This limitation is inevitable in this type of study, based as it is on intensive field work. However, as noted above, there were a number of contacts made with nearby villages which gave a wider perspective to the observation in the narrower field of intensive study. Also, years of contact with the entire Damin-i-koh and with those who have lived closely with the Santals have provided a corrective to any tendencies to make large-scale generalizations on the basis of limited field data.

The Method of Presentation

The problem of presentation has required considerable effort before it could be resolved. After several attempts at a general description of political and social life in the villages under study, it became apparent that a limitation of the subject was necessary. Therefore it was decided to center the presentation on the role of the Santal village headman.

The role of the headman was chosen as the focus because the headman is both supported by the Santal traditions and at the same time the enactment of headmanship is the primary support of

hapramko ak' dustur (the traditions of the ancestors). It will be seen that the role of the headman has become more critical with the growing need to maintain close connections with the protective "encapsulating" government, particularly with the Sub-Divisional Officer who is the local representative of the Government of India. The headman is permitted direct access to the Sub-Divisional Officer which enables him to bring the problems of the village directly to the officer most competent and best prepared to give assistance. This connection also makes the headman the guardian of the village land records which may be described as the "Charter of Santal Identity", for the records protect the rights of the Santals to the ownership of their lands; when these records fall into the hands of non-Santal village officers, a variety of means are employed to remove the rights of the Santals. Where the village headman is active and competent, the cultural continuity of the village is more surely protected, not necessarily as a rigid, reactionary resistance to change, but as a continuity of life style in which the innovative elements can be integrated into the traditional with a minimum of social disturbance. It may be of significance that in many areas along the borders of the Santal Parganas and in districts where isolated villages of Santals are located, the non-Santal people often refer to the Santals as "Manjhis", giving the whole community the title of its headman, the manjhi.

But even such a limited subject involved so much information and extended analysis that a further limitation was necessary. It seemed appropriate to eliminate first the economic problems of the

headman and his people; these would require an extensive presentation. Then the religious aspects of the headman's role were excluded, though a large body of data on this subject has been collected. Finally, it became apparent that even the socialization of the Santals, as it is seen in the preparation of the headman for his role, had to be eliminated from this presentation.

This process left the basic social and political life of the village as it involves the role of the headman. From the data collected, a number of action-situations became the center of interest. These have been termed, "enactments", and a representative sample of "enactments" provide the basic data for the analysis of the headman's role.

Before the reports of the "enactments" can be made fully intelligible it is necessary to present two bodies of information as introductory material. First the historical development is described which led to the emergence of headmanship, as it is found today. The historical review given in Chapter II presents the primary reasons why certain traits have emerged and remain operative in the performance of the headman's role. Central to this historical review is the fact of "encapsulation" explained as a protective membrane surrounding the Santal village established by the Government of India.

A second type of information seems necessary as an introduction to the "enactments". The behavior of the headman cannot be made intelligible without first describing the setting in which the action was performed. Hence, a chapter on the social and ecological

community in which the headman lives and works: this community is two-layered, the Santal community as a whole--hoꝛ disom (Santal country)--and the ato, or local village community. Having placed the headman in his "world", the political "instrumentalities" require description before his actions can become significant: the governmental entities, the various groups of village people, the specific offices of the village administration all need explicit description. Finally, it is necessary to outline the basic traditional categories into which the Santals divide themselves, their clans, sub-clans, sects, households, etc. After this descriptive material is presented in Chapters III, IV, and V, it becomes possible to present the nine selected "enactments".

The "enactments", however, provide little more than a series of episodes or anecdotes. A systematic understanding of the headman's role is attempted in the over-all expository treatment in Chapter VII. Here the generalizations possible from the data collected have been offered. The method by which the headman succeeds to his office and the problems involved in using this method, the hereditary principle, is analyzed. The relation of the headman to the government is described. The last part of Chapter VII deals with the relationship of the headman with his people, in a variety of analytical sections which focus on the maintenance of tradition and the containment of deviance. This exposition of the role of the Santal village headman is, in a way, a summary of the entire work. It also includes references to the

source of role-descriptive terms and suggestions for further study, particularly the area mentioned above as omitted in the present work.

The most significant theoretical contribution of this study is the analysis of Santal village council procedures which repeatedly validate and fulfill the ideal of Santal consensus. Consensus in the village council is both a reflection of ato saḡai and a means of perpetuating it as a characteristic of Santal culture. F. G. Bailey has provided a "scheme for investigation" in his Decisions in Councils and Committees (1973) in which he raises issues and questions directly applicable to the non-caste Santals of the Santal Parganas. Bailey's face-to-face hypothesis, his concept of arena councils and his description of the traditional and statutory village Panchayats are all illustrated in this study.

The "face-to-face hypothesis" is substantiated in the frequent meeting of the Santal village council. The "arena council" is illustrated in both the pargana assembly of traditional Santal society and in the inter-ethnic council of the heterogeneous village of Dangrajolha, where the Santals are a minority. The traditional panchayat system has had little effect on the encapsulated Santal society but the new statutory panchayat system, as illustrated in Chapter VI, has already effected even homogeneous Santal villages.

The description of the Santal village communities, complete with their egalitarian form of village council, including the paradoxical role of the traditional headman, may also contribute to Bailey's concern over the historical fact of consensus. It

seems that the Santal communities in this part of India have successfully actualized the ideology which places paramount value on ato saḡai. This becomes especially evident in the enactments recorded in Chapter VI where the presence of the headman and the pursuit of consensus are inextricably related to ato saḡai.

CHAPTER II

THE EMERGENCE OF SANTAL HEADMANSHIP

Introduction: Approach to the Subject

The emergence of leaders or leadership groups may be studied in different ways. The emergence of social structure can be the focus of study. Patterns of interaction are examined in an attempt to discover what factors are involved in the rise of specific individuals or groups to the status of leadership. The organization of power relationships in a society or social entity becomes the major object of inquiry. Very often this type of leadership study has involved the scrutiny of the competitive process in the political arena. Where records of political activity are available over a significant period of change, this approach has provided valuable insights into the nature of the process by which leaders emerge in their arena. Such records, whether written or oral, must provide in some detail evidence of the specific events and probable motivations involved in the rise of the leaders or elites under study.

A different approach is employed in this chapter. Here a study of the emergence of a cultural role is the focus of examination. Even in this approach, a historical perspective is necessary. But the data required are more general and relate to society-wide conditions rather than to the details of specific interactions. Norms and values are the subject of study, rather than pragmatic

activity. The information available among the Santals along with a few written resources provide the data for this type of study.

It is difficult at this point to judge which of the two approaches has provided greater understanding of the organization of leadership for the social scientist. The study of interaction and of social structures, their emergence and change, has generated a body of fact and theory which is impressively authentic and realistic. The study of cultural roles is more abstract and generalized. Nevertheless, it deals with the fundamental data of behavior--the norms and values which form the essential framework within which interaction takes place, the "rules of the game" which largely govern the competitive process. It is probably correct to say that both approaches are necessary and capable of contributing to each other. Certainly, the approach used depends largely upon the available data.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe how the cultural role of the Santal village headman has emerged out of a series of historical experiences. The major periods of Santal history, as far as it is known, will be briefly described as they relate to the gradual development of the norms and values, traditions and institutions, which govern the behavior of the Santal village headman today. Later chapters deal with the headman's role in the contemporary scene; the present chapter deals with the historical emergence of what became culturally defined as headmanship.

Origins

Early steps in the emergence of headmanship are lost to history. The conditions under which the role first developed are not recorded. Any attempt at reconstructing the early life of the Santal people which produced the role of the headman would be pure speculation. For purposes of this study we can only accept the fact that when the Santals first attracted the attention of administrators and writers, they were organized with village headmen in small nucleated settlements. However, events and conditions for which we do have historical data provide some of the most significant characteristics of the role as it appears today. The purpose of this chapter is to note the effect of these known events and conditions upon the village headman's role.

Migration and Settlement

The role of the Santal village headman has been colored by the fact that the Santals in the Damin-i-koh have been, in historic times, an immigrant people. They represent an intrusive cultural element coming into the area within the last one hundred and fifty years. The circumstances of their migration into this area involved two notable experiences. In the first place the migration demanded what might be called a pioneering investment. In the second, the migration brought the Santal into conflict with earlier occupants of the territory. Both the investment process and the conflict seem to have influenced the forms of leadership which evolved.

To understand the nature and extent of the investment made by the Santal migration and settlement in the Damin-i-koh, we should first note conditions in what is considered their original homeland. It is impossible to trace the routes of the earliest Santal migrations, although it is quite evident from their mythology that migration has been a pattern in their history. It suffices here to say with confidence that the Santal villagers of today are descendants of one of several Mundari-speaking people who, prior to the establishment of British control in India, formed the dominant population in a large part of the Chota Nagpur region. This is a region of rugged hill-ranges and, historically, of dense forests, penetrated by several major streams of which Santal mythology notes most frequently the River Damodar. Somewhere in this region, probably in what is today the Midnapore District of West Bengal, some three hundred miles south and west of the Damin-i-koh, lay the land of Sant from which the Santals are reputed to have gained their name.

In this homeland, at some time during the unrecorded past the ancestors of the present Santals developed an interest in wet-rice cultivation. This interest in permanent agriculture was added to, although not completely substituted for, the earlier love of hunting and dependence upon forest products for livelihood. Opportunities to possess rice fields or to hold them in the face of aggressive non-Santal land speculators were limited. As the Chota Nagpur area was penetrated by the agricultural populations the Santals became land hungry people early in the nineteenth century.

At this point it was apparently not difficult to induce the Santals to leave their homeland for cultivable areas elsewhere. The hunger for land seems to have been the basic motivation for the investment of life and labor in the migration to the Damin-i-koh.

Capital resources required for the migration included labor, life-support during the period before harvests, and tools, animals and seed necessary for the agricultural operation. Labor was plentiful and organized under village leaders. Because the migration took place in groups they tended to settle in nucleated villages. The investment in labor tended to be group investments rather than individual or family investments. This was enhanced by the cooperation necessary for the continuing arduous work of preparing rice fields and cutting channels for irrigation. Life-support during the migration and the period before the first harvesting came from similarly collective enterprises. The Santals were able to exploit the forests along the route of migration and surrounding their new settlements for meat and vegetables. Their hunting usually involved a large-scale operation which characteristically involved considerable cooperation. There are also indications that the gathering of forest products was done in groups. It was only for iron tools, draft oxen and seed grains that the Santals had to go to out-side lending agencies for their capital resources. Under the aegis of officers of the British East India Company, the Santals went to the traditional agricultural money-lenders of non-Santal villages for loans for their tools, animals and seed grains. These loans were by legal necessity individual

and family responsibilities. Though the Santals were dependent on the non-Santal moneylenders after their migration it seems erroneous to assume that their migration depended on moneyed capitalists. It seems apparent that leadership and authority, like their labor and life-support enterprises, were indigenous to the migrating Santals.

The collective and cooperative experiences of the migration and settlement in the Damin-i-koh tended to reinforce earlier trends in Santal Society. The great interest in wet-rice cultivation and permanent agriculture became a focal economic interest in Santal culture. Egalitarian organization became the basic principle of Santal political and social relationships. Indigenous leadership was esteemed in Santal village life and also in inter-village relations.

In addition to the experiences involved in the investment made by the Santals in their migration and settlement in the Damin-i-koh they also experienced conflict before the new land was theirs. They did not find the Damin-i-koh totally unoccupied, and their movement into the area was not uncontested. Only through success in a period of conflict with non-Santal rivals did they achieve their dominance in the territory. Their success in the conflict depended in part on their technology as competent hunters and masters of the ways of the forest and in part on their effective social organization and leadership.

The few, poor, scattered settlements of agriculturalists who had managed to penetrate the forests of the Damin-i-koh made

no effort to contest the settlement of the Santals. It was the Maler or Mal Pahariahs (literally the "Mal" people of the hills) who attempted to prevent the immigration.

The Mal Pahariahs were different from the Santals in many ways. We may note the difference in language, in economic interests, and in their relationships with outsiders. The language of the Santals is to be classified as an Austric language, akin to Mundari, Savara and other languages of the eastern sector of India's "Central Belt". On the other hand, the language of the Malers is related in its fundamental structures to the Dravidian languages of south India and to the Gondi and Oraon languages found mostly in the central sector of India's "Central Belt". In their early contacts, the Santals and Malers were not able to communicate with each other in mutually understandable language. Economically the Malers differed from the Santals in that they rejected completely the Santal preference for rice cultivation and permanent field agriculture. They were slash-and-burn horticulturalists whose primary interest was in exploiting the forests for their economic needs. This economy demanded access to extensive areas of forest. The forests were important to the Malers for a further reason connected with their dealings with their neighbors. The forests served as a "privileged sanctuary" for their marauding raids on the villages of the river plains which lay to the north and east of their hill country. They had succeeded for centuries in maintaining the inviolate isolation of their forests while they attacked the village communities whenever the defenses of the villagers

were weakened or disorganized. The Santals, on the other hand, tended to live at peace with their agricultural neighbors.

The Santals were not the first to challenge the Malers' rights to their forests. Soon after the East India Company took control of Bengal a devastating famine disorganized the village communities which lay within reach of the marauding Malers who immediately took advantage of the situation. This brought them to the attention of the government in Bengal which promptly sent company troops to protect the rent-paying agriculturalists. The British established a military presence in the Raj Mahal hills, but the pacification of the Mal Pahariahs did not involve any serious cultural change for them. The first officers in charge of pacification were men of exceptional humanity. They followed policies which provided early precedents for later dealings of the British with the Santals. They gave recognition to the traditional Maler leaders, and promised the preservation of their traditional customs, while requiring only that the Malers themselves form a peace-keeping organization. Under the early British officers the Malers continued in possession of their forest rights in the Damin-i-koh.

After the first years of the pacification, however, the authorities in Calcutta began to call for revenues from the Damin-i-koh and Raj Mahal Hill areas. Local officials tried to persuade the Malers to alter their patterns of food production, to substitute permanent farming for their slash-and-burn methods. When the Malers failed to respond to these efforts, relations between the authorities

and the Malers became strained. Company officials decided that the area of the Damin-i-koh should be opened to migrants of more productive habits.

The British authorities encouraged Santal migration into the Damin-i-koh. However, they did not provide any effective protection for the new settlers against the attacks of the Malers who claimed prior rights to the forests of the area. The Malers could not mount any massive resistance to the Santals, for the peace-keeping corps subsidized by the British was untrained for concerted efforts against other people. In spite of this the Malers carried out their usual guerrilla tactics over a long period of time against the new Santal agriculturalists in the area.

The outcome of the conflict was determined by factors of technology and social organization. In both the Santals were superior to the Malers. The Santals were not "purely agriculturalists"; they were familiar with the forests and could meet appropriately the guerrilla-type tactics of the Malers. The capacity of the Santal leadership for maintaining their social organization while keeping the morale of their people during their physical encounters with the Malers proved more than adequate. The Santals became the dominant population in the territory leaving the Malers as a minority in the Damin-i-koh for more than a century. It should be noted that in addition to the fact that early Santal migrants were able to match and defeat the Malers, the massive numbers of immigrants within a few years resulted in "no contest" between the two ethnic groups.

In 1837 a British Civil Servant, James Pontet, was assigned to the development of revenue resources in the Damin-i-koh. In 1838 only some 3,000 Santals resided in less than 50 villages in the area. By 1851, only fourteen years later, the Santals numbered about 83,000 settled in more than 1,400 villages, each with its own headman. Fertile valleys were cleared of scrub forests and became highly productive paddy land. The Damin-i-koh began exporting rice and vegetable oils to Calcutta markets. Most notably, according to records of the East India Company, the amount of collectable taxes in the Damin-i-koh increased from rupees 2,000 in 1838 to nearly rupees 44,000 in 1851.

As a consequence of their investments in land-clearing and their success in the conflict with the Mal Pahariahs the settlement of the Santals in the new area left them with a substantial territorial heritage. Their oral traditions reflect a continuing pride in their achievements; they had earned their right to the land. Their consciousness of ethnic identity had been heightened by the Santal victory. More important for this study was the effect of the migration upon leadership roles. Through the process of settlement in the Damin-i-koh the village headmen acquired a prestige which has been successfully preserved and passed down through the successive generations. The headman today inherits the status of the village founder (Mānjhi Harām) whose memory is revered and symbolized in the village mānjhi than.³

Assimilation and Prosperity

After the migration and settlement, the Santals entered a period of serious social and economic disorganization. In little

more than a generation their achievements were very nearly nullified and the economic prosperity they had established was largely dissipated. To some extent the term "cultural distortion", suggested by Wallace and used by Nicholas for instances of "demoralization" among "subordinate groups" in situations of culture contact, may be applied to the Santals in this period (Nicholas 1973:73). To explain this rapid deterioration we may note two conditions of Santal life at this point in their history. First, as they became predominantly agricultural in their economy they became increasingly incorporated with non-Santal communities in the governmental system of British India. Secondly, they fell prey to the perils of prosperity.

In the non-Santal world into which the migrants were now precipitated, the British East India Company was attempting to establish a political order governed by laissez faire principles. It tended to value highly the expansion of individual competitive enterprise and its policies consciously subsidized such enterprise. This usually meant ignoring, if not actively discouraging, collective and cooperative economies. The British system of authority was highly rationalized and rigidly bureaucratic. This meant that only those with close friends in the system and considerable adeptness in manipulating the bureaucratic rules could obtain specialized and personal attention to their needs. The system of justice to which the Santal was compelled to resort in this new setting was based upon highly verbalized laws maintained in the precise written form of British tradition. These laws were enforced with impersonal

disinterest and preserved by complex rules foreign to the Santal social organization. The Santals came out of a history in which cooperative enterprise had proved successful. They had learned well its rules and procedures which were essential to their way of life. They were ignorant of the methods of the British competitive order and regarded it with disapproval. They were powerless against a bureaucracy in which they had no friends while their opponents had many. They were helpless to protect themselves against injustices and exploitation because they knew only the personal procedures of their village council where adjustments and adaptations were made with considerable freedom. They knew nothing of written evidence and the wide-spread perjury of the British courts were alien and abhorrent. The manipulation of court procedures was also foreign to them. The failure of the Santal to preserve their rights and identity in this period was largely due to the fact that they were unprepared for incorporation into the British Indian economic and political order.

It is possible to describe this dilemma of Santal culture in terms suggested by Wolfe, using his distinction between "primitive" and "peasant" cultures. Wolfe's definitions are given thus:

. . . in primitive society, producers control the means of production, including their own labor, and exchange their own labor and its products for the culturally defined equivalent goods and services of others. . . . In primitive society, surpluses are exchanged directly among groups or members of groups; peasants, however, the rural cultivators whose surpluses are transferred to a dominant group of rulers that uses the surpluses both to underwrite its own standard of living and to distribute the remainder to groups in society that do not farm but must be fed for their specific goods and services in turn (Wolfe 1966:4).

Santal society before and, perhaps, during the settlement of the Damin-i-koh, may be characterized as "primitive". The period after the first settlement may be described as one in which a rapid transition to the conditions of a "peasant" society took place. Relatively independent in most economic affairs, the Santals suddenly found themselves moved irresistibly into "peasant" status amid the marketing processes of a society dominated by rulers unsympathetic to their norms or their preparation. Later developments in Santal history, to be described presently, may be defined in Wolfe's terms, as a return of Santal society to a position intermediate between the "primitive" and "peasant" conditions.

The second reason for the difficulties of the Santals after settlement was generally achieved may be found in their lack of preparation for an unaccustomed prosperity. The Santal was tempted to spend more for clothing and alcohol than he could afford because he counted too heavily on the harvests from his newly cleared land. However, this weakness need not be ascribed to some entirely personal or cultural (or "primitive") "love of pleasure". It must be seen in a broader perspective. In the area which the Santal had newly settled, markets were quickly established by non-Santal merchants in centers easily accessible to the peasants, and commodities of world-wide trade became available in the Santal area.

The new and attractive goods served to disorganize the villagers' values. The Santals found themselves surrounded by items which did not fit into their familiar system of "culturally defined equivalent goods and services" (Ibid). Without an adequate

system of equivalent values, they often paid far more for what they purchased than their economy warranted. To make it possible for the Santals to overspend, the retail merchants provided credit. Loans were made at usurious rates of interest enabling the entrepreneur more profit from his moneylending than from the retailing. There is evidence that aggressive retailing was motivated more by the profits of moneylending than by the gains from the sale of commodities. Goods were made to appear attractive and novel so that the newly prosperous Santals would go into debt to buy them. Indebtedness was usually secured by mortgages on the Santal's land, and as soon as the debtor began to default on mortgage payments the law permitted the moneylender to take possession on the mortgaged acreage. The merchant, whether a Bengali merchant-moneylender (mahajan) from the east or a Bihari merchant-moneylender (banya) from the north or west, was protected by all the powers of the judicial and police systems. The Santal was handicapped by the fact that being illiterate there was no way to scrutinize personal accounts, far less contest the situation through a foreign system of law. Within a few years after their settlement in the Damin-ikoh the Santals lost control of the fields they had carved out of the forests.

The result was not merely the personal disorganization which Wallace mentions: ". . . alcoholism, passivity, indolence, violence, irresponsibility, etc." (Nicholas 1973:73). It disordered the Santal culture. The Santal became a helot on the acres he had brought into production. He became a menial in the house of the

merchant who had invited him into an unfamiliar commerce. But what was more profoundly disturbing, he saw the whole structure of his village life changing into that of a typical Indian caste-village. The merchants and the money lenders pressed the Santals into a subordinate status in the caste hierarchy which fit their own traditions and predilections. As a landless laborer the Santal was being depressed into the status of an outcaste. Because he ignored the status symbols of Hindu society, such as the taboos on widow-remarriage and meat-eating, the Santal was becoming an untouchable among the more powerful non-Santals. More important to this study, the Santal village headman seemed to be relegated to nothing more than an occasional leader in the panchayat meetings of a subordinate people.

The Santal Rebellion

Before this process could be completed, the Santal rose in violent rebellion. The rebellion, the "Hool" of 1855 is regarded by the Santals as an event of crucial importance to their history; the social scientist can give it no less importance. The rebellion resembles in some respects the phenomena referred to as "nativistic movements", "cargo cults", and "messianic movements" which have been described in many parts of the world. According to the records of the Santal Rebellion the traditional leadership did not precipitate the eventual outburst of violence. This was effected by visionaries with claims to supernatural powers. Although the rebellion did not have all the characteristics of what

Wallace has called "religious revitalization" (Nicholas 1973:68). Santals over a wide area were inspired toward sagai, (actual "oneness") and a determination to regain the status achieved by their settlement in the new land regardless of personal cost.

Reports of wide-spread discontent appeared in 1854. In village and pargana (inter-village) councils there were frequent discussions of the plight of all Santals. The three most noted complaints were: (1) the fraudulent manipulation of the money-lenders, who falsified accounts, committed perjury in court actions, and corrupted government clerks and police officers with their bribes; (2) the rapacity of tax collectors and landlords collecting land-taxes; and (3) the cruelty of the police.

Excitement mounted as the dry season passed and food resources dwindled. Suddenly, in a village not far from Barhait, a climax was reached. According to the most widely accepted version of events, two brothers, Sindhu and Kanhu, reported that they had received a visitation from the creator god of the Santals, the awesome Marang Buru who had never been known to appear in any form to any man before. The brothers reported that they had been visited by the god for seven days in succession, and that at the last visit Marang Buru had given them a book with blank white pages on which to write commands to the Santals to avenge their oppressions. News of the miraculous and repeated visitations spread quickly. Blank white pages began to circulate through the Santal villages, wide and far, symbolically commanding the people to draw up their bills of indictment and to take action against those who had stolen the

land which was rightfully theirs. It is a measure of the Santal desperation that the supernatural visitation involved their most awesome, unapproachable and ultimate deity. It also seems significant that "blank white" pages were the particular symbols chosen to be circulated among the traditionally non-literate people. One major cause of their difficulty in dealing with moneylenders and courts was their illiteracy. The people who had been oppressed through the written "white pages" of the non-Santal world produced their own book of record and determined that the condemnation of their exploiters would be spelled out in detail upon its pages.

On June 30th 1855, in the season when normally the cultivators should have been preparing their fields for the coming of the annual monsoons, ten thousand Santals gathered in an encampment just outside the village where the visionary brothers, Sidhu and Kanhu, were living. As Datta reports, "the divine order that the Santals should get out of their oppressors' control was announced" by the brothers to the crowd, and the "Santals declared their determination to do away with the Bengali and up-country mahajans and banyas, to take possession of the country and set up a Government of their own". It is significant to our study of the headman that, as Datta reports, in the midst of this crescendo of furor and clamor, "letters were then written by Kirta, Badhoo and Sunno Manjhis at Sidhu's direction addressed to Government, to the Commissioner, the Collector, and Magistrate at Bhagalpur, the Collector and Magistrate at Bisbhum, to the Darogahs of Thannahs Digbee and Tikree (Raj Mahal) and to several Zamindars and others; from the Darogahs and Zamindars

replies were called for within 15 days" (Datta 1940:15-16). The traditional leaders of the people, the three headmen, at the very brink of the rebellion wrote formal complaints to the government officers. These documents represented a last attempt to achieve the kind of adjustment and reconciliation which the Santals generally manage to achieve in their own judicial processes. The summary commands to the police officers (darogahs) and land-tax collectors (zamindars) to appear before the Santals indicates that these functionaries required immediate trial and condemnation for their deeds of personal maltreatment and exploitation.

Almost immediately thereafter violence broke out. A small caravan of moneylenders was proceeding to a weekly market when they were met by a large group of excited Santals near the village of Barhait. The Santals in their fury attacked the carts and their occupants, leaving five moneylenders dead. A Police patrol was sent to apprehend the two leaders of the Santals, Sidhu and Kanhu, and bring them to trial for the murder of the five moneylenders. The leader of the patrol found himself outnumbered and attempted to reason with the Santals. When he tried to slip away the crowd went out of control and only two of the 20 policemen survived. These two were able to report the violence to superior officers. Presently some 30,000 Santals, armed with axes, hunting spears, bows and arrows were on the march. The rebels were not seeking to destroy the British regime although a few British officials were killed in isolated areas. The prime targets were the individuals known to the Santals as responsible for their losses and degradation:

numbers of moneylenders, many land-tax collectors and particular policemen notorious for their rapacity. A succession of episodes marked the next four months, until, after the monsoon season had ended and the cool weather begun, martial law was declared on November 10th 1855. With fourteen thousand troops armed with modern weapons, General Lloyd and Brigadier General Bird threw a cordon around the Santal population. The "Hool" was suppressed in sixty days, at the cost of some 10,000 Santal lives.

Revival

Though the British authorities crushed the rebellion with decisive military force, the results of the rebellion favored the Santals and brought redress to many of the complaints which had prompted their violence. It brought a significant change in the relationship between the Santals and the economic and political systems of British India. It may be said that the precedents set by authorities who had pacified the Mal Pahariahs a half-century earlier were applied to the Santals. Since the Santal population concerned was a much larger, tax-paying and productive one, the British were far more thorough in dealing with the Santals than in the earlier situation. McPhail reports that "the Santal grievances were so fully redressed that some of the newspapers of the day complained that the Government was encouraging rebellion by granting everything the rebels had asked for". Actually, as McPhail declares, a "lesson in government . . . had been taught not by the Government to the subject people, but by a subject people to its Government",

the lesson being that Government cannot ignore the welfare of its people or remain blind to profound social and cultural dislocations (McPhail 1922:63).

Administrative changes were made. The first measure taken was the establishment of a distinct administrative area in which Santal interests were to be guarded. An area of 5,000 square miles was carved out of the existing districts of Bhagalpur and Birbhum, and called explicitly the Santal Parganas. This was declared a "non-regulation district", meaning that the usual judicial and bureaucratic procedures of British India would not be applicable to the government of the new district. The administrative center was moved to the village of Dumka which was centrally located to the Santal population and somewhat isolated from the non-Santal interests surrounding the area. The officer placed in charge of the new district, Mr. Ashley Eden, was a man known for his awareness of indigenous needs and his ability to improvise procedures of administration suitable to special settings.

The next important measure was the establishment of a new role for the Santal village headman. It is evident that whatever the excesses of the rebellion, the reputation of the Santal village headmen, as responsible leaders, was not tarnished. They were not regarded by authorities as radical extremists, but as individuals capable of maintaining orderly government in their own established settlements. The headmanship became the primary office of administration in the district of the Santal Parganas in Bihar. As McPhail puts it, ". . . in every village the headman, elected by the people

and not only holding office ad vitam aui culpam but bequeathing it to his son, was on a small scale magistrate, police officer, and revenue collector in one". In each village, where possible, the man elected as headman was the direct descendant of the "founder of the village", the headman who had led the village group in their migration and settlement. This man was designated by the Government as the pradhan or mustagir of the village. This gave to the traditional headman responsibilities for collecting land rents and taxes, and transmitting them to the government treasury. It formalized and gave governmental recognition to the headman's leadership in judicial proceedings whether conducted personally or in concert with the village councils. It made the headman responsible for law and order in the village, with the duty to report to the police forces in the area any disorder or trespass in the village confines. In these roles we see a new definition of traditional responsibilities, a formalization and legal recognition of the implicit roles in Santal society. To preserve the Santal headman in his status, it was decreed that in all villages defined as "Santal villages" the headman must be a Santal in perpetuity. From the traditional status and administrative role of headman emerged a more complex role in two spheres, the sphere of the village and the sphere of the central government.

To protect the economic basis of Santal society, special regulations in the Santal Parganas governed the transfer of land rights. It became impossible for a Santal to transfer ownership of land to a non-Santal. To establish Santal ownership a

thorough-going revenue settlement was carried out by responsible authorities. Officers toured the villages and in consultation with village headmen and their councils the rights of Santals in their lands were carefully examined and injustices of the pre-rebellion years were corrected. Most of their land was returned to the original Santal settlers or their heirs. Protection of these rights became one of the responsibilities of the village headman and his village council.

The administration established after the rebellion was not utopian. How the village headman actually operates under this system will be discussed in another chapter.

Santal society became an "encapsulated" society. The Santals through their "Hool" appear to have preserved their right to live by their own traditions and under their own leadership in a region they called their own. But it should be understood that this independence has been far from complete. Instead of calling Santal society after the rebellion an independent one, it seems more appropriate to use Bailey's term, "encapsulated" to describe it. Bailey uses the term to describe specifically the "political structures" which he studied. These structures he found, "partly independent of, and partly regulated by, larger encapsulating structures" (Bailey 1969:12). In this chapter the term seems applicable to the whole social life of the Santals. Santal economic structures, for instance, after the rebellion became "partly independent of, and partly regulated by" the economic processes of surrounding areas. While Santal peasants did not attempt to isolate themselves from

the commerce of British India, they did attempt to retain some power of self-determination in their economic decisions. Specifically, they could retain their ownership of land against all legal and commercial manipulation. With regard to the more inclusive process of cultural diffusion it may also be said that the Santal culture became "partly independent of, and partly regulated by", cultural developments in the non-Santal world around them. The Santals under a leadership adequately protected and given broad powers, became able to resist those aspects of "sanskritizing" and "modernizing" Indian society which conflict with their own value systems.

The term "encapsulation" is particularly appropriate in describing the new role of the Santal village headman after the rebellion. Santal traditions continued to control the headman's appointment by defining the rules of inheritance and by according to the village council certain powers of approval or disapproval. Santal cultural norms determined the type of person selected for headmanship, and guided the relations between the headman and his fellow villagers. However, it was by the authorities of British India that he was given his role as tax collector and "justice of the peace", and these duties required that he move frequently between his home village and the offices of government in town centers. He was "partly independent of, and partly regulated by" the "outer world" of the government and its system, while he played his traditional role in the "inner world" of his village.

During the period which followed the rebellion and reorganization, the East India Company was displaced from its control

of the Indian Government by the British parliamentary authority. During the decades--almost a century--of parliamentary control, the rights of the Santals in the Santal Parganas were stabilized and became practically the traditional rights of the people. The role of the Santal village headman, as both traditional headman and government functionary, came to be accepted as the cultural norm, especially in the Damin-i-koh where Santal villages dominated the area. In the pages which follow whenever there is reference to the "traditional role" of the Santal village headman, it should be understood that the reference is to the role which emerged in this period of Santal history.

The Traditional Century

During the period of British parliamentary control in India, the Santals experienced a number of changes in their environment but these did not seriously alter the cultural norms and values relating to village organization and the role of the village headman. Notable influences toward change include the extension of Christian missions into the Santal Parganas and the development of institutions for secular education in the district. Santals, including those from the Damin-i-koh, were given opportunities to move out of the village milieu: some enlisted in the army corps used by the British during the First World War; a good many joined the movement of labor into the tea plantations of northeast India and lesser numbers left the village to work on construction crews for the railway system. These movements out of the village were

usually limited to a few individuals or families. Economically it was not a period of great prosperity; the Santal continued to find the products of the market place too attractive for his economy, and while he could not secure his loans with mortgage contracts the legal protection given him was not extended to the crops grown on the land; so usufruct rights were alienated on large acreages of land, and non-Santals enjoyed the crops of Santal land even though the ownership of the land was legally out of their reach.

The powers of the Santal village headman to deal with these changing conditions were limited, and in this period they were not expanded or enhanced. Individuals were free to leave the village, though new-comers could be made unwelcome. Village headmen were not empowered to restrict the work of Christian missionaries, and some even accepted conversion as will be seen in the following chapters. Traditional authority of the village headman over the youth of his village continued to survive the secularizing of education only to a limited degree, but this was largely because Santal youth made no large-scale rush to institutions of secular education until the end of the period under discussion.

A Scheduled Tribe

The control of the British Parliament in India ended with the establishment of Indian independence in the months following the close of the Second World War. It is in this period of Indian Independence that this study of the village headman is made.

For the Santals, perhaps the most significant event in the years of independence has been their inclusion in the special status of "Schedule Tribes" under the provisions of the Indian Constitution. This has been the direct result of the fact that the nationalist movement which led to Independence early gave recognition to the special difficulties of the people called "aboriginals" by anthropologists and British administrators. The "aboriginals", like the Santals, had resisted both "sanskritization" and "islamization" through the pre-British history of India. In the British period they formed a varied and scattered population of some twenty millions. Under the British regime they suffered serious demoralization, much as the Santals suffered and for similar reasons. The history of the period includes a large number of uprisings among them, though few such rebellions resulted as favorably for the rebels as the Santal rebellion. The nationalist leaders gave a new name to the "aboriginals": they called them the "adibasis"--original inhabitants. The nationalist movement made much of the plight of the "adibasis", and promised redress. The result has been the special legislation for "Scheduled Tribes".

The writers of the Indian Constitution may be said to have given their formal sanction to the continuance of the "encapsulated" status of Santal society. However, in practice this constitutional provision has served to facilitate the movement of Santals as individuals into the structures of Indian society rather than to preserve the traditional Santal norms and values. The Santals, like other "adibasis", have rights to reserved places in representative bodies

and in governmental bureaucracies. They have been given special consideration when funds have been spent to bring health and educational facilities into their villages. Their opportunities for advancement as individuals in various aspects of Indian life have been protected. But these very efforts to improve conditions of life have tended to dissipate the authority of the Santal traditions and substitute outside interests for village-centered participation. As will be noted in later chapters, the revisions of the organization of village government, and the establishment of elected authority in village areas, has required that the Santal village headman resort to various new relationships especially where traditional ties have been dissolved. At the same time the Santal villages of the Damin-i-koh have some serious economic problems and traditional procedures seem inadequate to improve conditions. The role of the Santal village headman will be subjected to new strains in the coming years. The chapters which follow deal with some of these strains.

In this chapter I have described the emergence of what the village Santals consider to be "traditional headmanship". This status carries with it the aura of historic validity along with the century-old sanction of the government of India, both under British rule and after national independence. Given these sanctions, headmanship is further described in Chapter III as the key role in the Santal "community" regardless of the ethnic surroundings or alien intrusions threatening their culture.

CHAPTER III

SANTAL COMMUNITIES: THE VILLAGE HEADMAN'S LIFE SETTINGS

Introduction: Communities

The role of the headman is enacted on two levels of community life. He has a general interest in his hor disom, the Santal country. His horizons do not extend beyond the borders of that part of the Indian sub-continent which is the dwelling place of the Santals. This is the headman's "universe". But his immediate interests remain in his ato, the village of his jurisdiction.

It is the purpose of this chapter to describe these two levels of community life. The Santal country can only be dealt with in general terms, but the village community can be described in detail.

The village community of the Santals is here represented by two very different villages. The first is the homogeneous Santal village of Manjhipur. It is the type of village community which took shape after the rebellion and continued to be the dominant form of Santal village through what has been labeled the "traditional century". The second village is the ethnically heterogeneous Dangrajotha, originally Santal and still headed by a Santal, but now populated by a majority of non-Santals. It

represents the results of change. The Santal traditional heritage is maintained in varying degrees of continuity as illustrated by the single homogeneous village--Manjhipur--and second by only the Santal community of a heterogeneous village--Dangrajoiha.

The hoꞗ hopon

The Santals have developed a strong sense of ethnic identity out of their historical experiences. They regard themselves as special people. Their name for themselves, hoꞗ hopon (literally: sons of mankind) carries the implicit meaning, "the true men", the only really human society. What is here labeled the "community" of the hoꞗ hopon may be considered the "tribal community" of the Santals. This use of the term "tribe" indicates a linguistic-cultural community with a self-conscious feeling of identity as a people with distinct ethnic and cultural characteristics.

The Santal disom

Closely associated with the hoꞗ hopon is the geographical concept of hoꞗ disom (literally: Santal country). A Santal villager will say, "Noa do hoꞗ disom kana", meaning, "This is Santal country", and in doing so he makes a distinction between areas occupied by Santals and areas occupied by other people. Pointing southeastward toward the delta lowlands where Bengali villages crowd the landscape, the Santal will say, "Hana sec' Bangla disom menak'a," meaning, "In that direction lies the country of the Bengali people". Where the villager is somewhat sophisticated about political boundaries, he may speak of the Santal Parganas district as

hoṛ disom or even aleak' disom (exclusively our country). However, like the word desh of Sanskritic derivation, the Santali disom implies a less definitive boundary than modern political and administrative areas, and it carries greater emotional implications of ethnic identity: the hoṛ disom and the hoṛ hoṇon of the Santals are as intimately related in emotional context as are "land" and "people" in other areas where ethnic groups have had great struggles to gain or preserve their lebensraum.

It is a matter of pervasive anxiety among Santals that so much of the hoṛ disom has fallen into the hands of non-Santals. It troubles them that in many Santal villages non-Santal populations have been admitted to permanent residence, but it is more distressing to realize that in some villages even the control of the Santal headman has been lost. Where a non-Santal has been appointed, or elected, the village chowdhury (the non-Santal equivalent of maṅjhi--headman), it is generally felt that the village area has ceased to be a part of hoṛ disom, even if Santals are living in the village. The loss of villages to non-Santals has given a sort of patch-work character to hoṛ disom. Many villagers do not refer to the Santal Parganas as aleak' disom or even hoṛ disom; only those areas under Santal headmen and Santal village councils are considered as the components of hoṛ disom. In this sense, the control of the village headman constitutes the essential characteristic of the "Santal Country".

Santal Egalitarianism

There are several characteristics of the hoꝛ hoꝛon world which must be described if we are to understand the role of the village headman. The first is the egalitarianism of Santal society. The words "met' leka" are repeatedly used in all sorts of everyday situations to indicate that each Santal is "like one" or that Santals are "all alike" in the sense that there are no differences in power or status among them. These words often appear in the sentence, "Sanam hoꝛ hoꝛon mit' leka tahekanako", meaning that "All Santals remain alike, true men".

Santal egalitarianism can be seen in several settings. The clan divisions of this society, examined later, allow no status distinctions between clans or within clans. When Santals are asked in what way they are all alike, the reply invariably is, "Paꝛis menak'talea ar aran menak'talea" (we have our clans and we all have a voice).

The village councils must give to each head of household an equal voice and permit free access to the discussions of the village elders by any regular member of the village community. Even the village headman cannot be regarded as more than "primus inter pares", first among equals. His home and his holdings are not noticeably superior to those of many of his fellow villagers. His dress and manners are those of the common man in Santal society. Although headmanship is traditionally inherited by the eldest son, he must be sanctioned by his fellow villagers who compose the village council. Even if there are no rivals to his election his

appointment to headmanship must be accompanied by the voiced agreement of the village as a whole. As will be examined in a later section, the paris, which I label exogamous clans allow no distinctions of status among them. The oral traditions and the observed practices in the village today repeatedly emphasize an egalitarian ideology.

Differences with respect to land-holdings, acreage under cultivation, the number of cattle kept by a family, and elected positions held by household members are manifest in Santal communities today. However, these differences have little reference to power or the lack of it in the decision-making processes in the village. The effective authority in the village is exerted by the village council in which every household is represented by its head, who is free to exert through persuasion and compromise a power not related to wealth or political station.

Santal egalitarianism appears to be one of the most effective boundary maintaining mechanisms by which they preserve their identity and distinctiveness in the face of the aggressively assimilating influences of the pan-Indian culture around them. Every Santal villager is conscious of the fact that loss of Santal identity means the loss of social status. Absorption into a non-Santal community carries the threat of sub-ordination into a disadvantaged inferior caste.

Respect for Seniority

Among the hor hopen a second generalized principle is the ritualized recognition of seniority. Early in the process of

enculturation, every Santal child learns the respectful gesture called dobok' johar. It is the universal expression of respect for seniority. Every younger person must bow low when approaching anyone who is older, even if the elder is an age-mate only a few days older. At times chronological age is subordinated to what may be called "status seniority": this most frequently occurs when the village headman inherits his office early in life so that he is chronologically younger than most of the elders of his village; in such cases the respect due to status as village headman supercedes chronological status. This type of exception does not diminish the high regard accorded seniority wherever it is met.

The dobok' johar gesture made by males differs somewhat from the gesture appropriate to females. The younger male (or male ascribed to a junior status) usually places his open left hand under his right elbow and in a coordinated action extends his right forearm forward towards his elder with his right hand cupped and his head bowed. The younger female simply bows from the waist before the elder with hands pointed down and lowered to within inches of the ground. The younger person uses the same gesture whether the elder person is male or female.

Dobok' johar involves reciprocal gestures from the elders recognizing the respectful junior's approach. Here again there is some difference between the responses of males and those of females. The elder male (or male ascribed to a senior status) recognizes the younger person by merely extending the right arm outwards somewhat perpendicular to his body and towards the younger person,

simultaneously opening his hand from a half-closed to a palm-open gesture. The palm is then gradually turned downwards. The elder female recognizes the approach of a respectful junior by extending both arms outward towards the younger person. The hands are open with palms upward. The hands are then drawn inwards towards the body, as though the elder woman is gently beckoning the younger towards her, with a smooth gradual motion of hands and fingers.

Santals give a specific meaning to each of these gestures. They say that the younger woman's gestures mean that she is presenting herself to serve the senior she respects. The younger male presents himself to the senior with the expectation that he will be given a blessing. The gesture of the elder male is one implying that a blessing is meant for the junior. The elder woman's gestures invite the junior to come into her presence.

These gentle, respectful and silent forms of greeting are used at every ceremonial occasion or whenever guests or relatives are received in the courtyard of the household. The dobok' johar is used regardless of the relationship between the persons greeting each other, whether it be a joking, respectful or avoidance relationship.

The Santal dobok' johar is unique in its form; no other people in the area use these symbolic gestures. They serve as a manifest act of Santal identification; there is no mistaking the presence of Santals where there is an exchange of dobok' johar. When a Santal uses the gestures, he is proclaiming his membership in hor hopon, even as he is emphasizing the Santal principle of

respect for seniority. An example of this symbol of identity was given during a visit by a member of the Government of India to the Damin-i-koh area in 1970. Mr. Kisku, a Santal serving in the national cabinet, still regarded himself a member of the hor hopon. During his visit among the villagers he did not fail to perform with appropriate gestures of dobak' johar, and although the headman of the village of his ancestors was his junior, Mr. Kisku accorded him his "status seniority" with the appropriate gesture.

The Santal villagers are conscious of their minority status in the Damin-i-koh. They are aware of being encapsulated in a society which threatens assimilation. The repeated use of the dobok' johar serves to emphasize the principle of respect for seniority as a basic ingredient of membership in hor hopon. The often repeated symbolization of respect, along with the constant reiteration of the egalitarian principles, serve as manifest indications of Santalness and hor hopon "community".

The Village Community

The Santal villagers live in nuclear village communities not unlike the agricultural settlements of most premodern peasant societies. In the following section two aspects of village organization are presented. In the first the physical arrangements of the village are described. In the second the social interaction patterns of the village are described.

Village boundaries in the Damin-i-koh were fixed at the time of the revenue settlements made soon after the rebellion,

though some revisions were made at subsequent settlements. The total acreage included within the village boundaries varies from village to village: one village near the communities of this study has only 44 acres, another has 644 acres.

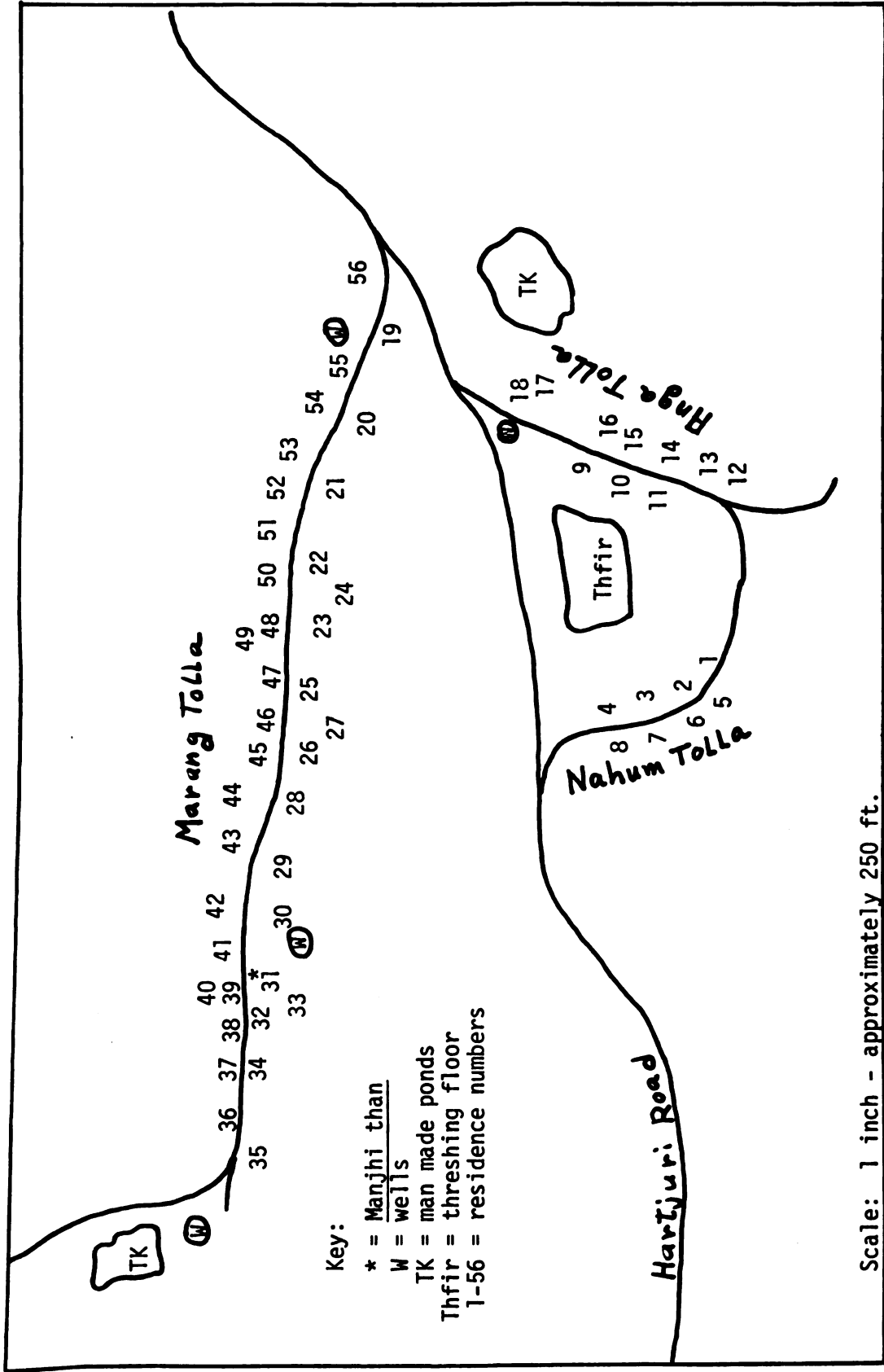
As in many parts of the world and almost everywhere in India, the village in the country of the Santals is thought to include three distinct (though not necessarily contiguous) areas. At the center of the village forming a sort of "nucleus" in the "cell-like" body of the village, the residential area includes the residences of the people, their stables and their storehouses. The fields cultivated by the people form a second area and woodlots of the village (together with whatever ponds and streams may be found in the village area) form a third part of the village territory. The proportion of the total village acreage given to these three types of village land varies, though traditionally every village is supposed to reserve at least 15% of its acreage for free grazing of all animals in the village.

The organization of the administration in the Santal Parganas after the rebellion gave to the indigenous headman and his council the right to control the use of space in the area allotted to residences, stables and storehouses. Agnatic kinsmen of those who were granted residential sites in the village at the time of the first revenue settlement have permanent rights to reside in the area, and freedom to expand their dwellings and other structures. Their offspring or members of the patriline are allowed to join existing households virtually without question. On the other hand, strangers,

either Santals or non-Santals, must obtain special permission from the headman and the village council before they can establish residence inside the village boundaries at any time. After a stranger has been permitted to reside in the village, the same rights are accorded him to expand residence and other structures, and close kinsmen are freely allowed to join him. When local residents holding fields in the area of cultivation bring in Santal employees who do not have land holdings, the outsiders--though Santals--must reside on the land held by their employer. Other rights to village resources, such as the right to graze cattle on the common lands, are given to landless employees only specifically and under limiting conditions: their freedom to use these resources remains under the constant scrutiny of the village elders.

The distribution of buildings in the residential area of a homogeneous Santal village is shown in the residential map (p 53) of the village of Manjhipur. The residential pattern will be seen to have a linear form with three distinguishable lines of houses. The largest number of residences are located on the two sides of the road running towards Dangrajholla. This line of houses is known as Marang Tolla. The Anga Tolla has only ten houses lining the road to Rampur. The eight houses of Nahum Tolla form a line on a road circling the threshing floor and connecting the road to Rampur with the road to the market town of Hartjuri.

The residential units of these three "tollas" each contain an assortment of structures which may well be called a homestead. In some cases two or more residences are built around a courtyard



Key:
 * = Manjhi than
 W = wells
 TK = man made ponds
 Thfir = threshing floor
 1-56 = residence numbers

Scale: 1 inch - approximately 250 ft.

Map No. 2.--The Village of Manjhipur

to house a large joint family. All households have some sort of stable for animals and a place for the storage of ploughs, tools and food grains.

Serving the residents are three wells for the large Marang Tolla, one well for the smaller Anga Tolla. The residents of Nohum Tolla must carry water from one or another of the other wells in the village, or, when rains are plentiful, from one of the two tanks (or ponds) on the edges of the residential area. A large threshing floor lies between the two smaller tollas and provides space for the primitive threshing process of village farmers.

The sites for household dwelling in the residential area cannot be purchased. The right to a homestead site is inherited or granted by special action of the village council and the headman. This is also the procedure in adjacent non-Santal villages, as it is in most of rural India.

In Santal villages one small area in the residential sector is especially reserved, the area directly in front of the headman's house. Every traditional Santal village maintains a rectangular mud covered platform known as the mañjhi than (headman's sacred place). The mañjhi than symbolizes the traditional authority of the village founder, the first headman. It is the place set apart from all others, where, on certain auspicious occasions, the headman leads in the worship of ancestral spirits. From this place many village festivals begin. A single smooth stone appears in the middle toward the east end of the mañjhi than. This phallic symbol, as

well as the entire structure, is kept clean and remains protected from any use other than that of religious ritual.

The appearance and distribution of dwellings in the heterogeneous village of Dangrajolha is somewhat different from that of Manjhipur. In many respects it reflects the pattern of non-Santal Hindu villages located nearby (p 56).

In the first place, the village is much larger than Manjhipur and although the dwellings present a linear pattern built on both sides of the main village street, there are three smaller tollas occupied by either different caste groups or different ethnic groups.

In the second place, non-residential uses of the residential area of Dangrajolha have multiplied. Whereas in Manjhipur only stables and storehouses are associated with the residential structures, in Dangrajolha many of the homes of the Sha community have been altered to permit the operation of retail outlets offering local supplies of oil, grain, flour, soap and such manufactured items from outside as kerosene lanterns, aluminum pots and tea kettles. Several of these local retailers also function as money-lenders. A small branch post office has been set up, attached to a Sha house.

The Hindus of the village, under the guidance of associated Brahmin families, have erected a small Kali temple on the north edge of the village; the Muslims have established a mosque; and a segment of the Santal population which has converted to Christianity has, with the assistance of Roman Catholic missionary tutors, built a church behind the village headman's house. The small church also

serves as a three grade school taught in Santali. The Shas have built a school near the Kali temple and invited the government to appoint a teacher. A Sha teacher from Dangrajolha runs this recognized government school of five grades which is taught exclusively in Hindi.

The appearance of the village has been further changed by the type of traffic in and out of its borders. The Shas buy and sell grain in addition to the seeds from which they press oils. It is common to see strings of small horses carrying large grain bags down the road. The Muslims of the village operate two wheeled pony carts, both in connection with their weaving enterprises and as a regular public "taxi" service carrying as many as six passengers at a time. The strings of pack horses, the pony carts, the ubiquitous oxcarts, and numerous pedestrians compose a scene comparatively alien to a traditional Santal village. Many residents of Dangrajolha own bicycles, whereas only four bicycles are found in all of Manjhipur.

The housing in Dangrajolha has features different from that of the typical Santal village. In Manjhipur all houses have walls of sun-baked mud and roofs of thatching grass. Only three or four of the forty-four dwellings have brick-tile roofs. Dangrajolha's non-Santal residents have managed to acquire some metal roofs for their houses as well as having a larger proportion of tile roofs mixed among the thatched. Even the mud and thatch dwellings among the non-Santals differ in appearance from those built in the Santal manner. The Santals usually build thicker mud walls and give their thatched roofs a different contour that emphasizes the wide verandah

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not usually found on non-Santal houses. The verandahs and courtyards, although entirely coated with clay plaster, appear strikingly neat and cleaner than those of most non-Santals. The contrast is quite apparent. Although there is a great difference in appearance between the homogeneous Santal village of Manjhipur and the heterogeneous village of Dangrajolha, the management of the fields and the common lands around the two residential centers remains much the same.

The right to graze cattle on the village commons or to gather fuel or building material in the woodlot of both villages is accorded to the villagers without fee. Grazing areas in the Damin-i-koh have been permitted to deteriorate. Over-grazing and the obvious absence of management have left these areas in a condition of minimal productivity.

The cultivable areas of both villages are closely held in private ownership. The tax-free acres of the headman and other village elders are held by a single owner over such long periods of time that even this "public land" is treated as a private estate. The fields of the village form a highly irregular "montage" of small plots. Most of the land is used for wet-rice cultivation, and the earthen ridges between plots serve both as boundaries of ownership and retainers for irrigation water necessary for flooding the fields. The land cultivated by any one household is seldom consolidated into one area: fragmentation of holdings has been extensive, and the parcels owned by a household are more than likely to be found scattered in two or three areas. This fragmentation is partly due

to the general practice in rural India of dividing property equally between all male heirs and partly to the need for holding different types of soil permitting the cultivation of different food products in a subsistence economy. In Manjhipur most land-owning households have such a variety of small plots which compose a total of only three to five acres per household. Each family aspires to have a share of the richer land in the village area.

Patterns of Interaction in Two Types of Villages

The differences between the typical homogeneous Santal village of Manjhipur and the heterogeneous village of Dangrajolha in physical arrangements and appearance are associated with even more striking differences in the patterns of social interaction in the two villages. Though these two villages are contiguous, with coterminous boundaries along one sector, the history of the two villages and their social organization present significant contrasts to this study.

The social relations in Manjhipur are normally governed by the traditional social institutions of paris, gutia, bõs, gharonj and oaris, by the traditional authorities of village headman, village council, and by the typical Santal cultural themes of egalitarianism and ritualized respect for seniority.

How Dangrajolha became a socially heterogeneous village involves historical events which are no longer recoverable for the most part. The intrusion of non-Santal elements into the village represents a process which presents a potential threat to Santal

society, a threat of serious proportions. The difference in the social interaction patterns reveals what happens when a Santal community succumbs to large scale assimilating influences. It also indicates the nature of Santal defense mechanisms against assimilation and Santal adjustments to alien cultures.

Manjhipur represents what the Santals refer to as aleak'ato (exclusively our village) and their interactions are those of a people who find no distraction from following their traditional relationships. The basic principle underlying interaction is expressed in the term ato saḡai (village oneness) which affirms a kinship-like unity among all inhabitants.

Varying degrees of freedom in social interaction are evident in the homogeneous Santal village. These degrees of freedom can be observed between the members of a single household or a bōs (lineage) kinship as well as in interaction between acquaintances from different villages. They are most frequently observed in intra-village relationships which occur during calendrical or life-cycle events.

Three types of relationship are recognized in Santal social terminology: landa saḡai, manao and erer. It is somewhat difficult to equate these terms with terms commonly used in anthropological literature, because variations are often subtle and not clearly classifiable.

Nevertheless, the landa saḡai type of relationship is very similar to the "joking relationship" described by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1965:90). In this type of interaction there is maximum

freedom of self expression, to play "practical jokes", come into actual physical contact, and to offer differences of opinion.

At the other extreme, the Santali term erer is very similar in meaning to the concept of "avoidance behavior." The word erer indicates the practice of literally "turning aside from direct encounter with some one". People in this avoidance relationship will make the gesture of dobok' johar only in the presence of others; if they meet alone they turn aside and make no indication of recognizing each other's presence.

The term mano refers to interaction patterns intermediate between the freedom of landa sagai and the reticence of erer. The term mano means paying respect, honoring or carrying out the wishes of another person. There are a number of kinsmen, including affines, with whom an individual observes neither a joking relationship nor an avoidance relationship; their interaction is referred to as manao, one of respect.

Pragmatically, it is evident that even these three types of interaction fail to indicate the real complexity of choices available in Santal society. Actual behavior ranges over a long continuum of slight variation from extreme freedom to extreme reticence; it is possible to recognize forms of interaction which may be placed along a continuum including Free Joking, Normal Joking, Respectful Joking, Normal Respectfulness, Respectful Avoidance, Normal Avoidance and Strict Avoidance. Further distinction of types is not necessary here, but it might be done to emphasize the fact that there are numerous shades of freedom and reticence in Santal interaction to

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which the traditional Santal is extremely sensitive. These differences do not suggest a hierarchy of statuses; there is nothing in the behavior which might imply superiority or inferiority. Rather, they indicate distance of kinship and other factors which determine relationships. The Appendix B (pp 291-293) contains three Tables which summarize the expected behavior of young males or females and the expected behavior of male and female adults after marriage. In all expected interactive behavior, the element of kinship is a central concern, and whether the kinship be affinal, consanguine or fictive (and ascribed), the relationship between village mates assumes kinship as its basis.

The headman of the village is subject, as much as any of his village mates, to the same differences of freedom in interaction. There are those with whom he can and must be free and others with whom he will and must be reticent, with still others toward whom he must observe a medium attitude of respect. Of course, the respect due the headman from his people tends to limit the extremes of freedom or reticence found in interactions between those who do not carry the aura of headmanship.

The patterns of interaction in Dangrajlha remain the same as those described above in the Santal community, but the village as a whole reflects quite different interpersonal relationships. Prior to the last revenue settlement made in 1918, several households of Hindi-speaking Shas, oil-pressers by caste and Hindus by socio-religious background, obtained the right to establish residence in Dangrajlha. At about the same time a few families of

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Bengali-speaking Muslim weavers, called Jolhas, had gained the same rights. The details of the financial transactions by which residential rights were accorded to these non-Santals in a traditionally Santal village are not recorded. Since their admission to residence, their numbers have grown and their proportions of the village population have expanded. The Hindu oil-pressers have been able to introduce a Brahmin priest into the village to tend their Kali temple, three families of Pandets who claim Brahmin descent and function as writers, several Kumars of the blacksmith caste occupation, some Rajwars who are landless laborers, and three families of Domes who by inheritance serve the Hindu homes as sweepers, barbers and field laborers. A few of the Dome women act as midwives for the women of the Sha households. With these caste-groups included, the Hindu population of Dangrajolha amounts to 65% of the village census.

About 15% of the population of Dangrajolha are Muslims, all regarded as weavers by occupation, though the transportation of their fabrics to markets near and far have led them into transport enterprises.

The heterogeneity of Dangrajolha's social components has been increased by the conversion of a number of Santal families, including that of the village headman, to Christianity under the ministry of Roman Catholic missionaries. Regardless of the fact that two religious groups exist within the Santal community, the relationships continue on the basis of kinship and ato sagai rather than being overtly strained because of religious difference.

Neither Christians nor non-Christians practice sectarian endogamy; inter-marriage is relatively unhindered. Other social relations such as the exchange of guests on festive occasions, commensality and the exchange of services among neighbors is unrestricted.

Interaction between Santals and non-Santals is mostly confined to economic and political activities. Other forms of social contact are minimized. To the Pandets and the Shas the Santals are a special type of outcaste whose ritual status is highly impure because they eat all types of meat, drink rice wine and liquor, conduct public dancing in mixed groups (i.e. male and female), practice widow remarriage, and generally disregard other taboos necessary to Hindu purity. They are consequently untouchable. Contact between the servant castes of the Hindu community--the blacksmiths and the Domes--and the Santals takes place somewhat more freely. These menials are sometimes employed for their services by the Santals, but social interaction of any type is highly reticent.

Conflict over control of land has polarized the dominant Hindu Shas and the Santals. The Santals do not try to hide resentment and distrust toward the Shas. The Shas appear to have one predominant interest in the Santals; their desire to gain possession of whatever Santal land becomes available. The interest of the Santals in the Hindu way of life is minimal. They seem to enjoy watching the Hindu festivals, but remain confined to the role of spectators.

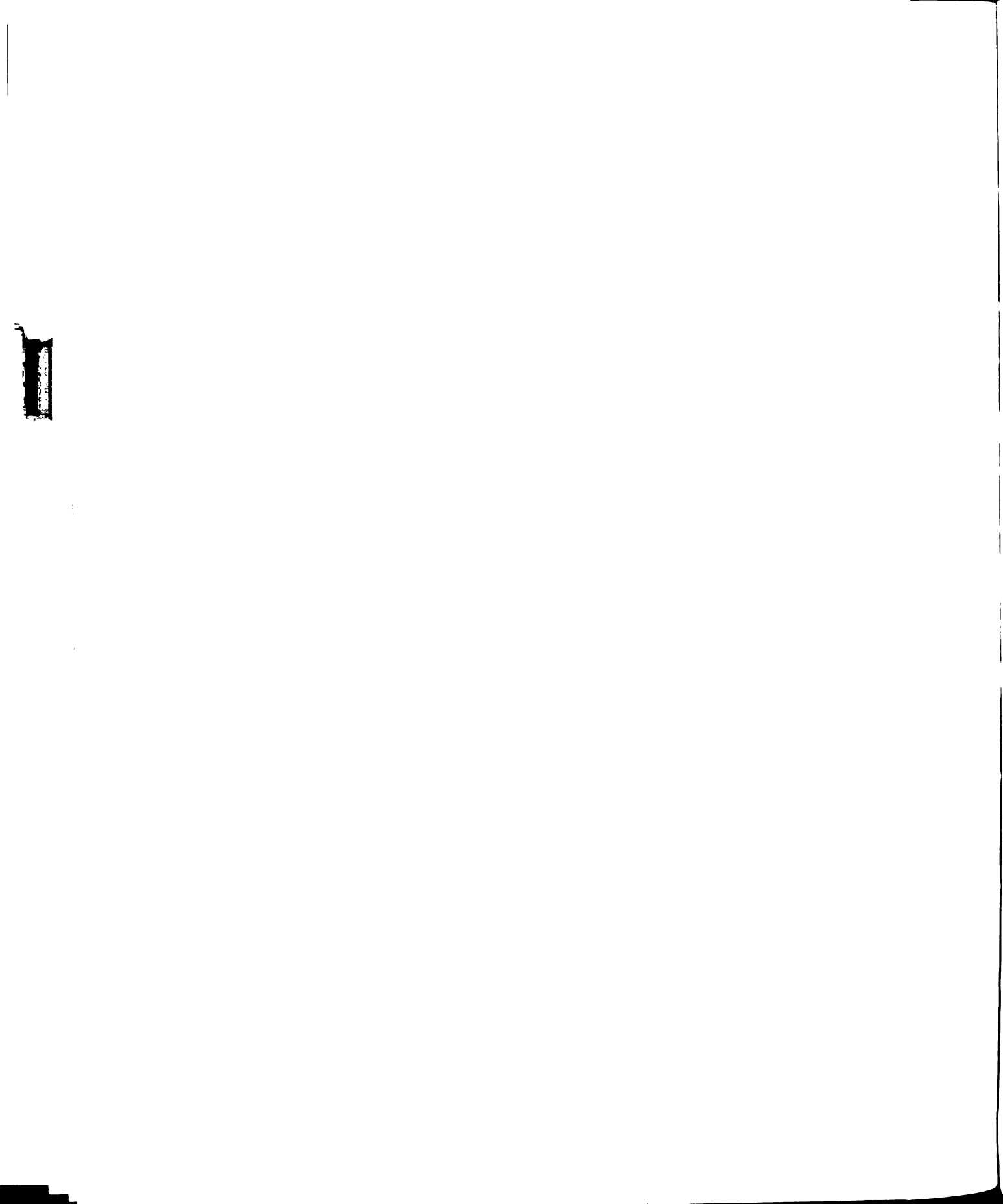
The relations between the Santals and the Bengali-speaking weavers are less reticent, but again most interaction is confined

to economic and political activities. In many parts of the world Muslim polygynists tend to marry freely, usually as minor wives, the women of other communities. In Dangrajolha the strong emphasis among the Santals upon ethnic endogamy has made marriage with Muslims impossible except in rare cases.

The Santals of Dangrajolha continue to practice ethnic endogamy and paris exogamy; they retain the use of their own language in all their affairs; they identify with hoṛ hopon and the hoṛ disom; they cling to their egalitarianism and the ritualized symbols depicting their respect for seniority while being governed by a hereditary headman and the council of household heads. It is a solid ethnic community in the face of the multiple non-traditional influences which have intruded upon the village. In spite of the interests of some of its members in the traditions of the Christian faith, the Santal community has been drawn together increasingly by the threats of change to the traditions of their ancestors.

Although no ritual is held which absolutely requires the headman to act as the principle performer, several of the traditional rituals incorporate the headman's participation in significant roles. Since the headman of Dangrajolha has converted to Christianity other village elders are chosen to perform the headman's role in non-Christian rituals. The Santal community has produced a unique personality who is especially suited for this position; this old man acts as the guardian of tradition with intensity and commitment.

Rather than being assimilated into the "Hinduistic" system the Santals of Dangrajolha adapt as a community, bound together



by their time-tested culture, in the same manner demonstrated in the homogeneous village of Manjhipur.

One of the key elements of Santal life is their well-preserved political tradition. In Chapter IV the familiar political arenas are discussed while emphasizing the village headman's syndrome of roles at the heart of political life.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICAL ARENAS OF THE SANTAL VILLAGE HEADMAN

Introduction: The Instrumentalities

The Santal village headman is a functionary of central importance in the political order of his society. Indeed, his performance in the "political arenas" constitutes the most important, most visible, and most demanding aspect of the headmanship. The political system in which he performs may be described as one based on several distinct instrumentalities. While these instrumentalities are interrelated they usually form the basis of the political arenas in which the headman is destined to participate by definition of his office. These instrumentalities will be described after some generalizations are formulated.

The first four instrumentalities are characteristic of Santal society; they are traditional elements of political structures indigenous to the social system. They are (1) the household in its village setting; (2) the village council made up of household heads; and (3) the administrative elders including the headman himself. A fourth element in traditional political life was (4) the Pargana assembly with its chief officer, the parganic'. This instrumentality no longer exists among the Santals.

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The last two instrumentalities are characteristic of pan-Indian polity; they exist by the authority of the national Government. (5) The Sub-Divisional administration has been operating in the Damin-i-koh since the Santal Rebellion of 1855. (6) Since 1950, the Indian Government has introduced an instrumentality of rural democracy--the new Panchayat system--with a new set of administrative offices which will be described with some notes on the likely effect of this innovation upon the Santals.

There are basic differences between the traditional political elements of Santal society and the governmentally established instrumentalities. The general purpose of the Sub-Divisional administration and the new panchayat system, like all national structures, attempts to bring the conduct of government in the Santal area into coordination with the governmental processes throughout the country; this is the universalizing principle of government which aspires toward efficiency and equal opportunity. At the same time, a special concern for local and ethnic concerns must be preserved in national government, and in the Santal area this specializing principle has required particular emphasis.

The traditional elements of Santal polity have had a far more personal character than the bureaucratic structures of Government, and have been concerned less with legal consistency than with human adjustments and adaptations. For the Santals the idea that power may be used to coerce conformity is both foreign and abhorrent to their value system. The decisions of either the village elders, the village council or the household head in his family setting

must always be reached openly and for the common good of each member in the groups concerned. Concensus, rather than coercion, is the basic goal of traditional Santal polity. Such a relegation of power to a very minor role in political life is possible only in a rural society with highly effective and customary controls achieved through enculturation rather than legislation. It would seem to be impossible in a highly plural society like that of the Indian sub-continent. Among the Santals, life seems to be at its best when they deal with political power in traditional ways.

Santal experience, preserved orally until recent times but now given literate record in the village headman's journals, indicates that the unwritten rules of society have been continually challenged by the pragmatic acts of individuals and groups. Nevertheless, three characteristics seem to pervade the whole system in a manner which may provide the key to Santal survival in modern times as in the past: (1) Each organizational element in the Santal structures is responsible for, and exercises authority over, its members, displaying a certain degree of autonomy within the entire system; (2) Each organizational element recognizes an elder member as its coordinating agent and final authority, whose role it is to assure the pursuit of morality and the equality of rights and responsibilities as defined by the hapramko ak' dustur (traditions of the ancestors); (3) The members of each element act as a counterbalancing body of authority, modifying the power of the head-person in the group; this third characteristic serves to preserve the egalitarian principle of Santal society which awards equal rights

to each participating member of the community, never surrendering absolute power to any head, whether of the household, the village or the pargana.

One further generalization should be made before proceeding to the description of the various political elements among the Santals. It concerns the importance of the village headman's role. The entire system seems to revolve around the headman. He is the professional directly responsible for the smooth operation of the system: trained from childhood in the household of his headman father amid the continual activities of his father's role, acquiring in this setting a profound commitment from his heritage to the traditions of the Santal people, he is, at the same time, economically supported for his work by the special grant of tax-free use of the "headman's land" of the village.

The instrumentalities of Santal polity may now be described.

The Household

In Santal polity, the household is the basic unit, controlling the social behavior of its members and the use of land in its possession. The eldest male in the household has authority over all the members of the household, but he recognizes the individual rights and desires of each individual member, especially those of the other adult males in the household. As household head he is expected to make economic and political decisions, but these must always, at least ideally, be made in consultation with the other adult males of the household. He has final authority in

matters concerning kinship relations and ties; he is the leader in ritual and festivals outside the homestead. Finally, as household head he is the formal representative of the household and its members in the village council.

The Village Council

Every homogeneous Santal village, like Manjhipur, is governed by a village council consisting of the household heads of the village. In meetings of the council, the kulhi durup', each member of the council has the right to voice his opinions, claims and complaints and to exercise a single vote in all decisions of the council.

The council meets at the call of the headman of the village whenever a matter is brought to his attention which he regards as serious enough to warrant a meeting. Meetings of the kulhi durup' are usually held in the late afternoon or evening, except in the case of emergencies. It is important that all household heads be present at every meeting of the council, and therefore the time of meeting is set when men can attend who have duties in their fields or at the weekly market during the daylight hours. The kulhi durup' usually meets in a clearing at the end of the village street, in a well known place readily accessible to all. The meeting can be called at the request of any person in the village, provided they have a complaint or charge, a claim or proposal, some matter which calls for council decision. The decisions of the council control all social behavior in the village, all use of lands owned by the villagers, all matters governed by the traditions of the Santals.

At meetings of the village council the manjhi (headman) is the presiding authority. His position of final arbiter at council meetings is based on his responsibility as guardian of the traditions of the ancestors. Though he controls only one vote in the council, his own, he exercises extensive influence in the decision-making process because his opinions generally conform to traditional understandings of village life and village values.

Santals revere the hapramko ak' dustur and it is ever the purpose of the headman to guide discussion in the council meetings towards a consensus of understanding and decision which are in line with the ancestral traditions. After a matter has been discussed at length in a council meeting, the headman calls for definitive decision from its members. Ideally this decision should represent a complete concensus of opinion, but in reality deliberations seldom reach a complete agreement. However, in most matters village councils, like that at Manjhipur where traditional standards continue to dominate, reach decisions with the support of very strong majorities.

In a village like Dangrajolha, in which the population is divided into several ethnic groups, village government must go through much adjustment, yet the fact that Dangrajolha was designated a "Santal village" in the organization of the area after the "Hool" has preserved certain features of the Santal system.

In the first place, the regulations of the Santal Parganas as a "non-regulation district" provided that the headman of the village which had been defined as a Santal village must always be

a Santal, inheriting his position in the paternal line and confirmed in his rights by the village council and the Sub-Divisional Officer in the Government system. The headman of Dangrajolha is a Santal whose position has been protected by these regulations, though the Santals are today a minority in the village with decreasing economic power and limited political power outside their own community.

As the recognized "pradhan" or "mustagir" the Santal headman of Dangrajolha collects taxes from all the people, performs the necessary police duties for the whole village, and has control of all village records of land holdings. He cannot therefore be ignored by the majority population of non-Santals.

The village council of the Santals, however, has not been granted statutory supervision of non-Santal affairs. In Dangrajolha the decisions of the Santal village council govern only the affairs of the Santal population. Each of the other ethnic groups--the Muslim weavers and the Hindus of all castes--have had to organize their own ethnic councils to deal with matters of concern within their respective ethnic groups. The Hindus, moreover, have had to resort from time to time to the use of caste councils to deal with matters specifically governed by caste traditions and morals within the ethnic group. Ethnic and caste councils are strictly limited in their powers and procedures to the members of the groups they represent.

For matters concerning the whole village of Dangrajolha, it has been necessary from time to time to call into conference the leaders of the ethnic groups to constitute an inter-ethnic

council. These instrumentalities have no basis in tradition or in governmental regulations, and are therefore forced to resort to improvisations and expedients of various kinds, most of them borrowings from one source or another. The government of India has not undertaken any effort to give regulation to inter-ethnic councils, because it is expected that the new panchayat system, described below, will sooner or later function as such a council where heterogeneity of population needs some new instrumentality.

The Administrative Elders

The village council is not only convened at the call of the headman, its proceedings are under his guidance for he is its presiding officer, and the enforcement and execution of its decisions are his responsibility. This makes him, in reality, the chief administrator of the village. As such, his responsibilities are so varied and numerous that assistance must be given him, and tradition has made provision for this assistance in a form peculiarly suited to the Santal preference for egalitarianism. According to hapramko ak' dustur, there are seven designated administrative elders who are given authority for the conduct of village affairs. They are, (1) the Manjhi, the headman himself; (2) the Paranic', the first assistant who assists in matters related to the use of land; (3) the Jog paranic', or second assistant of the headman; (4) the Jog Manjhi, or assistant in charge of the morals of youth and adults; (5) the Naeke, the village priest or ritualist; (6) the Kudam Naeke, the assistant priest, and (7) the Godet, the village

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messenger. Not all villages make use of all seven officers; the number actually working in a village depends partly on the size of the village, and partly on the number of calls upon their services. Ultimately, the number of elders is decided upon by the headman in consultation with the village council.

Each of these officers is a man of importance in his own right in the village. Each is an elder of the village, and, as head of his own household, a full member of the village council. Village elders hold their position throughout their lifetime, unless the council adjudges an individual to be morally corrupt or physically unable to continue his duties. Because the duties of each of these administrative elders are rather clearly understood in the traditions of the Santals, each man tends to perform his duties independently. The assistants are not underlings, or tools in the power of the headman; however, they are responsible to both the headman and the village council.

Life-time tenure for such officers might mean that they could accumulate through time inordinate power over their village fellows, but this does not happen. In the first place, they do not form an administrative clique intent on consolidating power; occasional consultation between the headman and one or more of the officers takes place as specific administrative duties necessitate, but the villagers are not hospitable to the kind of secrecy required to give a group the opportunity to work together against the wishes of the whole community. In the second place, the frequency of council meetings and the continued effectiveness of egalitarian

expectations serve to counter-balance any tendency towards the accumulation of power in the hands of any one of the administrative elders or any combination thereof. An additional check on the powers of the headman comes from the supervisory position of the Sub-Divisional Officer, representing the Government, who actually appoints the headman to his duties as pradhan and mustagir of the village; this appointment must be repeatedly confirmed every few years, and every headman is desirous of ensuring re-appointment which necessitates the maintenance of good relations with his village people who are always free to take complaints against him to both the village council and to the Sub-Divisional Officer.

At this point a somewhat analytic examination of the nature of the headman's specific role, as a part of the Santal political system is appropriate. The Santal village headman may be characterized as (1) the Pradhan, or officer directly responsible for government concerns in the village, (2) A symbol of Santal values and traditions, and (3) both an authority and a leader among the people of his village.

The office of Pradhan is a creation of the administrative authority of the national Government, and the duties related to the office are defined in government regulations. However, it is the practice of the Sub-Divisional Officer to define specifically the major areas of responsibility in written form when appointing, or confirming the appointment of a village headman. A typical statement is found in the appointment papers of the current headman of Manjhipur. According to this statement, the headman must:

1. Pay an annual government rent (property tax) of 418 rupees (about %55) in behalf of the raiyats (landholders) of the village.
2. Collect the annual rent from the raiya
ts at the fixed government rate, according to the class of land. Any over-assessment collected will be a violation punishable by the S.D.O. (Sub-divisional Officer). A proper commission will be paid to the headman for the collection of the revenue from the raiyats when the full amount is turned over to the revenue authorities.3. Guard the boundaries of the village from encroachment by outsiders.
4. Prevent the felling of the trees shown on the village map.
5. Perform police duties prescribed by government.
6. Perform any additional duties which the government may prescribe.

The collection of tax revenues is a primary concern of government. The headman is responsible for collecting a specific amount of revenue. This total amount is, of course, the sum of taxes due from each parcel of land in the village area, for each parcel is classified, evaluated and assessed a specific amount. The process of assessment is carried out at the time of the revenue settlement.

The tax must be paid by the owner of the parcel in a monetary payment, not in kind, and therefore the need for cash is introduced into the subsistence economy of the village. It also requires agencies for marketing agricultural products, providing the village with cash funds for the payment of taxes. Santals in general have no cultural institution for preparing individuals to perform the commercial and banking operations needed to meet the demand for taxes, and certainly the headman, with his commitment to traditional patterns, has little interest in providing the necessary services. (Where an occasional headman--like the headman of Dangrejolha--attempts

enterprise in the commercial realm, the results are seldom satisfactory.)

In the early administration of the East India Company, land taxes were regarded as "rent", and the collector of land "rent" was treated as a landlord, a "zaminder", responsible for paying the government its revenue but not limited in the "rental" charged of the cultivator. Such a system created great hardship and social disorder in areas where the system was established, and provided a major impetus to the Santal Rebellion. The whole configuration of concepts involved in the headmanship in Santal society stands in opposition to the equation of the headman with the "land lord" or "zamindar" of non-Santal societies. The headman certainly has responsibility for the collecting of annual revenues due the government, but it is clearly understood that this responsibility is purely a "trustee" responsibility. The government can rightfully claim its revenue and the pradhan's duty is simply to carry through the operations by which the householders of the village pay their respectful duties to the government.

The pradhan is compensated for his efforts. A percentage of the revenue is paid to him for the costs of collection. The compensation is paid only after all revenues are turned into the governmental treasury at the Sub-divisional center. In practice, it is expected that some loss will be inevitable, and the headman's explanation of unpaid amounts is given due consideration. In times of deficient harvests, remission of taxes is most necessary, and the Sub-Divisional Officers in the "non-regulation" district of the

Santal Parganas have powers to grant these remissions with a freedom not found in "regulation" districts.

The second area of responsibility for the pradhan of a village is the maintenance of boundaries, both those of the village itself and those between landholdings within the village. Quarrels over the boundaries of fields have frequently marred the peace of Indian villages and to some extent the Santals also are inclined to encroach upon the soil of their neighbors if the headman is not alert and constantly vigilant.

The third area of responsibility deals with the areas open to common usage; in this particular statement it deals only with the trees in the woodlot. Growing and full-grown trees are not a part of the commons of the village; they are not available for any villager to fell and use. The government has reserved them as a source of revenue. They are not to be sold to commercial contractors, as are the trees of the government forests; village householders have primary rights and are given preference when trees are sold by auction. In many cases the trees are sold at a fixed price to local people. It is obvious that free exploitation of the trees would quickly denude a countryside which has already lost much of its wooded cover.

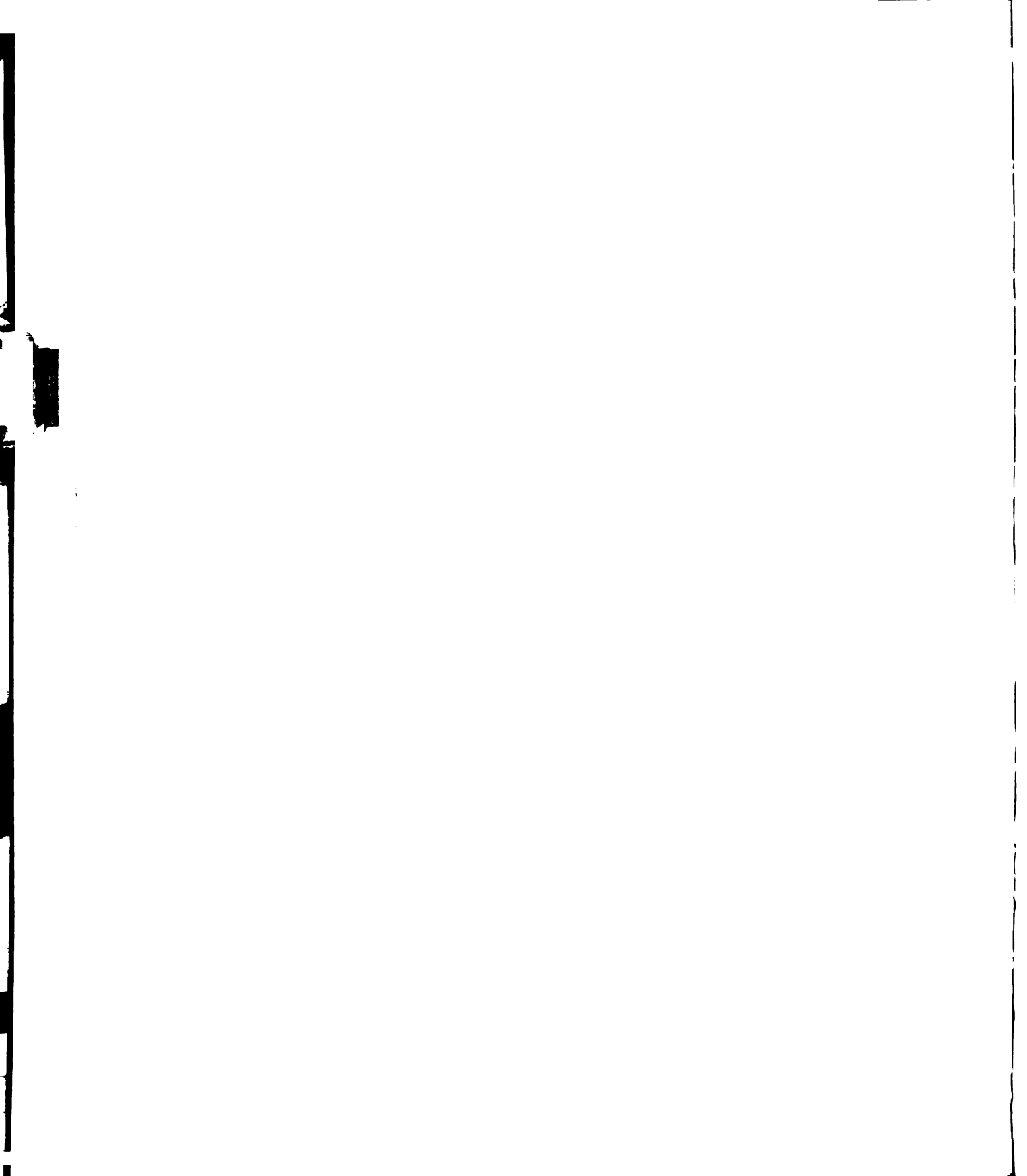
Police duties are not specified in the above statement of appointment. They involve whatever seems needed for "the keeping of the peace", and include fairly close cooperation with the regular police authorities in the area whenever those authorities are within the jurisdiction of the village.

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The final statement in the appointment paper indicates that the pradhan is expected to perform his duties in a general spirit of cooperation with the governmental activities; he is to regard himself as primarily a government servant, rather than occupied in any of the other roles open to him. Such an implication makes the role of the Santal village headman a complex and often confusing one if, under any particular Sub-Divisional Officer, the governmental authority lacks sympathy with the other roles of the headman, particularly that of guardian of the traditions of the ancestors. The record, from what has been labeled the "traditional century", indicates that governmental officers have generally been sympathetic with Santal values and have minimized the difficulties of the headman. Since Indian Independence the same policies seem to be continuing, though the pressures towards universalizing governmental policies are increasing.

As a symbol, the headman is expected to preserve both correctness and justice. The headman is a symbol of correctness in that he is expected to maintain, in his own conduct and in the relations of the village people, the moral, jural and legal traditions of the ancestors, the rules which Ralph Nicholas has described as "propositions about behavior, stating what one may or may not do, directing that certain kinds of action be performed while enjoining others, distinguishing right and wrong, correct and incorrect" (Nicholas 1968:302). He must not only maintain the heritage, but he must surround it with an aura of seriousness by his consistently reverential demeanor. As a guardian of tradition he stands as a



bulwark against the assimilative tendencies of the present time. Without the effective enactment of his role such tendencies would very probably erode Santal identity. The actual fulfillment of the headman's role as guardian of tradition, when performed by an intelligent and competent individual, becomes the one assurance that the Santal social system will survive, and where the Santal headman proves negligent or incompetent in his office, Santal institutions are in danger of alteration and more likely to follow the patterns of assimilative cultures.

The Santal headman is also a symbol of justice. He maintains traditional standards of justice by his leadership in settling disputes (serious or trivial) and his constant efforts to regularize irregularities. In performing these duties he must always avoid any tendency to arbitrate; Santal judicial processes are mediative, and directed towards the development of consensus, and any approach to the arbitrary judgment of a "third party" disturbs the peace of the village as it provokes indignation among the elders. The efforts toward consensus require, of the headman, insight in understanding the real roots of conflict, alertness in seeking compromises, and appreciation of the available resources for mutual satisfaction.

The question may, here, be asked appropriately if the headman should be regarded as an authority or as a leader. The distinction between authority and leadership has been made by Bierstedt. He has suggested that men become leaders through the outstanding fulfillment of organizational and personal relations

and through the fulfillment of communal norms in such a manner that his followers willingly submit to his wishes in order to realize manifest goals or goals represented by the leader. Authority, on the other hand, is associated with the dominance accorded a person holding a prestigious status or position in an organized setting in which structural relations of super-ordination and sub-ordination have become institutionalized or habitual. Bierstedt's discussion suggests that leadership is evident in the innovative setting, where the leader-follower relationship is in formation, while authority is evident after the differences in status have become customary or habitual; after this "solidifying" of the patterns of coordination, authority may be granted to any person elevated to the status of superior, and any person in the status of inferiority responds with obedience and cooperation without testing the abilities of the authority. The authority need not personally prove himself competent to elicit the loyalty of his sub-ordinates while the leader is constantly required to demonstrate that his actions are leading the group in the direction of their norms or expectations (Bierstedt 1970:316-319).

If this distinction between authority and leadership be applied to the Santal headman's role, it becomes almost necessary to say that leadership and authority can be, and are, in this society, simultaneously evident. The long-established traditions of the Santals give "authority" to the village headman, whoever he may be; even when a young man inherits the position, his words are regarded with respect and his judgments are viewed with attention.

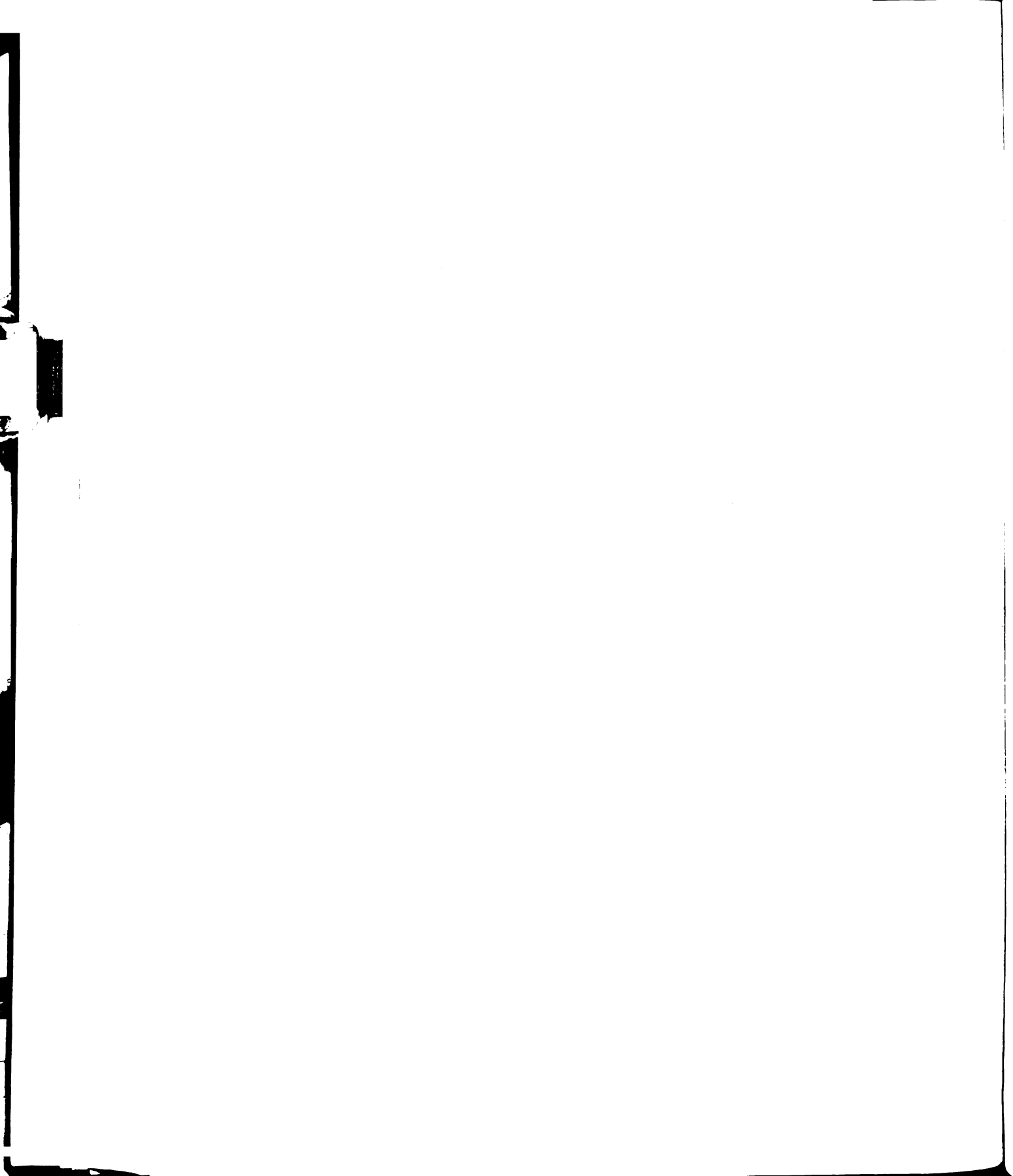
Yet the egalitarian aspects of Santal life, especially the need for developing consensus, continually compels the headman to demonstrate his leadership--genuine ability in both administration and judgment.

Another aspect of leadership is presented in the following statement by F. G. Bailey:

We already have a variety of synonyms for strong and weak leaders. The strong leader commands: the weak asks for consent. The strong man has men at his disposal like instruments: the weak leader has allies. The former's political credit is high: the latter's low. The strong man has ready access to political resources: the weak leader does not. Notice that questions about a leader's control over his team are questions about the relative size of his political resources as measured against the political resources independently controlled by his supporters (Bailey 1969:75).

By the criteria which Bailey offers, we might say that the Santal village headman's role makes of him a weak leader: his resources are usually no greater than those of his fellow village elders (except that perhaps tradition grants him an advantage they do not have, and perhaps in his later years experience equips him with models of resolution and compromise which not all other elders can acquire as fully as he does); but as to economic wealth, he is not superior to others in the village, and as for the coalition of active corps of devoted or fanatical followers ready to do his bidding unquestionably, the headman's role does not grant him such resources. Without these he may be regarded as "weak", but the epithetical use of the term "weak" appears inappropriate in describing the headman's role. His moral and consensual leadership has demonstrated considerable effectiveness when performed competently in resisting the encroachment of non-Santal influences.

Finally, it becomes imperative to try to ascertain the villager's own opinion of the headman's position. The Santals speak of their headman as the "big" man: they say, "Mañjhi do marang hor kanae" (the headman is a big man). Marang is literally translated as "big", but it must be distinguished from the near synonym, laṭu. Laṭu means "big" in the sense of "corpulent" or "fat", and since there are no fat men in a traditional Santal village it becomes apparent that laṭu is inappropriate in describing the village headman. Marang implies both importance and seniority, both of which do apply to their concept of headmanship. Similarly, Santals usually consider their headman to be a bud aḱil hor, literally a man with knowledge and wisdom. He is expected to give wise counsel (solha), but he is not expected to be a talkative person dispensing his opinions indiscriminately. They expect their headman to be an aḱuric' (leader), a person who is actively engaged in the pursuit of some purpose, and not merely a passive advisor whose position requires him to remain objective or neutral. There must be an aḱuric' to head the ceremonial hunting expedition. There is always an aḱuric' among a group of boys herding cattle or among a group of young men performing a drama to demonstrate the traditions and events of history. Modern political action groups do not exist without an aḱuric', neither do traditional Santal villages. The village headman is expected to be a marang hor, a bud aḱil hor, and an aḱuric'. Pervading these concepts as applied to the headman is the notion of importance, seniority, experienced wisdom, and active leadership.



The Pargana

At some point early in Santal history, it was found expedient to organize an authority to deal with inter-village relationships: many reasons can be deduced to explain the emergence of an inter-village council even in a subsistence economy located in a land of isolating forests but these reasons need not be speculated on here. The Santals have, in historic times, applied the term pargana to the collection of villages accepting the authority of an inter-village council, and to the council itself. Very soon after the Santals began to settle in the Damin-i-koh they organized their villages into pargana groups and developed pargana councils.

The pargana council was made up of groups of elders; each group, with its headman, represented one of the villages in the pargana. The selection of representatives from the village to the pargana council was not formalized; the elders who formed an informal advisory group around the village headman accompanied him to the meetings of the pargana council.

The pargana assembly elected one person from among those representing their villages in its meetings to serve as the Parganic' for a life term. This elected officer, usually a village headman, acted as the presiding officer of the council. Inevitably he became the most influential and prestigious figure among the men of the ten to twenty villages associated in the pargana. Of the criteria used in selecting the Parganic', the most important was that he be a man well informed of hapramko ak' dustur (the traditions of the ancestors) and the most able to point the way to the preservation

of traditional Santal values. This ability, is the Santal definition of "wisdom". It was important because the Parganic' was continually called upon to inform and counsel the elders and councils of the area villages in matters dealing with Santal traditions in the face of problems arising from the challenge of life in the Damin-i-koh.

It was the duty of the Parganic' to call meetings of the pargana assembly. These meetings were not regularly scheduled but called whenever a headman or a group of village elders requested them. The request was made to the Parganic' and if he adjudged that the request warranted an assembling of the village delegations, the meeting was called. His duties as presiding officer of the meeting were very similar to those of the village headman in his own village council. The Parganic' served as a guardian of tradition and guided discussion towards consensus as effectively as possible. After extended and free discussion by the village representatives, the Parganic' called for a decision, but this call usually did not come until he was confident of a consensus or, at least, a strong majority in support of the decision.

The pargana assembly served as a high court of last resort rather than as a legislative body. However, as is usual where such bodies are found, the decisions of the assembly tended to have legislative effect because they became precedents for long periods and in numbers of situations. For the most part the pargana assemblies dealt with matters which local councils could not resolve, either because of the lack of consensus in the village or because of the novelty of the problem (and the difficulty of relating it to

traditional patterns). Some matters of inter-village conflict (or need for cooperation) also found their way to the assembly. To some extent, the pargana assembly served as a supervisory body in matters of moral, jural and legal practice; complaints against local village councils could be brought to the Parganic' and thence to the assembly. This possibility meant that each village council was influenced by the potential superior authority of the assembly.

Although the Sub-Divisional administration of government is discussed separately in a later section of this chapter, it is necessary to introduce this instrument of government while considering the pargana. The pargana organization had its origin early in Santal life. It became active in the Damin-i-koh very early in the period of settlement, and its part in the rebellion was important. It survived the post-rebellion re-organization of the traditional system without the formal recognition of British Indian governmental authority in the "traditional century". However, during this period, the Government found it "necessary" to deal directly with the villages as political instrumentalities. It did not empower the pargana assembly or the Parganic' with any type of administrative function (such as it gave to the village headman and the village council). With the denial of legislative, judicial and police functions the pargana remained a wholly Santal institution, until the end of the British period, concerned only with the preservation of Santal values and traditions which were regarded as the essential ingredients of the welfare of society. Without the sanction of the Government, matters involving dealings between Santals and non-Santals

could not be brought to the point of resolution in the pargana assembly. This appears to have been a deliberate decision of the Government designed to limit the political authority of the Santals to their respective villages.

The Government paraphernalia of the Sub-Division may be said to have paralleled the traditional jurisdiction of the pargana except that usually in the area of the sub-division there was room for several pargana groupings, the sub-division also had authority over non-Santals and much greater resources than the purely Santal institution; it raised taxes, as the pargana did not; it employed large numbers of persons while the pargana was served in a largely voluntary capacity only by the Parganic'. The sub-division had police authority, and could enforce judicial decisions against the will of individuals of considerable influence supported by large numbers of followers; the pargana assembly gained its authority solely from the consensus it could develop among the Santals.

In spite of the differences between Government and pargana assembly authority and resources, the Subdivisional authority found it both wise and expedient to keep apprised of the activities of "unofficial" pargana assemblies. They were composed of the most prestigious leaders of the Santal community, whose influence profoundly affected the attitudes of the Santals and their willingness to work under the regulations of Government. Their judgments revealed the fundamental moral and traditional values of the people who cultivated the land and provided the revenues. And the complaints brought to the pargana assemblies were a dependable indication of the

problems of the people as they were recognized and felt by most Santals. The Sub-Divisional authority therefore relaxed bureaucratic procedures and made it possible for the leaders of the pargana assembly to act as mediaries between the various offices of the Sub-Division and such village councils or headmen as had special problems unresolved under ordinary procedures. Ignoring regular channels of authority, such mediation was always informal, highly personal and effective.

Pargana assemblies are now only another chapter in history. They seldom, if ever, have met since India gained its independence in 1947. This has not been due to any act of Government (as far as has been ascertainable). Rather, there seems to have been a gradual diminishing of pargana activity since 1930, with the period between assembly meetings growing gradually longer and the number of matters submitted to the Parganic' for decision gradually becoming less.

This gradual change seems to be due to two primary factors. First, there has been a large in-flux of non-Santals into the hor disom since the 1920's until the Santals have become a minority (about one third) in their own country. Some villages have remained purely Santal in their population, but a great many villages have become heterogeneous. As a result it has been increasingly difficult to bring together ten or twenty Santal villages in a contiguous area to form a pargana. The second reason may be described as a gradually spiraling process in which village independence increased while pargana authority diminished, each trend accelerating the other. As pargana assembly meetings became less frequent, more and

more matters had to be resolved in village councils; at the same time, as more and more matters were finally dealt with in the village, the need for a meeting of the superior authority diminished. As the activity of the Parganic' decreased, the village headman took on increased responsibility for maintaining the Santal traditions; at the same time, as people depended the more on their local headman, the fewer became the appeals to the wisdom of the Parganic'. The result of this spiralling process has been a great strengthening of the local village council, its headman and administrative elders. Today, with the pargana system no longer functioning, the responsibility for maintaining hapramko ak' dustur falls entirely upon the village community and its leaders, especially the village headman.

However, there are times when even the wisest headman finds himself confronted with problems too novel or too complex for his clarification, and when village councils are unable to achieve a workable consensus regarding some issue sorely in need of resolution. Change and frustration are common experiences in the Santal village today. In such circumstances the Santal gift for adjustment has found devices which, if not traditionally ideal are pragmatic and expedient. A number of cases have been noted where the headmen of two or three villages have sat down to consult each other on the meaning of hapramko ak' dustur in difficult situations. And occasionally, whole village councils have joined in an inter-village effort to find a suitable solution to a problem, the voices of neighboring villages giving an added impetus to the processes by

which consensus is reached. These substitutes for the pargana assembly seem to have positive results.

There are times, however, when even these improvisations do not bring a satisfactory resolution, or when complainants refuse to be satisfied with the decisions of the improvised conferences. Then it is inevitable that individuals who have financial resources and non-Santal support of some sort appeal to the non-Santal system of adjudication, the Civil courts of the Sub-Division. Matters which eventually proceed to the civil authorities are usually jural and legal matters, while matters which can be resolved by Santal authorities are concerns of moral traditions.

An additional reason for the eclipse of the pargana assembly may be found in the development of the Anchal and Block Development programs and the new Panchayat organization of the Government of India since 1950. Certainly these programs are potentially new devices for inter-village action. However, the pargana assembly was clearly defunct before the introduction of the new rural programs. And its demise should not be attributed to the new efforts of Government.

The Sub-Divisional Administration

The political structures of Santal society meet the structures of the Indian Government through contact with the sub-divisional administration. This administration is the one of six sub-divisional systems in the Santal Parganas district, which, in turn, is one of the seventeen districts of the State of Bihar, one

of India's 16 States. To the average Santal, the bureaucracy of the Indian government seems totally removed from the concerns of life in the village, but the village headman, as an appointee of the sub-divisional authority--at least for matters concerning revenue and police administration, if not for traditional duties--must give a good deal of his time and effort to his responsibilities for the sub-divisional offices. Other village leaders are also aware of the importance of these administrative responsibilities beyond the Santal community.

The sub-divisional administration serves as an interpreter of, as well as intermediate link with, the codified laws of India as they are applied to all elements of the nation's population. There are a number of special statutory provisions applied only to the Santal population, and these are the special concern of the sub-divisional authority. A brief review of these special provisions is appropriate at this point for they give the political structures of Santal society a unique character. These provisions were first promulgated by the British rulers after the Rebellion of 1855; they have been little changed since.

Three specific legal provisions continue to influence Santal life in that they strongly affect the ability of the Santals to maintain their traditional system; it is these provisions which serve to "encapsulate" Santal society, preserving a degree of independence which would be soon lost in the midst of assimilative trends were it not for the provisions. (1) Santal land cannot be sold to non-Santals under any circumstances. (2) The rate of

interest which can be charged on loans to the Santals is held under Government control. (3) The principle of primogeniture in the selection of the Santal headman is recognized by the governmental authorities, and the headman who inherits his office is given the same recognition, rights and privileges, duties and authority, as the headman who is elected by the vote of the people in non-Santal villages.

It has been the responsibility of the chief authority in the sub-divisional administration, the Sub-Divisional Officer, known generally as the S.D.O., to assure the enforcement of these principles. As both chief magistrate of the sub-division and the chief administrative officer, he is directly accessible to the village headman, and practical experience has taught the Santal headman that in this officer he has a reliable and sympathetic court of last resort. Even though more recent organizational changes have attempted to weaken the ties between the village headman and the S.D.O., providing other avenues of communication with the Government, Santal headmen continue to maintain their communication links with the S.D.O.'s office.

Modern Rural Programs of Government

Since 1950 a nation-wide effort has been made to bring governmental services and democratic participation in government to the rural areas of India. To this end, the sub-divisions of the district have been further sub-divided into what are called "anchals". There are, for instance, six anchals in the sub-division

in which the villages under study here are located. The two villages described in these pages are among the 134 villages in the Hartjuri Anchal of the Paurapur sub-division.

The anchal headquarters at Hartjuri town include a police station and a Block Development office. The police station serves the Hartjuri police "thanna" which is coterminous with the anchal. The Block Development office serves the anchal through rural development and extension programs. These programs are initiated by national authorities but they vary from anchal to anchal to meet the specific needs of the area. They generally include agricultural, public health and adult education projects with officers trained at least minimally for each project. The Block Development staff also includes "village level workers" who circulate among the villages and attempt to establish contact with the people with an intent to enlist their interest in the projects of the "block". The officer supervising the Anchal program is the Block Development Officer, or B.D.O.

Within each anchal the villages have been organized into "panchayats". The term, "panchayat" refers to patterns of Indian village government of very ancient origin in which five men ("panch" means five) conduct free and open hearings on complaints and claims made by fellow villagers. The traditional panchayat could be the governing body of an entire village or of a caste segment of the village. In the modern administrative scheme, the panchayat area, or panchayat raj, has been organized to include a small number of villages, or a population of no less than one thousand; the governing

committee of this panchayat area is elected by secret ballot with all adults, male and female, resident in the area granted the right to vote.

Like the town or township of a modern state, the panchayat is given a limited right to levy taxes and provide services in its area. This panchayat system is ultimately intended to become the smallest local unit of government.

There are those in the Government of India who are seeking assiduously in the name of progressive democracy to make the Block Development and Panchayat systems universal in rural India. N. R. Inamdar, in his formulation of the goals of the government, has said that it is expected that panchayats will be established in all the areas which can be classified as village areas; that the panchayats shall become democratized institutions whose members will be elected in free and competitive elections by secret balloting; that the Panchayat bodies will be vested with adequate financial and personal resources to permit a continuous widening of their scope of activities; and that these panchayats will be under centralized control under the immediate supervision of offices of the Sub-Divisional administration (Inamdar 1970:2).

Verrier Elwin, in a serious critique of the system has recognized these goals:

The State Governments and the Administrations of the Union Territories are vying with one another in the rapid expansion of the Panchayat Raj institution. There appears to be a unanimity of opinion that these village Panchayats should be, not merely the administrative unit, but also the medium for development activities. This is in accordance with Article 40 of the Constitution which says that: 'The State shall take

steps to organize village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government' (Elwin 1963: 129).

However, Elwin questions the appropriateness of applying the system to areas where adibasis live. He says of the adibasis:

The decision of their Councils is law to the tribal people. The sanction behind them is both necessity and faith; necessity because in those far-flung areas social equilibrium and stability have to be maintained by some responsible agency and the Council is that agency; faith because with the tribals their social customs and religious rites are the essence of existence (Ibid.:130).

It is my opinion that Elwin's strictures are entirely applicable in the hor disom among the hor hopon. Even though the Santal villagers do not occupy "far flung areas" as some tribal groups do, and though they are in contact with governmental mechanisms and non-Santal groups in many aspects of their lives, they still maintain their strong faith in their traditional forms of polity, and are fully satisfied with the instrumentalities, established and proven through the past century, including their direct contact with Sub-Divisional Officers.

To the Santals, the panchayat system is a threat to this established system in many ways. First, many matters pertaining to jural and legal rights are of mutual concern to panchayats and the Santal village councils; for the panchayats to assume control of such rights is in direct violation of the rights which the villagers claim, assumably under the Constitution of India, to exercise their own control over social behavior and their lands. Secondly, under the system of election in the panchayats, it is possible for small villages or units of the population to have no

representatives in the council, while other villages may have several elected members: this is because candidates are elected by the entire jurisdiction of the panchayat, the panchayat raj, with a majority vote given to the largest group, leaving minority groups without representation. The election system may be appropriate in a population of homogeneous society and uniform status, but where large differences of ethnicity and culture divide the population, block voting by groups usually eliminates representation from minority groups. This is in violation of the democratic intent of the constitution, and certainly contrary to Santal values. Thirdly, the representative body of the panchayat holds office for a limited period of time, a condition alien to Santal traditions which accord life-tenure to council representatives and officers, and provides appropriate compensating mechanisms to prevent abuse of power; life-tenure has meant security and strong personal responsibility in Santal polity which seems to be absent in the new order.

In the hor disom the likelihood that a panchayat raj might be homogeneously Santal in composition is very slight. The villages under study here belong to heterogeneous panchayats, including Mal Pahari, Muslim, Caste Hindu and Outcaste populations as well as Santals. The Santals have categorized these groups as Pahar reak', Muslawak', Dekowak' and Ojat' reak'. Their past experiences with these groups, especially with the first three, have left in the Santal community a good deal of resistance against any kind of interaction with these people. It is therefore difficult for them to participate in the political arena with them.

In summary, the Santals have a profound respect and affection for their own traditional instrumentalities, with their egalitarian emphasis and their strong preference for consensus and adaptability in dealing with the concerns of political life. The almost-uninhibited competition of panchayat elections, the pressure to form coalitions with alien groups, the linguistic difficulties of political discussion in a multi-lingual setting, and other difficulties have discouraged most Santals from entering the political life of the panchayat system with anything but reticence.⁴

Summary: Three Graphic Presentations

The description of political instrumentalities available to the Santals may be graphically presented in the three figures given below. The first (Fig. I) shows how the four units of traditional Santal polity relate to each other. The households (1), each with its head, are represented in the village council (2) of which the headman is the presiding authority. The administrative elders (3) of the village, including the headman, are related closely to the village council, but also serve to represent the village in the pargana assembly (4), with its Parganic', an inter-village organization.

The second figure (Fig. II) shows how the four elements of Santal traditional polity were related to the Sub-Divisional administration of India's Government through the office of the headman during the "traditional century", before Indian Independence from the British. The only difference between Figure I and Figure II is

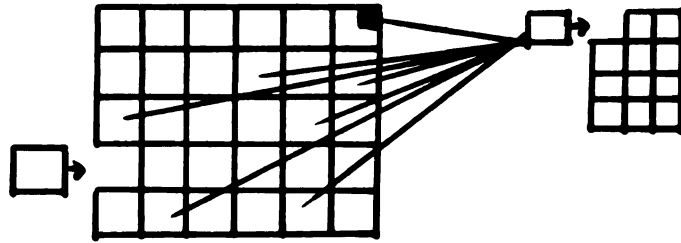


Figure I.--Traditional Political Instrumentalities.

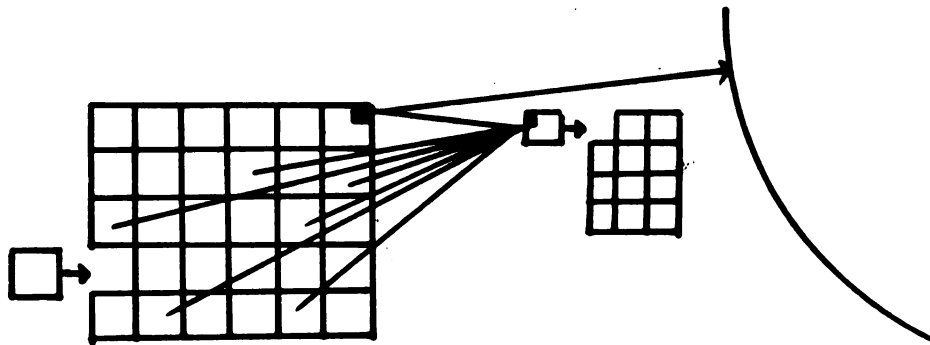


Figure II.--Political Instrumentalities During the "Traditional Century".

Key to Figure II: Numbers 1-4 are the same as referred to in the text for Figure I. Number 5 represents the Sub-Divisional administration to which many villages were attached.

the addition of the curved line (representing part of a circle) illustrating the Government's imposed instrumentality of the Sub-Divisional administration. The number of villages thus attached to the administration are far too numerous to illustrate here.

The third figure (Fig. III) illustrates the complexity of relationships developed since Independence. The representation of the households (1) in the village council (2) continues as in previous years. The village council, however, no longer appeals to the pargana assembly because this body is defunct and does not appear in Figure III. Instead two bodies intervene, theoretically, between the village council and the Sub-Divisional administration: village councils are supposed to relate to the panchayat (3) which is not a Santal body, and usually contains more non-Santals than Santals. The panchayats of an area relate to the Anchal-Development Block organization (4) for various services, and the Block Development program is under the direction of the Sub-Divisional administration (5). Regardless of the legislated organizational structure, the

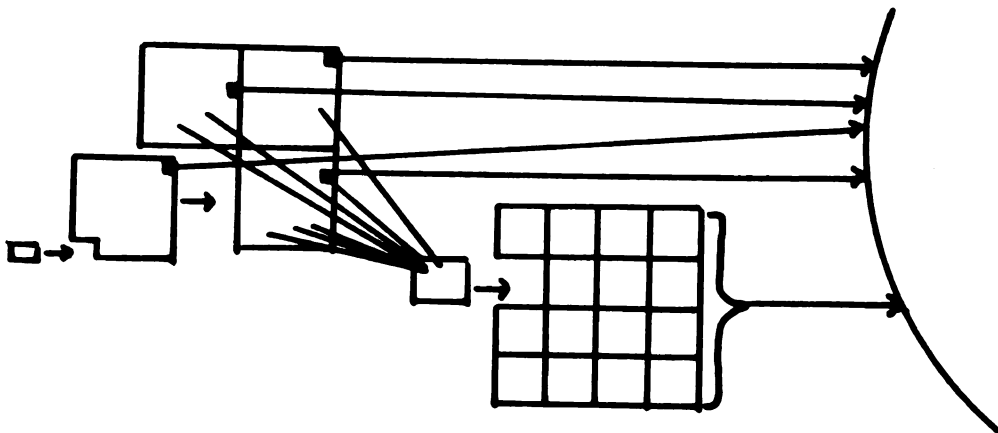


Figure III.--The Current Political System.

Santal village headmen tend to exercise their right to take matters of village concern directly to the Sub-Divisional offices whenever possible.

The Cost of Complexity

The complexity of this last system has brought with it many strains. This is particularly due to the delays which are experienced in getting decisive action under the new system. Santals have seen that in their traditional order, with its strong local authority and its highly personalized village councils, matters of dispute or emergency needs of many kinds have been dealt with immediately, and in a framework of open discussion and full participation. Furthermore, decisions have not been curbed and complicated by reference to written regulations and rigid laws; the goal of all adjustments has been to reach a workable consensus in compromise. In the new system, every circumstance seems to create increasing delay and frustration. Moreover, the resolution of difficulties has become prohibitive to many who have not the financial means to meet the costs.

In many ways, the political instrumentalities created by the Government have, for many decades, been encroaching upon the authority of the Santal system. It should be remembered that Santal society itself was saved from extinction by the agency of Governmental intervention after the Rebellion of 1855, its protective regulations preserving the economic basis and authority structures of Santal life. This fact has given the officers of

Government a role in Santal life which inevitably over-rides traditional authorities in cases of confrontation. With Independence and the efforts to extend modern democratic procedures into the rural life of India, the tendency for Governmental authority to undercut traditional authority increases.

The Government provides courts which can grant relief to plaintiffs even when traditional councils refuse to do so. Moreover, the Government courts have police powers not available to the councils of the Santal village. The result is that individual Santals, either having been educated in non-Santal legal procedures or guided by non-Santal sophisticates, have been able to resort to the Governmental instrumentalities when their traditional system has failed to grant them the relief they feel they must have. The governmental institutions are costly and slow-moving, but those who can afford to make investments in appeals to the courts and police, have been increasingly inclined to do so. The vast majority of Santal villagers have neither been educated in the philosophy of the current system nor can they afford to hire non-Santal counsel to interpret their position. The common man still depends upon his traditional instrumentalities and his champion of justice and correctness, the village headman who lives just down the path from his people.

CHAPTER V
SOCIAL CATEGORIES FOR THE
HEADMAN AND HIS PEOPLE

Introduction: The Importance of Categories

In Santal villages many residents are kinsmen who know each other personally, furthermore, each Santal seems to know his village mates. This is not surprising considering the fact that the average Santal village is composed of only 30-50 households. The additional fact that the village is the nexus of life processes, the place where continuous interpersonal relationships are experienced throughout life, enhances people's awareness of each other. These relationships are governed by norms well known among the kinsmen, the old and the young, the males and the females.

Rules of behavior are often singled out as essential in the consideration of human interaction, but so is the formulation of social categories essential to human life. These categories are basic to the processes of human thought and they bring order into social relations. The Santals have developed, as an ancient heritage, a number of social categories necessary to the village headman's relationships with the people. These categories serve as a widely accepted identifying characteristic of Santal society in general.

Although the categories of Santal society have their parallels in other societies, it is incorrect to view the parallelisms

as absolute similarities. Like every other ethnic group, the Santals have had a unique history and this has meant the development of unique characteristics in their conceptual equipment and their social practices. For instance, it may be convenient to refer to the Santal pāris as a "clan", but it must be noted that the pāris lacks many of the characteristics found in units labeled "clan" in studies of other societies. Likewise, the Santal ghutiā may seem to have characteristics of the Hindu "cult"; but the ghutiā is a kinship group and the Hindu cults are frequently made up of unrelated persons, even of persons of different castes.

In the assimilative contacts experienced by the Santals, there have been attempts to equate the Santal categories with classifications used in the assimilative society. These may be noted, but care should be taken to avoid thinking of these attempts as anything more than the re-interpretations that grow out of assimilative contact. In this chapter the Santal categories of pāris, gutiā, bōs, gharong, and oaris are defined and discussed as they are manifest among the villagers.

The Santal Pāris

Every Santal, including the headman, is known as a member of his patrilineal exogamous pāris. The twelve pāris may well be referred to as "clans". The label "clan" has been used differently among Anthropologists, but it generally indicates an extended kinship group like the pāris which includes all persons unilineally descended from a common ancestor of fictive or mythological character

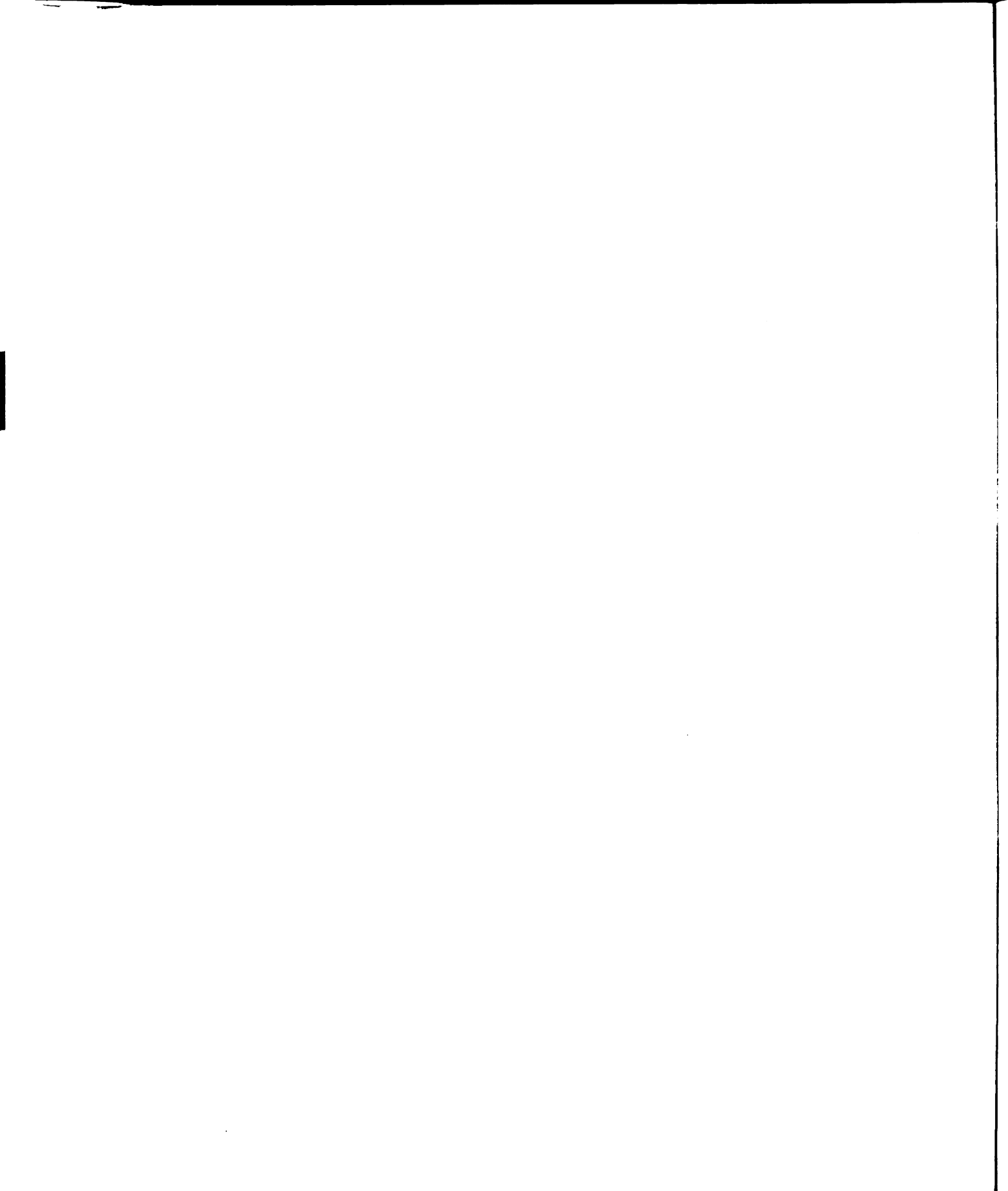
rather than through a known or well-remembered ancestor. Because some writers include both matrilineal and patrilineal descent groups under the term "clan", it is necessary to specify the paṛis as a patrilineal kinship group. Similarly, because the term "clan" has on occasion been used for groups practicing endogamy as well as exogamy, it is necessary to distinguish the paṛis as being an exogamous kinship group (Fox 1967:49-50).

The division of the Santals into twelve paṛis, and the practice of paṛis exogamy is traced to the ancestors and strongly validated by the mythology of the Santals. It is common for the creation myth to be repeated at certain life-cycle events either by the headman or a respected male elder (see Appendix C, p 295). The creation myth relates the belief that the original pilcu haṛam (sacred grandfather--first man) and pilcu buḡhi (sacred grandmother--first woman), who were not brother and sister, were the parents of twelve brother-sister pairs. Each pair is regarded as essentially of related origin because they were born at the same location. Each pair was, therefore, given a distinct name which further emphasizes their distinct nature. In the mythological age, the male and female in each pair practiced strict incest taboos in their relation to each other: these true brothers and sisters of the creation myth never came to know each other sexually. It was the solemn duty of each brother to protect his sister from all bodily harm and especially from sexual molestation. The third generation of hor hopon came into being when the brother in each of the original pairs cohabited with another brother's sister--that is to say, according to Santal

lore, outside the incest restrictions. While the twelve sisters retained their original name, which they shared with their paired brother, they did not pass on the name to their offspring. Instead, the offspring in each case took the name of the father. Thus, in the mythological beginnings, Santal society acquired its twelve patrilineal divisions each practicing the strict incest taboos which governed the "true brothers and sisters" of the original pairs.

Every Santal carries the name of his pāris. The myths give the names of twelve pāris: Hãsdak', Murmu, Kisku, Hembrom, Mār̄ndi, Soren, Tudu, Baske, Besra, Pāuria, Cõr̄ẽ and Bedea. However, according to oral tradition, one of the twelve pāris was "lost" many years ago when the members of this pāris refused to accompany the rest of the Santals in migration to a new place. Various versions of the story are told, but all agree that the Bedea clan was lost because of "stubbornness and disobedience to their elders". Contemporary Santals say that the eleven pāris still exist, but I found only nine pāris among the people in the communities of this study.

Membership in the pāris serves to structure the social relations of the Santals in several ways. In the first place, it marks the individual Santal's descent from the common ancestors of all the Santals, and therefore validates his membership in the hōq hōpon, the company of true men. This strengthens the solidarity of Santal society. Membership in one of the eleven existing pāris means, furthermore, identification with those who have been, unlike the "lost" Bedea pāris, both obedient and cooperative in the Santal



history of migration. In short, the identification with pāris traditions provides a strong moral basis for Santal unity.

In the second place, pāris distinctions serve to structure the important aspect of mate selection in Santal social relations. In keeping with the belief that all members of the pāris are, like the mythological brother-sister pairs, "true brothers and sisters", clan exogamy is strictly enforced by all Santal elders, even though individuals can not trace their actual agnatic relations beyond three or four generations.

In the third place, membership in the pāris accentuates the general egalitarianism of Santal society. In the mythological setting, not one of the original brother-sister pairs could or did claim any preferences of any sort. Mating between pairs was based on the accident of inebriacy after a long day of celebration in the dancing grove; no bias or preference is suggested. In more recently developed traditions elements of competition are reported between a few of the clans. Older people--usually women--sometimes speak out in objection to the marriage of a Kisku and a Mār̄ndi, repeating an old tale of how the Kiskus proved themselves more intelligent than the Mār̄ndi. Marriage between a man of the Tudu pāris and a woman of the Besra pāris is also discouraged because, they say, a group of Besra women once bested a group of Tudu young men in a battle of wits. Today these stories are treated lightly by most Santals. The authority and dignity of the village headman are never exerted to place any restrictions on mate selection between persons

of any two pāris, and informants repeatedly declare the complete equality of pāris.

There are evidences that the "world" of the pāris has been under some pressure in the culture contacts of the past century or so. One such is shown in the reports of Culshaw and Skrefsrud of a folktale suggesting that at one time Santal clans were stratified according to occupations in a manner not unlike the historic caste-occupation patterns of the Hindu village. In this story the Murmus were supposedly the priests; the Kiskus, the rulers; the Sorens, the soldiers; the Tudus, the metal workers and smiths, and so on. The reaction of Santals to this story, at least in the Damin-i-koh communities of this study, leads one to question its origins. One group of villagers reacted to the idea of Kiskus as rulers and Sorens as soldiers with the retort that they must not have been very good at their jobs because the Kisku and Soren households of that village were all rice farmers like everyone else. Another informant explained that some Hindus must have started this story many years ago in order to confuse Santal children, but they believed even the children know the truth too well to be taken in by Hindu myths.

Majumdar and Sachchinanda have taken these folktales more seriously. They have suggested that the Santals may have acquired them early in their migrations from other Mundari-speaking people in the Chota Nagpur region where we should seek the cultural origins of the Santals. With regard to this suggestion, it may be said that the caste-like organization of some Chota Nagpur people is

quite adequately explained as the result of fairly recent cultural contacts with Hindu people. It may be said in general, that where caste-practicing populations have become the dominant population in an area once occupied by adibasi groups, these latter have usually been incorporated into caste-organized villages as a subordinate caste. Where the influence of caste ideas has been less dominant, and where class-like differences have developed among the adibasis themselves there has been a tendency for the class stratification to take on, increasingly, the ideological patterns of caste, with tendencies towards endogamy in the strata and untouchability in inter-class relations. This is the impression one gets from reading the reports from many areas, especially in India's "Central belt". No evidence of caste-like developments are manifest in purely Santal villages of the Damin-i-koh, at least between the paris structures of Santal society.

The names of the paris continue to hold a significant place in the life of the modernized and urbanized Santals. Indian society is, today, following the European practice of giving each individual both a first and last name. While not all of India's communities have adopted this practice of the family surname, the European pattern has proved so great a convenience in the modern setting that it may be expected to have an increasing acceptance. For the Santal, the European pattern is easily and promptly acceptable; the paris name has been used (with few exceptions) by educated Santals as their surname, and its inheritance in the paternal line accords perfectly with Santal traditions. Whether or not the practice of paris

exogamy will be retained in the modern setting, cannot at present be predicted except to say that where modern biological concepts of incest are accepted it is not likely that mythological kinship ties will continue to govern mate selection. In fact, there are some reports among the villagers that in some Santal communities near Calcutta clan endogamy is allowed providing the couple represent two different bõs.

The Santal Bõs

The bõs defines relationships of importance to the Santal headman only on rare occasions. Where the family of the headman fails to provide a direct male heir for the headmanship, relatives of the bõs provide the candidates for election to the office. Where the headman and the village council must arrange for the inheritance of land left by a landholder without a male heir, they resort to the bõs to provide an acceptable successor to the ownership.

Largely because of the occasional role the bõs plays in providing heirs to land and to village offices, Santals maintain their interest in the extended family beyond the members of a single household. This interest does not usually extend beyond the second cousins; it is rare that a third cousin is selected for such inheritance. Second cousins in the patriline can prove that they have a common great-grandfather, naming each progenitor in the unilineal descent. Third cousins, in order to claim this relationship, must be able to show how they are descended from a common great-great-grandfather, and this cannot be done by many Santals

because of the lack of written records. It is a rare occasion when such a demonstration of kinship would be called for because a male heir is usually found within the first or second cousin classification.

The bõs differs from the paṛis or gutia (to be described later) relationships which depend on descent from fictive or mythological ancestors. Since it is based on the same patrilineal pattern of descent, the bõs, like the other forms of relationship, requires the practice of exogamy. This emphasis on exogamy is difficult to explain. It does not seem to be based on any socio-economic motives such as the desire to strengthen affinal alliances or to enlarge the family estate, motives which are often found to be a concern in mate selection among societies emphasizing exogamy; it is usual in Santal society to give young people almost complete freedom in mate selection regardless of economic or political alliances, providing they observe the traditional lines of exogamy.

There may be biological concerns in maintaining exogamy in Santal society, for the term "bos" is also used for the "blood line" of cattle. It may be the desire to keep the human "blood line" "pure" that exogamy is emphasized. If the practices of Santal cattle breeders are examined it becomes apparent that they seek to improve their herds by inbreeding, mating closely related individuals in their attempt to maintain characteristics considered desirable in cattle; in brief, the cattle bloodlines lead to endogamy rather than exogamy. Of course, the limiting of inheritance to the bõs may involve the idea that if the heir belongs to the same "blood line" he is more likely to have biologically inherited characteristics

which have marked his ancestors, his predecessors in office and ownership. No evidence that such biological considerations are consciously held has become manifest. It is possible that the only acceptable explanation of the Santal emphasis on patrilineal exogamy is that the mythological sanction, that governs pāris exogamy and bõs exogamy has a continuing effectiveness among the people.

It may be asked if the bõs relationship can be thought of as a "lineage" in the sense usually found in the anthropological literature. The term "lineage" has been applied to a great variety of phenomena, from corporate collectives of determinative importance, to relationships influencing social behavior rarely with minimal effect. Among Santals, the bõs appears to have the prime function of determining inheritability beyond the household in the absence of a male heir. The bõs cannot be labeled a "corporate group" which, according to Radcliffe-Brown's definition, should meet together at least occasionally to perform some collective function, or recognize the authority of some chief or council of representatives, or possess and control collective property, or have any two or all three of these characteristics (Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1962:41). The bõs has none of these characteristics: it has no collective rites or performances; it has no formal authority or head; its significance to property ownership or inheritance of office is limited to providing candidates from among whom the village council may make a selection in rather rare circumstances. The bõs may be labeled a "lineage" only in the sense that it recognizes known kinship beyond the households and has both a name and a function in

Santal society. This kinship category does fit the general usage of the term "lineage" as interpreted loosely by Beals and Hoijer who state, "Families related through a common ancestor more remote than a parent are called lineages. Common residence is not necessary, and sometimes no more than a recognition of common ancestry exists" (Beals and Hoijer 1971:354).

As is the case with other forms of the lineage, the bõs does undergo continuous division. This does not involve any formalities. It is simply the result of the fact that in each generation new persons achieve the status of great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather and sooner or later they die. New individuals become first, second and third cousins, while the children of these kinsmen become too remote for consideration as bõs kinsmen. The segmentation of households is not to be considered as a process of bõs segmentation. Even though the Santal gharonj (household), which is discussed in the next section, does segment, the individuals remain members of a common bõs. It will be noted that the kinship relationships of the gharonj are much more definitive than those of the bõs.

The Santal Gharonj

The role of the village headman is significantly concerned with the gharonj. He is a member of a gharonj; in fact, the head of his gharonj. In his dealings with the people, the headman must often regard them more as members of their gharonj than as specific individuals. The Santal term, gharonj, may be translated as

"household" in the sense which the term has acquired in general usage, i.e. the individuals living together in a house. The term, "joint family", which has been used increasingly to denote a legal and customary entity found frequently in pan-India society, may also be applied to the gharonj. Karve describes the "joint family" thus:

The joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked in one kitchen, who hold property in common, participate in common family worship and are related to one another in some particular type of kinship (Karve 1965: 8).

This concept of the pan-Indian joint family is, like the ideal of the gharonj, the long-continuing household containing all the descendants of a founding pair to the generation of the grandchildren or even the great-grandchildren through male descent. This ideal is not usually achieved among the Santals any more than among others who compose the pan-Indian population. Death, divorce, and the withdrawal of individuals and nuclear units take their toll until most households actually include only remnants of the total descent group. Sometimes only widowed or unmarried members are left to live together. Sometimes a single individual remains as the representative of a descent group. Quite often in the Santal villages one or two married sons with their wives and children remain with their parents to compose the gharonj. In all instances named the Santals continue to give the status of gharonj to these kinsmen, with the rights of participation and protection in the life of the village accorded to such units.

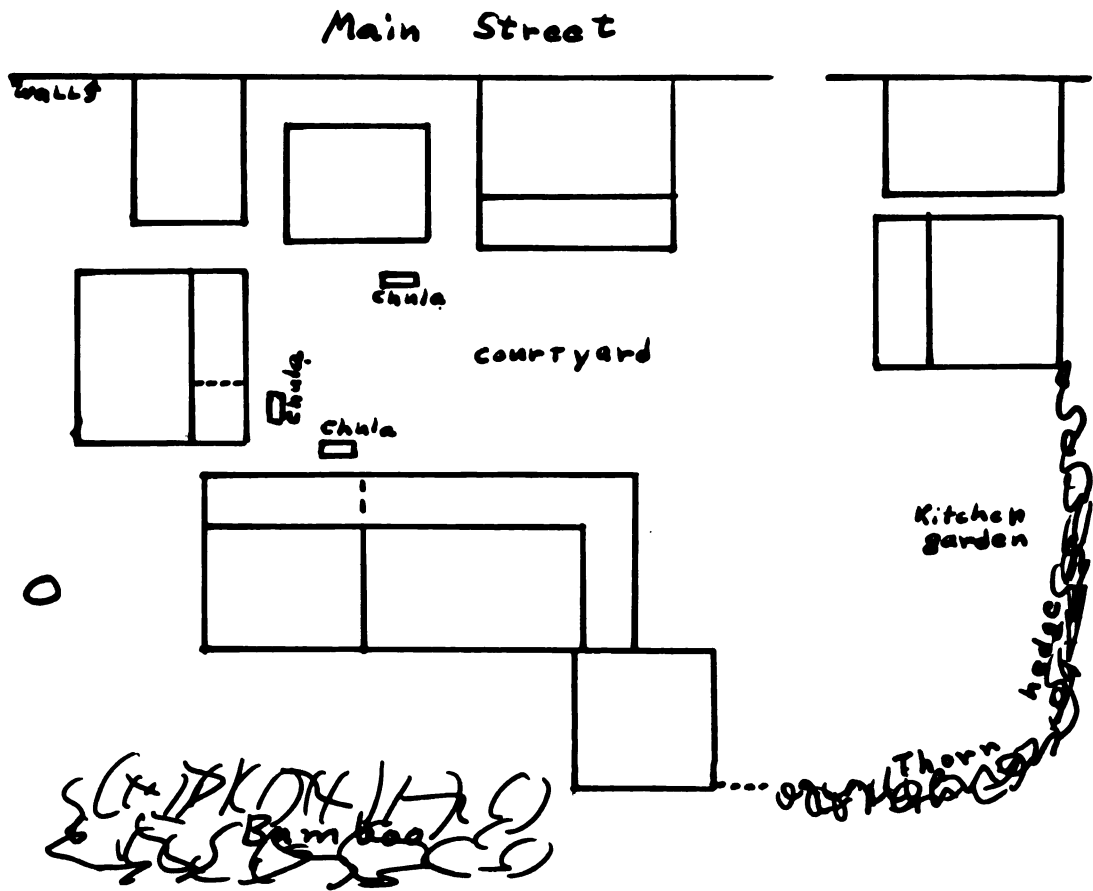
The gharonj may be said to have a life-cycle and the stages of the life-cycle affect the role it plays in village life. At its

inception, the joint family is a small nuclear family consisting of a man, his wife and their own children. In time the children become adults; the daughters leave to become members of their husband's gharonj, (usually in another village) but the sons remain as members of the household bringing to it their wives. The children of the sons grow up together as part of the gharonj of their father and grandfather until the household becomes rather large. Sometimes before the death of the founding pair, but often after the death, the nuclear units formed by the sons and their heirs withdraw (segment) and form a new gharonj. It is considered the duty of the youngest son to remain with his father until his death, even though other brothers choose to segment during the father's life time. With the dispersal of nuclear units new joint families begin again the cycle of the gharonj.

At its maximum size, the gharonj tends to have great influence in the activities of the village community. As a single nuclear family or as a small remnant family, the gharonj may play a distinctly dependent role in the multiple range of village affairs. Size of gharonj is not the sole determinant of influence in the life of the village; other factors, discussed in another section, are highly significant to political and social influence.

Figure IV attempts to illustrate the buildings occupied by three gharonj, (p 116). A gharonj may live under more than "one roof" (as does family "A" in Figure IV). It is common for well-established families to build two or more residential structures adjacent to each other, usually around a courtyard, with a collection

Figure IV.--Three Households in Manjhipur



Key to Figure IV: The three different households are designated as "A", "B", and "C". The use of sub-numerals refers to the fathers (as sub-1) and the sons (as sub-2). The abbreviation "kit" refers to kitchen.

of buildings which I label a "homestead". Most homesteads include residential dwellings, a small kitchen/food storage building, and a cattle shed. When a gharonj segments the new household member units may build new homesteads, but usually the segmenting units remain in the dwelling they previously occupied, establishing their own hearth (chula), a store room and some type of facility for a few cattle (as family "C" did, having segmented from family "B" in Figure IV). A gharonj, whether it is a nuclear family unit, a father with married sons, or of some other composition, usually eats from a single storehouse and from a common hearth.

The one essential trait of the gharonj which distinguishes it from all other categories in Santal society is the unified economic basis on which all members are dependent. The gharonj members participate as both producers and consumers. The gharonj is "collectivized" in its economy.

Karve, in the discussion which follows her definition, has noted that the organization of a joint family is fairly easy to maintain in an agricultural setting where commercialization has a limited place in the economy and where subsistence is the major goal of economic effort. But in the modernizing, highly mobile economy of the pan-Indian society families must make rather elaborate adjustments to maintain the "jointness" of their economic life. Where individual members, or even nuclear units of the joint family, follow employment opportunities to move for periods of time away from the ancestral residence, the joint economy can sometimes be continued in the form of a unified accounting of incomes and a

family control of expenditures through a system of allowances to its members. These measures are usually acceptable only when there is some significant family property which cannot be divided without serious loss. Modernizing Santals have been known to make these adjustments to retain the value of land which remains valuable only as a unified source of income.

It is common for a large gharonj to divide, or segment. When more than one married son with children comprise the gharonj the three or more adult males find it difficult to continue a single economic and political unit. If the father becomes elderly the oldest son takes charge of the household, even if the old man retains the household head position in name. This circumstance usually brings about the type of friction which results in segmentation. Sometimes the resources of the gharonj economy are insufficient to support a large number of people and the constituent nuclear units separate to create improved economic opportunity. Finally, upon occasion, the impetus for a nuclear unit to withdraw from the common life of the gharonj originates with incompatible relations among the sons' wives. The role of a subordinate woman in a household, where her responsibilities involve menial drudgery, often results in intolerable frustration and aggravation. A combination of these reasons or others lead to division; the precipitating event is always one which is culturally defined as a sufficient grievance.

To prevent early division of the gharonj, competent leadership is necessary, both in the activities of the male and female members. The hapramko ak' dustur cannot supply the devices for

solving all problems of household conflict, and frequent failures of leadership make matters worse. The Santal gharonj segments, but the relationships after the fact appear to be most congenial, not lacking in mutual concern and a high degree of sociability.

Additions come to the gharonj through the marriage of sons who bring their wives to their father's household and through the birth of children to the sons' wives. Each wife is a working resource of importance to the household in addition to her potential child-bearing capacity. Santals give bride price in recognition of the value of young women. This process is balanced by the losses of daughters who leave the household of their fathers to become new members in their husband's gharonj.

Wives are usually recruited from outside the village; the real or pseudo kinship ties between all inhabitants of a Santal village makes marriage within the village seem incestuous to traditional Santals who prefer village exogamy. When a new wife finally leaves her natal village to join her husband she always visits the headman in the company of her father to seek his blessing and to thank him, as the representative of the ancestors, for having kept her safely and having taught her how to be the wife of a horj hopon. Even though most marriages occur between people whose natal villages are less than ten miles apart and even though daughters do return to their villages with their husbands to join in various calendrical and life-cycle events, the new wife will never return to her natal village as fully responsible to a consanguinal kinsman.

Should a marriage end in divorce the woman can return to her father's or elder brother's household providing the bride price is returned and the male kinsman is willing to take her back. Divorce does occur but remarriage is common for both the divorcee and the widow. Only a few adult women remain in the village as single persons. In keeping with most pan-Indian societies the Santal women find their identity through their affiliation with an adult male kinsman.

The composition of the gharonj can be changed in two other ways. The adoption of male children is common in the event the kinsman of either one's gharonj or bōs dies, leaving them without a designated father. Such adoptions are ritualized and the children are thereafter treated as full members of the household and have full rights of inheritance. The final addition of members is another form of adoption found among other ethnic groups in India as well. If a man has no male heir but does have a daughter, he can arrange for his daughter's marriage and bring the new husband into his household as a "ghar jāwāe" (house husband). The male offspring of this union will be the legal heir of his mother's father's land and homestead. More than one male heir would divide the inheritance equally. In this manner a young adult male is "adopted" for the purpose of caring for his wife's parents and their land as well as for the purpose of siring male offspring. No ghar jāwāe unacceptable to the headman would be brought into the village.

The gharonj is a highly significant political unit in the Santal village. It is in this capacity that the household most

often comes to the attention of the headman. The household head sits in the circle of the kulhi durup'. Whether the household be large or small, every household head is a member of the village council. In the outer circle of council meetings other adult males are often present. They are the adult males of households which are represented by their fathers or elder brothers, the rightful household head. As long as these other adult males continue to live in joint families theirs is a minor role in village discussions and decisions; the major responsibility is always given to the senior adult male of the household.

In the deliberations of the village council, it is usually some aspect of the gharonj which is under consideration. Where a deviant or irresponsible individual is under consideration, it is his gharonj which is under scrutiny. Because the gharonj is responsible for the behavior of its members collectively, the gharonj is fined for misdemeanors or held responsible for restitution. The household head is responsible to the village council as the true representative for incorrect behavior and for the adjustment of the same. Most of the conflicts brought before the village council are conflicts between gharonj units or those intra-gharonj matters which are unsolvable within the household. The most valued possession of the gharonj--the cultivable land--is under the protection and supervision of the headman and the village council. The payment of land taxes must come from the household head and be paid directly to the headman.

When a gharonj segments and the land is divided, the withdrawing unit must sometimes erect a new homestead. It is the duty of the village council to confirm the new household head in his right to a portion of the residential acreage in the village in addition to any cultivable land.

The relationships of gharonj members are clearly defined and well-known to all. Rules of interpersonal relations among affines are referred to earlier (pp 60-62) and in Appendix B, p 291. In addition to the usual kinship patterns studied the Santals claim a relationship called oaris. An individual in the gharonj may be, alone or in concert with others, the oaris of any kinsman, affinal or consanguine, because of whom he has a claim which has been recognized by the authority of the headman and Santal custom, upon produce, cattle or goods--a claim that becomes redeemable under customarily defined circumstances. This definition of the oaris relationship becomes clear only as examples are given. The first example is found connected with the practice of bride-price. Bride-price is usually paid in the form of cattle transfer. If the bride should run away with another man, leaving her husband without a male heir, the husband can go to his wife's household and reclaim the bride-price he paid to them. The husband, his father and his brothers, who paid the bride price, are said to be the oaris of the wife; they have a continuing interest in the bride-price involved in the marriage, and can claim it if the terms of the marriage are broken by the bride. A second example shows the oaris relationship between siblings. Two brothers, after inheriting their father's

land, may agree not to divide it into smaller holdings. One brother voluntarily moves away from the village, to take employment on the railway, at a tea plantation, or in the army (increasingly common practices). The second brother remains in the village and cultivates the common fields of the gharonj. The outgoing brother retains his interest in the land, passing his rights on to his male heirs, and returns periodically to claim a share in the produce of the land to supplement his cash income. This is simply an adjustment of the sort the Santals frequently develop to meet life's circumstances, an adjustment mutually satisfactory, covered by the flexible oaris relationship. This relationship indicates a continuing, traditionally recognized interest in and claim upon material goods.

The Santal Gutia

The Santal gutia is a narrowly specialized part of the headman's life, and involves him in relations with a very small group of men. The gutia may be called a sub-clan as a division of the paris. Campbell has listed as many as forty-one gutias in one paris and as few as fifteen gutias in another. Membership in the gutia is inherited patrilineally, as is membership in the paris. As the paris is not confined to any locality, the gutia membership is scattered geographically over numbers of villages, and the number of members in any one village is small.

Unlike the paris, the gutia becomes involved in group-confirming religious rites. It may be called a worshipping entity. Each gutia observes the rites of a special boŋga or spirit. It

meets--though seldom more than once a year--to perform these rites and to join in a ritual meal to consume the food offered in these rites. These rites are performed in a grove of trees or under a certain tree near the village. The men of the obor gutiã of the Soren pãris, for example, offer chickens to their bongas on certain auspicious winter evenings and remain at the scene to eat and talk throughout the night. After eating, they drink hãndi (rice wine) and spend the time in fellowship until dawn. Villagers are reluctant to discuss the activities of the gutiã because of the secrecy and fear associated with the worship of their particular bongã. Consequently, I was never invited to one of these events. However, I was assured that the gutiãs meet only at the time of such events. A Norwegian missionary of many years, Johannes Gausdal, in his book, The Santal Khũts (1960) gives more details about these groups.

The headman is a member of only one gutiã. When members of the various gutiã meet for their ritual feasts the headman, like all others, respects the secrecy of the situation and avoids any dealings with others gutiã activity.

The gutiã "world" impinges closely upon the metaphysical world of the Santal. It also performs some functions performed in non-Santal societies by various sects and cults. The Santals have little need to turn to the numerous cults of Hindu society, or the sects of Christianity, with their secret rites and intimate fellowship for gratifications available in their own world. It should be noted that familiarity with the gutiã gives the Santals

a category for recognizing Hindu and Christian cults and sects; he sees the Catholic mass as parallel to his gutia rites, and the cult activities of Hinduism--even in their ecstatic forms--are not inexplicable to the Santals.

Summary of the Social Categories

The following chart is offered to summarize the categories by which the Santal headman orders his real kinsmen. His concerns are listed in the left-hand column; in his leadership he must be aware of all these aspects of village life. In the remaining columns are indications of what categories are involved in these concerns. The headman is responsible, for instance, for the smooth transfer of inheritance; in ensuring correct transfers he must take into account the bõs and gharonj units of the village. When special claims on designated material goods are to be enforced, the headman deals with the bõs, the gharonj and the oaris.

In summary, the gharonj emerges as the most significant category governing village life. Consequently, it becomes the major category of concern to the headman. The gharonj directly controls the daily life of the people. The center of life in the gharonj is filled with economic and political concerns, the prime concerns of the headman.

TABLE I.--Kinship Categories and Social Concerns.

Concerns of the Village Leadership	Categories Governing Village Life				
	Paṛia	Bõs	Gharonj	Oaris	Gutiḷa
Identifying Relationships	X	X	X	X	X
Kinship Relationships	X	X	X	X	X
Inheritance Claims		X	X		
Social Controls			X		
Political Interests			X		
Special Claims		X	X	X	
Rites and Myths			X		X

CHAPTER VI

ENACTMENTS OF THE HEADMAN'S ROLE

Introduction

The study of Santal village headmanship becomes more meaningful when preceded by a preliminary examination of various aspects of the social system in which the role is performed. Such a preliminary examination has been made in the preceding chapters. In Chapter III a description is given of the community structure of Santal life--the disom or Santal national homeland, and the ato or Santal village community; these form the basic ecological world of Santal society. Chapter IV gives an outline of the main features of the political arenas in which the headman performs his most evident, publically recognized duties. In Chapter V a few of the major social categories of Santal society are presented; it is important to know how the village headman categorizes his own people in order to understand his relationships with them.

In this chapter attention is turned to the dynamics of headmanship. The performance of this role is a series of enactments, and the description of this role must include a narrative of specific activities. Eventually generalizations are made regarding the various actions, giving them their underlying significance in a social context. But the generalizations must derive from the

observation of a succession of actions--social processes--involving the active role performance of the headman.

Action cannot be immediately reduced to an orderly analysis; the narrative of specific cases is a suitable medium for reporting action. Several instances arise in the flow of events when explanations or analytical considerations can, and must, be made. But where these digressions occur, they do not constitute a logical well-organized exposition; they follow, and are dependent upon, the sequence of action rather than upon any logical classification. The logical and orderly account takes shape only after the narrative of reported action.

In this chapter of enactments, the observations made in this study are reported in a framework of narrative. Digressions from the narrative appear in brief passages of explanation and passing efforts to analyze significant actions. These digressions are intended to alluminate the narrative. They also serve to develop a more complete, extended and logical presentation of headmanship which will be offered in the final chapter.

The case studies selected for narration fall into three groups. The first four cases deal with the headman as the maintainer and guide of traditional social life. The first narrative reports the critical events occurring in the process of maintaining the hereditary succession of headmanship. The second shows the headman acting as keeper of the peace in a complicated case in which conflicting interests must be brought into consensus, an end which is furthered by the invasion of non-Santal authority; the headman

uses the non-Santal invasion to effect traditional goals. The third narrative in this group deals with a conflict over private rights of property and ends, by the intervention of the headman, in the strengthening of the Santal tradition of collective control of resources. The final narrative reports the activities of the headman, and others, in the completion of a respectable marriage.

The second set of case studies includes two narratives which indicate how the traditional headman deals with individuals who have lived for long periods outside Santal society and who return with a tendency to deviate from the traditional ways of life. In the first narrative, the deviation consists in resorting to wholly non-Santal methods in gaining control of a piece of land. In the second, the deviation amounts to an innovation in Santal procedures for segmentation of a household and the division of the estate. In both cases, the headman functions as the agent who reincorporates the deviant into the society, leading the deviant to conform to traditional village life.

The final group of cases includes a long, double study and a short one. The long study reports two instances of efforts to place the village headmanship in the hands of an individual outside the hereditary line, by devices not familiar to Santals and not concordant with Santal norms. In both cases the traditional principle of inheritance of office is preserved, but only because of the authority of the encapsulating governmental power, the Indian government as represented by the Sub-Divisional Officer. In following the two cases, however, an individual comes into the

picture who may be labeled a "surrogate" village headman. Local circumstances have given this man, by personal commitment and public recognition, a status much like that of a traditional headman, though he has no hereditary right to office. This "surrogate" headman provides an almost ideal example of the traditional village headman, complete except in respect to his hereditary right. Viewing this individual in action in a village where the actual headman is less qualified for the office, the observer is inclined to speculate that the cultural model of headmanship has a certain compulsive tendency to produce an individual who takes up the actual performance of the role in a Santal village.

Appended to this double narrative, the case of a new political leader is presented, a representative who, while clinging to Santal traditions, has characteristics which enable him to perform an authoritative role in the new political structures of rural democracy fostered in the modern village scene in India.

Following these case studies, an attempt will be made to make generalizations about the headman's role. This will constitute the last chapter of the dissertation.

Maintaining the Patriline

The pattern of inheritance by which Santal headmanship is passed down through generations is simple: the office goes from father to eldest son. But in actual practice, circumstances may require a few variations and adjustments. It is well, therefore,

to trace an actual case of inheritance and note the pattern as it is pragmatically carried out.

In spite of segmentations and death in the gharonj of the headman, the position will be passed along, in the male line, in the family of Sakra Soren of Manjhipur. This is possible partly because the continuities of the bōs assure the provision of heirs.

Sakra mañjhi was of the Soren paṛis, (therefore legally recognized as Sakra Soren). He was headman of Manjhipur at the time of the last Revenue Settlement in the area in 1918. The settlement allotted 24 bighas of cultivable land--about 8 acres--as the "headman's land", free of taxes, to compensate the headman for his services as pradhan, or land-tax collector and governmental officer in the village. In addition, Sakra had privately owned lands of 14 acres which he had, in part, inherited and, in part, acquired prior to the 1918 Settlement.

Sakra had two sons who remained in the joint family relationship with him until his death. The older son, Dasu, inherited the headmanship and was confirmed in office by the village council. As headman, control of the tax-free acreage accrued to him. His younger brother, Misher, was a skilled carpenter, and earned income by preparing doors with ornately carved panels--in addition to the income earned from working the land. Soon after the death of the father, Misher was also confirmed in the office of Naeke in the village, the officer in charge of religious rites. This office was inherited through his bōs relationship to the previous Naeke whose gharonj had failed to provide a direct male

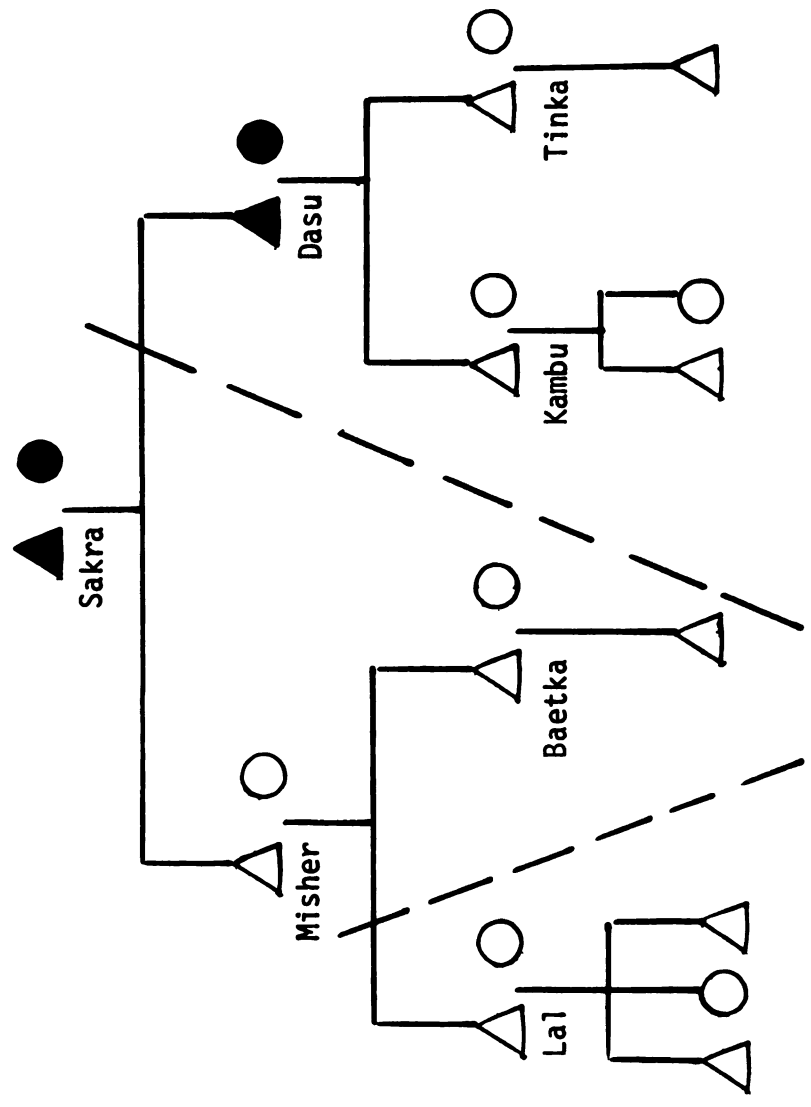
heir for the office. Misher was appointed as heir by action of the full village council.

With the office of Naeke came a small plot of tax-free land. These circumstances served to give the two brothers a somewhat comparable economic status. In addition, Misher as an individual was a personality greatly respected by his fellow villagers, a man whose counsel was often sought and whose judgment had been demonstrated on many occasions. In short, because of his personal abilities he was not overshadowed by his elder brother in the headman's office.

Soon after the death of their father, Dasu and Misher segmented their gharonj, dividing the privately owned acreage and cattle equally between them (see Kinship chart, p 133). They also divided the structures of the homestead, including the residences, stables and storehouses. Thus the gharonj of Sakra Soren segmented, but remained parts of the bōs which included the households of Dasu and Misher Soren.

Dasu, the headman, had two sons, Kambu and Tinka, born ten or twelve years apart. These men in due course married, but continued to live in joint relationship with their father. Together they cultivated their father's tax-free acres and the 7 acres inherited from Sakra Soren. When Dasu died, the elder son, Kambu inherited the headmanship without question. The two brothers, however, found it expedient to continue in the joint relationship with the elder brother fulfilling the responsibilities of household head in place of his father.

Figure V.--Kinship Diagram: Sakra Soren Lineage



In recent years the two brothers have continued the joint gharonj. Kambu, the elder, had a son and a daughter, but both children died from dysentery. Though Kambu's wife is still of child-bearing age and the pair may yet have a son to inherit the headmanship, it is quite possible that their line may fail. Thus, the little son of Tinka, Kambu's younger brother, is at present in line to inherit the headmanship from his uncle. Since it is preferable for the headman's gharonj to provide his heir, rather than to resort to the bōs, the brothers apparently regard the division of their gharonj as undesirable on all counts. Should the son of Tinka not survive to assume the headmanship the eldest son of Misher, son of Sakra would become the preferable choice for the office to succeed Kambu.

The gharonj of Misher, the Naeke, has not remained unified. The eldest son of Misher, Lal, showed an interest in improving his economic standing, an interest of personal nature, not connected with his membership in the gharonj of his father. After some ten years of marriage he began to cultivate additional acres on a share crop basis. Thereafter he was involved both in the cooperative effort of cultivating his father's land along with his younger brother and in the private cultivation of acres belonging to others. Lal was not obligated to share the produce of the extra cultivation with either his father or his younger brother. Thus his income was no longer restricted to an equal share in the joint gharonj economy; it was possible for him to achieve a slightly higher standard of living through his personal efforts. He symbolized this change by

instructing his wife to cook separately from the other women of the household, on a chulā (little mud hearth) built separately from the hearth of his father's gharonj. In addition to the little open chulā located in front of their residence, Lal's wife, with the help of her husband's brother's wife built a more permanent chulā on the end of their wide verandah. This chulā became a full-fledged independent kitchen when, in the monsoon, the open verandah was enclosed with walls to protect the cooking arrangements.

The next step in the separation of the joint gharonj did not come until the youngest son of Misher, Baetka, had been married long enough to have a son. A combination of Lal's financial independence and the fact that his younger brother also had a healthy male heir seemed to bring about the final separation of this joint gharonj. Lal requested the segmentation which was granted by his father. Lal received half of his father's private acreage along with half the cattle and oxen. Lal was given his residence and the cattle shed which had belonged to the joint gharonj. This left Misher and his wife, together with Baetka and his wife and son together as a joint household. Baetka continued to cultivate the remaining half of his father's 7 acres, which he will inherit in toto on the death of his father. Baetka also cultivates the tax-free acres assigned to his father, the Naeke, which land will be passed along to the succeeding Naeke.

Today, Misher and Baetka sit down to eat together the food prepared by the two wives. The wives eat after their husbands. Baetka's small son will eat with his father as soon as he is old

enough to do so. The family of Lal eats from their own chula on the other side of the large courtyard. The joint gharonj has divided the land and the cattle which are no longer a part of the joint economic and political unit of Misher's household. Lal is the head of his own gharonj and a member of the village council composed of the household heads. There is no lack of congeniality and cooperation between the two households even though they now constitute two parts of a common bõs rather than a common gharonj.

The household's of Misher and Lal are as much a part of the bõs of Sakra Soren as the household of Kambu the villege headman. While the inheritance of cultivable land and cattle as well as such offices as Naeke and Manjhi (headman) usually pass from father to eldest son, in the absence of a male heir, members of the gharonj and secondarily the bõs are in line for both the material inheritance and the office. In spite of this tradition there have come to me no reports or evidence that these kinsmen spend time or energy in plotting for favorable positions in possible future selections to office. Certainly, the kind of intrigue (often accompanied by murder) which has been reported between rival branches of royal or noble families--or in the families of zamindari landholders--in the non-Santal world, is not reported in the world of the Santal village headman.

Keeping the Peace

The festival of Sakrat' is held on the last day of the month of Pous; in 1970 it fell on the twentieth of January, in the season

of cool, dry days and clear nights.⁵ It was a time for the headman of the village to be present and watchful among his people.

The day was full of excitement. There was an archery contest in the afternoon, and the winner was carried on the shoulders of his peers to the headman's house. There he was given special recognition, for in the traditional Santal village archery is still held in high honor as a heritage from the days when Santals were masters of their forested country. The headman brought out a pot of hāndi, and himself poured out the first leaf-cup full, to hand it ceremonially to the champion archer of the day.

When the first pot of hāndi was done, the dancing began. In the festival dancing of the Santals, the young women form the center of interest. They form lines in groups of eight to fifteen, locked arm-in-arm, and move gracefully backwards and forwards. Some of the men form short lines facing the women, beating the drums hung from their shoulders or piping their shrill bamboo flutes; other men swing individually around the dancing lines. The dancers sing, songs of merriment and mischief, and the laughter is spontaneous and care-free.

In the late evening there was feasting. The men and boys sat together at the edge of the kulhi (main street) or in someones large courtyard near the large clay cooking pots filled with rice, pulse and meat. The women gathered behind the mud walls of neighboring courtyards, while the older women occasionally went to the cooking pots to stir the food and add more fuel to the fires. The men and boys ate first, followed by the women and children.

Soon after the feasting the young men began to play the drums and flutes and the young women soon returned for more dancing. Around midnight the women and girls went home, followed later by the older men, but the young men remained in small groups here and there still tapping the drums softly while others just talked or "hunkered" silently.

The next morning the village chowkidar, or watchman, hurried to the headman's house to report that a young unmarried woman had been raped the night before. The headman obviously felt that immediate action was necessary, for he hurriedly summoned all available heads of household to a kulhi durup'. The headman convened the council in his own courtyard rather than in the usual open meeting place at the end of the main street.

The headman had called the three young men who were accused of the breach of the peace with their fathers as well as the father of the young woman. (Women are not permitted to participate in the meetings of the village council, unless they are personally accused, and then only if the wrong is of an extremely reprehensible nature.) When the available heads of households had gathered the accused and their accuser were already present, seated together immediately to the right of the headman and the jog mąnjhi who had brought them.

The father of the young woman was asked to begin the hearing with a statement on behalf of the victim. He was livid with anger as he described what he declared to be the events of the previous evening. His accusation may be summarized as follows:

"After the dancing, sometime past midnight, P. Murmu, G. Hembrom and C. Kisku took my little girl by force and each one of them raped her. She could not leave the spot because of her condition, but was found by her two friends who brought her to me this morning, and told me this terrible story."

Then he proceeded to indicate the intensity of his anger, saying, "The three must all be punished now, or I will go to the police".

This was a most extreme threat. It was a threat not only against the young men he accused, but against the whole village and its authority. There is need to explain why the aggrieved man would resort to making a police report. It cannot be said that he represented a puritan Santal morality: while extra-marital relations are recognized as causing strains in the peace of the village, they are not defined as acts of extraordinary wickedness. Rape is not so unusual that the father of the victim needed to act with such exasperation. The father's excitement is probably better understood as related to his expectations of bride price in connection with the marriage of his daughter. It is clear that the woman's failure to make a suitable marriage, with bride price, was troubling her family (as it was a matter of gossip in the village); according to information brought out in the council hearing. Now her respectability was threatened. For a young woman to be raped did not add to her desirability, though it would not mean any serious decrease in the bride price she would bring. However, if the event of the previous evening was not defined as "rape", and if the young men involved were not made publicly responsible and given at least a minimal punishment, the reputation of the young woman would be such that the hope of obtaining a bride price in her behalf would

be diminished. If, in addition, the sexual escapade should result in pregnancy from a reported but unproven rape situation it would be more difficult for the family of the young woman to find a willing husband. (Although, a pregnant woman is a suitable prospective bride, proving her ability to conceive.) If it was accepted that the young woman was seeking sexual relations from whoever would take her, both she and her father would lose self-respect in the village.

Following the statement of the aggrieved father, the headman asked each young man to stand before the council and answer the accusation. The youngest of the three, aged 17, was the first to be called. He was the son of a landless laborer, as shy as he was poor. His simple reply was that he had not touched the girl. The second, aged 18, son of an influential landowner, loudly proclaimed, "Onkage bañ hoeakana!" ("It did not happen like that!") He described the event from his point of view. "Everyone knows she is old and wants to marry too much. She invited the three of us to go into the dark with her, so I went". The fact that the young woman was indeed some 24 years old, and beyond the usual age of marriage for Santal women, was well known in the village. The third young man, aged 19, testified, "I was with my friends drinking handi after the dance and this female came by and urged us to follow her. I did not see who it was at first. When I saw who it was, I quickly went home".

The headman then called for an opinion from the jog manjhi, whose special responsibility is the moral conduct of the young, and from the elders of the council. There was an extended period of quiet discussion, all speaking in low tones. Then the jog manjhi and

the headman counselled together privately. Finally the headman gave the judgment. He pronounced no innocence or guilt; he did not define the event as "rape" in terms of a misdemeanor or felony. He simply called upon each of the three young men to pay a fine of five rupees each to the father of the young woman. He followed this with a didactic lecture against the shameful practices of women being out alone at night and young men following them in the dark.

It would seem that the council felt that the father of the young woman would be appeased with a small sum of fifteen rupees provided that the young woman was not entirely at fault, giving some indication of wrongdoing on the part of the young men. The council and the headman expected that the young men would pay the fine without demur. However, the solution was not so easily realized.

The father of the third accused, the Kisku youth, a man of influence and means, spoke up. He was not so much offended by the manner in which the matter had been handled as he was offended by the supposition that his son had been implicitly considered guilty. If the young man was guilty of participating in sexual relations with the young woman, he was also guilty of transgressing the incest taboo of paṛis exogamy. The young woman was also of the Kisku paṛis. If the youth was guilty of incest, the punishment should be much greater than five rupees. The fact that the fine was only five rupees was tantamount to a verdict of innocence. Therefore, he insisted that instead of paying a fine, he and his son should receive the apologies of both the young woman and her father for

false accusation. The statement obviously took the council by surprise, and there was a long period of silence. Finally, the Kisku father arose and proclaimed that he would never pay such a fine. The other fathers also refused, but the father of the young woman murmured that the word of the council must be obeyed.

The council sat in silence for some time, as though waiting for some resolution to their dilemma; they had tried to pacify a demanding father, and it had led only to additional disturbance in the village. Perhaps they were hoping the angry father would withdraw his complaints or suggest some compromise, but this was not to be. The determined complainant announced that he would take the case to the police if the matter was not settled by the council. He was determined to revenge the act which implicated disrespect to his daughter and to him even if he had to go outside of the village system to do so.

The jog manjhi closed the council meeting with the announcement that there would have to be another meeting of the council in the evening when all household heads in the village would be present. Nothing more was said and after some time the members of the council dispersed.

The father of the woman did not wait for the evening meeting. He walked to the Anchal headquarters immediately and reported the rape case to the police, giving the names of the three young men as the accused. A small squad of policemen immediately accompanied the angry father back to Manjhipur. They arrived in the late afternoon, located the three young men, and placed them under arrest.

They tied all three young men with a common heavy rope with their hands in front of them. The police brought the accused to the headman's house followed by a large number of villagers who had gathered to witness what would happen next. In the presence of the headman and several village household heads, the police demanded one hundred and fifty rupees to be paid at once to the girl's father. They threatened that if the fine were not paid immediately, they would take the young men off to the Anchal headquarters and hold them in jail to await a trial which would inevitably be delayed several weeks.

The fathers of the three accused young men responded after some conversation among them along with other household heads. The most wealthy of the three fathers brought out silver bracelets worth about one hundred and twenty rupees. It was his son who had alone admitted performing the sex act, denying only the implication of rape. The other two fathers came forward with the remaining thirty rupees demanded by the police; they strongly asserted the innocence of their sons. But threatened with the indefinite imprisonment of their sons, whether guilty or not, they recognized that they had to make the payments.

Actually the father of the young woman received only thirty rupees of the one hundred and fifty paid in fines. The rest, of course, went to the police to pay them for the trouble of coming to the village. It is not uncommon for rural police officers to exert their authority and collect fines extra-legally, outside the judicial process, to keep certain types of disorders under control. The lack

of legal knowledge or representation renders rural people particularly prone to such exactions in rural areas. However, it should not be thought that the rural police in India practice indiscriminate or uncontrolled extortion. Generally, alert supervisors of the system keep these exactions to a minimum. Also, in many cases it is possible for the headman of a village to protect his people from serious inroads; they have, especially in the case of Santal villages, direct access to the higher officers of the police at the sub-divisional level, and complaints placed in the correct form can give the rural police officers enough difficulty to restrain them from seriously oppressing the rural people.

The fact that the village headman, in this case, did not attempt to protect the three men apprehended and roped together by the police, though the matter was clearly within the jurisdiction of the village authority, needs explanation. The explanation becomes obvious as events later in the week are observed.

A few days later there was an occasion of celebration in the village when a "cousin brother"--a patrilineal parallel cousin--of the head of one of the village households returned to his home on a visit. The man had been working in the tea plantations of Assam, and returned with his wife and son to enjoy a short vacation and show off the fine clothes and cash money he had accumulated as an indentured laborer. His local kinsmen arranged for the purchase of a quantity of handi, and all the men of the village were invited to join in an evening of welcoming festivities in honor of the successful brother from the distant tea plantation.

The first symptom of village reaction to the rape case-- indeed, its first step in reasserting its authority--became evident when the organizers of the festive welcome refused to buy the required handi from the father of the Kisku youth who had refused to pay the village council's fine. This man had a good supply of handi on hand and was usually one of the chief suppliers of rice beer for village festivities, but the welcoming host refused to buy from him, the first act of negative sanction--a positive indication of alienation. Nevertheless, this Kisku father and his son appeared to join in the festivities. When the handi was being poured into the leaf-cups of the village men, the host did not pour any handi for either the Kisku father or his son. This open act caused the two Kiskus to withdraw to the edge of the crowd of men gathered around the courtyard of the host's house.

For a time the two were ignored entirely. Then the conversation of the guests turned to the subject of "those who were guilty of two major offenses". It became apparent that the first offense was their failure to obey the decision of the village council and their refusal to pay the simple fine of five rupees. This meant, of course, that they had caused a major scandal to develop out of a minor matter. The second offense was the shame they had brought to the village by bringing up the issue of paris incest. The coming of the police was strongly resented because it brought great shame to the village in the sight of both non-Santal policemen and other villages; it made it appear that Manjhipur could not manage its own affairs and gave the impression to others that Manjhipur people were

careless in matters of paris exogamy. Such impressions brought shame to the village.

After some time and more cheerful drinking, the father of the young woman who had brought the rape case to the council, walked over to the Kisku father and son, and confronted them solemnly with the words, "Be panta, be panta!" This expression literally means, "out of line"; in the usage of the village, persons found guilty of be panta may not take part in any type of village activity. They are not excommunicated from the village, but they are excluded from the communal events in village life until they make restitution of an appropriate sort.

The be panta expression made the situation explicit and clearly defined what the Kiskus must do. They went home immediately and brought two large clay pots full of handi. One was presented with formal respect to the headman with the words, "Receive this in the good spirit of our ancestors". The second pot was presented in the same way to the aggrieved father of the young woman with the words, "Take this, my brother, and do not be offended". Thereafter the headman invited the penitent Kisku father and son to sit in the circle near him, and asked that each man be given a leaf-cup of handi. After this the celebration went on without further comment about the Kiskus and their errors. Much handi was consumed, and the propitiation of the father and son was complete. They would return to their established place in the council and social activities of the village.

These events demonstrate that the headman and his council had never defined the case of rape in terms of crime and guilt. They had only recognized that the public image of a man had been injured, for that seems to be the import of a weakened right to bride price. The man had a right to some public restitution; he needed to be able to say in effect, "The young woman was raped; she is not promiscuous", when it came to questions of her marriageability. No one needed to be punished, and the fines were very light; they gave the impression merely that three young men were "a bit too willing to follow a young woman into the dark on a festival evening". Such a definition of the situation would have left the village in peace.

Any person destroying this definition would be breaking the peace. To punish such a person was somewhat difficult for the justice of his defense was indisputable. The council would have been remiss if it had ignored the transgression of paris exogamy once it was brought into the open. No doubt, if the Kisku father had pressed his point, the council would have had to bring the young woman before it; they would have destroyed her reputation totally. Such an action would have brought great turmoil to the whole village and there would have probably emerged serious divisions between the kinsmen of both Kisku households.

Bringing the police into the village from outside the village system had, in effect, solved the whole problem. Those who had really disturbed the peace, the fathers of the young men attempting to defend their sons, had been placed under serious

pressure. But the aggrieved father of the young woman had obtained fifteen rupees more than the village council would have given him, which was his due for the trouble he had taken in walking to the police "thanna" and back. The headman and the council had been vindicated in their judgment; they were, as it turned out, able to affirm again that the council's justice was far more benign than justice in the non-Santal world, even though it did not always meet the demands for individual rights. The Kiskus, even though an influential family, experienced the negative sanction of their fellow villagers followed by the redeeming processes of ato saḡai through the authority of the headman.

It may be pointed out that the aggrieved man's resort to the non-Santal authorities--the police squad from the Hartjuri thanna--provides an almost complete example of what Bailey labeled a bridge action. Bridge actions are found where two distinct systems of social relations exist in contiguity, as in a situation where a society is encapsulated within another--the situation of Santal society. When an actor decides to employ the role he has in one system to effect his goal attainment in another, the process may be defined as a bridge action. In the rape case, the aggrieved man operated in two systems, the village authority system and the local governmental authority system with its police corps. He found he could not protect his dignity in the village authority system; it was obvious no one wanted to deal with a matter of interclan incest under the circumstances. He therefore resorted to the governmental

system and called on the police as an Indian citizen has a right to do.

The bridge action did not involve a confrontation between the two systems. The police were well paid for their efforts. The headman and his fellow council members retained their authority; they may be said to have strengthened their position in the village.

That the eventual effect of the headman's enactments were acceptable to the people became manifest in the events of the festive welcome celebrations, an occasion ready made to bring ato saḡai into full realization again. The village was treated to the spectacle of a rich man accepting the authority and judgment of the headman and the traditions of the ancestors. Everyone witnessed the immediate response of the headman in accepting the contrition of the recalcitrant villager and silently accepted the fact that the Kishus were fully restored to their usual position, "in line" with their fellows. The peace had been kept and the basis for keeping the peace had endured another complicated test.

Maintaining the Village Collectivity

Under both the British and Indian administrations, land policy has emphasized the principle of individual rights: even though all members of a gharonj are granted an equal inheritance by law, each parcel of land is registered in the name of an individual who is responsible for the payment of land tax. On the other hand, Santal traditions have always emphasized village rights and collective responsibility: in practice, tradition has allocated to

families continuing usufruct rights, but the concept of "free hold", granting rights to alienate ownership with complete freedom, is contrary to Santal thought. Whenever matters of land usage come under the adjudication of the village headman and his council, Santal tradition gives primary consideration to village needs rather than to individual rights. It is inevitable that the difference between these two diametrically opposite traditions would lead to confrontations. One of the most difficult problems in the encapsulation of Santal society has been the preservation of Santal ideas of "human rights" as village rights in the face of a strongly individualistic encirclement.

The headman of Manjhipur has on several occasions demonstrated not only his commitment to the Santal traditions with regard to the preeminence of village rights, but also his personal ability to protect those traditions in pragmatic situations. One of the clearest examples, both of his adherence to, and of his capability to protect, collective interests in his village is given in the field notes taken in June of 1970:

A bamboo grove was located on the boundary between two neighbors, Mardi and Kisku. On June 5th Mardi cut two large bamboos from the grove adjacent to his residence. On June 6th Kisku cut four bamboos from the same grove. Mardi went to the grove before Kisku left with the last two bamboos. He carried a club and told Kisku not to take the bamboo home as it belonged to him. There was a heated argument, but Kisku took the bamboo home without any physical violence. Mardi ran to the headman immediately, complaining that Kisku had stolen his bamboo. The headman told the goget to assemble all household heads for kulhi durup' on the same evening. The headman told each man to make his claim before the council. Each claimed that his father had planted the grove many years ago. This was confirmed by some of the older men who recalled that the two

respective fathers had planted the first bamboo roots of the grove as a joint effort on their common boundary. After some time both Mardi and Kisku were asked to show the location of their boundaries on the village map. Each did so while others studied the map with them.

After agreement was reached that each had properly acknowledged his own boundaries, the headman pointed out that the bamboo grove was not indicated on the map at all. The headman therefore pronounced his judgment that the grove which had spread and grown on both sides of the property boundaries belonged not only to both men, but to the entire village. Anyone could cut bamboo from the grove, but they were to first ask permission from the headman so that no one would take more than he needed. None of the bamboo was to be sold to anyone inside or outside the village.

There was immediate agreement among the household heads to this pronouncement and to the requirement that Mardi and Kisku each pay four rupees for the purchase of handi for everyone to drink as the final settlement of the matter. Neither man had four rupees to give, both being very poor. The headman told them to bring equal shares of dal (a split pea-like pulse) and together make a fire to cook it into a soup-like drink for everyone to enjoy. They both complied and the men of the village stayed together for two or three hours in the spirit of ato sagai.

The large, highly-tensile and durable bamboo is an extremely valuable economic asset. (This is the Bambusa arundicea species which sometimes grows to a height of 100 feet and provides a remarkably versatile wood-substitute in the construction of ox-carts or frames under thatched roofs.) Such an asset can enrich a single individual, a partnership, or an entire village. Under private ownership, it would bring considerable income either from fellow villagers or at the weekly market. Under the control of the village authorities it would bring benefit to many families.

In the case described in the field notes above, the investment of two villagers of one generation produced a conflict between their sons in the next generation. If the investment had been made

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by a single family, or by close branches of a single bõs, the controversy would probably have never been brought to the attention of the headman, and the profits would have enriched the heirs united by the kinship ties. But this investment was made by two unrelated partners, and their informal relationship did not survive them.

The failure of the partnership to survive the death of the original investors may be explained as due to the lack of traditional support in Santal culture for what is so clearly recognized by non-Santal cultures as the formal partnership. Santal culture explicitly governs the economic responsibilities connected with village membership and kinship ties in bõs, gharonj and oaris. Individual impulses (or profit motives) are moderated by these well-accepted responsibilities. But partnership is not one of the accepted or regular "social categories" in Santal society. Individuals form partnerships because of purely personal predilections, and the association is based on a somewhat temporary congeniality. Such a partnership operates in a cultural vacuum in Manjhipur. Consequently, strong differences in economic interests are likely to dissolve a partnership quickly.

When it became apparent to the sons of the original investors that the bamboos were coming to maturity and that there would be considerable profit in controlling the clump, the kind of profit motives encouraged by non-Santal models began to develop in the cultural vacuum. No social definitions were available to modify the inflaming effect of the private motives. Partnership was dissolved and untempered rivalry broke out. The rivalry disturbed

the cooperative tenor of the village and the contest over the bamboo clump came to the immediate attention of the headman and the village council.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this enactment was the rapidity with which the village came to consensus. The headman seems to have understood the situation to be one in which only one conclusion was possible. The fact that he called the kulhi durup' within a short time after the conflict situation gives the occasion the atmosphere of controlled urgency.

There was no extended discussion in the village council. The witness of the older men was necessary to bring out some pertinent facts in the case, particularly the fact that the clumps were first planted as a partnership enterprise. But no argument seems to have developed once the two men in question had presented their positions. When the headman delivered the judgment there seemed to be immediate acceptance; even by the contending parties. The rights of the two individuals to the bamboos were ignored as though they had never existed, and the welfare of the village as a whole was strongly emphasized.

Later the headman explained his position:

"Everyone needs bamboo. Some need it to use in making a new roof. Some need it to repair their ox-carts. Some cut it to sell in case of emergency. It is our bamboo. (Santali employs both inclusive and exclusive pronouns, this was the inclusive our.) It is not one man's property. I knew it was not on the map, but not everyone knew. If the bamboo had been awarded equally to Mardi and Kisku they would have continued to fight over it. They might have cut it all down to sell and wasted the money. Now everyone knows and everyone is happy with the fact that it is village property. If Mardi or Kisku need

Bamboo they will get it without any question, but they will not waste it."

The reference to the village maps, on which the headman laid particular emphasis, should be explained. On the official maps of the Revenue Department, all property which is specifically owned and controlled by individuals or particular authorities is clearly marked as such. This is true of the trees which stand in the common pastures of the village or along the borders between landholdings. All trees not so marked would be regarded as the common property of the village; the marked trees were owned by the government, (if there were such trees; in actuality all trees held in common were long ago cut down and used by the villagers). The clump of bamboos has many of the uses of timber trees and can easily be compared to the trees which have disappeared. The lack of specific labels of ownership of the official land which was clearly marked as to its ownership and tax responsibility. An Indian court would have found little difficulty in drawing a line through the clump of bamboo to give title to the contending parties of that which fell inside of their respective boundaries. The headman was apparently conscious that the collective interests, which he wanted to guard as custodian of Santal traditions, would have normally received less credence before non-Santal authority. As long as the case was kept within the bounds of Santal jurisdiction, village rights would be safe, and as long as the contending parties were persuaded that the non-Santal authorities would side with the headman--the pradhan--they were unlikely to go outside the village system with the case.

As the headman had presumably expected, his prompt action averted the intrusion of outsiders into the matter. The parties in contention were conforming members of the village and generally more comfortable with their traditional setting of village solidarity than in a situation requiring legal representation in the non-Santal court system. Should the contending parties have taken their case outside the village, even to the village market in an attempt to gain support from kinsmen or neighboring villagers, or had there been a delay in the action of the headman, the non-Santal world might have entered the situation aggressively and persuaded the parties to borrow money for a court case and in the end exploit the already waning resources of Manjhipur.

Maintaining Proprieties: The Headman
and Kasima Marriage

The role of the headman in the seven forms of marriage varies: the greater the social approval accorded to the marriage, the greater is the participation of the headman. The role of the headman in the most elaborate form of marriage, hapramko bapla (ancestor's marriage), "traditional marriage" can be seen in Mukherjea's description of such a marriage. No comparable description of the Santal kasima form of marriage has appeared in the literature, even though it is the form most frequently practiced among village Santals. This is not a unique form of marriage; other ethnic groups follow quite similar ceremonies. The following account of the Santal kasima is taken from field notes recorded in January of 1971. The account will be followed by an

analysis of the relative importance of the roles involved, namely the roles of the principals--the groom and the bride, the roles of the parents or heads of households, the roles of the elders of the villages, and the role of the headman and his assistant in charge of youth, the jog manjhi.

The day to day account of Kasima, January 1971:

January 20th

In the evening of the third day of Sohrae festival the young women were dancing, arm-locked in a line of about 12 individuals. The dancing took place at the end of the main street of the village. The young women, some of whom were married, were probably between the ages of 15 and 30 years. The leader of the group, Champa, was about 25 years old, but unmarried. She displayed well her agility as a dancer and led the singing as they danced with a clear, somewhat piercing voice.

One of the young men, Barku, a drummer who played for the girls to dance, continued to watch Champa with the same keen interest he had shown throughout the three days of festivities. He was her junior in age by four or five years. He was from a village about four miles from Manjhipur, but had often seen Champa at the weekly market in Hartjuri. They were not strangers. He met her privately when the dancing stopped, long after midnight. This had been arranged somehow during the long hours of festivities. She went home with him to stay in his father's courtyard for the remainder of the night. The next morning Barku introduced Champa to his mother by simply stating to her that he had brought a guest who would be staying for some time.

January 21st

On the 21st morning Champa's parents asked her freinds where she was. Having been told of the young man Barku, the father went immediately to the jog manjhi and asked him to go to Barku's village to inquire about Champa. The jog manjhi went on the evening of the 21st. In the meanwhile everyone in Manjhipur discovered that Champa had gone away to Sitapur with Barku.

The jog manjhi entered Barku's village calling out in a loud voice, "Māyam panjaet' kanān", (I am following blood). He was directed to the house of the headman where he related the reason for his presence and the name of the young man's father. The

headman immediately called some young men and asked if Champa was with Barku. He also inquired whether Barku had brought Champa of her own free will. The replies to both questions were affirmative. The headman then called Barku's father and asked him to bring the young couple with him. After the usual ritualized greeting of dobok' johar the village headman turned directly to Barku and Champa, in the presence of the visiting jog manjhi, and asked only one question, "Kasima reak' din dohoepe se ban?" (Will you set a day for kasima or not?)

This was Champa's chance to speak for herself. Although she was alone in a strange village she was well assured of the protective presence of the jog manjhi she knew so well, along with the assurance of the headman who represented a position she trusted explicitly. If she said no, Barku and his father would have had to pay a fine of seven rupees (about a dollar) to the jog manjhi of Manjhipur who would have taken Champa back to her father. But Champa stood silent and after a moment looked over at Barku who uttered, "Yes". The headman said nothing, but the jog manjhi asked the preferred day for the kasima. The young man's father was quietly consulted momentarily after which Barku informed both the jog manjhi of Manjhipur and the headman of his own that Saturday (Jan. 23rd) should be convenient. At this the young couple returned to his father's house where Champa continued to stay with Barku. The jog manjhi stayed in Sitapur to find out more about the village and the family of Barku.

January 22nd

In the morning, about 7:00 a.m. the jog manjhi reported the previous day's events first to Champa's father and then to the headman. Champa was in Sitapur at the household of Barku's father. She was very happy and the kasima date was set for Saturday (the following day).

January 23rd

About 3:00 p.m. the party of men set out from Manjhipur to complete the kasima in Sitapur. The party included the headman, jog manjhi, two other village elders, the father of the bride and ~~four~~ or five other men, including Champa's brother and father's brother. The party of 12 men arrived at the headman's house in Sitapur together and were properly greeted and asked to sit on the simple rope beds, on one or two wooden chairs and on the edge of the mud-floored porch. Barku's father was informed by the Sitapur jog manjhi that the men had arrived from Manjhipur.

Instead of going to meet the guests, Barku's father, along with Barku, the village elders and other available household

heads went to their usual meeting place for a kulhi durup', on the eastern end of the village. They discussed at length how much Barku's father should consent to pay Champa's father in bride price. This discussion took place within an hour, after which most of the men, including the headman and the elders went to Barku's father's courtyard. The jog manjhi of Sitapur went to the headman's house and escorted the guests to the host's courtyard. The Manjhipur guests were properly greeted with the appropriate dobok' johar after which they were invited to sit opposite their counterparts in a semicircle.

The headman of Sitapur called Barku before the company and asked him if he liked Champa or not, and if all was peaceful between them. Barku uttered the affirmative and was dismissed to the outer circle. Thereupon, Barku's father gave five rupees to the jog manjhi of Manjhipur who in turn gave it to Champa's father in full view of everyone present. At first Champa's father refused to accept the five rupees and said that he wanted at least two cows and 300 rupees as a minimum bride price. For a time there was much jovial titter-tatter among the men with many jokes passed among them regarding strong wives, many sons and the proof of manhood. Finally, Champa's father accepted the five rupees as a public symbol of the marriage contract, and Barku's father gave the sign for his wife to bring three large clay pots of handi along with a supply of leaf-cups. Much handi was consumed while the badgering and bargaining for the "real" bride price settlement continued between Champa's father and the jog manjhis of both villages. Neither headman entered into the conversation but carried on a private conversation which appeared not to be concerned with the event at hand.

Champa's father finally agreed (with the approval of his older brother, the household head) to accept 140 rupees in cash instead of a heifer which Barku's father wanted to give, along with 20 rupees. The money was to be paid in cash within a week. The festive drinking continued for some time after the agreement was announced and the men of Manjhipur walked home a bit unsteadily about midnight on January 23rd.

January 28th

The jog manjhi of Sitapur accompanied Barku's elder brother to Manjhipur the following Thursday evening where the 140 rupees was given to Champa's father. Barku's father had sent his eldest son to market with a young ox to obtain the money. The two men from Sitapur had been cordially greeted and given refreshment, but they did not stay in Manjhipur for more than an hour. Just as they were leaving the jog manjhi asked Champa's father for an extra tip for having caused Barku's father to keep his word concerning the bride price. He left

muttering that Manjhipur was a cheap village because he had received only three rupees.

February 1st

Champa appeared on the path coming into Manjhipur from Sitapur. She was carrying a large clay pot which had been colored with white clay. This is the traditional handi container carried by women who return to their natal village as a guest kinsmen. Champa was followed within five minutes by her new husband. She entered her father's courtyard and stood humbly until her own mother asked her to put down her burden, which she placed on the courtyard floor. She proceeded immediately to debok to her mother. The mother then called the father and other household members who received the young couple with the usual dobok' johar. Champa's father then summoned a few neighbors to come and share the pera hor handi (guest kinsman rice beer) which they did late into the night, with Barku in their company. Champa helped her mother and the other women of the household prepare a simple meal after which she spent some time in the background talking with her female friends and relatives.

February 2nd

In the morning, before Champa left Manjhipur, she accompanied her father to the headman's house. After both had been asked to enter the courtyard and were greeted according to custom, Champa's father stated that she had come to pay her respect. She was leaving the village of her fathers. The headman said nothing, but rose from his stool and went outside the courtyard to the manjhi than. Champa and her father followed him in silence. As they stood beside the manjhi than she gave the headman one rupee and thanked him for being a faithful manjhi haram along with other words of personal praise and thanksgiving. He accepted the one rupee in the name of the ancestors and wished her a long and happy life in her new village. He blessed her with the hope that as the ancestors had given life to Manjhipur, their spirit would protect her and make her full of strength to bear many sons to her husband.

The headman then summoned his wife to bring a small clay pot of handi which he presented to her to take to her new village and share with her new household. Champa bowed before the headman in gratitude and turned away to join her husband who had waited for her at her father's house. The young couple went to their village together.

In analyzing this account let us note first the roles of the groom and the bride. It may be asked what degree of independence is

given in Santal society to the young people in the selection of their mates. One measure of independence is the freedom given them to meet, observe and judge each other in a variety of situations. In the above case it will be noted that visits to the weekly market provide some opportunity for marriageables to observe each other. In this case the conclusive decision to marry was made at the time of a Santal festival where the young people were engaged in the traditional Santal dances. This festival was held in an exclusively Santal setting in which all participants were well aware of their most subtle traditions of mate selection. Mate selection based on Santal identity was facilitated by approved normative interaction in the festive situation. The observation and assessment of partners was based on approved standards: for instance, the dances were Santal dances which were accompanied with songs appropriate to the festive occasion, and those who were adept at the dancing and singing were highly attractive by the standards of Santal aesthetics. At the same time, a Santal festival includes the entire village, complete with the presence of the jog manjhi and the parents of the youth who more actively participate in the dancing and singing. The freedom of this couple to mutually select each other was structured by the norms and values of their cultural heritage; the "rules of the game" of selection were formulated by approved traditions in the arena of the festival, and this decision was made in concert with those "rules".

The couple mutually decided to spend the night together. While the rendezvous was private, it could not be much of a secret;

the young woman's companions were able to inform her parents with sufficient detail for the parents to give it its proper definition in Santal culture; kasima was indicated. Although the rendezvous seems to have been somewhat spontaneous and impulsive, the fact that the couple went to his father's courtyard for the night indicates that the act was culturally defined. The choice of the father's courtyard brought his household into the whole process. The pair was integrated immediately into the household of the young man; residence is patrilocal in Santal society.

Another aspect of the kasima marriage involved the parental roles when the couple decided to marry. The payment of the bride price required the inclusion of their households in the decision. The father of the groom would have to pay an agreed upon bride price to the father of the bride. Though the decision on the amount later occupied much time and effort by many individuals, including the elders of both villages along with the households, Santal society does not generally allow differences between parties in matters of bride price to prevent an otherwise mutually acceptable marriage. Furthermore, the payment of bride price does not usually endanger the family's economic welfare.

In the morning, after the couple had spent the night together in the young man's courtyard, there was no emotional reaction in the homestead. No formalities accompanied the report of mate selection to the father of the household. The absence of ritual at this point can be explained best by pointing out that Santal society has clearly defined and accepted the roles of married life in such a way that no

ritual explanation, redefinition or didactic intensification is needed and no elaborate rite of passage is necessary to diminish tensions or fears associated with the change in status of the principals or their families.

The young man's family did not attempt to formally communicate with either the village elders of Sitapur or with the young woman's family in Manjhipur. The village elders, especially the headman and the jog manjhi took the chain of events as a matter of common occurrence. The young woman's family, however, was prompt to enter upon its role. The young woman had not simply "run off" with an irresponsible young man, and information to this effect was quickly made available to her father. In the kasima marriage which was indicated the father would be associated with, and have the assistance of, his village peers and the village elders. In the next stage of the marriage, the decision of the bride price and its payment, the difficulties of the young woman's father would be merged with the interests of his village elders as both households and village elders became involved.

When the jog manjhi from Manjhipur went to Sitapur to inquire about Champa and the intention of Barku he went directly to the house of the village headman. The initial contact between the jog manjhi and the headman was marked with an explicit desire for consensus; the two men did not assume the roles of adversaries, even though both understood that bargaining over bride price was soon to begin.

It was the responsibility of the headman of Sitapur to determine the intention of the young man of his village in the presence of the jog manjhi of the young woman's village. That this intention was made manifest by the young couple who had the right to confirm or reject their decision in the presence of the village elders gave them an opportunity to exercise the type of egalitarian rights so often a part of life in the Santal village. The young woman knew that her freedom to withdraw from the marriage was protected and the young man was not compelled to accept responsibility for his decision of the night before without a second thought. Had she decided not to stay in Sitapur as a bride the young man would have been asked to pay eight or ten rupees to the jog manjhi who would have taken the girl back to her father with no further interaction expected between the principals, their families or their village elders. The public act of deciding to set the kasima day and go through with their decision may be regarded as the central act of the marriage process. By this act mate selection was given social recognition, even though this was only the beginning of kasima formalities.

The process of settling and paying the bride price was the responsibility of the household heads with the approval of their kinsmen and village elders. The bargaining may be said to have begun with the jog manjhi's inquiries in the young man's village during his first visit. He had remained in the village ostensibly to find out what type of village was taking a daughter of Manjhipur. More obviously he enjoyed the hospitality offered him while actually he was observing every evidence of the economic status of both the

village in general and the family of Barku in particular. But there are other considerations involved in setting the bride price. The durability of marriage is important, for the young woman's family is concerned that they not have a divorced daughter returning to them at an extremely unmarriageable age. To make an assessment of the durability of the marriage (and the less durable a marriage, the greater the need for the insurances of a high bride price) would keep the jog manjhi alert to a number of details about life in the village and in the home of the young man. Deviation from Santal norms in village life could have intense effect on the marital relations of every couple. After a few cups of handi, Santal villagers usually become revealingly honest about their neighbors and about themselves. The investigative task of the jog manjhi was not an impossible one. Undoubtedly, he returned to Manjhipur with much more information than could be determined by this observer.

The "day of kasima" was the day on which the negotiations and bargaining on bride price were done; it went forward to a conclusion according to "the rules of the game". However, the "day of kasima" was also the day of festivity; it was only on this day that any eating and drinking are reported. Though the anthropological literature on marriage rites presents a great variety of procedures, it seems unusual to find the combination of marriage feasting with the pecuniary negotiations. It is generally true that bargaining on bride price or dowry is divisive in its effect on the families concerned, while eating and drinking serves to unify the parties or at least temper the conflicts. In the kasima marriage the Santals

have served their pervasive concern for consensus by combining both the divisive and unifying aspects of marriage by kasima into a single day of mingled festivity and negotiations.

The ritualized activities of the "day of kasima" were obviously arranged to minimize confrontations. In the first place, the two parties in the negotiations were headed by the most respected dignitaries available, the headmen of the two villages concerned. No third party or external neutral referee was needed: the negotiations needed neither mediator nor adjudicator. The two headmen present could be expected to uphold the cultural norms and traditions as well as the "rules of the game" in the arena of negotiations. In the second place, the two parties were not permitted to come immediately into the arena. There was what might be called a "cooling off period" for the party of 12 men from the young woman's village. For the negotiating party of the young man's village a period of organization and decision was necessarily made possible with a short kulhi durup'. This period of preparation was necessary in the young man's village because a larger number of people were involved than the selected party from Manjhipur and the negotiations for bride price, as other matters affecting the lives of the entire community, merited consensus and terms within established guidelines lest the amount offered be too much or too little. After the period of "cooling off" and rest from their walk the party from Manjhipur were escorted ceremonially by the jog manjhi to the courtyard of the host where the organized and properly arranged representatives of the young man's village awaited.

After the traditional greetings were given and each person was recognized by his position, the negotiations began with two ritualized acts. First, the groom was called before the negotiators and asked formally if he wished the final stages of the kasima process to proceed; through his public affirmation he indicated that his gains in the marriage warranted the expenditure of the time, energy and the bride price which must be given.

The second act reveals much about the significance of the bride price. The father of the groom offered, through the medium of the jog mañjhis, a token amount of five rupees to symbolize his willingness to accept the young woman as a companion for his son. The father of the bride was persuaded to accept this offer only after he let it be known that he was not anxious to give up a faithful and healthy member of his household. The giving of the five rupees was a symbol that, whatever the final amount agreed upon, nothing would be done to void the relationship already established between the young man and the young woman. There would be no "hold out"; no ultimatums would be served to disrupt the flow of negotiations. The acceptance of the five rupees from the father of the groom symbolized the establishment of sincere willingness by the young woman's father that the negotiation would go forward without fear of withdrawal or failure. The fact that jovial rejection of the five rupees took place did not negate the sincerity on the part of either party, it served well as the first act of informal interaction among people who did not know each other on a personal basis but who knew their roles, the rules and the situation at hand. It

may be said that after this act of giving and receiving the five rupees, the enjoyment of festivities overshadowed the bargaining process as the focus of the day's activities.

The bride price, decided upon in the late hours of the evening of feasting, was paid at the time agreed upon. The payment was not made without the presence of village authorities; the jog mañjhi from the young man's village. The absence of the headman at the time of payment indicates that there was no fear that the agreement would not be kept.

The marriage process was completed with one last rite. A few days after the bride price had been paid, the couple returned to the young woman's village for a formal visit. The young woman returned to her natal village in the new status of a married daughter returning for a visit: she came back with evidence that she was an accepted daughter-in-law in her husband's father's household. The pot of pera hor handi was given to Champa by her father-in-law to take back to her father's household as a symbol that the negotiations and rites of kasima were fulfilled. The bride price had been paid and received and the daughter of one man's household had been given as a bride to another man's household where she was accepted with the full rights and expectations of an affinal kinsmen.

The visit of the young couple to her natal village was terminated with the benediction and blessing of the headman of the village. In this brief, dignified enactment, the headman as mañjhi haṛam (the respected father of the village) gave formal recognition to her departure as a daughter of the village. This



act is more formally a part of hapramko bapla (traditional marriage) but is not neglected as the conclusion of the kasima marriage. With the departure of the young woman from her village, given the blessing of the headman, the villagers cannot demand anything more from her. Neither can she expect or demand anything more from her natal village. She becomes essentially a part of her husband's household with no claims of inheritance or physical claims of any type whatever from her gharonj or bõs. The departing daughter leaves to begin an entirely new set of relationships.

The headmen of the two villages involved in the kasima form of marriage play significant roles. They do not interfere with any aspect of the process; the principals and their kinsmen, along with other village elders carry out the performance of their respective roles. Nevertheless, the influential presence of the headmen as symbols of traditional dignity and morality is manifest at all points where tensions are likely to arise. During the festivities the two men eat and drink with the others; they are not given differential treatment. But their presence appears to effect both the esprit de corps of the festivities and the consensus attained in negotiations. The kasima marriage process, like the traditional marriage becomes a village concern which necessitates the awareness, participation and final blessing of the headman. Although his active role may seem less pronounced than the jog manjhi's, the headman is ultimately responsible for the people of his village and is the one who gives his blessing to the addition of new members through marriage and the departure of village children by marriage.

The examination of kasima marriage deals with traditional Santal culture. The principals belong to Santal villages where Santal headmen are able to maintain the norms of their heritage. It is necessary to discuss some of the difficulties observed in a village of cultural pluralism like Dangrajolha.

In a Santal village like Manjhipur the kasima marriage does not emphasize any "purely religious" elements. There is no invocation to the village bonga; there is only one visit to the village manjhi than; when the married bride formally leaves her natal village. Actually, the marriage process from beginning to end deals with individuals and social entities without reference to superhuman concerns. This secularism should permit the headman of Dangrajolha, inspite of his conversion to Christianity, to perform his role in the process. Nevertheless, he is loath to do so because, by his Christian definitions, the kasima is declared to be no marriage at all. His unwillingness to play his role in this rather frequently enacted rite is apprehended by his people, and the result is a general reaction of alienation and disturbance among them. When, for reasons of expediency, the headman of Dangrajolha has performed his role in the kasima marriage, he has failed to elevate the occasion to the level of dignity observed in the case narated above. There is some hesitancy to hold kasima marriages in Dangrajolha, and less desirable forms are practiced.

In Dangrajolha marriages in the Christian form are performed with the headman's blessing. Christian authorities are called in to elevate the rituals into "acceptable" religious ceremonies. Bride

price considerations are relegated to sub rosa negotiations and festivities exclude the traditional handi drinking. Cultural confusion results from non-traditional rites performed in a social vacuum.

Containing the Deviant: Two Generations
Challenge the System

In 1920 the headman of Manjhipur found his authority challenged by a Santal who had gained experience in the non-Santal world. In the challenge the headman of the heterogeneous village of Dangrajolha played an irregular role; the Pargana assembly of the area provided an authority supporting traditional structures; and the Sub-Divisional Officer in charge acted in a parallel role, avoiding confrontation with Santal tradition and making possible the resolution of conflict in a manner suitable to the Santals and the individual challenger alike.

In 1919, Sobhan Tudu, the elder of two sons of a Santal household in the village of Paharjuri, returned from service with the British Indian Army. He had fought in the First World War and had continued in the army for some time after the close of the war. He returned to the hor disom wearing western clothes (mostly old army uniforms), with some cash wealth, and speaking both Hindi and English. All of this very much impressed the younger men of his village and brought him some recognition from non-Santal officials and British officers in the Sub-Divisional headquarters.

Sobhan Tudu wanted to establish himself as a cultivator of good paddy land in or near his natal village. He had apparently

learned enough about the non-Santal world to realize that prospects for him in that realm would not bring him a position commensurate with his achievements in the world outside of the hor disom. Furthermore, his ideal of a "good" life was essentially Santal.

Sobhan became acquainted with the village headman of Dangrajolha, a person whose ties with the Santal world had been modified by his conversion to Christianity, and who, as a consequence, gave evidence of sympathy toward individuals with a deviant experience like that of Sobhan. The headman of Dangrajolha informed Sabhan of a piece of land which he thought might become available under the proper circumstance.

The piece of land in question was some 28 acres in extent and fertile. It was not registered in the name of any one particular person, but it was included in the village boundaries of Manjhipur, and therefore the headman of Dangrajolha was not in a position to turn it over to Sobhan.

The land had been a matter of controversy for some time, and the headman of Dangrajolha had tried to gain possession of it. It is evident that when the war veteran, Sobhan, appeared on the scene, the Dangrajolha headman saw an opportunity to use him in some way, either to frustrate the headman of Manjhipur with whom he had had conflict or perhaps even to obtain a part of the land for himself.

In 1913, a young man of Manjhipur, who had some sort of claim on the land, made a deal with the headman of Dangrajolha, for a financial consideration, by which the headman thought he

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could establish claim to the land. The details of that transaction are not fully known, but the whole arrangement was cancelled when the revenue settlement of 1918 was carried out in the area. The headman of Dangrajolha had tried, on this occasion, to have the land registered as a part of the area within the boundaries of Dangrajolha. This was not permitted, and the land was left under the Manjhipur jurisdiction. The ownership of the land could not be verified, and therefore it remained without a specific owner (and land-tax payer) in the control of the Manjhipur headman and village council.

The headman of Manjhipur cultivated a portion of the land in 1918 and 1919, and paid the land tax, though he did not register the land under his own name. All the while, the headman of Dangrajolha viewed the parcel with the hope of gaining control of it in one way or another, according to reliable informants.

In consultation with acquaintances at the headquarters of the Sub-Division in Paurapur, and with the headman of Dangrajolha, the veteran, Sobhan, determined to resort to the non-Santal procedure of bansgari to gain possession of the much desired land. This involved, first, assuring the court in Paurapur that the land was without previous owner in the records of the village of Manjhipur. This was done without personal reference to the headman of Manjhipur, for copies of the village records were available in the Revenue Office of the Sub-Divisional headquarters. After assurance of a clear record Sobhan had to prove that no one was literally "in possession" of the land, for under Indian law "possession" by an active cultivator is of prime importance to the definition of

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ownership; the cultivator's rights must be first determined before ownership can be transferred. The headman of Dangrajolha testified that the land, which was on the borders of his village, though outside it, was not being cultivated and in part he was right for the cultivation of the land by the headman of Manjhipur was only partial.

Having satisfied the two cardinal requirements, the court permitted Sobhan to take possession of the land by the method called bansgari. Bansgari was never accepted in Santal tradition. It smacks of arbitrary power and lacks open and free discussion and decision in the village council. It is abhorrent to the Santal villagers. In this procedure, the court sends an amin (a land surveyor) employed by the government and holding the power of police protection, along with the claimant of the land, to the site. The surveyor and his assistants enter the land to the accompaniment of village drums (in this case supplied from Dangrajolha by the Doms). The drums are supposed to attract the presence of any who might contest the assumption of possession. The amin then drives a number of stakes into the soil marking the boundary and symbolizing that the court authority has given possession and ownership to the party with the claim. It was in May of 1920 that Sobhan obtained his claim on the land by this method of bansgari.

Immediately after the performance of bansgari, the headman of Manjhipur took two steps in rapid succession. First, along with other village elders of Manjhipur, he pulled up the stakes planted by the amin, and began immediately to plough the land; it was the

season for paddy land to be prepared for the coming of the monsoons in June. Second, the Manjhipur headman appealed to the Pargana assembly, the most prestigious and influential ally in the traditional instrumentalities of Santal society. As soon as Sobhan discovered the steps taken by the Manjhipur headman he filed a law-suit against the Manjhipur headman and elders for trespassing.

The case of the land was now to be examined by two different systems of adjudication, the Pargana assembly of the Santals and the Sub-Divisional authorities. The former took action almost immediately; the latter proceeded with the delays common to bureaucratic judiciaries.

The Manjhipur headman presented his case before the Pargana assembly in terms of Santal tradition. He recognized the authority of the assembly and requested its assistance in condemning the act of bansgari. He accused Sobhan Tudu of resorting to methods and institutions outside the Santal system; he pointed out that Santals did not need to employ the method of bansgari and that it was the duty of the true hor hopon to ask his brothers for their judgment before appealing elsewhere in the matter of land acquisition. He suggested that Sobhan was guilty of conspiracy, also contrary to the traditions of the Santals who believe in coming to their decisions in open and frank discussion; in this conspiracy, he declared, the headman of Dangrajolha had taken part (a person who had not been as assiduous in maintaining Santal customs as a headman should be). Finally, he maintained that he had personally begun to

bring the land into cultivation as a village property, and had plans to bring the area fully into cultivation in the coming season.

The Pargana assembly called both Sobhan and the headman of Dangrajolha to appear before it, even though the natal village of Sobhan and Dangrajolha were both outside the territory of the assembly representatives. In 1920 this summons was not to be refused. The two appeared and gave every evidence of respect to the assembly. The headman of Dangrajolha was questioned first. His testimony was frank and open: he did not claim any rights to the land, recognizing that the action at the revenue settlement in 1918 was final and accepted by him; he denied trying to regain possession of the land for himself, saying that he had freely relinquished his claims; he swore that the headman of Manjhipur had not cultivated the land since the settlement, and in this his declaration conflicted with that made by the Manjhipur headman. As to the "conspiracy" charge, he openly confessed that he had aided and encouraged Sobhan to obtain the land through bansgari.

Sobhan was then examined by the Pargana assembly. He was asked why he had tried to get possession of the land through bansgari without first approaching the Santal authorities, the headman of Manjhipur and the village council; he was also asked to explain why he had brought the hoꝛ hoꝛon into confrontation with the outside authorities by filing a suit against a village headman. Sobhan had only one defense: he said that he had instituted the court procedures and resorted to bansgari because he had become accustomed to British

law through his years in the military, and he confessed that he had neglected the traditions of the ancestors even after returning to the hor disom. He then proceeded to express his sorrow and shame at having started the law suit, which could not be dropped at that point, but he reiterated his strong desire to cultivate the land as a good Santal.

After many hours of deliberation during which the traditional values of Santal society were repeatedly reiterated in scores of different ways by numerous assembly members, producing a powerful flood of social suggestion and group pressure, the parganic' called for a decision by the assembly. The decision was formulated in typical Santal fashion. First, Sobhan was informed that his "true brothers" of the hor hopon were trying to preserve control of their village lands and to prevent infringement upon the rights of the Santal village by those who would alienate the rights of villagers to the control and cultivation of their soil. Next, Sobhan was told that he had committed no error in desiring the land in Manjhipur; his error lay in bypassing the local and Santal means for obtaining the land. He was particularly condemned for bringing shame and loss of status upon his fellow Santals and their authorities by his appeal to non-Santal authorities and the use of bansgari which was alien to Santal procedures. The parganic', speaking for the whole assembly, reminded Sobhan that he was no longer living in the "great world" of the Great War; he was now living in hor disom, the land of the true men, and must adhere to Santal ways and rules. He was advised to move his residence to Manjhipur, if he wanted to cultivate

the soil of Manjhipur, and there to live in peace and unity with his brothers, and so continue in the favor and blessing of the spirits of the ancestors.

The headman of Manjhipur was instructed to present a formal plea to the Sub-Divisional magistrate, requesting him to instruct Sobhan to begin residence in Manjhipur as a land holder in that village.

The hearing ended with the humble acceptance of judgment by Sobhan and his allies. Then Sobhan was fined in the typical way; he was called upon to supply rice beer for the entire Pargana assembly and the interested witnesses who had joined the well publicized hearing. Everyone remained together far into the night, drinking ḥāṇḍi and talking freely while groups of younger men beat their drums around them. There was much story-telling about events modern and ancient, and when the assembly finally dispersed, Santal esprit de corps had been restored and Sobhan had gained a degree of acceptance with most of the assembly members.

Several weeks after the Pargana assembly had made its position clear, the case instituted by Sobhan against those who had "trespassed" on his land came before the magistrate of the Sub-Division. A copy of the findings of the court are given in Appendix D, page 299. As expected, Sobhan was given title and possession of the land. However, after the recorded judgment was given, the magistrate instructed Sobhan that, as a landholder in Manjhipur he was expected to be a resident of that village. There is no record in the Sub-Divisional offices that a communication had reached the magistrate from either

the Pargana assembly or the headman of Manjhipur, but the instructions of the court indicate that the magistrate had been appraised of the decision reached in the Pargana assembly. The instruction given to Sobhan to move into Manjhipur as a resident indicates the continued policy of the Government to cooperate with the local authority of the Santal village elders.

Sobhan moved to Manjhipur and established his house in the residential area of that village. Since he had come to the village under exceptional circumstances, his first years of residence were regarded as a period of probation, but with the passing years he gained popularity and respect (always reserved in some quarters) among the people of Manjhipur, for his contributions to the discussions of the kulhi durup', of which he became a faithful member, were always characterized by apparent good judgment in conformity with hapramko ak' dustur. To some in Manjhipur, his adherence to Santal loyalties were somewhat suspect, for he made frequent trips to the Sub-Divisional town of Paurapur, where he maintained friendships not approved in Manjhipur, and his wealth and his influence with Government officers passing through the area were further reasons for considering him, still, a marginal member of the village. He died in 1944, leaving two sons to share the 28 acres of land.

The 1968 Challenge to the Santal System

The kinsmen of Sobhan Tudu, who had been a deviant in 1920, tested the Santal traditions again in 1968. The challenge ended as it had in 1920, with the reassertion of the customary authority of

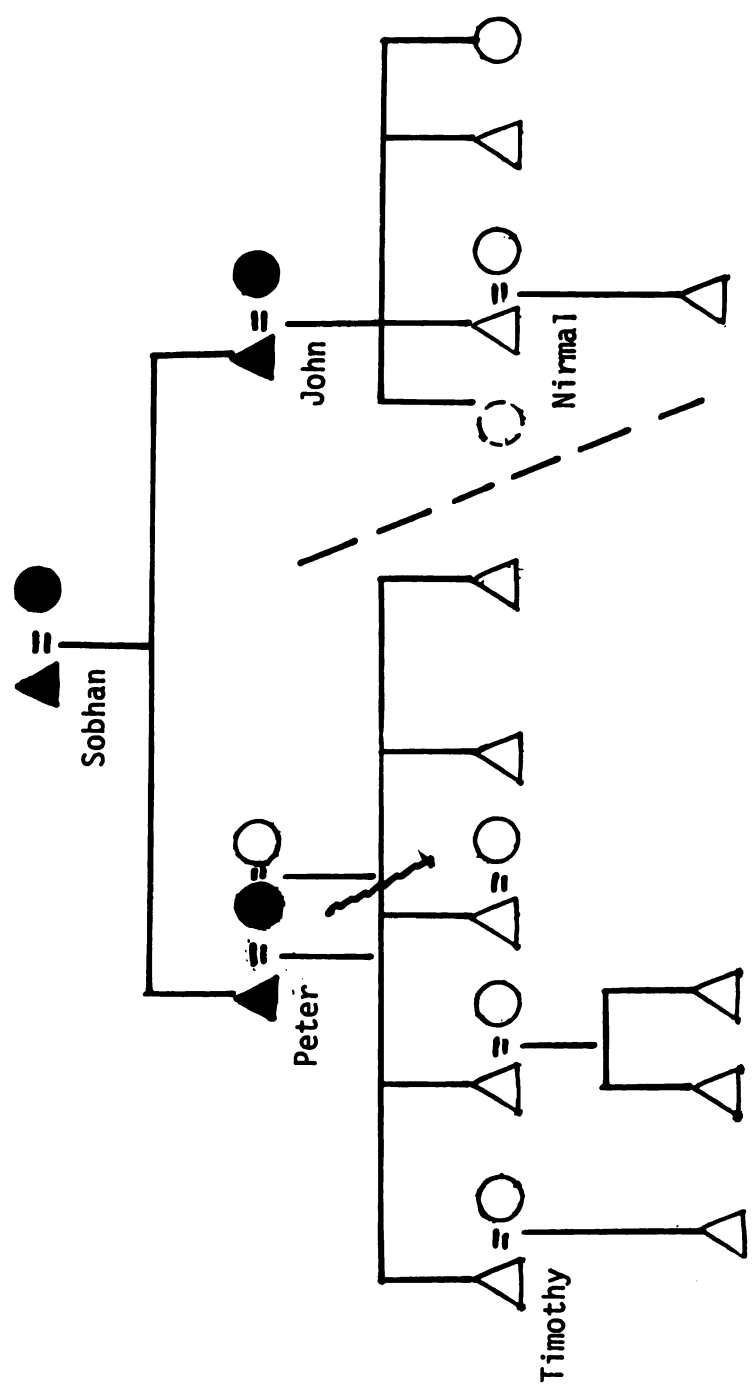
village council and the headman. In 1968, however, there was no radical resort to non-Santal authorities or confrontation with tradition in the manner of Sobhan's action in 1920. Rather, a small innovation was proposed in customary procedures and these were actually accepted as congenial with Santal norms of justice.

In 1920, Sobhan was granted ownership and possession of 28 acres of good land, at the cost of settling in the village of Manjhipur where the land was located. He also had to buy rice beer in quantity to bring his brother Santals back to a sense of concord among themselves and with him after dealing with the complicated case.

The challenge in the 1968 case was made by a grandson of Sobhan, a young man named Nirmal. (See kinship chart on page 180.) This young man was a member of the third generation of the bõs which had extensive--and generally successful--contacts outside the Santal village. The grandfather had fought with the British Indian army in the First Great War (W.W. I). The father of Nirmal had fought with the British Indian army in the Second Great War (W.W. II). Nirmal, as well as his senior cousin, Timothy, had extensive schooling in a modern educational institution; the older cousin also served in the Indian army after Independence. And yet in this more sophisticated generation, the challenge to traditions was much less serious than in their grandfather's, and it was presented with due regard to the Santal sense of ethnic self-determination.

The call for change was made at the point when, for the first time since 1920, there was need for a division of the land

Figure VI.--Kinship Diagram: Sobhan Tudu Lineage



claimed by Sobhan Tudu. Sobhan's family had remained unified, in economy if not in residence, without intermission from 1920 until 1968. Some unusual circumstances helped to preserve this unity through the years. In the first place, Sobhan's two sons did not divide the family because the younger son entered military service and remained there until after the death of his older brother. The younger son, John, left his young bride with an infant daughter, and went to join the British Indian army. He served in campaigns in Southern Europe. Just prior to his return, his older brother, Peter, died of small pox. Peter had married twice; his first wife left him three sons, his second had borne two sons before Peter died. The oldest of these sons was Timothy.

When John returned from military service, he took over the responsibility for his brother's five sons and the widow. But the widow and her children preferred to live in Paharjuri where her affinal kinsmen welcomed her. John reestablished the Tudu household in Manjhipur with the wife and daughter he had left behind, and they had two sons within a few years; the older son being named Nirmal. Although John and his brother's widow occupied different residences in different villages the family was not economically divided; the produce of the land was appropriately divided because Peter's heirs (being male) were in line to inherit his share of the land. Peter's widow returned periodically from Paharjuri to take her share of the harvest back to her residence. She was in an oaris relationship with her brother-in-law and the family lands, and this

relationship was protected by the traditions entrusted to the village headman.

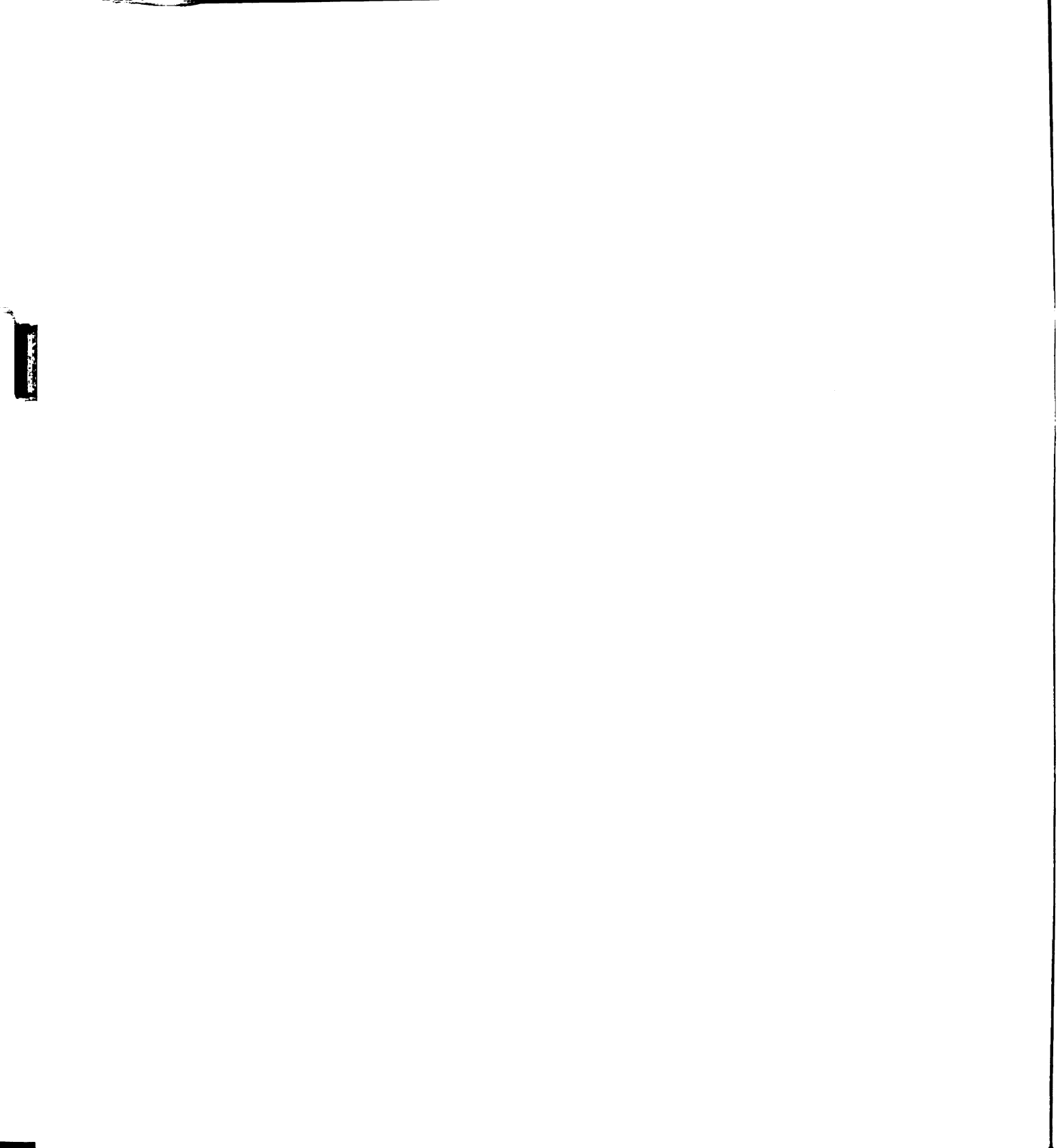
Under the counsel of John, as head of the household, Timothy, the eldest son of Peter was sent off to a mission school in Paurapur where he completed nine grades of school. After his schooling and with John's permission, Timothy enlisted in the Indian army (now Independent of the British). In due course, John's own son, Nirmal, was sent to a different mission school in the town of his mother's brother. John remained the household head of the Tudu family in Manjhipur for some nine years, during which he made some very close friendships along with some deep-rooted unfriendly relationships. John cultivated interests in the non-Santal "world" although he was a faithful village council member. His family life was full of turmoil because of his excessive drinking.

Suddenly in 1953, John was burned to death in a straw fire that broke out while he was on watch at the village threshing floor. John's widow concluded that there had been foul play and fled to her brother's house the day following her husband's funeral. Hence, the family of Sobhan Tudu came to consist of two widows living with their children in their respective natal villages rather than in Manjhipur. The traditional candidate for household head was in the army. The headman of Manjhipur informed the S.D.O. in Paurapur of the situation and the appropriate authorities were contacted to arrange for Timothy's discharge from the service. Timothy was soon discharged but chose not to reside in Manjhipur. He made his residence with his step-mother,

brothers and step-brothers in Paharjuri, the natal village of Sobhan Tudu, his grandfather.

Timothy continued to manage the family property for some years from his residence in Paharjuri. Like his uncle John, he recognized all heirs of the family as under his charge, and he shared the produce of the land with the widow of his uncle John and her children, while he continued to support his own step-mother and his brothers. The elders of Manjhipur were unhappy that the household head of the Tudu estate kept his residence in another village; the house which Sobhan had built was permitted to decay and fall into ruin, as the mud houses do when not maintained regularly. Under Timothy, the family's unified economy continued even though John's widow refused to return to claim the share of produce allotted to her in behalf of her sons. John's eldest son, Nirmal always accompanied his mother's brother who came to Manjhipur during harvest to claim his sister's share from Timothy.

In 1968 Nirmal returned to Manjhipur and reestablished the homestead of his father and grandfather. He was accompanied by his older sister and younger brother; his mother had died in the house of her brother. Nirmal had completed only seven grades of school but was alert and consciously responsible for his sister and brother. The fact that he made the decision to return to Manjhipur indicates how profoundly the Santals desire to hold cultivable land and remain a part of their traditional villages. In 1968 the opportunities for employment outside the hor disom were far more favorable than in 1920 when Sobhan returned from World War I. Furthermore, Nirmal's



training and the connections of both his mother's brother and his older sister's husband with the Indian railway could well have assisted him in gaining full employment in the modern world outside the village.

There was yet another reason why Nirmal might not have chosen to return to Manjhipur. His mother had hurriedly left the village because she firmly believed that her husband had been murdered. She had not trusted the headman to seek the full information regarding her husband's death and had often related these misgivings to Nirmal. Nirmal's childhood memories of Manjhipur were not without bitter elements. This young man returned to claim his father's inheritance and soon petitioned his older cousin, Timothy, for partition of the land and rebuilt the crumbling residence as an established household head in the village.

To divide the land was considered appropriate by the headman and the council who welcomed the resident landholder. To appeal to non-Santal authorities to effect a just partition was unnecessary. But, for the literate and intelligent young Nirmal, the traditional method of partitioning the land seemed unacceptable.

The traditional custom of partitioning resorts to a "game" of chance. A small map of the land as divided into plots is drawn on the ground. Then, in the presence of the headman and two or three other respected elders and household heads, the elder heir takes in his hand a number of small pebbles. The number is exactly half as many as the number of plots to be divided. Each pebble is thrown to fall in a plot so that half of the plots in the estate are indicated

by the pebbles thrown. The younger party gets the remaining plots. This process would have given Timothy a chance at half of the 28 acres in question.

To challenge this procedure Nirmal proceeded in an appropriately Santal manner. He requested the headman to call together the entire village council. He proposed an open meeting, with Timothy and his four brothers present and suggested a more rational procedure be adopted than the well known "game of chance". Both Nirmal and Timothy had copies of the official village maps; both could read and understand them well. Nirmal suggested that it would avoid the fragmentation of their land, and other ills, if they simply drew a line from East to West dividing the property into two, equal but consolidated wholes. He then claimed that a large irrigation pond near the center of the acreage should be included in his share, since his own father, John, had initiated its digging.

The matter was put to the entire council for free and open discussion, and the household heads contributed their usual personal opinions. Regardless of the objection of a few who preferred the traditional method of land division, the council finally conceded that the young challenger was proposing a just settlement under Santal custom but they did not agree that Nirmal should have control of the irrigation pond since John had been the head of an undivided household when the pond was dug. The pond was to be used cooperatively by both Nirmal and Timothy.

When the headman announced the consensus of the council concerning the land partition and use of the pond he also reiterated

the position of the ancestors regarding residence for all landholders. He declared that it was now time for Timothy to establish residence in Manjhipur if he intended to cultivate land in the village and participate as a household head in the council. Finally, the two young men were required to provide equal amounts of rice beer for the villagers after their long--and dry--discussion of the matter.

The council established its authority again through the declaration of the headman as Timothy, though he could not move his entire gharonj into the village, built a small residence where he resided periodically when taking care of his property in the village.

Thus the minor challenge of young Nirmal was contained by the village authority, though it meant changing an ancient custom. Perhaps more important, the occasion of the land partition had provided the opportunity for the headman and the council to exert pressure on Timothy to become more of a participant in the life of Manjhipur. The outcome of land partition worked toward fulfilling Santal traditions.

Crisis and Survival: The Viability of the Headman's Role

The role of the village headman includes two distinguishable facets: the role of the traditional manjhi whose task is to guard the traditions of the ancestors as he maintains his dignity or manjhi haram; and the role of pradhan or mustagir, the functionary of the government in raising taxes and maintaining the peace. The

encapsulation of Santal society has made it possible for a single individual to perform both roles.

Forces of change have been attracted to the headman by the fact that the office of pradhan or mustagir is invested with powers giving real economic advantages. It is possible for a pradhan, who is inclined to do so, to gain control of land rights where inheritance has failed or heirs have questionable rights; where owners of land are economically embarrassed, in debt, or compelled to migrate elsewhere for work. When an individual who is not committed to his duties as guardian of Santal rights takes control of the office of pradhan, the Santal headman's role is fundamentally changed. This amounts to a threat to the integrity of the position of headmanship. Such threats have been made both in the homogeneously Santal village of Manjhipur and in the heterogeneous village of Dangrajolha.

Challenge in Manjhipur: The Marginal Man as Contender

The threat to the position of headman in Manjhipur came from a Santal who may be regarded as one of the more marginal individuals in the village. Manot Tudu is one of the most wealthy men in Manjhipur; he is the holder of the largest acreage of cultivable land. As a symbol of his marginal status in Santal society, he was elected to a seat in the Panchayat of the local area. This involved the neglect of the hereditary principle, basic to Santal society, governing access to all offices. It involved entering the competitive electioneering of democratic India, an activity not appreciated by

the Santals whose democracy is based on consensus among household heads rather than on advantages gained in the adversary process. Acceptance of a seat in the Panchayat also meant tacit agreement to the demise of any form of inter-village assembly along the traditional patterns of the Pargana assembly.

Manot Tudu had already tested his strength against that of the hereditary headman by taking the headman of Manjhipur to court in a law suit over a small plot of land in the village. In this suit Manot Tudu had won the decision of the Sub-Divisional magistrate. This had encouraged him to contest the office of the headman himself. He thought he had a basis for his case in the fact that the headman had not been explicitly appointed to the position of pradhan when he fell heir to it; the headman had actually been given, in a formal writ, responsibilities to conduct the office during the last months of the life of his aging father who had become unable to carry out the duties of the office. When the old man died, through oversight in the office of the Sub-Divisional headquarters, the heir had not received a writ of appointment as incumbent of the office in his own right. Manot Tudu planned to make much of this oversight. He also attempted to influence to his cause a number of the household heads of Manjhipur and persuade them to witness before the Sub-Divisional Officer to the effect that the incumbent was incompetent in the execution of his assumed office.

Manot Tudu therefore presented a petition against the headman to the Sub-Divisional Officer (S.D.O.) in mid-1969, claiming

that the headman was acting under an assumed but an illegal appointment and that the people were unhappy with his performance. Tudu accompanied this petition with his own application for the position, claiming the support of the village people for the appointment.

Late in the year the S.D.O. held a local hearing at the nearby Anchal center in Hartjuri. He called the household heads of Manjhipur to the hearing and personally and publicly polled the villagers to determine who should be the village headman. Despite a concentrated effort by Tudu, his younger brother and his brother-in-law, to sway the village household heads, and though the incumbent had served the office only three years, when the tally was made by the S.D.O., it was found that only three household heads opposed the appointment of the hereditary headman, and these three were the kinsmen of the challenger.

The appointment of the traditional headman in the face of this serious challenge, the confirmation by the S.D.O. of the Santal principles of hereditary headmanship and the resulting re-affirmation of the principle of encapsulation, meant the strengthening of traditional forces in Manjhipur. To some outsiders this may have seemed regrettable, since Manot Tudu was not only the richest man in the village but also one of the most "progressive". He had achieved liason with the rural improvement programs of the Development Block centered in the Anchal, and had begun to make use of some of the technical advice and resources available through the Block offices. Manot Tudu's opponent controlled less agricultural land and much less financial power than Tudu, largely because he clung to traditional

procedures. He had not taken advantage of his headmanship for personal enrichment. As headman, he had helped arrange for a new village well to be finished with brick and cement curbing and he was in constant contact with the Village Level Worker of the Development block, but he did not consistently pursue progressive technological change.

Had the "less progressive" headman been displaced by the "more progressive", however, every evidence points to the prediction that Manot Tudu would have used the office and all of his "progressive ties" for the enrichment of his own gharonj, leaving the rest of his fellow villagers to their traditional wet-rice cultivation. His entire record shows that Tudu lacked the leadership which identifies with the group and moves the group towards acceptable goals; he was marginal in his relationship to his fellow villagers and his goals appeared familistic or private, disfavoring ato sagai.

Retaining the Chowkidar

The narration of the re-affirmation of traditional headmanship in Manjhipur should not be left without adding a report of an enactment of the headman's role which followed soon after the headman was confirmed in his office. It demonstrates the power which a Santal village headman may hold if his village council supports him, a power which makes it possible for him even to ignore decisions of the S.D.O. The incident demonstrates that in the encapsulating process the independence of the Santal system can be maintained by

the capacity of Santal authorities to make their own decisions effective as much as by the interest of the encapsulating power of government.

This incident concerned the authority of the village over the office of the chowkidar, or village guard. The chowkidar is an appointee of government, performing duties specified in writing by the governing authority; but the duties are closely parallel to the traditional duties assigned to the godet, or traditional village messenger. (This parallelism is much the same as that of the duality of manjhi and pradhan roles.) According to governmental code, the office of chowkidar, like the office of godet, is very often an inherited office, and the government usually honors the wishes of the village council which confirms the godet in his office. The chowkidar, however, has some duties outside the village in which he is the hereditary godet. Since the establishment of the Panchayat, the chowkidar has been placed under the authorities of the Anchal thana who police the area known as the panchayat raj.

The chowkidar is compensated for his work as village and Panchayat guard by the grant of a productive parcel of land in the village of Manjhipur free of taxes. It is therefore a post deserving a serious and faithful performance.

The office of chowkidar in Manjhipur and its panchayat raj, came to be contested by two men, the incumbent being the younger brother of the contesting candidate's father. The incumbent, Singa, was forty-six years old, a widower and the father of one married son, a man who had served the people faithfully for about twelve years

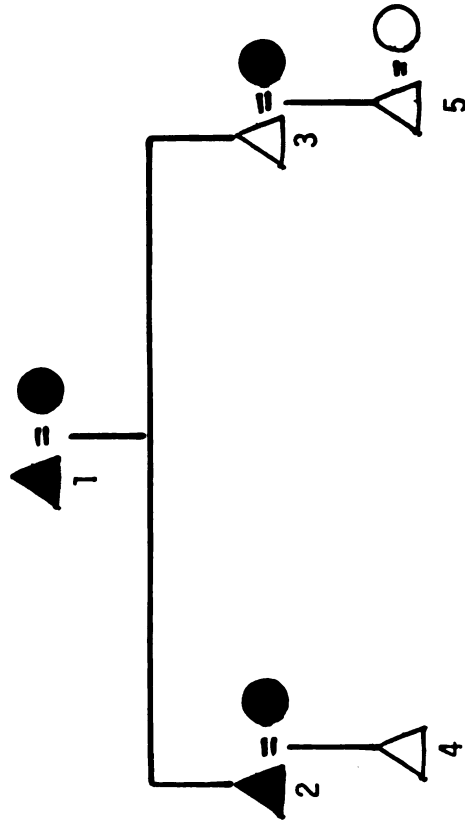
since the death of his older brother. (See kinship chart on page 193.) Singa had also supported his nephew, his elder brother's son, for the twelve years, cultivating the land of the gharonj in addition to the three acres of tax-free "chowkidar's land". The nephew, Danu, had grown up without an interest in land cultivation; he had learned to ride a bicycle, and had formed friendships with persons not connected with Manjhipur.

When the nephew, Danu, reached the age of twenty-four, though unmarried, requested a segmentation of the gharonj and the partitioning of the land, which he, as the son of the elder brother, had a half right. The segmentation was permitted by Singa and the partition of land was supervised by the village headman.

Having gained possession of his family's land, Danu proceeded to seek the office which had been his father's. As mentioned in previous passages, the inheritance of a Santal village office is not automatic; the confirmation of the village council is necessary, and there have been precedents for passing over the direct heir in favor of a better qualified individual not in the direct line of inheritance. Therefore the village council, by tradition, was within its rights to reject the candidacy of Danu, the nephew, and retain the uncle, Singa, an appointment which could very well be inherited later by Singa's son, the parallel cousin of Danu.

With the encouragement of his sister's husband, Danu requested that his right to the office of chowkidar be brought before the village council for consideration. The kulhi durup' deliberated Danu's appeal at great length, but ultimately decided against Danu's

Figure VII.--Kinship Diagram of Choukidar's Lineage



Key to Numbers:

- 1. Amra; 2. Harna; 3. Singa; 4. Danu; 5. Phagu

petition. Danu paid for the handi which was consumed after the formal session of the household heads, but he refused to join in the consensus-establishing session of conversation following the meeting; he refused to accept the decision of the council.

Danu proceeded to cultivate the interest of his friends outside the village and to make himself known in the Sub-Divisional headquarters. In December 1969, not long after the village headman's victory over Manot Tudu, Danu filed a petition in the court of the S.D.O., claiming his right to the appointment of chowkidar because he was the direct and only male heir of his father. In his attempt to override the decision of the village council, Danu claimed that his uncle, Singa, had never been formally appointed to the office in accordance to the requirements of statutory law, but that he had served the office only because the heir of his deceased elder brother was of minor age. Danu claimed that his uncle Singa had fraudulently retained the office beyond the necessary time when the true heir could have been performing the duties of the office in his own right.

In mid-1970 the S.D.O. held an inquiry at the Anchal headquarters. Many of the Manjhipur village elders were not present for the meeting, which may have been by design. Part of the S.D.O.'s decision reads as follows:

Having held inquiry on _____ 1970 at Hartjuri parade camp, all the villagers have supported the case of Danu and the general opinion was in his favor. I have tested the candidates. Singa, the acting chowkidar has become old, aged about fifty years and not capable of discharging the duties of chowkidar. Danu is about 28 years and healthy and active

habits . . . under the circumstances set forth above, I recommend the case of Danu in place of his deceased father on the basis of his hereditary claim. He is to report to the S.D.O. for favor of orders.

On receipt of the decision, Danu went to the Sub-Divisional headquarters to take possession of the brief letter appointing him chowkidar. He retains possession of the letter but actually he has not been able either to perform the duties of the office or to take possession of the tax-free land which goes with the office. His uncle, Singa, continues to officiate and enjoy the privileges granted by the village council as though the S.D.O.'s action had not taken place. The headman is unwilling to award the status of chowkidar to a 28-year old bachelor who rides around the country on a bicycle and makes alliances with people who have nothing to do with Manjhipur. The people of the village, who associate Singa with their village office of goḍet, are unwilling to let Danu take the office of chowkidar because for many years the tax-free acreage cultivated by the chowkidar have supported their goḍet. Singa, the goḍet of Manjhipur has been active in the affairs of the village and supportive of the dignities of Santal life. In addition, he has on occasion served as Kudam naeke (assistant village priest) at sacred festivals. Singa displays all of the necessary qualities for his office, but it appears that Danu has neither commitment to the office nor ability to perform its duties. Because the headman of Manjhipur has control of access to the tax-free lands of the chowkidar, and Danu can not enter them without the permission of the headman, the headman is able to make the S.D.O.'s appointment ineffective.

The young man was able to rally supporters to the hearing at the Anchal headquarters and gain there the S.D.O.'s sanction. But his unconventional behavior, his unmarried status, his lack of commitment to the culture of the Santals of his village, all combine to make it impossible for him to enter upon the office of chowkidar or the tax-free lands which accompany the appointment. He still holds his share in the land of his father's gharonj, but he is denied the office and the land of the chowkidar by a headman who knows his powers and can effectively achieve the goals he and his council agree upon.

The villagers are keenly aware that Danu continues to cultivate influential friends wherever he can, and may one day attempt another confrontation with the headman and the assemblage of village household heads.

The Headmanship Crisis in Dangrajolha

In the village of Dangrajolha, the headman's position has been under long-continued threat. For a period in the recent past it appeared that the Santals would lose control of the office. However, the hereditary line has survived and most recent events suggest that the new incumbent may be able to revive his authority and use it with increased effectiveness to maintain the integrity of Santal society in the village. The long story of the difficulties of the headmanship in Dangrajolha deserves careful attention.

The history of Dangrajolha has been different from that of Manjhipur in that it has been an ethnically heterogeneous village

for many years. It is not known when, or under what circumstances, the Hindu Shas and Muslim Momins gained residential rights in the village, but it was before the turn of the century. It is clear that these two non-Santal groups have steadily increased their population and economic strength, exerting a continuous assimilative pressure on Santal life in the village. Today the Santals are an ethnic minority in the village. It is only by reason of the protective encapsulation of Santal society that the Santals in Dangraholha have escaped engulfment in structures similar to those of the caste villages in encircling Indian society. Because the Indian government continues the policies established after the Santal rebellion, Dangraholha is still classified as a Santal village and the headman of the village remains a Santal.

The first serious set-back to traditional authority in Dangraholha came at the beginning of the present century when the hereditary headman was converted to Christianity. At that time, if the village council had been completely independent of governmental supervision, the convert would have been deprived of his office and its emoluments. But the government followed a policy of protecting religious freedom and refused to sanction the dismissal of an officer of the government for religious reasons. The village council was required to retain the convert as pradhan. Consequently, Dangraholha continued under the headmanship of a convert to a religion which, in the opinion of the Dangraholha Santals today, undermined the headman's commitment to some important aspects of the office. He refused

to be involved in the sacred rituals of Santal culture requiring the participation of the hereditary manjhi in a leading role; church authorities insisted that these rituals should be categorized as "idolatrous" and therefore forbidden to the convert. In 1912 an especially disturbing crisis was precipitated by an extremely zealous church official visiting Dangrajolha: doubtlessly thinking that he should emulate some of the famous iconoclasts of European history, the official marched to the manjhi than--the sacred dwelling place of the ancestral spirits and traditionally the burial place of the founder of the village--dramatically attacked the sacred mound of earth and removed the earth to prove that the bones of the ancestors were neither buried in the spot nor protected by the invisible ancestral spirits. The conversion of the headman and the loss of the sacred manjhi than led to the curtailment of many traditional rituals. These traditional rituals supporting the Santals in the maintenance of traditional standards and norms.

In the third generation of Christian headmen, the recently retired headman added to his religious defection a tendency to deviate in another way. He has undertaken financial and land speculations; he has attempted to perform the role of a commercial entrepreneur in the fashion of the more wealthy non-Santals of his village. His efforts led, finally, to his involvement concurrently in eleven court cases in which he was either the accused or the plaintiff. Most of these cases involved financial dealings but a few involved land transactions. Most of the cases, but not all, were purely personal involvements, not directly related to his

office. His general inability to gain the successes he pursued may be explained as the result of his lack of preparation for the entrepreneurial role; his background afforded little or no training in commercial manipulation. He had a modicum of modern education provided by a mission school, and he was highly motivated to make himself more economically comparable to the more wealthy Shas and Momins of his village. But neither the education nor the motivation could override the negative effect of his cultural experience: his inheritance prepared him for a non-competitive role in a society of collective concerns and consensual decisions, and this preparation was clearly dissonant with the qualities needed for entrepreneurial success. His failures gave the Santals reasons for shame among their non-Santal neighbors.

Santal morale has also suffered in Dangrajolha from economic losses which have been continuous and distressing. The economic losses may be explained as due to Santal incompetence, but a more adequate explanation would point to the exploitive aggression of non-Santal money-lenders. Today most of the land in the village is still registered in the name of Santal owners, and these owners continue to be responsible for the required land taxes; the rights and duties granted by the British Indian administration after the Santal rebellion continue to be granted to the Schedule Tribe by the constitution of independent India. But the protective encapsulation does not extend to the crops grown on the land. The crops may be assigned to creditors--the moneylenders--for years without limit for the payment of debts and interest accumulating endlessly. In

DangrajoIha today only a handful of Santals enjoy the harvests which their land produces; the rest labor on their lands in debt peonage.

In spite of the assimilative pressure of powerful non-Santal groups living in their village, and in spite of the religious and behavioral defection of their hereditary headman, and in spite of their economic depression, DangrajoIha Santals continue steadfast in their ethnic loyalty. They remain proud of their identity with hor hopon; they endeavor in every way possible to protect their ato saḡai sense of solidarity as they confront the non-Santal segments of the village. Ethnic endogamy is unquestionably maintained; in spite of rare transgressions, the norms of endogamy are never questioned. Linguistic patterns are habitual and general. Paris exogamy is enforced. Rituals--though attenuated--are supported as frequently and faithfully as possible without the participation of the headman. And the Santal village council (though controlling only the Santal community in the village) conducts its affairs by Santal norms. It may be said that Santal culture survives in DangrajoIha.

The survival of Santal culture may be explained in part by the presence in DangrajoIha of a person who performs the role of a surrogate headman. This is Harma Hembrom. When the life patterns of this man and the Santal community are observed in context, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in a Santal village where the headman does not assume the traditional role, some individual will become invested with the characteristics required to fulfill "headmanship". Santal culture provides a role for the maṅjhi haṅam,

a model of dignity and wisdom, a bud akil hor. It appears inevitable that some individual will perform the role, first because of personal commitment and eventually because of social recognition. The scope of this study does not provide enough evidence to conclude that wherever a village lacks a good Santal headman, some lesser person in the village will act out the role; the case of Harma Hembrom does suggest the operation of some cultural compulsion to role fulfillment, especially where the role is critically necessary for the survival of Santal society. However this may be, my observations in Dangrajolha have led me to the conclusion that Harma Hembrom has played a significant part in preserving morale in a village which has lost much of its Santal identity. This personality must be described.

Harma Hembrom is about 85 years old. He was a young man when the village was torn with anxiety and forboding by the destruction of the manjhi than; it was during those days, which he remembers vividly and accurately (his account is verified by records in the headquarters of the mission) that he decided to remain true to Santal traditions and the hor hopon regardless of pressure from some of his peers. He was a young householder in 1918 during the fierce arguments between the Santals and non-Santals that accompanied the land revenue settlement. The old man claims that the two events of history--the destruction of the manjhi than and the landgrabbing efforts of non-Santals--were primary causes in his determination to preserve Santal traditions and Santal land.

Today the old man lives in a homestead built according to the best traditions of Santal construction. At the entrance of his thick-walled mud house are long-seasoned handcarved wooden doors of solid and enduring Sal (Indian oak). On the long sides of the verandahs, the pillars are built of mud, round and solid. The roofs on the three residences are of native tile. The homestead buildings, hand plastered in white clay, form a closed rectangle around a large, clean mud-plastered courtyard.

The old man carries himself with sobriety and dignity. The members of his household regard him with obvious respect, tinged with affection. His joint family consists of himself, his second wife, the widow of his deceased son, a married grandson and two unmarried grand-daughters. His second wife is considerably younger than he, the mother of his son having died some years ago. No member of this household, nor any member of the bõs of Harma Hembrom is a Christian.

Harma is a land owner who has avoided debt. He enjoys the products of his fertile land without obligation to any moneylender. He has earned a reputation for his ability to avoid financial entanglement with non-Santal entrepreneurs. When he employs others in time of planting and harvest, he is known as a just employer but one who demands a full day's labor. He employs both Santals and non-Santals of low caste for services he is unable to perform.

Although he cannot sign his name in any of the three languages of the village--Santali, Bengali, Hindi--he is articulate in all three. It is apparent that most of the villagers, regardless of

ethnic identity, acknowledge and respect Harma for his honesty and wisdom. He is a stalwart guardian of hapramko ak' dustur and yet this does not involve the rigid adherence to trivial rules and regulations often found in the traditions of the literary cultures; when men come to him for advice, he draws upon an enormous body of memories and demonstrative illustrations so freely that the course of action suggested in his words seems aimed to produce equitable and just solutions to human problems, rather than mere faithful adherence to old customs.

Old Harma is an active participant in the consultations of the Santal community council in Dangrajolha. He performs a leadership role in the council because he is an authority on Santal traditions; he is the storehouse of historical information, and his experience in dealing with interpersonal and interethnic relationships has been extensive. His manner is never one of the commanding authority, but his fellow-villagers follow his suggestions as though under compelling authority. He has never participated in cases outside the village of Dangrajolha, although he has been the mediator between the ethnic groups of his village on numerous occasions. Differences which cannot be resolved in the village either through the Santal kulhi durup' or the occasional interethnic council do not concern Harma. He has avoided all involvement in grandiose schemes for getting rich or powerful, all types of court cases and quarrels of the marketplace.

This bud akil hor has a reputation for being always available to those who need his guidance. His fellow-Santals of Dangrajolha,

both non-Christian and Christian, consult him often. The Christian headman of Dangrajolha, a man different from Harma in many ways, comes to him for advice in times of extreme difficulty. But headmen from other Santal villages, including the headman of Manjhipur, have come to him with intractable problems. Even non-Santals have sought out this man known for his insights and integrity.

Harma Hembrom exemplifies the Santal ideal of the village headman through his commitment to Santal traditions and his competence in dealing with the affairs of village life. He has given his fellow villagers a core of stability and a focus of identity, which has undoubtedly been a fundamental factor in the survival of Santal cultural integrity in the village of Dangrajolha.

Despite the efforts of Harma and others in the Santal community, the headmanship of Dangrajolha reached a critical point in 1970, during the period of my observation and study. Ganga, then headman of the village, in a fit of drunken despondency resigned his office, and for some months it appeared that a non-Santal might be elected to the headmanship. The events of this period and the consequences deserve more detailed description.

Ganga's despondency was due to many factors. First, his personal efforts to become a rich man were leading to disaster, with eleven cases pending in the courts involving him as plaintiff or accused. Second, Santal elders in the village were openly complaining against him, deploring his lack of wisdom in affairs of the Santal council as well as in his personal behavior. Third, non-Santal leaders were manipulating him to his utter confusion;

their aggressive interest in gaining control of village lands was continuous. Finally, he saw that he was not able to withstand the pressure exerted by the newly established Panchayat organization to take control, more and more, over matters of village government and administration. Only a very alert and competent headman could make sure that decisions outside of his defined authority were not left to the Panchayat to make.

Ganga was unable to cope with the situation, and in his despair he began drinking heavily. He was not in a continual state of inebriation, nor could he be considered an alcoholic, but he seldom refused handi or any other form of alcoholic liquor, whether offered by friends or foes. One evening he became inebriated in the company of his political opponents in the Hindu section of the village. Information is incomplete concerning the details of the conversations, arguments, and disputes of that evening, but it is verified that Ganga signed a statement of resignation at some point during the evening. He left the statement with his political opponents.

The following day Ganga publically acknowledged that he had purposefully and knowingly signed the letter of resignation. He would make no explanation. The letter was taken by a village messenger to the S.D.O. in Paurapur and properly filed in the official manner required.

For the Santals the resignation was without precedent. The appointed headman, the living heir of the founders of the village, the traditional pillar of the Santal village had resigned. The

economic and political pressures that had forced the resignation were viewed as enormous, practically overwhelming, certainly ominous.

The non-Santals of Dangrajotha regarded the event as the end of Santal encapsulation; no longer would the government protect the Santal headmanship. They girded themselves for the period of free political competition which would precede the appointment of a new headman. The procedure legally required the appointment of a new headman to include the following steps: (1) All potential candidates were to file petitions of nomination in the office of the S.D.O. within a specified time; (2) The S.D.O. would investigate local circumstances and set a date on which he would meet with all household heads in the village (Santals and non-Santals) as recorded by the census; and (3) The S.D.O. would convene his court in the presence of all household heads of the village for a public review of potential candidates; at this meeting he would determine what support each candidate had and make his official appointment of a qualified person. Candidates for the headmanship began immediately to seek, by the various means available to them, the support of householders in the village.

The competition was manifestly to be conducted by pragmatic means. There was no basic consensus in the village regarding the norms and standards of the headman's role. The role provided by Santal tradition was to be discarded but there was no substitute in the experience of the ethnically heterogeneous village. There was no basis for moral guidance in the governmental regulations, for these were purely procedural: the "wish of the people" was the

only criterion suggested by law for the selection of a village headman, but there was no village-wide consensus to be found in the "wishes of the people".

The ethnic divisions of the village could be expected to provide some basis for selection, and both the Muslims and the Santals felt a definite obligation to support a candidate representing their groups. The Santals could be expected to support their mayam boeha, their blood brother, in any situation where there was open contest against other ethnic groups; by their tradition the individual deserving their support would be a man from the patriline of their headman's bōs. The Muslim community could be expected to support a Muslim candidate, but the Muslim criteria for leadership were much less specific than those of the Santals; their candidate was expected to be a respected, wise individual who was conservatively religious. It mattered not what his ancestry might be. But both the Santal and Muslim communities were minority groups in the village; had they combined, they could not equal the 70% of the village population who were Hindus.

The Hindu community of Dangrajolha did not constitute a politically unified ethnic population. Their caste divisions and class differences and the strong familism that gave each family a differentiating ambition generated a number of factions among the Hindus. Their historic tradition would have prompted them to place as their candidate a member of their "highest" caste, a Brahmin; but the few families of Brahmins in the village were living in a dependent client relationship, serving the wealthier Shas as purely

religious specialists; they were "highest" in no political or economic sense. The dominant Shas included competitive individuals and families, with factions led by individuals whose appeal to their supporters was purely pragmatic and based on expediency as understood in the most immediate and fiscal terms. The general tendency, therefore, in the Hindu community was to give preference to a candidate for headmanship who possessed the largest economic resources and could promise the most immediate gains to the families of the community, even if these gains were no more than an occasional feast.

A few weeks after the resignation of the Santal village headman, four candidates filed petitions for nominations at the Sub-Divisional headquarters.

The Santals had a candidate--Hotan--the unmarried younger brother of the headman (Ganga) who had just resigned. As a younger male in the joint household of the headman, he had not represented his household in the village council, but he was very familiar with the Santal community. He was only 22 years old and a residing member of the headman's gharonj. The only other possible candidate from that family was the 13-year old son of the resigning headman--the direct heir--but a minor who was legally incompetent to take the office. Hotan had finished nine grades of school away from the village but he had been the cultivator of the family for about five years. He worked hard but had suffered economically because of the failures of his older brother. He was not in a position to exert any economic pressure on potential backers, but he had two advantages

which made him attractive to his fellow Santals. First, he had the approval of the "surrogate headman", the traditionalist Harma, whose advice he had taken on many occasions and whose company he had often joined in various village discussions. Second, he had completed enough formal education to afford him a respected position among the majority of Santals in the community who were non-literate. Hotan was adept in both Hindi and Bengali in their written and spoken forms. No santal offered to compete with him for the support of the Santal community.

The Muslims also produced a single candidate, a well-known weaver who had the support of a fairly united community.

Two candidates appeared from the Hindu community, both members of the dominant oil-pressing Sha caste. One was a shopkeeper and moneylender, a highly successful mahajan, a grain dealer who held mortgages on the rice crops of many Santals and Hindu families, and who had freely used his economic power to gain political advantages both on the village and the Panchayat raj level. The other candidate was a middle aged Sha of less wealth, but a man who had employed many laboring Muslims and Santals in agricultural operations and one who had joined with the recently-resigned Santal headman in dealing with many village disputes; he was known as an active and wise participant in village affairs.

Of these four candidates, the Santal Hotan had little hope of gaining support from any large part of the village population in open competition at the public hearing to be scheduled by the

S.D.O. His only hope of election lay in the old constitutional right given to the Santals for the continuance of encapsulation and protection of Santal independence. The other three candidates had real hope of winning a majority of villagers to their support. The Muslim candidate had not only the support of the Muslims, but he could expect the support of many non-Christian Santals whom he had befriended against the exploitative maneuvers of the Hindu money-lenders. He also had some support among disadvantaged Hindus, and he made attempts to win their allegiance. Both of the Hindu candidates knew that in an open contest they had real chances for victory, and they invested considerable resources in achieving that victory.

The village of Dangrajolha became a furiously active political arena during the weeks preceding the appointment of the new headman. There were few precedents and fewer regulations; what precedents were available were borrowings from the non-Santal world, the pan-Indian political scene; available regulations merely served to "keep the peace". Social conditions in Dangrajolha produced a number of unusual components; generally speaking pragmatic concerns dominated the political competition.

In such a setting, the emergence of what Nicholas has described as "factions" became apparent. The established ethnic and caste groupings were strained, and the appeal of the candidates (except for the Santal, Hotan) included just such pragmatic appeals as are the basis of "factions". Nicholas describes factions thus: "Factions are conflict groups, political groups, not corporate

groups, and members are recruited by a leader and on diverse principles" (Nicholas 1965:27-29). The mahajan may be categorized as a "pure factional leader"; all of his appeals were appeals to immediate individual and family interests rather than to traditional or established social-entity concerns. The other Sha and the Muslim candidate could hope to win the election only as units of other groups defeated to their leadership, and, while not reckless of old ties (as the mahajan was inclined to be), they did from time to time appeal to those who were attracted by power or economic resources, and other pragmatic interests.

The real competition became manifest when the Muslim candidate gave a large feast for his supporters. Invitations were issued to all who would come. The candidate made known his political platform on the occasion of the feast. He declared that his ability as a sympathetic mediator in resolving differences between villagers was well-known to all, and his reputation as a friend of the people, without ulterior motives, was well-founded. He promised an administration of equity and good faith. There were many families in Dangrajotha who had had so little experience with "equity" and "good faith" that the Muslim's appeal could not be at all universal; these families, many of them poor, had much greater trust in the power of a patron than any other form of security.

At the feast of the Muslim candidate, all Muslim families were in attendance. They were joined by many Santals and a number of disadvantaged Hindu families. All of those joined in eating together. The Hindu families of respectable status who came to

enjoy the feast were given uncooked rice, pulses, vegetables and chickens, to be prepared and eaten in the ritually purified precincts of their own homes; this was a necessary arrangement because of the strictures against inter-dining in Hindu tradition.

The mahajan, the wealthy and aggressive Hindu money-lender, prepared a feast with a triple menu to accommodate all residents of the village. The food and eating arrangements catered to the restrictions demanded by the ethnic communities. As an additional attraction, ample supplies of handi and distilled liquors were made available to those who would accept them. The evening of feasting gave opportunity for speech-making, but the occasion provided only limited inter-ethnic interaction; the speeches could generally be geared only to the segments of the people who sat together during or after the feasting. It is reported that on the day following the mahajan's feast and program of benevolent speeches, the debts of many families were cancelled in whole or in part.

The second Sha candidate also gave a feast. He had a large goat slaughtered for the occasion by a Muslim butcher, but food for the Shas and Brahmins was cooked separately by a servant of the Brahmin priest to ensure ritually pure food. The number of persons in attendance at this feast was not large. The candidate did not get a wide hearing on this occasion. Many Santal families attended, reported to enjoy the food, not necessarily to hear the claims of the candidate.

The candidate Hotan could not afford to give a feast. He could only spend time in the courtyards of the people who would

receive him. He did invite groups of non-Santals to the homestead of his joint family for evenings of conversation and refreshment (handi) which was a bit awkward for him; considering the fact that his courtyard was the courtyard of the resigning headman. It is reported by Santals and non-Santals alike that in these sessions Hotan demonstrated his knowledge of the problems facing the village. He was a good listener and mediator of divergent views, respectful of Santal traditions, but additionally respectful of the positions taken by other ethnic groups. How Hotan would deal with the aggressive entrepreneurs of the Hindu and Muslim communities, the central problem of Santal life in the village, remained the unanswered question, one without immediate solution.

After the filing of petitions at the Sub-Divisional headquarters and the opening excitement of feasts and pronouncements, the people of the village became engulfed in furious personal campaigning. The village was subjected to disputes and confrontations between the contending parties almost daily; the candidates themselves and their lieutenants found all manner of "issues" at stake in the campaign, and individuals were called upon to commit themselves to one or the other candidate with promises and warnings to be fulfilled in the future. Each candidate, except Hotan, was sure of victory on the day of the S.D.O.'s hearing.

In the Santal community the excitement of the opening feasts was thoroughly enjoyed. To be treated as guests of honor at the hands of their exploiters was obviously a novel and rather pleasant experience. But when they came together in their own

households, they reminded each other that the "big shows" by the "big men" were no indication of things to come. The "big men" were latu hor, corpulent, proud men, not to be trusted with the power of the headmanship. Most individuals managed to avoid committing themselves to the support of any non-Santal candidate, though continuous pressure was put upon them to do so from the beginning to the end of the campaign.

To the leaders of the Santal community in Dangrajotha, the longer the spectacle continued, the more ominous it became. The last shreds of Santal power in the village were being auctioned off in the mad scramble. The last ties to their inheritance in the Santal disom, the legal ownership and control of the land, were about to be severed. The election of the non-Santal headman would not only destroy the system of inherited responsibility which was the core of Santal polity, but would place in the hands of their exploiters the village records, the tokens of their original and continuing ownership of the land. They feared that this could only mean dispossession by one false means or other. Furthermore, the appointment of a non-Santal to the headmanship would sever the line of communication which had continued for a century between the Santal village and the S.D.O.; no longer would the Santal headman have the right to enter the presence of the protective governmental representative with his payment of revenue and his periodical reports on the conditions of the village.

Those were dark and discouraged moments of recrimination in the Santal community. The elders, without exception, placed the

blame for the crisis upon the resigning headman, Ganga. The non-Christian Santals did not hesitate to blame the bankruptcy of his headmanship on his Christian loyalties and his failure to commit himself to the traditions of his ancestors. All Santals called him a fool for trying to make himself a match for the non-Santals whose resources exceeded his own. The Santal community did not respect Ganga's personal commercial speculations. They loathed his drunkenness.

The Santals of Dangrajolha anticipated with dread the day of the S.D.O.'s public hearing and the change to a non-Santal authority over the village. It would mean the final dissolution of the encapsulating protection they had achieved through the sacrifices of the Rebellion and the century thereafter.

Meanwhile the S.D.O. had been examining the situation in all of its legal and pragmatic aspects. He had also weighed the various political implications of any decision he might make.

Pragmatically, it was obvious that the resigned headman, Ganga, could not be returned to office; his incompetence had been demonstrated. If the traditional Santal pattern of primogeniture were to be followed two possibilities presented themselves. The younger brother of the resigned headman, the candidate Hotan, could be placed in office. But there was a son and a direct heir of Ganga, the thirteen-year old boy, Sukal, who had both traditional and jural claims to the office. Santal tradition would call for a decision by the village council (the council of Santal heads of households; not any interethnic body). Santal traditions offered precedents for

appointing either Hotan or Sukal. The boy, Sukal, could be passed over because of the reputation of his father and the appointment given to the parallel line of Hotan who was a son of the deceased headman; or the headmanship might be retained for the boy, Sukal, with the administrative responsibilities given temporarily to a responsible adult until such time as the heir was competent to take the duties into his own hands. The S.D.O. was well informed of these possibilities within the patterns of Santal tradition.

The S.D.O. learned that the village of Dangrajolha was still, de jure a Santal village, though it had become de facto so heterogeneous a village that the Santal community had become numerically a minority and politically weak in presence of the Sha caste of the Hindu community.

In addition to pragmatic and legal aspects of the case, the S.D.O. had political considerations to weigh. As a governmental administrator in a fairly typical modern democracy, he could not afford to ignore the political interests from the larger prospective. At the State level, non-Santal interests could exert pressures on a local administrator in such a case as the appointment of a headman in a de jure Santal village.

An elected minister of the State government has considerable influence in determining promotion policy in the administrative bureaucracy, and under political pressure from the electorate the future career of a Sub-Divisional Officer could be impeded by the personal intervention of such an elected official. In spite of the many safeguards which attempt to ensure the independence of civil

servants in the performance of their duties, the actual political situation in Bihar at the time this case was under consideration was one which did not always favor the special regulations for the adi basis; these were largely commercial interests which would gain by the removal of Santals from appointed offices. The S.D.O. was obviously aware of the total political arena.

Fortunately, there have remained interests supporting the "scheduled tribes" in their efforts to retain their cultural and political identity. The political leaders of the adi basis in Bihar have, from time to time, formed more or less effective political organizations which have maintained the rights of the minorities. This has most effectively come to pass through judicious coalitions. Several individuals from among the adi basis who have gained office in the governmental bureaucracy at the State and National levels have learned a great deal about the manipulation of the bureaucratic regulations. These individuals have been able, on numerous occasions, to prevent the misuse of governmental measures which could weaken the position of all adi basis.

Finally, there are still to be found a large number of active individuals who continue to follow the leadership of the well-remembered nationalist leaders, Gandhi and Nehru, whose defense of the adi basis has become a part of India's national tradition. The incorporation of this concern for the Santals and other "scheduled tribes" in the provisions of the constitution remains the foundations for all legal defense of the rights of these people. The S.D.O. prepared himself for the public hearing and the appointment of a

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new headman for Dangrajolha conscious of these political considerations.

On the day of public decision--the day designated for the S.D.O.'s hearing at the Anchal headquarters--an unusually large number of villagers from Dangrajolha appeared. The proceedings were opened with an announcement by a court officer stating the purpose of the hearing. Then the S.D.O. read a brief statement which he had drawn up with obvious care. He first described the provisions of the legal code pertaining to the appointment of village headmen in the Santal Parganas district. The substance of the provisions were as follows:

In the event that a village recorded as a Santal village is left without a headman who is able to perform the duties of his office, the appropriate governmental official shall appoint, if living, the legal heir of the patriline, who shall be determined as next in line for the office.

The S.D.O. then went on to show that, having received the resignation of the headman, Ganga, he recognized that there was now no person authorized to perform the duties of the village headman in Dangrajolha, and that it was necessary to make a suitable appointment. According to the provisions of the legal code, he had determined that there was, in fact, a legal heir to the office, who, according to the law, should be appointed as official pradhan or mustagir of Dangrajolha.

He then went on to declare that Sukal, the son of Ganga, the former headman, was appointed to the office. However, because the appointee, Sukal, son of Ganga, was of minor age he should be represented and advised by his father's brother, Hotan, until Sukal becomes 21 years of age in May of 1978. At that time Sukal should

appear before the S.D.O. at the Sub-Divisional headquarters to receive his full appointment without restriction to perform on his own the regular duties designated by the State as the one legal and true mustagir of Dangrajolha.

The public appointment of Sukal, an unknown boy, to the office of village headman came as an obvious surprise to everyone. To the Santals it was an almost unbelievable deliverance. The traditions of the Santals had been upheld by the jural rules of the government exercised by the S.D.O. The Santal community was given new hope for survival as a political force. The decision saved them from almost complete cultural extinction in Dangrajolha, for the transfer of records of village lands into the hands of non-Santals, particularly of the sort of non-Santal leader represented by the mahajan, would have meant their rapid assimilation into the non-Santal village life as an untouchable and subordinate caste group (more likely an outcaste group).

The S.D.O.'s decision, made without giving any opportunity to the contending parties in the political campaign to express themselves or test their strength, came as a shocking disappointment to the factions which had assumed that the role of the Santal headman had been extinguished in Dangrajolha. The gains they had hoped to seize with their rise to power were snatched from them. The investments they had made in the political competition were rendered valueless. The mahajan from the Sha community was particularly enraged; he had assumed that the appointment was safely in his hands.



The S.D.O. allowed no petitions for reconsideration. He emphasized that his decision was based upon irreversible legal grounds; Dangrajolha was indisputably to be legally defined as a Santal village, and the appointment he had made was not contestable.

Hotan, the newly appointed temporary village pradhan, assumed his responsibilities at once, gathering new advisers about him in addition to the continuing association with the surrogate headman, Harma. The prospects for the Santals of Dangrajolha were thus brightening when this study came to its completion.

A Traditional Headman in Political Alliance

The assimilative pressures which encircle such villages as Manjhipur have generated a challenge to the political structures of Santal society; the Panchayat system is now in direct competition, on the political level, with Santal traditions. The Panchayat council and its chairman, the sarpanch, offer a complete substitute for the Santal headman and the village council of household heads. The Panchayat has, in many respects, replaced the upper structures of the Santal traditional system; it now seems to await the weakening of the village political structure in order to replace it.

However, as seen in the preceding case study, the Santal village headman is still protected by encapsulating regulations of the government. His village council continues to maintain its traditional functions. The duties of the village pradhan, with its responsibilities for keeping the peace in the village as well as collecting the revenues, have not been modified. At the time

of this study there is no expectation of change in the government's policy respecting them.

Nevertheless, the panchayat system provides a complete substitute for the traditional system should it be required. It has all mediatorial powers of the village authorities, and several advantages not granted to the village system. For instance, it has powers to collect taxes for its own programs and projects; while the village headman and other elders have tax-free land providing their own emoluments, the Panchayat can collect from landowners small amounts for the enlargement of its own services to the village communities. The Panchayat is also given a competitive advantage by the fact that it forms the channel through which governmental services and rural improvement programs can be delivered to the village.

As long as the village headman and his council retain the loyalty of their householders, it may be expected that within the sphere of the powers granted to them, they will continue to maintain their authority and leadership. Should the traditional system falter, as it seems to have done in Dangrajolha, the Panchayat system has the potential to take its place. At any time a single villager or a consortium of families may be expected to turn to the Panchayat council, if they find that the traditional village system does not meet their needs.

In 1958 the Panchayat was organized in the Manjhipur-Dangrajolha area. (However, these two villages are not included in the same Panchayat raj.) Since each Panchayat raj is expected to have jurisdiction over about 1000 or more persons, and since

Manjhipur has a population of less than 300, the adjacent villages of Lakhanpur, Rampur and Sonapur were joined with Manjhipur to form a single jurisdiction, or Panchayat raj. Of the four villages, three were homogeneously Santal villages; Sonapur included a section of Bengali Muslims, but this represented only a minority group in the one village. Consequently, the Panchayat raj centered on Manjhipur was predominantly Santal and could be expected to remain in the control of the Santals.

But the Panchayat raj was not organized in the manner of the traditional pargana; it did not represent an upward delegation of the leading elders of the village system. It was organized on principles quite alien to the traditional system. The council of the jurisdiction, the Panchayat itself, has a specified and limited membership, whereas the meetings of the pargana were open to all householders in the area, and, under necessity, every householder could have a voice in its councils (though this was seldom the practice). The members of the Panchayat are elected in an open, competitive election, whereas the members of the pargana assembly held their positions by hereditary right. Moreover, in electing candidates to the Panchayat the electorate includes all individuals over 21 years of age, whether male or female, head of household or subordinates in the household. The elective system also tends to attract innovative, aggressive, ambitious individuals very different in purpose and capacity from the individuals who rose to positions of influence in the traditional political system.

It may be expected that the leaders of the traditional system, like good conservatives, would ignore the innovative system and treat it as though it did not exist. Instead, their essentially pragmatic approach to political problems (at least in Manjhipur) has led them to make a cautious alliance with the system and attempt to mold it and use it for traditional ends.

During a recent panchayat election, the headman of Manjhipur played a role which is best described as the formation of an alliance. It consisted of his effective support for a candidate whose commitment to traditional Santal society was clear but who also possessed the pragmatic capabilities to serve the purposes of his Santal brethren with dignity and success. It was as though the headman wanted to put in office a Panchayat member (a Pancha) who would be likely to preserve the hapramko ak' duster in the modern system, giving him a pseudo-adoptive right to authority among the villagers where he did not have a hereditary right, and requiring him to be both a man of the modern world and the traditional world.

Sanathan, the candidate for the Panchayat, was born in the village of Lakhanpur. His father was a successful cultivator who sent his son to the mission school in Paurapur. Sanathan completed the full eleven classes with a creditable academic record and an outstanding reputation as a soccer player. He was then selected to continue his education in a medical training center where he learned the necessary skills to become a laboratory technician. He returned to the mission hospital in Hartjuri for employment. The hospital was only eight miles from Sanathan's natal village where he

reestablished ties with his village folk. Instead of spending his free days with townfolk at the Anchal headquarters he rode his bicycle home to Lakhanpur to enjoy the presence of his gharonj and the people of his own village.

Sanathan's cash salary made him a welcome visitor, for he was generous to his entire family and his friends. Somehow he seemed to avoid ostentation. His education was superior to that of his village folk, but this did not seem to separate him from them. He was depended upon as one who could read or write as the occasion demanded. He gained the confidence of the elders and the admiration of the youth.

When the elections to the Panchayat were announced, Sanathan decided to be a candidate. He was encouraged by his village friends, and his gharonj. One of his peers in Lakhanpur was the eldest son of the headman of that village, an age-mate with whom he had played socker on the village team whenever they had opportunity to challenge a neighboring team. Sanathan decided that the political activity would not conflict with his duties as a technician at the hospital. His employers did not object to the decision because he remained faithful to his wage earning occupation.

The election campaign lasted for about two months. The campaign methods employed by Sanathan were consonant with his Santal norms. He first elicited the support of age-mates and kinsmen of his natal village. He then visited the headman of each of the four villages in the Panchayat raj in the company of a few men from Lakhanpur, including the headman's son. With each headman he spent

some hours quietly explaining the nature of the new system. He pointed out that the new organization would bring the four villages together in a certain type of cooperating unity which would assist in gaining the assistance of the Block Development projects. He responded to their questions, some repeatedly asked and never fully answered, and tried to give the traditional stalwarts a sense of assurance where they felt threatened. He proved to be a successful interpreter of the new system to those who gave early signs of complete distrust.

The headman of Manjhipur decided to give open support to young Sanathan. He invited the candidate to his village for a traditional evening of festivities. Sanathan arrived with a small group of supporters; their arrival was without fanfare. He came walking beside his bicycle with a pot of hāndi tied on the back fender. He presented the small pot of hāndi to his host in the presence of several village householders with the appropriate dobok' johar.

There was singing and dancing as the villagers sat around drinking hāndi and discussing the new political reality. As the festivities drew to a close, the headman of Manjhipur publicly announced that he had invited Sanathan, with his father and brothers from Lakhanpur, not only as personal guests but also for hearing from an educated member of the hor' hopon what the Panchayat organization would and would not do for the village. He then invited Sanathan to explain to the guests why he was seeking a position on

the Panchayat council although he had a well-paid position at the mission hospital in the Anchal headquarters town.

Notably, in introducing the young candidate, the headman of Manjhipur referred to him as manotan juan boeha (respected younger brother). The terminology announced publicly the kinship-like tie which existed between the traditional headman and the potential young leader and explicitly enunciated the fact that the headman had confidence in this younger man who had not misused his modern education. The term "brother" has often been lightly used in the western world, but in the Santal village, when used by the headman in the manner employed, it refers to an alliance of more than ordinary confidence.

Sanathan responded to the headman's endorsement with a brief speech. It was not the type of oration that has come to be expected from intent political candidates. The young man sat humbly among the people in the courtyard of the headman and spoke in casual tones. After paying his respects to the headman, he explained his candidature. The following notes are taken from a reconstruction of the speech reported by a number of people who were present on the occasion:

The new system is good. It will give us adi basis a voice beyond our village. The new plan will give us a voice in government more equal to the Hindus. It will give us representation beyond our village as we are represented within our own villages.

I want to be elected as a member of the Panchayat because I want to help other young men. My village brothers are all good men, but many of them are too poor. We can improve our conditions. We can learn of new government plans which will

help us and give us a better chance. Our sons can have a better chance in life than our father have had.

I know the thoughts of my village brothers and those of the big men (men in government) outside the village. I know the ideas of the Muslims who are also a minority in this region. I can speak Hindi, the language of the big men (in government) in Bhabalpur and in Patna (the State capital). I can also speak the white man's language. I am a son of my village and I respect the ways of our fathers, but I can stand among others who are outside of our village, wearing the same shoes they wear, wearing the same white shirt they wear while I speak as a hor hopon in their language.

The support of the headman of Manjhipur assured the candidate of all but a handful of Manjhipur voters, old and young, household heads and lesser adults. With this support Sanathan won a seat in the Panchayat.

Not all candidates to the Panchayat were in alliance with the headman of Manjhipur, or necessarily in alliance with other headmen. For instance, the richest man in Manjhipur, whose efforts to unseat the village headman have been described above, was actually in open conflict with the headman. This man, Manot Tudu, was able to win enough votes in the other three villages of the Panchayat raj to be elected to a seat on the Panchayat council. A Muslim from Sonapur was also elected. These cases indicate that the headman of Manjhipur, in this election, did not influence the entire electorate, or ensure the defeat of his opponents.

However, it does seem apparent that in the future the support of the traditional village leadership will continue to influence both the election of candidates and the work of the Panchayat. By adjustment to the Panchayat system and by exercising their influence upon the majority of voters, the village headmen in the Manjhipur

area have every hope of holding much of their traditional authority, if not actually enhancing it. It is possible that through judicious alliances between the several headmen and by agreement among them upon the candidates to be supported, the strength of the headmanship will continue secure. These expectations depend upon the ability of the Santal society to continue its traditional enculturation of the young and the preparation of political candidates for the Panchayat system with the characteristics of the young man, Sanathan.

Already the alliance between the village headman of Manjhipur and the young Pancha, Sanathan, has proved productive. It provided a basis which has led to the election of Sanathan as Sarpanch after the most recent elections. The young Sarpanch represents the Panchayat at conferences at the Anchal level, where representatives from other Panchayats gather, including many from non-Santal constituencies.

In spite of the positive results of this alliance, as judged from the traditional villagers point of view, it must be recognized that the system of alliances has none of the stability of the traditional Santal system with its basis on the hereditary principle. If traditional norms lose their effectiveness the appeal of political candidates to familistic and individualistic interests can destroy the collective norms of Santal political life. Certainly, any modification by the encapsulating governmental powers, in the rights and powers of the village headman, will swing the balance of power in the Manjhipur area in favor of the Panchayat system.

This example of alliance between the Manjhipur headman and Sanathan demonstrates two manifest characteristics of Santal society today. First, the people will follow an alert and informed headman who exerts his leadership. Second, tradition oriented Santal society does adapt to change while retaining the time-tested hapramko ak' dustur.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROLE OF THE SANTAL VILLAGE HEADMAN

In this chapter an orderly and systematic description of the actual role of the headman is attempted. It is necessary to clarify and make use of a number of terms which are "role-descriptive"; while they do not indicate specific actions or activities, they refer to distinguishable classes of behavior involved in the headman's complex role. It also seems appropriate to include some reference to certain aspects of the headman's role and his social milieu which require further research.

No attempt is made to form separate sections entitled "Theory" or "Suggestions for further research". Instead, explanations of the role-descriptive terms and their previous use in the literature of Anthropology and other social sciences accompany the use of the terms in the systematic development of the description. Some of these terms are taken from general English usage which seems suitable here. These terms may not have been put to use by others in the manner they are employed here. The suggestions for further research are also made at the points in the description where their need is most clearly apparent. The suggestions for further research may be

summarized as including the economic life of the Santals and the place of the headman in economic affairs, the religious practices of the Santals in which the headman plays a most prominent role, and the wholly neglected subject of socialization which is fundamental to the understanding of the relationship between personality and social organization in the Santal society.

The description of the actual role of the Santal village headman is organized under four major headings: The Ascription of The Role, The Headman and the Government, The Headman and Other Administrative Elders, and The Headman and The People. No section has been written to describe or analyze relations between the headman and the non-Santal people, partly because one aspect of this subject has been dealt with in the last section and partly because the relations between the Santals and non-Santals are dominated by economic factors, details of which have been omitted in this study.

The Ascription of The Role focuses on the problems arising from failures of a family to produce heirs, failures of candidates to meet the criteria of a suitable headman, and the potential place of modern education in preparing the heir for his inherited position.

The Headman and The Government focuses on the actual relations observed between the hereditary leader of the ato (Santal village) and the non-Santal state. This material is organized around five themes: (1) Communication between the headman and government, which is different from the type of communication Bailey describes in the role of the "broker" or "fixer"; (2) The power derived from the office of pradhan, which Swartz refers to as "unqualified 'power'"; (3) The

threat of coercive power which may be said to have a "prompting effect"; (4) Independence obtained from governmental authority through the use of powers granted by the government; and (5) Alliance formation necessitated by the development of rural democracy in the form of the Panchayat system.

The Headman and Other Administrative Elders deals with the relationships between the traditional village elders which are both coordinate and superordinate-subordinate. The latter appear in the forms of delegation of power by the headman and the direct assistance given to the headman.

The Headman and The People focuses on the relations between the headman and the people of his village community (as distinct from the non-Santal people who present special problems in villages such as Dangrajolha). This material is organized around five major themes: (1) Protecting collective rights, (2) Ensuring the performance of collective duties, (3) Protecting the rights of individuals, (4) Containing deviance, and (5) Ensuring commitment to Santal community and culture. Collective rights are seen as those which ensure public benefits and those which preserve the authority of the headman, an essential factor in the maintenance of the collectivity. The authority of the headman resides mainly in his patriarchal dignity, his personal dignity and his government office, terms which run closely parallel with Weber's "traditional", "charismatic" and "rational" authority. The ensuring of the performance of collective duties involves the headman in some ritual duties, not a developed part of this study, and in inter-village

relationships which call for sodidarity in support of the village headman. Protecting the rights of individuals, the headman actively supports individual choices at various junctures of village life. The reference to containing deviance demonstrates that Santal society does not use exile, incarceration or grievous punishment in dealing with those who disturb the unity of the village; even ostracism seems to be of a mild type of the Santal community. Instead of these sanctions, intimate communication and propinquity function to restore conformity in most efforts to deal with deviance. Ensuring the performance of individual expectations is dealt with as a problem in personal commitment to Santal community and Santal culture. This personal commitment is diminished by distractions exerted by culture contacts and enhanced by some form of isolation; it is found where social propinquity is preserved and certain forms of exemplary reinforcement are exerted.

In this chapter the attempt is made not to deal with the description of the role of the headman wholly in abstractions. Wherever a role-descriptive term is used there is an attempt to give an example from the enactments of the previous chapter. Wherever possible, the generalizations of the description are based on empirical observations. It is obvious that this study has not been based upon a wide or random sample of Santal behavior; it has been confined to two villages. Therefore all of the generalizations in this chapter must be held as tentative; this study should be widely replicated. However, the study of the limited subject has been accompanied by extended, less intensive, observation in a much

larger area in which I have lived and worked for seven years, and the generalizations have been presented with this background.

The Ascription of The Role

The headman acquires his role by inheritance; where possible the principle of patrilineal primogeniture governs the inheritance. It will be seen from the first of the enactments of the previous chapter that patrilineal primogeniture is not always possible; in a society of high mortality rates, especially among children, the loss of direct heirs is an exigency for which provision is made. Santal society gives emphasis to the bõs, or known patrilineal kinsmen, as a source of candidates for the inheritance of property and office. The bõs of the village headman becomes as extended as necessary to provide a suitable heir. Consciousness of kinship in the male line may be expanded to include persons as distantly related as third cousins where the male line fails in the more proximate branches of the family.

Because the headman inherits his "headmanship" he has an ascribed status as opposed to an achieved status (Linton 1936:115). It is common usage in the Social Sciences to refer to status and role as inextricably linked together, but seldom do we find a reference of a role as ascribed. However, in Linton's original discussion of status and role he says:

Ascribed statuses are those which are assigned to individuals without reference to their innate differences or abilities. They can be predicted and trained for from the moment of birth (Ibid.).

The expression, "trained for", implies that role performance is expected of an individual in a particular status. Therefore, ascription to a status must surely mean ascription to the role required of an individual holding the status. Since human behavior is not biologically inherited, ascription of an individual to a particular role must involve the training of the person for the role, whether consciously or unconsciously. The feasibility of the principle of inheritance of office may be said to depend on the effectiveness of the institutions of training in a given society.

There has not been an attempt in this study to trace in detail the patterned activities involved in the training of those who inherit the headmanship. It has been observed that Santal society trains its children for adult participation in their society through direct, continuous and active association with the parental generation. Like most other pre-industrial societies, the Santals have no specialized or formal institutions of training. That the families of the Santal headman are not large can be seen from the genealogical tables Appendix E, page 303. Therefore, the number of children requiring training at any one time is small, so that the investment of time and effort in training does not put any unsupportable strain on any one generation.

To deal with the problem which presents itself when the heir to headmanship does not meet the criteria set for the position by Santal tradition, Santal society has developed what may be labeled an "amendatory device". This device is seen in the powers of the village council to grant or withhold confirmation of

individuals who inherit office. Where the eldest son of a headman is patently unable to perform the duties of the office, the village council may elect a younger son, an uncle, a cousin, or some other male of the headman's bõs in his stead.

Modern society has provided the villagers another instrumentality by which Santal society may be sure that the hereditary principle will provide a suitable headman. Modern educational institutions are now available to assist in training the future headman, beginning at a fairly young age. The headman of Manjhipur attended a small government primary school in a neighboring village for five years. The resigning headman of Dangrajolha attended a mission operated school on the edge of his father's courtyard for three years followed by five years of formal education in a mission boarding school. Each of these men were kept close to village life at the insistence of their fathers. Ganga, of Dangrajolha was brought home from the boarding school by his father in spite of his desire to continue his formal education. The surrogate headman, Harma, made it a matter of pride that he eschewed the sign of formal education; the ability to read and write. However, the newly appointed "acting headman" of Dangrajolha has completed high school matriculation which may improve his qualifications for office (at least for those duties required of the pradhan of heterogeneous Dangrajolha where he must now perform as headman). The somewhat unusual Sarpanch, Sanathan, described in the final narrative of the previous chapter (pp 220-229), demonstrates that formal education in a modern school can be effectively harmonized with loyalty to the

hoꝝ hopon and their culture, and is therefore potentially suitable for the training of village headmen. The effect of formal education upon the commitment and competence of the Santal headman offers an area for research of great importance, an area of study which is only introduced through this study.

The Headman and The Government

In proceeding to a description of the activities of the headman it is appropriate to begin with a discussion of his relationships with the government. After all, historically it is because of the initiative of government (in response to the Santal rebellion) that Santal headmanship has retained its most evident political characteristics.

The structural aspects of the headman's role in government have already been described in Chapter IV. The headman is appointed as the pradhan or mustagir of the village by the Sub-Divisional Officer (S.D.O.), with due regard to matters of inheritance and confirmation by the village council. As pradhan, the headman is required to collect land taxes in his village, a responsibility that gives him control of access to the land; without his sanction no individual may cultivate a parcel of land. The headman must also perform certain duties in maintaining peace in his jurisdiction. He is expected at all times to serve as the local representative of the administration of the Sub-Divisional authority. As such, he has access directly to the S.D.O. if need arises.

In examining the processes involved in the headman's relations with the government, it is important to note the communication which takes place between the headman and the S.D.O. Quite apart from the regular formal reports expected from the headman, informal communication takes place throughout the year, whether through subordinate officers, or the administration at its headquarters, or in direct face-to-face interaction. For instance, in the case of the 1920 deviation of Sobhan Tudu (pp 170-178), the decision of the pargana assembly that Sobhan should move to Manjhipur and become a regular resident householder was communicated to the S.D.O. by the headman of Manjhipur. The failure of this process of communication to take place in the case of the controversy over the chowkidar's position is not fully explained (pp 190-197), but it may well have been due to the fact that Danu had friends in the administrative bureaucracy who were able to effectively intercept communication.

Bailey has described the role of the village "broker" or "fixer" who serves as a link between the village people of the rural area and the offices of the State and National government in the town headquarters. It may be asked if the Santal headman performs an identical role. In response, it must be pointed out that the government has undertaken a moral commitment to the encapsulated Santal society. The connection between the S.D.O. and the village headman is not purely a bureaucratic relationship subject to expedient manipulation; the S.D.O. is responsible for the welfare and the continuity of Santal society and the village headman is

responsible for keeping him informed of conditions among the Santals. On the other hand, in the case of Danu, the rejected chowkidar, it is perfectly possible that Danu worked through "brokers" and "fixers", or himself acted as a "fixer", to disorder the relations between the government and the headman by tampering with the normative communication system (Bailey 1969:41). The fact that the headman has not been instructed by the S.D.O. to ensure the position of Danu as village chowkidar certainly indicates that the headman has in no way jeopardized his position or their relationship.

Effective communication has, on occasion, led to what may be labeled parallel action by village and governmental authorities. Such parallel action took place several years ago when the S.D.O., at the hearing in which he granted the war veteran his title to the 28 acres in Manjhipur (pp 170-178), concluded his findings by informally, but authoritatively, advising the land-holder to settle down and make his residence in the village of his land-holding; this advise paralleled the directives of the pargana assembly and the wishes of the village council and headman of Manjhipur. According to additional sources not cited herein, parallel actions of this sort take place with regularity.

The village headman's relations with government often result in the generation of power for the headman. Swartz has made a useful distinction of types of power in the Introduction of Local-level Politics:

When the performance of a role is supported by legitimacy, the ability of the actor in the role to enforce binding

decisions on those supporting him is called 'consensual power', as opposed to 'power' as an unqualified term applying to the same ability but based on coercion (Swartz 1968:31).

The village headman conducts most of his business among his fellow villagers using "consensual power", but because of his relationship with government, he can at any moment (within the framework of governmental regulations) resort to police intervention. The police represent coercion, and therefore provide the headman the vehicle to employ "unqualified" power. An example of this is found in the "rape case" (pp 136-149) in the previous chapter. The headman did not himself call the police, but he did not attempt to prevent the aggrieved father of the young woman from doing so. The police arrived and threatened to incarcerate the three young men of the village who had refused to accede to the judgment of the village council pronounced by the headman. There was an immediate payment of fines far higher than those set by the headman. The final result of the police intervention was the enhancement of the authority of the headman.

The mere threat of coercive power also adds to the effectiveness of the headman's decisions in the village. He is authorized by government to use police powers to deal with delinquency in the payment of land taxes. The headman has powers to call the police in case of a disturbance of the peace in the village. When the headman presents a decision as one that is required by governmental regulations, its acceptance by the villagers is not only related to the traditional authority of the office, but may be prompted by the recognition that the regulations can be enforced by the

appropriate extra-village police power. This reenforcing or "prompting" effect can be seen as one factor in the acceptance of the headman's adjudication of the bamboo case (pp 149-155): the headman declared in effect that the "map said" that the bamboos belonged in the common property of the village, there was little delay in accepting the judgment, for the "map" represented governmental regulations in the minds of most villagers.

On the other hand, the case of the chowkidar appointment demonstrates that the village headman can, on occasion, use the powers granted him by government to achieve a degree of independence from government (pp 190-197). The S.D.O. appointed Danu to the office of chowkidar, contrary to the wishes of both the headman and the village council. But the headman was able to neutralize the decision of the S.D.O. on the basis of a governmental regulation which directs that a man cannot enter upon a parcel of land (at least in the first instance) without the specific permission and formal recognition of his rights by the village headman. The headman of Manjhipur refused to grant Danu the right to cultivate the tax-free lands reserved as an emolument for the chowkidar, which meant that the S.D.O.'s decision could not be brought into effect. The alert headman can, in a number of similar ways, use the powers granted by government to achieve a considerable degree of local independence from the governmental authorities outside his village.

Finally, the relations between the headman and government have in recent years developed a new complexity with the creation of the Panchayat system of rural democracy. The Panchayat system

must be regarded as an aspect of government though its connection with the more familiar office of the S.D.O. is rather indirect; it is organized under governmental aegis and certain powers are delegated to it by government. Its elected leadership, however, operates independently of the administrative officers of the subdivision, and therefore the headman must establish a new set of relationships when dealing with it. He must find some way of identifying his authority with that of the Panchayat. No Santal headman can afford to completely ignore the Panchayat system. The headman of Manjhipur has formed a public alliance with the young pancha who has now become a Sarpanch (p 228). Alliance formation with elected office holders, who remain in the local area, is a new process in the political life of the Santal headmen. It seems possible that through such alliance formation the village headman of the future will continue to maintain his authority and leadership in his community. The converse appears equally evident.

The Headman and Other Administrative Elders

In the interaction between the Santal headman and the other traditional village elders, at least three types of relationships are discernible. In some activities they operate coordinately, each performing traditional duties without direction from the headman and even without consultation among themselves, but without conflict or competition because the traditional patterns form a consonance of roles producing coordination. At other times, the administrative elders perform delegated duties, taking the place of the headman and

carrying some of his authority in specific instances. On still other occasions, their duties require that they attend the headman and give him direct assistance.

To say that the element of competition does not enter into the relationships between the traditional elders would be naive. It is reported, for instance, that some years ago the paranic' of Manjhipur--the headman's first assistant responsible for land and revenue affairs--was dismissed from office by the headman and village council because of his personal corruption of land claims. This "corruption" proved to be a threat to both the headman and the village council which, if allowed to continue unchecked, would have brought governmental charges of incompetence against the headman. This event may be classified as an instance of competition. Neither the headman nor the village council have elected to appoint a replacement for the displaced paranic'. The headman has been free to handle the important duties of the paranic' without assistance. The powers and the possibility of incompetent use of power cannot be tolerated in the Santal village where the headman is expected to maintain the proper use of his mandate.

It will be seen that the delegation of powers and the necessary assistance under defined circumstances may be classified together as forms of superordination-subordination. For present purposes, the delegation of powers and the use of assistance are dealt with specifically; it seems unnecessary to discuss other forms of superordination-subordination.

The coordinate performance of roles by the administrative elders is most often found where the jog mañjhi and naeke carry out their traditional responsibilities. The naeke's duties as village priest are well defined by tradition, and are generally carried on independently of the headman or the other administrative elders. Indeed, his duties are such that he frequently requires the assistance of his kudam naeke, or assistant village priest. The jog mañjhi, who is in charge of moral conduct in the village, has much authority and often initiates activities in his sphere of responsibilities. Even where his role intersects with that of the headman, so that he works with the same people on the same problem, he frequently acts with a great deal of independence.

The coordinate nature of interaction between the headman and the other administrative elders is preserved by the circumstance that each office is acquired by inheritance; each role is thus "ascribed". The traditional village elders are not appointees of the headman; they hold office under their own rights. Consequently they do not generally constitute a "bureaucratic clique". They have little reason to form a "faction" of the type Bailey labels a "transactional group", based on the dependence of "hirelings" upon a supporting "patron" (Bailey 1969:37-44).

As for the delegation of powers, it is the jog mañjhi who most often is given duties to perform in which he acts under the powers of the headman. For instance, in the very serious and delicate discussions of the "rape case" conducted in low tones in the headman's courtyard (p 137), the consultations among the members

of the council were led by the jog mañjhi, while the headman remained a sort of neutral third party awaiting the development of a consensus. It appears that the leadership of the council for this occasion was delegated to the jog mañjhi. Later, of course, the jog mañjhi conveyed the opinion of the council to the headman who pronounced the decision of the council. In another case, that of the kasima marriage (pp 155-170), it was the jog mañjhi who represented the headman and the interests of his village by going to the village of the young man. There he served to make sure that the decision of the principals in the marriage, the young man and the young woman, was made freely and without external pressures. Later he made inquiries in the village regarding the potentials for durability in the proposed marriage. In these activities it would appear that the powers of the headman were delegated to the jog mañjhi, because he had a certain freedom of movement or ability to enter into situations where the greater dignity of the headman would not permit his involvement.

The religious duties of the headman are not included in this study, and therefore no examples of his delegation of duties to the village priest have been presented. But it should be noted that the headman must himself perform certain rituals and symbolic acts to which the naeke may be delegated. However, there are rituals which only the hereditary headman may perform, and not even the highly prestigious patriarch of Dangrajolha; the traditionalist Harma, as naeke of the village could take the headman's place.

Cases of direct assistance are frequently found in the relationships between the headman and the other administrative elders. The goḍet of Manjhipur, while acting as the traditional village messenger, also serves as chowkidar of the local area under the appointment of the S.D.O. His relationship with the headman is consequently also dual; as chowkidar he assists the pradhan, and as goḍet he assists the mañjhi. It cannot be said that in his role as goḍet he receives any "delegated powers" from his superior officer; he merely carries the word of the headman as he calls the members of the kulhi durup' to meet at the request of the headman. He may be said to have more powers of discretion as the chowkidar, or local constable, but even in this role his duty is only to apprehend a transgressor and bring him to the pradhan or take him to the police of the Anchal.

In summary, the role of the headman involves relationships with the traditional administrative elders which may be characterized as coordinate or superordinate-subordinate in the delegation of powers (especially where the subordinate has greater freedom of movement than the headman) and in the performance of direct assistance.

The Headman and The People

In examining the relationships between the headman and the Santal people under his jurisdiction, two phases of his role may be distinguished. In some of his activities he is concerned with the maintenance of the orderly traditional society. In others he clearly attempts to effect the containment of deviations from tradition.

This discussion of maintenance and containment does not begin with the assumption that continuity of tradition demands the arbitrary rejection of all change, or that the headman's role is regarded as a wholly "reactionary" one. The point of view of the early functionalist, Malinowski, who treats each culture as a "closed system", is wholly rejected in this consideration of the Santal headman's role (Lowie 1937:235). The focus here is upon the Santal community and its headman, not as a closed system, despite the measures of encapsulation taken to protect it from total assimilation, but as a social entity which is attempting to survive in a setting subjective to formidable influences to change. The headman of Manjhipur has had considerable success in preserving the continuous, although not undisturbed, interaction of Santals of his village to their mutual satisfaction; he overtly performs on the assumption that certain traditional patterns provide the most feasible means of assuring the continuity of Santal community life and Santal culture. This section is intended to show how the headman maintains the patterns of community interaction and how he attempts to prevent deviations resulting in disorder and chaos.

As a guardian of tradition, the headman must unceasingly act to ensure the continuity of the Santal community. The community may be seen to operate sometimes as a collective, a social integer. At other times it recognized the importance of each individual in the community.

The headman's role involves both the maintenance of the rights and duties of the village as a collective and the maintenance

of the rights of each individual. Interaction patterns in the village may be distinguished as based on these "rights" and upon "duties". Dealing with "rights", the headman may be considered as the protector of them. Dealing with "duties", he may be considered the one who must ensure their performance. Therefore the discussion which follows will be organized around five themes: (1) Protecting collective rights, (2) Ensuring the performance of collective duties, (3) Protecting the rights of individuals, (4) Containing deviance, and (5) Ensuring commitment to Santal community and culture.

1. Protecting collective rights.--In protecting the collective rights, or rights of the collective of his village, the Santal headman's role includes two types of enactments. He ensures public benefits, making sure that sources of benefit to the whole village shall be secured to the village and not utilized for private or for factional usage. He also preserves his own authority and thus the governance of the community as a whole.

The village collectivity has a material interest in the common properties which are included in the village area. In the discussion of the ecological aspects of the village community, these common properties have been described. They include grazing areas, water sources and woods (except those claimed by government). The failure of the Santal community to develop the economic potentials of these areas is a subject for a separate study. It appears that group interests in these areas and the ensuring of public benefits from these areas continue to occupy much time and energy from the headman.

In the enactments of the previous chapter, only one narrative deals with the headman's role in preserving the collective rights in the common property of the village. It is found in the case of the bamboo clump (pp 149-155). In this case the bamboo clump could be legally defined as private property, and the disposal of this property might well have involved simply the division of the bamboo growths between two families. However, the headman had been reared in a tradition in which forests surrounding the village were free and open to all village families, and the bamboo clump appeared to him as a resource of similar social utility. He therefore pushed the case rapidly to a traditional conclusion and was able actually to increase the common properties of the village by declaring, with the support of his council, that the bamboos were to be included in the common properties of the village. His success contrasts with cases reported from other parts of India where the pressure of population growth has made it extremely difficult for village authorities to preserve even the common grazing grounds against the gradual encroachment of private agricultural operations (Lewis 1965:93-95).

To the student of the political processes, the preservation of the headman's authority constitutes a most important aspect of his role as the protector of collective rights. In the Santal village the headman's authority is closely and clearly essential to the continuity and welfare of the collectivity of his Santal people; it is not generalizing beyond the facts to say that the headman protects the rights of his collectivity when he acts to preserve his own authority.

In the following paragraphs, examples are taken from Dangrajolha as well as from Manjhipur to show how the headman preserves his authority. In the case of Dangrajolha, it is noted that three fundamental sources of authority were lost by the headman who had to resign. In the case of Manjhipur, it is noted that the headman has actively taken steps to maintain his authority.

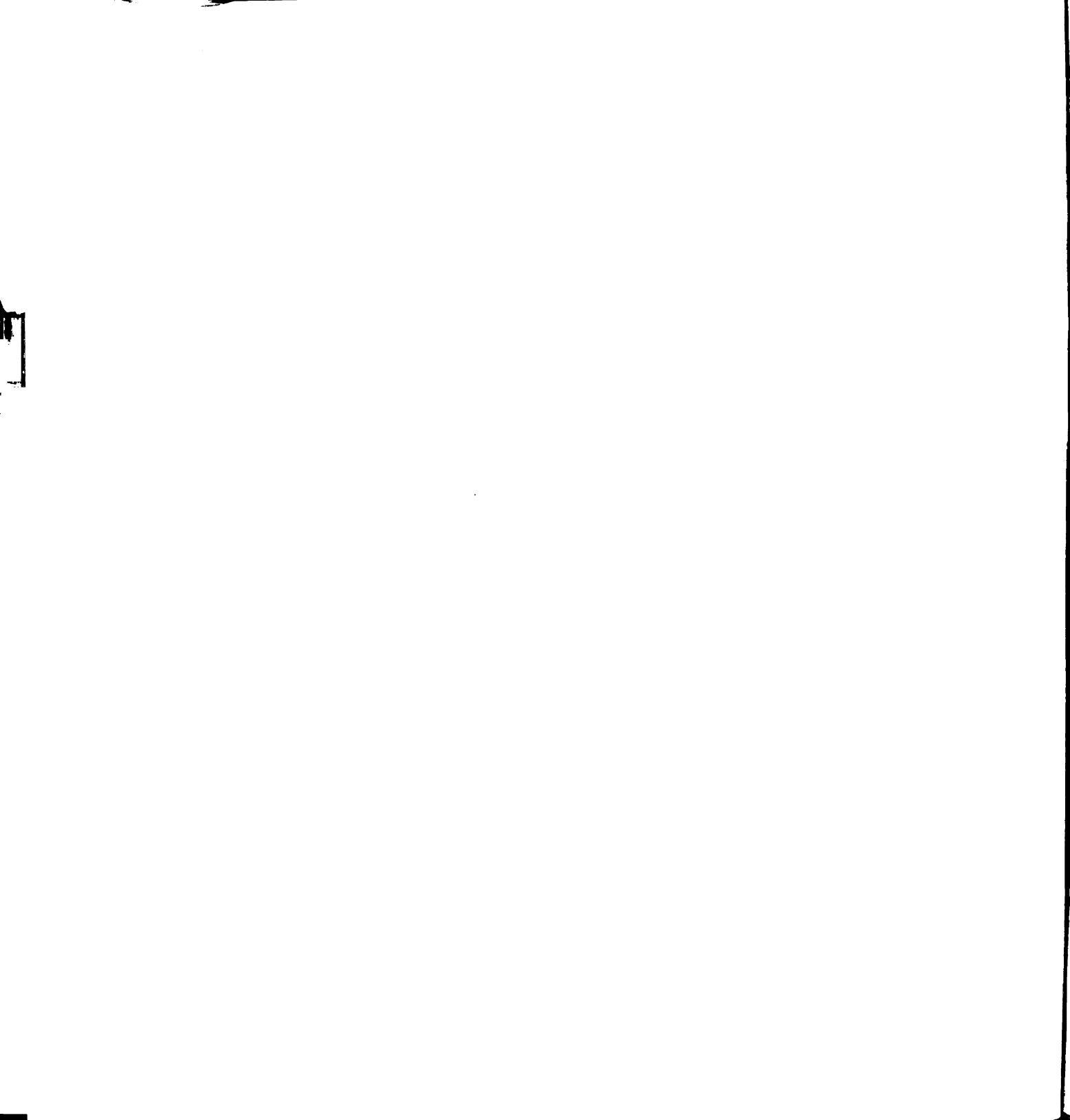
In Dangrajolha, the headman lost his position because he failed to maintain three sources of authority, his patriarchal dignity, his personal dignity, and his governmental office. These three sources of authority are roughly comparable with the three "pure types of legitimate authority" presented by Max Weber: "patriarchal dignity" compares closely with Weber's legitimacy based on "traditional grounds", "personal dignity" is similar to his legitimacy based on "charismatic grounds", and the authority coming to the headman from his governmental office compares with Weber's legitimacy based on "rational grounds" (Eisenstadt 1968:46-47).

As the direct heir of the founder of the village the village headman has acquired a patriarchal dignity--his manjhi haram--which not only gives him a senior kinsman relationship with every other member of the village (either a real or fictive relationship), but also gives each member in the village a similar relationship with every other member. The village headman's heritage makes him the father of every member of his village and makes every member close kin to every other member.

The failure of the Dangrajolha headman to maintain this manjhi haram and its resultant ties of kinship began, of course,

with the conversion of his grandfather to Christianity. The first fissures in his authority appeared when the convert refused to lead the essential religious rites of village life. The exact significance of the traditional ritual cycle, and the headman's role in them, must be left to a full examination of the religious aspects of the headman's role. It must be noted here that the failure of the convert to maintain his patriarchal dignity as manifested in the headman's performance in traditional rituals, contributed largely to the gradual loss of his authority. The failure of authority meant, for the people of DangrajoIha, a serious division in their collectivity; many vigorously opposed conversion to Christianity.

As a successful and independent cultivator and householder in the village, the headman achieves a personal dignity which not only gives him his status of primus inter pares among his fellow villagers, but gives every member of his village a sense of identity with him as a common man. When the headman knows well a large body of traditional lore and can provide pertinent and pointed precedents for his judgments, he proves his personal competence and shows himself the sort of man every Santal wishes to be. This seems to have been the key to the prestigious position of the "surrogate headman" of DangrajoIha, Harma Hembrom. When the headman uses his tax-free "headman's land" judiciously and manages his household with competence, his conduct and his achievements approach the Santal expectations of what a good Santal should be. The headman is expected to provide the living model which gives the Santal norms their effectiveness and continuance.



In the case of the headman of Dangrajolha who failed to provide such a model, we have an example of incompetent management. It appears that the resigned Dangrajolha headman first lost his commitment to traditional norms when he became too much impressed by the wealth and ostentation of the non-Santal merchants and money-lenders with whom he had to interact daily. But for the purposes of this section, it must be noted that he failed to be a "common man" in the Santal understanding of what a common man should be like, and as a result lost the following in his own community.

As the official pradhan of his village, the headman holds a bureaucratic appointment which operates to preserve the village collectivity. This may be explained by referring again to the Dangrajolha village situation. The Santals of that village have continued to maintain their ato sagai, their loyalty to the community of Santals, in spite of the conversion to Christianity of the headman and some of the other families,⁶ inspite of the invasion of non-Santal ethnic groups into their village, inspite of economic difficulties and the loss of some of their ritual support, partly because they continue to hold the ownership of lands in the village. Most of these lands are no longer under their own cultivation; many acres have been pawned away for debts. The ownership rights are still in the names of Santal families. By this they are assured, as long as a Santal headman holds possession of the village records. Deprived of this bureaucratic appointment as pradhan of the village, the headman would have to give up the records to non-Santal custodians. Experience provides much evidence to prove that when the village

records are put into the hands of men who do not protect the rights of the Santals, various devices are used to alienate those rights. The records can be changed "by perfectly legal means" which cannot be challenged without expensive litigation. In a real sense, the village records of landholdings in a Santal village constitute the "charter of Santal rights" in that village, and this charter can too easily be changed if it is removed from the custody of the Santal headman.

As pradhan, the headman also has formal access to the S.D.O. He has a recognized duty to present the needs of his people to the government officer most responsible for maintaining the encapsulation of Santal society. If a Santal village loses the right of the pradhan to formally represent his people, the relationship between government and the village becomes vague and tends to become ineffective.

When the headman of Dangrajolha resigned his post as pradhan, he placed in great peril the governmental instrument established to protect the Santal village from the aggressions of non-Santal interests. He had already lost most of the authority deriving from patriarchal and personal dignities. Only the continuing concern of the encapsulating government has given the Santals of Dangrajolha a basis for the recovery of their complete collectivity.

In Manjhipur, however, the headman has been able to maintain his authority. His patriarchal authority is well manifested in the belief but impressive ceremony performed with the newly married young woman before she left her natal village in the company of her husband (p 167). She had returned with her husband for their first

formal visit to her gharonj. At the close of that visit, she went to the headman with her father and expressed her formal farewell to him. She spoke words of praise concerning his dignity, and he responded with a personal blessing and the gift of a small pot of handi, symbolizing the desire for continuing peace between her village "kinsmen" and herself.

In the vigorous action taken by the headman of Manjhipur when dealing with the case of Sobhan Tudu (pp 170-178) and the land claimed by him through bansgari, there are several issues involved. The headman defied the governmental authority by pulling up the stakes put into the fields by the Amin of the Subdivisional court because it was an affront to his own responsibility, granted by government, to permit access to land (in the first instance). The villagers of Manjhipur assisted him in this. His act was, in effect, a declaration that his authority, as pradhan of the village, superceded all other authority over land control in the village. His appeal to the pargana assembly won the confirmation of authority granted to the headman by the Santal traditions, the basis of all authority. The pargana assembly did not, and could not, support him in a struggle against the Subdivisional courts in the matter of bansgari claims. But it could support him in a matter closely related to the welfare and rights of his collectivity. The pargana assembly did support him in bringing Sobhan under his headmanship. It brought the "rich" veteran into Manjhipur as a resident and a participant in the village unity. The headman understood what it would mean to have a valuable part of the village acreage controlled by an absentee

landlord; it would weaken the collectivity. In this case the headman is seen protecting his governmental position, his traditional dignity and his personal dignity and the authority deriving therefrom.

In the case of the bamboo clump (pp 149-156), it appears that the headman of Manjhipur appealed to immediate and expedient motives in obtaining the support of his council; he knew that every household in the village would welcome the right of access to the bamboo. It would appear that "transactional" ties were maneuvered in this case, rather than the moral ties which constitute a genuine collectivity. But it should be remembered that the headman was fully aware that the individual rights to the bamboo would have been dissipated very shortly by the men who claimed the bamboo clump, while the collective rights in the bamboo could be conserved to benefit the village over a very considerable period of time. Looking at the case from this point of view, the headman displays good management of his people and the resources.

That the headman of Manjhipur was able to make use of innovative situations for the preservation of his authority and the rights of the collectivity is demonstrated in his dealings with innovative situations which will be dealt with in the section discussing the containment of deviance.

2. Ensuring the performance of collective duties.--The headman is involved in making sure that collective duties are performed. The concept of ato saḡai, or village oneness, is cited most frequently when the village is called upon to participate in the ritual duties of tradition. These duties require the cooperation

of all households in the community. The failure of Christian Santals to participate in these rituals is anxiously regretted by the Santal traditionalists as a failure of the collective to perform its duties to ancestors and spirits as much as it is seen a failure of certain households to meet their obligations to the collective.

The duties of each village community in intervillage activities are important at this point. These duties of the collective were clear and well-accepted in the days of the pargana assembly. In those days, the headman had no difficulty in gaining the support of his leading householders when he went to the meetings of the assembly called by the parganic'. Today those traditional duties no longer need to be performed. Instead, we find the Panchayat system introducing new demands. The ability of the headman of Manjhipur to elicit a new sense of duty on the part of his householders in the elections for the Panchayat constitutes an important role for the future. If the collective acquires a sense of obligation to vote as a block in supporting a candidate for the Panchayat, the chances of continuity for Santal society will probably be much improved. The success of the young medical technician in effecting an alliance with the headman as he campaigned for membership in the Panchayat suggests that the initiative for collective action in the new rural democracy may come from other sources than the traditional headmanship. If, however, the next generation of headmen can be as well equipped for the synthesizing of tradition and modernity as Sanathan has proved to be (pp 220-229) it is possible that the collective duties of the village in the political realm of rural

democracy will be enforced by the leadership and authority of the village headman and not left to the self-appointed candidate.

3. Protecting the rights of individuals.--Both the leadership and the authority of the headman are often exerted to ensure the fulfillment of individual rights. In the enactments of the previous chapter one case which indicates the headman's role in ensuring individual rights is that of the kasima marriage. The rights of young adults to make their own mate selections are ensured and the rights of individuals to speak for themselves are honored.

The headman of the young man's village calls the two principals in the marriage to his courtyard and there, in the presence of elders of the village and the jog manjhi from the young woman's village, in a rather solemn moment, the young man's headman asks if he is prepared to set the date for the kasima (pp 155-170). This is the ritualized question calling for a public statement of intention. The answer must be given by the young man, and no one can speak for him. The young man's affirmative answer is followed by a period of silence, for the young woman must be given a similar opportunity to speak her personal intent. She is fully aware of the meaning of the silence: if she intends to marry the young man, she must remain silent; if not, she must ask to be taken to her home by the jog manjhi who represents her natal village. The young woman remains silent, and the preparations for the marriage proceed. Mate selection is a matter of individual choice for the adults of Santal society; the right to individual acceptance or rejection of a mate is protected by the headman.⁷

In the second example of the headman's role in protecting individual rights, three young men accused of rape are each given an opportunity to make their own defense. The formalities of their trial seem inadequate to protect all of their rights, and the imposition of fines is done before all interested parties have a chance to speak (p 141). As it will be seen in the discussion of judicial processes, the effort of the "trial" was not to adjudge the guilt of any one of the three individuals; it was to bring peace to the village. Nevertheless, the treatment of the individuals involved their right to speak for themselves in the session of the kulhi durup', under the protection of the headman's authority in the courtyard of the manjhi harām.

These examples cited present only two of the many junctures in Santal social interaction where the integrity of the individual is asserted and the rights of the individual protected by the headman. The question may be raised whether or not Santal tradition, as evident in the headman's role, maintains an equilibrium between individual rights and collective rights. This is an appropriate question for a study of political structures in Santal society. However, it seems more feasible to include it in studies of economic life and socialization processes than in this more specialized examination of the headman's role. In such a study of economic life it would be fruitful to ask why the Santals have been unable to act aggressively and with individual enterprise to meet the challenge of the highly aggressive entrepreneurs of the intrusive cultures. In such a study it would be appropriate to examine the

effect on Santal personality of the traditional emphasis upon collective interests. The lack of skill in commercial practice and the apparent "hedonism" of the Santal villager are best examined in the total economic configurations of Santal society, for the lack of such skill and the "love of pleasure" (Orans 1965: 7-9) of the Santals have cost them great losses in the economic aspects of their life. Therefore the problem of equilibrium between individual and collective emphasis is omitted here and may be taken up in another study when debt-peonage and the loss of usufruct rights on their land are made the major focus of inquiry.

4. Containing deviance.--The use of the terms deviance and containment as they appear below must be briefly explained. Deviance is variously used in studies of social problems or disorder; it always implies the existence of some body of norms demanding conformity. In this study, however, its meaning is restricted to specific concerns; it refers to the challenges raised against the authority of the headman by members of his community or by those who are otherwise subject to that authority. The term containment is adapted from general usage to refer to the special methods used by Santal society to deal with challenges of the headman's authority or other traditional requirements.

Santal communities deal with those who cause offense in a special way. They could use devices used elsewhere, such as exile, ostracism or incarceration, or various types of punitive measures. (Felonies which must be handled by the police and government courts do inflict such punishments.) Exile from the Santal village is

possible for severe infractions, but this usually takes place voluntarily. Incarceration is an unhappy practice of the non-Santal world which the Santals know by experience but do not utilize. Something akin to ostracism is sometimes used, as in the treatment of the Kisku father and son who disturbed the village of Manjhipur in the "rape case" (p 145). First the offenders were ignored when villagers neglected to purchase their ḥāṇḍi for the festivities prepared in honor of a guest from distant tea plantations. Then, during the festivities, those who poured the ḥāṇḍi into leaf-cups refused to pour any for the Kiskus. Finally the accusation was verbalized, "Be panta, be panta", meaning "out of line". But this was followed immediately by acts of contrition and forgiveness ending all semblance of ostracism. It becomes evident that extended ostracism is not congenial to Santal communities. As for punitive measures, it is rare that an offender against the village peace or the authority of the headman is punished in any grievous manner. In cases where the accused have consumed or destroyed another's property, restitution or repayment is required, but the standard treatment of offenders consists of requiring them to provide sufficient rice-beer or other refreshment for a period of conviviality following the deliberation of the case.

The fine required of the offender should not be considered a punitive measure. It is, rather, a containing measure. By the simple device of investing the fine of providing refreshments, the offender is transformed into the generous host of the festivities at which his judges and jurors become the appreciative guests. The

offender who has passed through the humbling experiences of an accused on trial, becomes, without prejudice, a peer of his fellow villagers fully "contained" in the community of the village.

The process of containment is not confined to the festivities after the kulhi durup'. The whole process of Santal adjudication aims at containment. The ideal of judicial process may be described as follows: First, the accusation itself is not formulated as a transgression against some stated rule. Rather, all offenses seem to be defined as disturbances of the peace of the village and as challenges of the village headman's authority. It is not an abstraction of law, but a community of persons and the person of the headman who have been offended.

Second, the determination of guilt is generally unnecessary. There is little secrecy in the village. There is no doubt when the peace of the village or the authority of the headman have been disturbed. There is little need for an offender to deny his guilt, for the goal of adjudication is not to impose hurtful punishment but to reestablish the peace of the village and the authority of the headman.

Third, the discussion proceeds immediately to the consideration of means for pacification in the village. Certain persons have been disturbed and must be granted relief. Here the use of precedent gives guidance to the council and headman. Every leader had adequate accumulation of precedents in his memory. The similarities and differences between a particular case and many relevant precedents are discussed at length. The flow of discussion

is not triangular, between the judge, the accused and the accuser; it is multiple, and the offender finds himself included in the process as though his own memories and experiences must contribute to the formulation of a solution to the problems created by the offense.

By the time a consensus has been reached in the council, the offender, who has participated in the flow of discussion, has usually accepted the consensual decision. With such an acceptance, the need for punitive measures does not exist; there is need only to symbolize the containment of the offender by making him the gracious host during the "social hour" which follows the "trial".

Of course, this is the ideal of adjudication by the village council and its headman. Many circumstances make for variations in the model. In the "rape case" (p 142), the father of the Kisku young man demanded that his son be acquitted of the "crime" of rape. Such a demand was outside the patterns of council procedure; there had been a disturbance in the village and certain people were extremely upset. The accusation of rape was less important than the need for reestablishing the respectability of the young woman (and her gharonj). To meet the unusual demand, time was needed, and the meeting of the council was recessed to resume at a later hour. However, before the council could reconvene it became necessary for the headman to acquiesce to the intrusion of coercive forces, in the form of the Anchal police, in order to pacify the situation. Before real containment could be achieved, the householders of the village had to carry on an extended conversation about "those Kiskus" at a meeting which was not intended to be a kulhi durup'. The conversation,

followed by the open accusation of "Be panta" was not prompted by the headman, but was within the expectations of tradition. Through the acts of contrition and restitution the entire matter was contained through the same processes which mark a regular kulhi durup'.

The veteran Sobhan was certainly considered a deviant (pp 170-178). He publically confessed that he had forgotten the "ways of the ancestors" and announced his contrition before the pargana assembly. He was reminded of his identity, his forefathers, and his obligation to the Santal system. He was directed to establish peace with the village and the headman by taking up residence in Manjhipur. The process by which the assembly came to its decision was intimately experienced by Sobhan, and his accession to its decision appears to have been genuine and effective. His containment into the life patterns of Manjhipur was, however, somewhat delayed; he was not immediately accepted by all his peers in the village. This was not so much due to the offense he committed as to the fact that he had lived outside the Santal culture so long that he became more alien than deviant.

In recent years the innovative Nirmal, Sobhan's grandson, with the improved and rational procedure for dividing the estate of a segmenting family (p 185), was permitted to use his method even though it neglected tradition and introduced rationality where tradition preferred chance. A record of the discussion which led the council to permit this innovation would provide valuable material for the study of the circumstances which permit innovation in a society dominated by tradition. However, the examination of that

single discussion exceeds the scope of this study. It must be noted that the headman used the occasion of the partition of land to bring pressure upon the absentee land-holding cousin of Nirmal to establish a residence in Manjhipur. The tradition-oriented headman of Manjhipur finally agreed to the innovation, but he did not fail to use the opportunity to reiterate the need to contain land-holders inside the village.

The rejection of the candidate, Danu, who sought his father's previous appointment as chowkidar, refused to remain with his fellow villagers because he rejected their decision to disallow his petition. He did furnish the handi (the symbol of acceptance), but he slipped away into the night with his friends from outside the village. He was not contained in personal interaction through the traditional process; the process failed to reach its goal of consensus and community. The headman could not cause an unwilling villager to accept a cultural tradition--a council decision, but he could see to it that the non-traditionalist remained barred from misusing the inheritance rule to gain village eldership for his own personal gain. In this case the individual was not contained but the traditional functions of the elders roles were maintained.

Further studies of the containment processes by which the Santal village, its council and its headman deal with deviants should be made. They would make contributions to our understanding of social control and add much to our knowledge of the means by which a minority may maintain its continuity in a milieu of aggressive acculturation. Perhaps the most effective counter to

deviance from the traditional, in the Santal village today, is a commitment to the culture and the sense of community. The headman is expected to ensure the continuance of such commitment among his people.

5. Ensuring commitment to Santal community and culture.--

The leadership and the authority of the headman must be exerted to ensure conformity to the societal norms and the performance of duties necessary for maintaining community in the Santal village. In the previous discussion of the "coercive power" of the pradhan there was no mention of the factor of personal commitment on the part of the people. The headman as mañjhi haṛam, rather than as pradhan, is able to assume the role of catalytic agent among the people in the process of realizing community--ato saḡai. Here the major concern is with the headman's "consensual power", as Swartz puts it (Swartz 1968:31). Essentially the fact of personal commitment to the Santal way of life is highly dependent on the role performance of the village headman.

Three situations described in the previous chapter on enactments throw light on the ensurance of commitment to Santal community and culture. From these it is possible to develop some generalizations concerning the headman's role. First, in the history of Dangrajolha village, the differences between the headman who resigned and the surrogate headman, Harma, suggest that culture contact and isolation are critical factors in commitment, and that the Santal headman may manage these factors to heighten commitment. Second, in the narration of Sobhan Tudu's land claim we may see that

social propinquity is regarded by the successful headman as essential to the maintenance of commitment. Finally, in the difference between the rejected candidate for the chowkidar position and the accepted candidate for the Panchayat membership we see the operation of exemplary reinforcement in the hands of the headman of Manjhipur. These factors do not encompass the whole range of complex factors governing the process of commitment in Santal village life; they are not the sole instruments available to the headman in performing his duties in ensuring that individuals perform their duties. But they are empirically derived from the observation of the enactments and may be regarded as the most important and effective factors in Santal village life.

The headman of Dangrajolha failed to maintain his own commitment to Santal norms and social duties, while the patriarchal "surrogate" headman, developed a strong commitment to the Santal way of life and had considerable influence on his fellows in maintaining their commitment. It is not possible to explore all aspects of the difference between these two men, but the most obvious are important.

Cultural contacts with Christianity and with the non-Santal merchants and money-lenders resulted in distraction. The appeal of Christianity also distracted the headman, as it had his father and grandfather before him, from his commitment to Santal norms and social duties. The wealth and power, ostentatiously exhibited by the merchants and money-lenders of the non-Santal sections of Dangrajolha, distracted the headman from the "common man" role required of him. The appeals of Christianity and the ostentation

of the non-Santal authorities failed to distract Harma because he was able to maintain a high degree of social and psychological isolation.

It was not possible for the headman to maintain the isolation of Harma. The agencies of conversion to Christianity concentrated their efforts on the village headman as on no other family in the village; these particular agents came from a tradition which had historically gained large success in conversion by concentrating on the political leadership of tribes and nations. Furthermore the duties of the office of pradhan compelled the headman to deal regularly and personally with the merchants and moneylenders of the non-Santal ethnic segments of the village. On the other hand, Harma could avoid such distracting contacts. The headman of Manjhipur had escaped such distracting contacts.

Undoubtedly the competent management of such cultural and social contacts remains an important factor in the maintenance of commitment in the Santal village, and the development of isolation, even if it be a purely psychological isolation, must continually demand the attention of the headman if he is to maintain his own commitment to his role as well as the commitment of his village people to their duties as members of Santal community. The enactments reported in Chapter VI do not give any evidence that the concepts of distraction and isolation are consciously-utilized instrumentalities in the role of the headman. But almost any extended conversation with the headman of Manjhipur or with Harma, the patriarch of Dangrajolha, will reveal a strong antipathy towards

frequent contacts with non-Santals and a vigorous preference for limited association with others, if not conscious isolation in the cultural affinities of their own Santal cultural milieu.

Social propinquity is regarded by the successful headman as essential to the maintenance of commitment. The headman of Manjhipur was vigorous in dealing with the case of Sobhan Tudu, the World War I veteran. The goal of his efforts was not, nor could be, the retention of a large acreage of land in his personal control; he could not prevent the purchase of the land. But he could bring the veteran into the social interaction of his village and thus subject him to the consensus-making processes of his village. The headman knew from experience that the commitment of a Santal landholder to the norms and duties of a Santal villager could be maintained in large measure by his experiences in the consensus-making processes of the village. In short, the headman knew that social propinquity contributes to conformity and commitment.

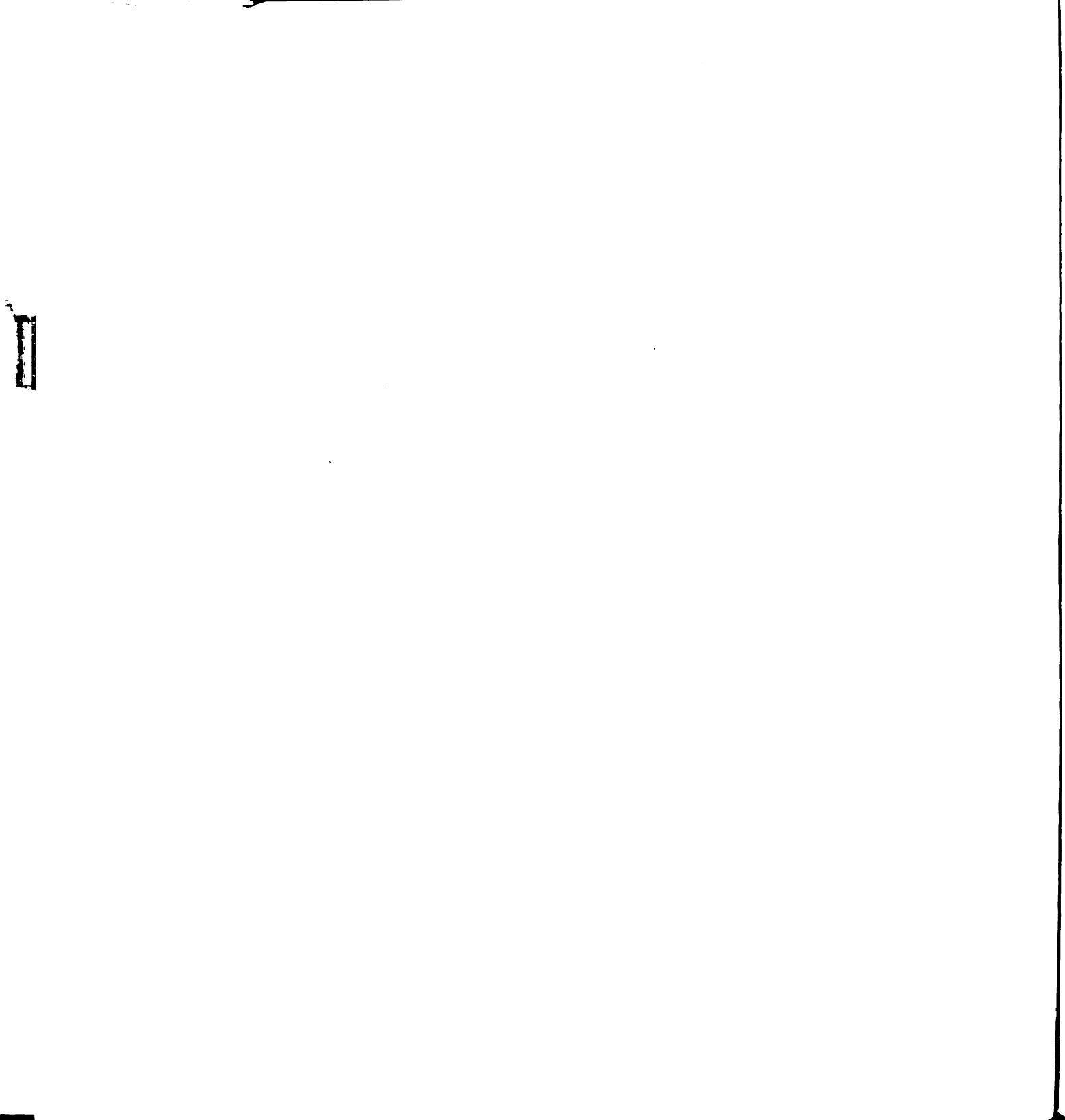
The effect of social propinquity can be observed at almost any meeting of the kulhi durup'. The men sit around in small informal groups in the meeting place, each man is within easy reach of the others. The making of formal speeches (of which there are few) is only a minor part of the process of deliberation; much of the talk is in low tones. Consensus is established among a small number of men on the basis of quiet, personal and persuasive communication. Then the interaction slowly changes, giving opportunity for the consensus circle to grow until everyone agrees. On occasion,

the voices of some are raised in excitement, but pressures gradually applied from the group, through the mood of intimacy, slowly submerges the individual's excitement. Finally, whatever reservations some individuals may hold are subsided during the period of handi drinking which follows the announced decision. The differences are usually put into perspective as minor costs in the process of satisfactory compromise.

This process does not invariably produce consensus in the village. But it certainly serves to maintain periods of harmony in the village, and makes the governance of the village possible. Without social propinquity, which means the physical and attentive presence of individuals in the council meetings, the development of consensus would be exceedingly difficult. Therefore, the concern to bring Sobhan into the life of the village community may be interpreted as an aspect of the headman's role in ensuring the commitment of his people to Santal community and the cultural milieu.

The terms exemplary reinforcement refer to the use of rewards and deprivation in controlling behavior. The concept of "reinforcement" has been made familiar by the work of behaviorists in the field of psychology. The position of the extreme behaviorists is not the position of this paper, but it is impossible to discuss commitment without recognizing the effect of reinforcement upon the individual.

In both the case of Danu, the rejected chowkidar candidate, and the case of Sanathan, the accepted candidate for election to the Panchayat, the headman of Manjhipur used, probably quite unconsciously,



the rewards at his disposal to ensure commitment to the Santal way of life. Danu's lack of interest in village life is a subject appropriate for an extended study of the socializing processes in Santal life, as is the remarkable commitment of Sanathan, the medical technician, to his village home. Here we must note only one factor, the role of the headman of Manjhipur.

The headman could withhold or grant the emoluments of the chowkidar's tax-free acres, and he used this control to deal with Danu. Withholding the emoluments did not change Danu's attitude or his values; he was not controllable at that juncture of his life. But the power of the headman was demonstrated in his case and it certainly provided the people of the village, and others who became aware of the case, an example of what could happen to the non-committed individual who fails to perform his responsibilities and adhere to the acceptable ways of the ancestors. Therefore it appears appropriate to label the headman's action as exemplary reinforcement.

Similarly, the support which the headman of Manjhipur could give to Sanathan in his election campaign was a demonstration of the political power of the headman. It was a precedent which every such candidate would heed in future campaigns. The point of the precedent was that the votes which the headman could deliver would be delivered only to the candidate who demonstrated his commitment to the Santal way of life. The overt reward to Sanathan for his obvious commitment, both before the election and thereafter, remains a clear illustration of the dynamics of exemplary reinforcement.

In summary, it may be said that the "consensual power" of the Santal village headman to maintain the commitment of his people to their Santal community and their culture depends upon his control of such factors as the isolation of his people (in one way or another) from the distractions of culture contact, the maintenance of such personal and consensus-making processes of village life, and the management of rewards and deprivation in effecting exemplary reinforcement of traditional norms and responsibilities.

In this final chapter I have attempted to analyze the dynamics of life in the Santal community through an analysis of the selected enactments of Chapter VI. The enactments, by choice, all involve the presence, the influence and sometimes the authoritative position of the village headman. Rather than analyze each enactment separately, I intentionally chose to organize the discussion around what appear to be the four major concerns of the Santals themselves in the consideration of headmanship; the ascription of the role, the relationship between the headman and the government, the relationship between the headman and other traditional administrative elders and the relationship between the headman and the people of his village.

The last section of this chapter focuses on the five themes which appropriately conclude the consideration of the Santal headman. Having been a participant observer among the Santals for several years in addition to the more formal period of concentrated observation of Manjhipur and Dangrajolha in 1970 and 1971, it has become quite apparent to me that the tradition oriented, non-literate,

rank-and-file villagers expect their manjhi to protect their collective rights, ensure the performance of their collective duties, protect their individual rights, function as the one who ensures the containment of deviance, personally emulate a commitment to Santal community and Santal culture and ensure that same commitment on the part of all other hor hopen. I have demonstrated, through the analysis of the enactments how the headmen of Manjhipur and Dangrajolha have sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed to carry out these ideals and expectations.

In the final analysis the headman of Manjhipur, like his father and grandfather before him may appear to be the complete fulfillment of Santal headmanship while the headman (recently resigned) of Dangrajolha, like his father and grandfather before him may appear to be everything the headman should not be. There is no reliable basis upon which to conclude that these two separate patri-lines in the two contiguous villages have produced "good guys" and "bad guys" for the last three generations. It should have become obvious throughout this presentation that very different circumstances have prevailed in the two villages throughout the last three generations. It should have become obvious throughout this presentation that very different circumstances have prevailed in the two villages throughout the last three generations. Powerful forces toward change from without the village coupled with the dynamics of personal decisions on the part of specific individuals who have altered their life styles have strained the tradition oriented way of life idealized as "Santal". It is not my intention to label the

individual headmen of Manjhipur or Dangrajolha but rather to demonstrate the essential role of the headman in the maintenance of a way of life which has struggled to endure the multiple forces and influences challenging its continuity. The key to this continuity is the Santal village headman who must fulfill his role as pradhan and manjhi haram.

Theoretical Conclusions

The focus of this study has been on the Santal village headman, but the Santal village council, composed of all household heads, has been portrayed throughout as the institutional expression of the egalitarian values of this society. The headman calls the kulhi durup' and presides over its meetings, but the "sense of the council" constitutes the final decision announced by the headman. The dynamics of decision-making in the Santal community involves not only the participation of all household heads but the role fulfillment of the headman--the traditional manjhi haram and the pradhan. No instance has been recorded here to indicate disunity between the headman and the village council on issues involving only the Santal community. Consensus is desired and obviously held as a paramount value. The paradox of an "egalitarian" society having a headman is best explained in light of the high value placed on consensus. As I suggested at the outset of this study, this paradox can be fruitfully examined in the light of Bailey's arguments about Decisions in Councils and Committees (1973).

Bailey offers a theoretical scheme appropriate to the Santal village council process described throughout this study. His points

of reference in India are both the traditional and the new statutory panchayat system. It has been made clear that these panchayat systems are both somewhat dissimilar from the Santal village council. Nevertheless, there are points of comparison which are noteworthy. First, the panchayats and the kulhi durup' both "reach their decisions by seeking unanimity, sometimes prolonging their discussions to extreme lengths in order to find it" (Bailey 1973:1). Secondly, the decisions made in both are not only decisions, they function as legislative acts in the sense that precedence is set, giving either positive or negative sanction to the act or situation under consideration. Thirdly, the action of both systems necessitates corporate enforcement, i.e. everyone involved in the decision is called upon to assist in the enforcement of the decision. This assumes that the communities involved in decision-making are "corporate in nature and form" (Smith 1969:194). In other words, pressures can be brought to bear which will not allow the people to neglect the fulfillment of council decisions. It is apparent that the Santal communities described are more readily able to fulfill these characteristics than their Hindu neighbors.

When the household heads of Manjhipur gather for kulhi durup', for whatever reason, even in the nascent stages of the decision-making process, each man is aware that he is not merely an unknown atom of society, but rather a "living cell" in organic relationship with the other "living cells" of his community (Ibid 3). In Bailey's terms, the members of the Santal village council are not "abstracted individuals" who will cast an unidentified

secret ballot. The council members are life-time members according to the sanctioned authority of the hapramko ak' dustur (customs of the ancestors). Furthermore, these responsible decision-makers will continue to live among their fellows in a face-to-face and independent relationship.

The Santal villagers, contrary to the "Indian villagers" observed by Srinivas, are not typically postured "back-to-back", nor do they conform to Bailey's reference to the Oriyas who say, "Your brother is your enemy" (Ibid. 7). The Santal community is one of interrelating pseudo-kinsmen complete with manjhi haram (village father). This is not a claim that breaches do not occur; the narration of the "enactments" gives evidence of various types of breaches occurring. Undoubtedly, the most common considerations of the kulhi durup' involve the same type of problems found in any Indian village. What seems different among the Santals is not the desire for unanimity, the precedence setting functions or the necessity for community involvement in carrying out council decisions. The major difference is the cultural value of ato saḡai (oneness of mind in the village) and the belief that the omnipresent spirits of the ancestors represent the established and expected norms of behavior against which all behavior can and must be measured.

Bailey does not present evidence of values or a belief system upon which the ideology of consensus or unanimity may have been based in the traditional panchayat system. He concludes that "we cannot point to these values and use them immediately as a structural explanation of behavior" (Ibid. 5). Among the village Santals the

values of ato saḡai and strict obedience of the traditions of the ancestors offer an explanation of the Santal council's pursuit of consensus so vital to the maintenance of ato saḡai.

Bailey questions why some councils try to reach consensus more resolutely than others. He concludes that there is a difference in the social relations between the council members and their public. The "public" represented by the Santal council members is the immediate kinsmen of their households. This egalitarian principle in Santal polity greatly adds to their ability to realize consensus while maintaining the paramount value of "oneness". Similarly, the fact that the Santal community is truly a multiplex community leaves no room for long-term disunity.

The Santal headman is a recognized catalyst in the process of attaining consensus. As maṅjhi haḡam, he represents the customs and the expectations of the ancestors whose rules of behavior are considered correct and applicable to all situations. The customs of the ancestors are guiding principles. The headman is the guide toward the maintenance of the spirit of those principles. The headman in a Santal community is first the maṅjhi haḡam and secondly the pradhan appointed by a representative of the state. The appointment as pradhan appears to be an aid rather than a hinderance to the headman whose obligation, among others, is the maintenance of ato saḡai. The fact that the system has worked for more than one hundred fifty years attests the reliability of the structure which gives the headman "inside authority" as maṅjhi haḡam and "outside authority" as pradhan. Even the Dangrajoḷha situation, with all of its pressures toward

change, does not prove Santal headmanship disfunctional nor has the paramount value of ato sagai deteriorated in the Santal community.

The heterogeneous composition of Dangrajolha has not actually changed the normative process of decision-making in the Santal community even though that council has become one of three ethnic councils. When the inter-ethnic council meets the decision-making process cannot draw upon the cultural value of ato sagai because it is not shared in common among the three separate communities. In Bailey's terms, the inter-ethnic council, like the new statutory panchayat of this heterogeneous village, is an "arena council". The members of the ethnic councils are "steered by the rudder" of those whose interests are represented or to whom the council members are personally answerable. While the members of these decision-making bodies are especially loyal to their own group, when they come together as a political body they attempt to dominate each other through the manipulation of the resources at their command. This phenomena is well illustrated in the recent crisis over the headmanship in Dangrajolha.

In the absence of the highly valued ato sagai the headman remains a potential catalytic agent, but one who must compromise and mediate in order to "keep the peace" and maintain a semblance of balance in the struggle for political power. The headman of Dangrajolha who failed as manjhi haram also failed as the catalytic agent whose responsibility included the maintenance of political balance in the larger village; his only choice was to resign.

The ability of councils (and panchayats) to reach consensus appears to rest on two necessary principles. First, there must be an acceptable value system providing a basis for consensus. Second, there must be leadership among those who pursue the process of gaining consensus, not only to maintain the cultural values, but also to counterbalance the efforts of those whose goals are not for the good of all. This study demonstrates cultural continuity among village Santals which has endured multiple pressures through many years. The paramount values of ato saḡai and the hapramko ak' dustur remain as does the provision for necessary leadership found in the fulfillment of Santal headmanship.

DOCUMENTATION

DOCUMENTATION

¹Manjhipur and Dangrajolha are pseudonyms assigned to the two villages of primary interest in this study. Manjhi means "headman" and pur means village. Dangra means oxen and jolha refers to Muslim weavers. Other village names and towns near these villages are also assigned pseudonyms as are all individuals mentioned by name.

²I first went to India in 1962 under assignment of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries to work with employees of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia in both educational and Village Uplift programs. These responsibilities included involvements in adult education, agricultural development and leadership training programs among three different language groups; Santals, Bengalis and Biharis who spoke Hindi. My initial assignment in India was from 1962 to 1967.

³The manjhi than often has a wooden post at the east end. Rice stalks or tree branches are tied to the post on auspicious occasions. The post is said to be a phallic symbol, as is the protruding stone on the top of the mud structure, but the Santals disclaim any connection between the post and similar symbols used by the Hindus. Sometimes the manjhi than is covered with a simple thatched roof but it is never found inside a building.

⁴The Santals have had considerable involvement in the political life of Bihar. Many have participated in the Jharkhand Party, an "aboriginal" political party which was founded over thirty years ago under the leadership of an Oxford Educated Christian Munda, Jai Pal Singh. Reference here is to local participation by the villagers in the "new" Panchayat system. See Orans (1965:96-109) for one account of the Jharkand Party and the involvement of the Santals.

⁵The Santalized Hindu calendar used in the Santal Parganas follows the lunar month cycle. The year begins with the new moon in March. The following Table shows the Gregorian calendar by month parallel to the months as observed by the Santals. This parallel is only approximate because the Gregorian calendar is not a precise lunar calculation. The third column of the Table refers to the four seasons of the year, employing the Santali word and the interpretation. It is much more common for the villagers to use the seasonal name than the name of the months.

(No. 5 continued)

Gregorian Month	Santal Parganas Month	Season
March	<u>Chat</u>	
April	<u>Baisak</u>	<u>Seton</u> (Hot season)
May	<u>Jhet</u>	
June	<u>Asar</u>	
July	<u>San</u>	<u>Japut'</u> (Rainy season)
August	<u>Bhader</u>	
September	<u>Dasae</u>	
October	<u>Kartik</u>	<u>Niron</u> (Summer-Autumn)
November	<u>Aghar</u>	
December	<u>Pus</u>	
January	<u>Mag</u>	<u>Raban</u> (Cold season)
February	<u>Phagun</u>	

⁶The Santal community tolerates the conversion of individuals to Christianity and does not cause such converts either to leave the non-Christian household or the community. The Christians of Dangrajolha are scattered throughout the Santal community, among landless and landholders and among the young and the old.

⁷About 40% of the married couples of Manjhipur were married with traditional ceremony which involved a matchmaker employed by the grooms household. Kasima is most often practices when the groom and bride are over 18 or 20 years or over. It is sometimes encouraged by the parents of younger people if the material resources necessary for a traditional marriage are lacking. See Mukherjea (1962:195-220) and Orans (1965:58-73) for other accounts of "marriage".

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Santali to English

ṛcur	to turn, to turn around
adi basi [adi vasi]	from Sanskrit: first inhabitants of the area
ajhar	wife or husband's elder sister
-ak'	suffix indicating possession, "of"
-akana	suffix form of verb, "have or has"
ṛkil	wisdom, skill
anga	dawn
apat	genitor
ato	village
ato saḡai	pseudo kinship relationship of the residents of any one village
ṛyuric'	a leader
baba (bā)	father, pa, dad
baha (Baha)	a flower, the female sex organ, a festival
bahu	a bride, a wife
balaya (balia)	the relationship between the respective parents or parent-like kinsmen of a married couple
bañ	no, not
bansgari	from Hindi: a method of posting claim on land
be panta	out of line socially, locally disapproved

beṭa	from Hindi: son, little boy
beṭi	from Hindi: daughter, little girl
bhaichara	from Hindi: the relationship of brotherhood
bigha	a measure of land equal of one-third of an acre
boeha	a sibling
boṅga	an evil spirit, a demon
bud	wisdom
ḍai	older sister
dal	pulse, split pea-like vegetable
deko	a caste Hindu, one who irritates
din	a day, a season
ḍobok'	to bow, to salute by bowing, to worship
doho	to put down, to place, to establish
dustur (ḍastur)	custom
eran	to turn aside, to avoid, to dodge
erer	to turn aside, to avoid, to dodge
erwell	designated affinal kinsmen, younger sister-in-law
gamcha	a piece of cloth from 1 1/2 to 2 yards in length of multiple use, usually worn as the lower garment by Santal men and boys
ghar jāwāe	a son-in-law who lives with his wife's household
gogo (go)	mother, ma, mom
godet	the village elder who is official newsbearer
goṅgo	father's elder brother(s)

gorom	"grand" as in grandfather or grand-daughter
handi	rice wine
hapramko	the ancestors
hatom	father sister(s)
hijuk'	to come, to approach
hili	designated female affines, as elder brother's wife
hilia	a relationship between ego and anyone designated as elder brother's wife
hirom	a second wife, a co-wife
hoe	to be, to become, to come to pass
hor (Hor)	a man, a human being, a Santal
hor hopon	a son of man, a Santal
jãwãe	a bridegroom, a husband
jãwãe goñki	daughter's husband
jog manjhi	the assistant village headman in charge of the moral conduct of the village
joto	all, one and all
juan	a young person of either sex, adolescent
juda	different
kaka	father's younger brother(s) and those of the same kinship relationship as designated
kaki	wife of father's younger brother(s) and those of the same kinship relationship as designated
kakagongo	father's elder and younger brothers as a class
-kana	present tense of the verb "to be"

kasima	one of several forms of marriage which does not require all rituals involved in traditional marriage
khũt	a sect, a division designated by varying totemistic affiliation
kudam (kudum)	the rear, the back, not the front one
kudam naeke	the assistant village priest, a village elder
kulhi	the main street of the village
kulhi durup'	a gathering of the village elders and household heads
kumañ	father's elder sister's husband
landa	laugh, to laugh, to joke
landa saḡai	a joking relationship
laṭu	big, large, fat
lebet'	to tread, to trample, to pace off
lotom	to cover over, to hide, to subdue
mahajan	moneylender, a great man
mai	term of address for a younger sister, daughter
mama	maternal uncle
mami	wife of maternal uncle
manao	to pay respect to, to honor, to obey
manjhi	village headman
manjhi haram	term of address or reference to headman
manjhi than	a rectangular mound containing a phallic symbol which represents the founder of the village, a place set aside to the spirits of departed chiefs
manotan	respectable, honorable

marang (marañ)	. . . . .	great, large, to become great, first born
maṣṭigar (mustigar)	. . . . .	the overseers and tax collector of the village
mayam	. . . . .	blood, to bleed
mukhiya (mukhia)	. . . . .	chief, principle, elder leader, currently an elected office to represent an area of government
naeke	. . . . .	the village priest considered a village elder
nahum (naham)	. . . . .	sunset, evening
nana	. . . . .	father's elder sister
onka	. . . . .	like that, as that
oraḳ'	. . . . .	house, dwelling place, home, family
oraḳ' hor	. . . . .	reference to the wife of the house
panja	. . . . .	to follow, to trace, foot-print, foot mark
paranic'	. . . . .	administrative assistant to the headman
parda	. . . . .	a curtain, covering worn over the head
paris	. . . . .	a Santal clan
pargana	. . . . .	a division of the country, an overchief of several adjacent Santal villages
paṛaṛa	. . . . .	liquor distilled from certain flowers or from rice
raca	. . . . .	courtyard beside or behind the house
raja	. . . . .	a king, a title born by certain Indian landholders
ryot (rayot)	. . . . .	a cultivating tenant, cultivator
saḡai	. . . . .	kinship or kinship-like relationship
sakrat	. . . . .	a festival observed on the last three days of the calendar year followed by Hindus

sangha	to marry a second time, a widow or divorcee of either sex
sangha <u>lotom</u>	reference to the children of a woman born prior to her current marriage
sapha	clean, clear, to clean
sapha hor	a Santal converted to Hinduism
se	or
sohrae	the chief festival of the Santals as observed after the rice harvest, but before the end of the calendar year followed by Hindus
teñaeya (teñaea)	brothers-in-law, the relationship between a brother and his elder sister's husband
teñañ	term of address for mutual among brothers-in-law or among those who may be designated as fulfilling the role of brother-in-law
tolla (tola)	outlying hamlet or part of a village, a weight, a depository for grain, the sole of a shoe
uni	he, she or that

Note: The chief reference for the glossary is Campbell's Santali-English Dictionary as supplemented by Bodding's five volume comprehensive dictionary. The Campbell reference more accurately describes the verbal and written use of Santali in the Manjhipur region (MacPhail 1953 and Bodding 1932-1936).

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

TABLE II.--Young Ego's Kinship Relationships.

Behavioral Relationship	Kinship Relationship	Classificatory Relationship	Ego's Term of Address
1. Free joking	a. YZ b. YB	bokot boeha bokot boeha	mai boko
2. Joking	a. EZ ¹ b. EB c. FF, MF d. FM, MM	bokot boeha goromko goromko	dai gorom ba gorom go
3. Respectful Joking	a. FEZH b. MB ²	kumañ mama	kumañ mama
4. Respect	a. F b. M c. FEB d. FEBW e. FYB f. MYZH g. FYBW h. MYZ i. MB ²	baba gogo gongo gongo kaka kaka kaki kaki mama	baba (ba) gogo (go) marang ba marang go kaka kaka kaki kaki mama
5. Respectful Avoidance	a. FEZ b. MBW c. MB ²	hatom mama mama	nana mami mama

¹The relationship with EZ is of respectful joking upon many occasions. She can be a very special sibling.

²This is a unique situation, the MB/ZS relationship varies with time and circumstance, i.e. age of ego and sex of ego, but this is always a respectful relationship of some degree.

TABLE III.--Comparison of Two Studies on Male Ego Relationships:
After Marriage With Specified Affines.

Type of Relationship from Kuapara Study	Kinsmen of Ego	Type of Relationship from Manjhipur Study
1. joking	WYB	free joking
2. joking	WYZ	free joking
3. joking	EBW	free joking
4. no record	EBWZ	free joking
5. no record	YBWZ	free joking
6. no record	EZH Z	free joking
7. no record	YZHZ	joking
8. joking	EZH	joking
9. avoidance	WEBW	respect
10. avoidance	WEB	respect
11. avoidance	YZH	respect
12. avoidance	WEZH	respect
13. avoidance	WYZH	respect
14. avoidance	WYBW	avoidance
15. avoidance	YBW	strict avoidance
16. avoidance	WEZ	strict avoidance

Note: The information for the Manjhipur study was obtained through personal interview with fifty-two married adults of mixed age and sex. The interviews employed the J-R-A continuum model with the seven possible choices as presented on page 62. The Kuapara study was done by Vijay Kochar (1970).

TABLE IV.--Comparison of Two Studies on Female Ego Relationships:
After Marriage With Specified Affines.

Type of Relationship from Kuapara Study	Kinsmen of Ego	Type of Relationship from Manjhipur Study
1. joking	HYB	free joking
2. joking	HYZ	free joking
3. joking	EZH	free joking
4. no record	EZHB	free joking
5. joking	EBW	free joking
6. avoidance	YZHB	free joking
7. no record	EBWB	joking
8. no record	YBWB	joking
9. avoidance	HYBW	respect
10. avoidance	HYZH	respect
11. avoidance	HEBW	respect
12. avoidance	HEZHB	respect
13. avoidance	YBW	respectful avoidance
14. avoidance	HEZH	avoidance
15. avoidance	HEB	strict avoidance
16. avoidance	YZH	strict avoidance

Note: The information for the Manjhipur study was obtained through personal interview with fifty-two married adults of mixed age and sex. The interviews employed the J-R-A continuum model with the seven possible choices as presented on page 62. The Kuapara study was done by Vijay Kochar (1970).

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

SANTAL CREATION MYTH

The Santal myth of creation is basic to understanding the social system. The myth is often recited on important ritual occasions. Culshaw and others refer to the importance of the myth. It has been retained among the Santals through the literary records and for the non-literate majority through oral traditions (Culshaw 1949:64-68). The following version was recorded from a village headman's recitation during a special family gathering, a life cycle event marking the celebration of the first steps of his one-year-old grandson.

"The Creator made two eggs and laid them in a nest of grass in the warm sun. After some days one ḥas and one ḥasil (goose and gander) came out of their shells. After some time the goose laid two large eggs and hatched them. From these eggs came pilcu ḥaram and pilcu budhi (first man and first women). Because they were hatched from eggs, they were not true brother and sister.

Pilcu budhi always gathered wild rice and pilcu ḥaram always hunted for small animals to eat. One day pilcu budhi gathered too much rice while she waited for pilcu ḥaram to return from hunting. She cooked a large pot full of rice, but pilcu ḥaram was too tired to eat. The rice boiled and boiled all night. The next day when pilcu ḥaram awoke the sun was high in the sky and pilcu budhi had gone to gather more firewood. He waited for her to return for a

long time and became very hungry. Finally, he drank too much of the sour water from the rice pot and it made him very happy (half drunk). This was the first handi (rice beer). When pilcu budhi did return he gave her some handi to drink too and they became very happy together. The two lay together for the first time in sex play while they were half drunk and had coitus. They were still young people but pilcu budhi became pregnant and bore a son. After that she bore a daughter.

She continued to bear children, first a son and then a daughter; but after each pair of children was born pilcu haçam and pilcu budhi moved to a different place to live. Pilcu budhi bore twelve pair of children and each pair was named according to something they had seen in the place where the children were born. The names given the twelve pair were: Hasdak', Murmu, Kisku, Hembrom, Marndi, Soren, Tudu, Baske, Besra, Pauria, Core and Bedea. These were the first true hoç hoçon (sons of man--Santals). Each true brother carefully protected the sister whose name was his name. Pilcu haçam and pilcu budhi were very happy with their family of healthy and obedient children.

After some time pilcu haçam and pilcu budhi became old and tired. One day when the family was all together in a beautiful grove of trees the father asked his children to sing and dance. They sang and danced all afternoon and all night. They forgot to eat their rice. They were so tired after dancing and singing that they slept all of the following day and evening. When they awoke they were very hungry and thirsty and they all drank too much of the souring

rice water which had boiled and remained in the hot sun for many hours. It was hāndi. They all drank until they became very happy (half drunk) and they sang and danced and drank more. The true brothers and sisters became separated and when they lay down to sleep each brother was with a different young woman. During the night each brother had sex play and coitus with the young woman he had chosen and from that day he kept her for his wife. Until this time the young women had all remained untouched by a man because their true brothers had protected them.

On the morning of the third day pilcu haṛam awoke early and found the true brothers and sisters were separated. Each brother had forsaken his true sister of pāris and had taken another as his wife. From that time until today no man has been allowed to lay with a woman from his own pāris. No man can take a pāris sister for his wife because they are his true sisters. But all Santal men must marry Santal women and all Santal women must marry Santal men of other pāirs.

The twelve new wives bore sons and daughters. These children were strong and happy. They were hoṛ hoṇon. Our children must be strong and happy. Our children must obedient. Our children must walk in the way of our fathers. We must teach them. We must stay together as hoṛ hoṇon and protect our true brothers and sisters" (also see Mukherjea 1962:1-45).

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D
THE BANGSARI CASE

The following is an actual copy of the judgment given in a criminal case which ultimately clarified Sobhan's legal possession of the 28 acre tract of land in Manjhipur in 1921. Actual names and dates have been omitted except for Sobhan's which is a pseudonym.

A few words should be explained for the reader who is unfamiliar with certain terms used in this document.

1. Bangsari is a method of staking a claim on land which is not registered as the landholding of a designated person. This procedure involves the presence of the person making the claim along with the government surveyor known as an amin and his helpers. The amin measures the land in question and records each plot claimed by the person making claim. A wooden stake is driven into each plot of ground after the measurement and record are made. The helpers of the amin carry drums which they beat very loudly to draw attention to the entire procedure.
2. Bhag means "on shares".
3. Patwari means "collector of revenue".

CRIMINAL CASE NO. _____ OF 1921

In the Court of _____, Sub-Deputy
Magistrate of the Paurapur District, Santal Parganas,
Bihar

Complainant: Sobhan Tudu of Paharjuri, Pargana

versus

Accused: 1. _____, Mustagir 2. _____ Paramanik
3. _____, Choukidar 4. _____ of Manjhipur

Under Section 447 of the Indian Penal Code

(Bangsari Case continued)

JUDGMENT

Sobhan Tudu Vs. 1. _____ Manjhi Mustagir
 2. _____ Paramanik
 3. _____ Choukidar

Section 447 I.P.C.

The allegation of the complainant is that he get settlement of about 85 bighas of land in village Manjhipur from the Sub-Divisional Officer with the approval of the Deputy Commissioner and on the ____ day of ____ last got possession over it by bangsari. One or two days after the bangsari, it is stated, the four accused persons along with other people of the village, went to the land and ploughed it, throwing away the bamboo posts which were fixed in each plot in token of the bangsari, and sowed paddy in it.

The accused deny any knowledge of the bangsari. _____, who is the Mustagir of the village, admits having ploughed and sown the land on the day of the occurrence with the help of almost all the people of the village and states that he has been in cultivating possession of it for the last two years. The accused, _____, also states that he cultivated the land on bhag on behalf of _____ on the day of occurrence. The remaining two accused say that they did not join the people in the ploughing and sowing of the land that day.

Several witnesses have been examined by the complainant. From the evidence of the Amin and other witnesses, it has been quite satisfactorily proved that the bangsari was really made on the land by the beat of drum, and bamboo posts were fixed in each and every plot of it. The Amin remained on the land fixing the posts and proclaiming the bangsari for about four hours. It would be preposterous to believe that the accused and the other people of the village had no knowledge of it. Moreover they must have come to know of it on seeing the bamboo posts which they removed. The prosecution witnesses have proved that all of the four accused have joined in the act of ploughing and sowing the land, and removing the bamboo posts from the plots. It has also been proved that the land was lying uncultivated for the two years past, and two rent receipts have been filed to show that he [the Mustagir] has paid rent for it, though it is admitted that the land was not settled with him. But none of the defense witnesses appears to be reliable. Three of them (DWs 1,2 and 4) are relations of _____. D.Ws. 3 is a dismissed Choukidar who was

once in prison for theft and D.Ws. 5 in himself is the Mustagir of the village. The receipts look suspicious and I'm not inclined to believe them.

For the above reasons, there is no doubt that the accused persons, with the full knowledge of the bangsari, knowingly and at the instigation of _____, the Mustagir who covets the land, ploughed up the land which the complainant had lawfully got by bangsari, and I consider them criminally liable for trespassing upon it with the intention of dispossessing him. I, therefore, finding them guilty under Section 447 O.P.C. order them to pay Rupees: Twenty-five (Rs 25/00) each, in default three weeks Rigorous Imprisonment

Paurapur

_____ of _____ 1921

Signed _____
Magistrate First Class

SEAL

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E
GENEOLOGICAL TABLE FOR MANJHIPUR

The nineteen bōs of Manjhipur are recorded in the form of a Table on the following pages. The bōs are referred to as lineages. The paṛis are referred to as clans. The column in the table entitled "lineage head" refers to known ancestors. The column in the table entitled "Map No." refers to the map of Manjhipur on page 53. The letters in parenthesis are abbreviations for: married men without children, (M); bachelors beyond 25 years of age, (Bh); youth of marriage age, (ϕ); and boys between the ages of 6 and 16, (B). All names which appear are Santali names but are pseudonyms in this case. The names of all deceased persons are underlined.

TABLE V.--The Nineteen Patriline of Manjhipur.

Lineage	Clan	Lineage Head	Map No.	Son	Son	Son
A	BESRA	<u>Amra</u>	10 & 11	1. <u>Harma</u> 2. <u>Singa</u>	Danu (Bh) Phagu	1 infant
B	HEMBROM	<u>Koka</u>	44	Jhakea	1. <u>Champai</u> 2. <u>Jhakea (Y)</u>	Gari 1 infant
C	HEMBROM	<u>Surai</u>	1,2,26, 27	1. <u>Misher</u>	1. Gina	1. Misher 2. Toru (M) Gungra (Y)
					2. <u>Jetha</u>	1. Gopen 2. <u>Janu (M)</u> 3. <u>Chaku (Y)</u>
				2. <u>Shom</u>	1. <u>Jibam</u>	1. <u>Munsi</u> 2. <u>Infant</u> 2. <u>Bagrai (Bh)</u>
D	HEMBROM	<u>Hopna</u>	43	1. <u>Baju</u> 2. <u>Choto</u>	1. <u>Monda</u>	1. <u>Shanku (B)</u>
E	KISKU	<u>Radu</u>	5,6,7,8	1. <u>Radu (M)</u> 2. <u>Choran</u>	1. <u>Juga (Bh)</u>	
				3. <u>Baijal</u>	1. <u>Raska</u> 2. <u>Som</u>	1. <u>Bhujai (Y)</u> 2. <u>Cebal (M)</u>

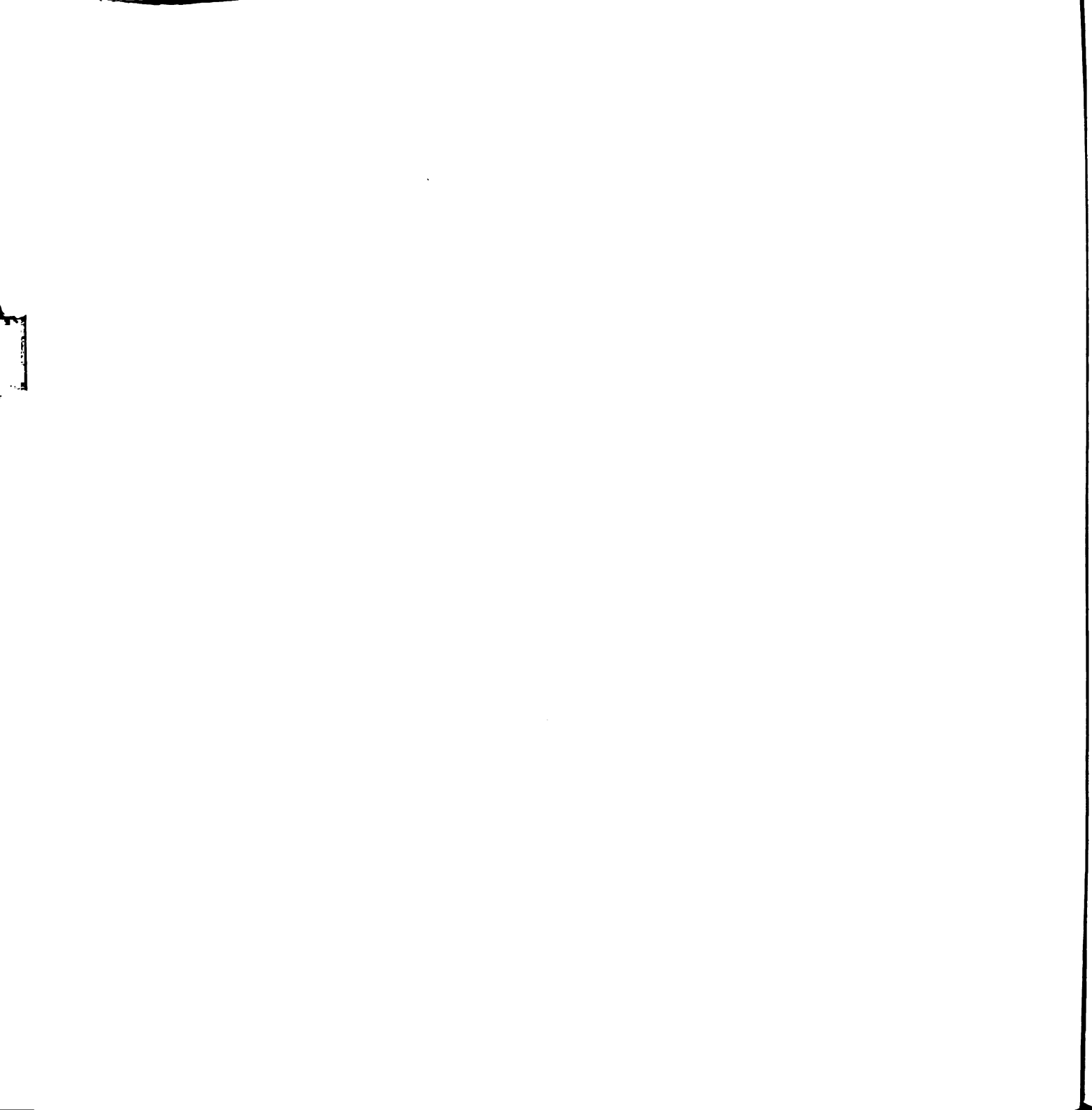


TABLE V.--Continued.

Lineage	Clan	Lineage Head	Map No.	Son	Son	Son
F	KISKU	<u>Paku</u>	45,46,47 48,49	1. <u>Thothe</u>	1. Judu	1. Charu(B)
				2. <u>Sangram</u>	1. Jogan	1. Ranju 2. Kanu(Y) 3. Sigri(B)
						2 infant
					2. Radha(Wr)	1. Paku(Y) 2. Jiteai(Y) 3. Satu(B)
G	KISKU	<u>Kanu</u>	54,55,20 21	1. <u>Barka</u>	1. Nirmal	1. Hodo(B)
				2. <u>Munsi</u>	1. Kanu 2. <u>Huka(Wr)</u>	1. Ceb1al(M) 2. Munsi(Y)
				3. <u>Banu</u>	1. Marang(M) 2. <u>Baju</u>	1. Matu 2 infant
H	MARANDI	<u>Palton</u>	28	Dharmu		1 infant
I	MARDI	<u>La1u</u>	12,13	1. Dinam	1. Sangram	1. Joitan(B) 2. Thakur(B)

TABLE V.--Continued.

Lineage	Clan	Lineage Head	Map No.	Son	Son	Son
I (cont.)				2. <u>Chabu</u>	1. Mersi 2. Lalu	1 infant son 1. Ratan(Y) 2. Jetu(Y) 3. Chabu(B)
J	MARDI	<u>Hopon</u>	32,35,33 34	1. <u>Manu</u>	1. Marang 2. Totu(Bh)	1. Shake1(B)
				2. <u>Pachu(Wr)</u> 3. <u>Shom(M)</u>		
K	MURMU	<u>Phagu</u>	36,41,42	1. <u>Manga1</u>	1. <u>Champu</u>	1. Pagu(Y) 2. Raske(Y) 3. Jamin(B)
				2. <u>Jointa</u>	2. Jiban (Adopted sons of <u>Chabra</u>) 1. Kambu 2. <u>Manu(Bh)</u> 3. Kala	
				3. <u>Rupaya</u>	1. Shaka1(Y) 2. Som(Y)	
L	MURMU	<u>Hotgo</u>	36	1. Ampa		Kanu (moved away)

TABLE V.--Continued.

Lineage	Clan	Lineage Head	Map No.	Son	Son	Son
M	TUDU	<u>Pondo</u>	14,15,16 17,18,19	1. <u>Bodi</u>	1. <u>Manot</u>	1. Lakkan 1. Hola(Y) 2. Kodu(Y) 3. Danu(B) 4&5 infant sons
						2. Shaku(M)
						3. Janga 1. Mungsi(Y) 2. Dharo(B)
				2. <u>Babulal</u>	1. <u>Pagan</u>	1. Manot 2. Babulal(M) 1. Cebalal 1. Dayo (B) 2. Odhgo (B)
					2. Budh	1. Jagu 1 infant son 2. Ladu(Wr) 3. Ramjeet(M)
N	TUDU	<u>Sobhan</u>		1. <u>Peter*</u>		1. Timothy(M) 2. Samuel(M) 3. Mixheal(M) 4. Manuel(M) 5. Daniel(Y)

TABLE V.--Continued.

Lineage	Clan	Lineage Head	Map No.	Son	Son	Son	Son
N (cont.)			9	2. <u>John</u>	1. <u>Nirma1</u> 2. <u>Pagan(Y)</u>	1 infant	
0	TUDU	<u>Tanu</u>	3,4	1. <u>Monga1</u> 2. <u>Sonate(M)</u>	1. <u>Barsa(B)</u>		
P.	TUDU	<u>Jonka</u>	37,38,39	1. <u>Mimu</u>	1. <u>Munsi</u>	1. <u>Basu(Y)</u> 2. <u>Budh(B)</u> 3. <u>Ganu(B)</u> 4. <u>Buto(B)</u> 5. <u>Bino(B)</u> 6. <u>Hopna(B)</u> 7. <u>infant</u>	
						2. <u>Dhipti</u> (adopted all sons of <u>Monga1</u>) 3. <u>Hanu</u> 4. <u>Tanu(M)</u>	
					2. <u>Nargan</u>	1. <u>Manot</u>	1. <u>Mimu(M)</u> 2. <u>Balu(M)</u> 3. <u>Manu(Y)</u> 4. <u>Thuka(B)</u>
Q	TUDU	<u>Pa1u</u>	50,51,52, 53,56	1. <u>Tanu</u>	1. <u>Barka</u>	1. <u>Lipsa</u>	1. <u>Saku1(B)</u> 2&3 infant sons

TABLE V.--Continued.

Lineage	Clan	Lineage Head	Map No.	Son	Son	Son	Son
					2. Thakur		1 infant son
				2. Kumraj	1. Jetu(M) 2. Maju(Y)		
				2. <u>Dinam</u>	1. <u>Baburam</u>	1. Monsa	1. Shetal(B) 1 infant son
				2. Balu	1. Shaku(M) 2. Narang(B)		
R	SOREN	<u>Ramu</u>	22	1. Chorán	1. Lukhiram 2. Ratan(Y)	1. Sitaram(B)	
				2. Raita	1. Baju(Y) 2. Chota(B)		
S	SOREN	<u>Sakra</u>	29,30,31	1. <u>Dasu</u>	1. Kambu 2. Tinka	1. Panu(B) 1 infant son	
				2. Misher	1. Lal	1. Dasu 2. Som	
					2. Baetka	1 infant	

*The five sons of Peter moved away from Manjhipur with Peter's widow although Timothy retained the landholding of the Sobhan Tudu lineage.

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