Ph. D. Thesis
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DECISIONS AND ANALOGY: POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND DISCOURSE AMONG THE HO TRIBALS OF INDIA.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an analysis of the political structure of the Austro-Asiatic Mundari speaking Ho tribals of the Chotanagpur Plateau in southern Bihar, India. Fieldwork was carried out in the Kolhan Government Estate of Singhbhum District between September 1972 and January 1974. It is a village study backed up by a general survey of the area.

The thesis falls into two parts, a structural-functionalist analysis of the political organisation of one village and its political environment and a case study of the discourse involved in one particular dispute settlement.

The concern in the first part is to understand the structure of a Ho village. The composite sections of the community and their interrelations are analysed to bring out the structural principles of descent and land tenure. The relationship of local level politics to the wider political environment is outlined in terms of a structure of double encapsulation by parallel systems of civil administration, instituted respectively by the pre-independence colonialist powers and the post-independence government of national unity. The process of village government is analysed with particular reference to the role and function of the village council meeting and its officials as the locus of community based authority. Emphasis is laid on the apparent structural distinction between public and private arenas of governmental activity.

The second part of the thesis is a detailed analysis of the transcript of one public dispute settlement in terms of the discursive tactics employed in the decision making process. Decision making and council procedure is analysed with a stress on the role of language as a political medium. The interrelationship of consensual procedures and tactics to polemic and oratorical style is outlined with particular emphasis on the role of analogy in effecting decision making. The theoretical insights that this provides are then considered. How does linguistic analogy relate to the local political structure and to the wider political environment?

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In this thesis I have used a simplified version of transliterating the Ho dialect of Mundari into the Roman script. I have not indicated lengthened vowels, nor have I indicated nasalisation. Checked (glottalised) vowels have been indicated with the symbol ':'. Thus da: for water. All indigenous terms are underlined.

NOTE ON HOUSEHOLD REFERENCE NUMBERS

All households and persons referred to in the text have been indicated by a Household Number, thus Rupa Murmu (H.83) or Rupa Murmu, H.83. This number relates to each household in the Lineage and Kinship Survey given in Appendix. Note A. It enables all persons to be located in the survey.

Chapter One : Introduction.

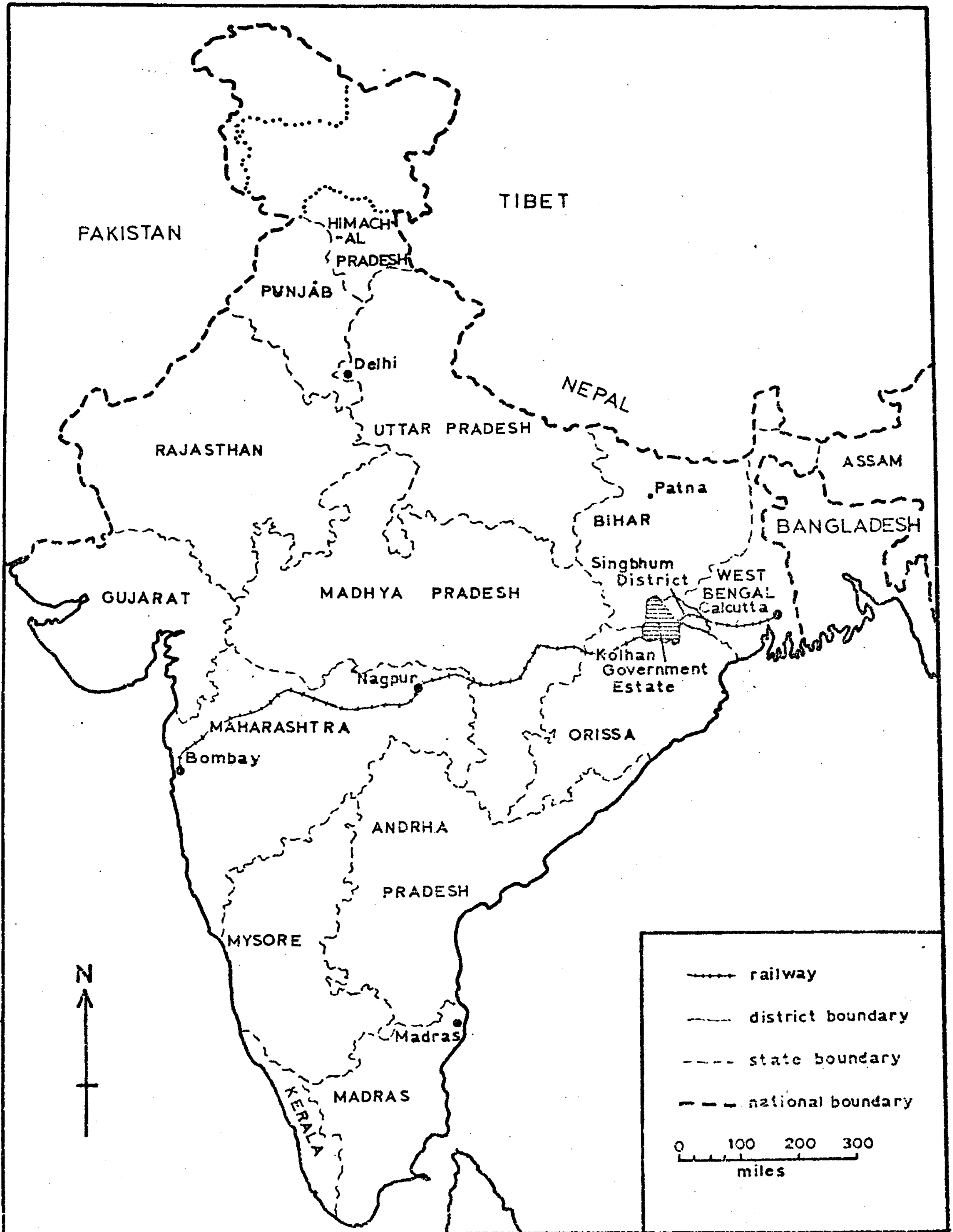
Introduction

This is a study of the Ho, a group living in the Chotanagpur area of India. They speak a dialect of the Mundari language which belongs to the Austro-Asiatic family. The distribution of Austro-Asiatic speakers suggests that at some time in pre-history the whole of north India was occupied by the ancestors of these tribal people. The Mundari language is one of the aboriginal languages of India, that is, its presence in India pre-dates Indo-Aryan influence. The Ho share a common language with many other groups such as the Munda, Santal, Bhumij, Tamaria, Bhil, Juang, Korwa, Kharia, Birhor, Bondo and Gadaba. While it can be assumed that they were the first settlers of north India, clearing the forests from the plains, they have since been pushed up onto the high plateau lands of central India by the rising population of the economically and politically dominant Indo-aryans, who entered India from the northwest, in contrast with the Mundari speakers who are presumed to have entered India from the north-east.

Generally speaking it can be said that the culture of all the aboriginal groups has caused them to retreat from any form of organised political state under which they would be subject to possible exploitation by a sovereign power. Their uncentralised political structure has kept them isolated in the interstices of the dominant Indo-aryan Hindu culture areas. Their social organisation is best suited to a semi-agricultural and collecting economy. Their segmentary lineage system, involving corporate ownership of rights over land and joint communal right s over forest produce, is well adapted to an organisation of small villages subject to frequent divisions. Sections hive off and start new villages in uninhabited forest areas, clearing new fields and relying for a large part of their economy on collecting uncultivated foodstuffs.

As the caste-peasant agricultural population expanded the pressure on land caused them to alienate it from the politically less dominant tribal peoples. Alienation of tribal land is an historical fact that has maintained a cultural division between the aboriginal tribal and the peasant Hindu - a division that has manifested

1:1 Map of India and Singbhum.



itself in many forms throughout history. The underlying archaic distinction is between 'man' and 'other man' or 'outsider'. All the Mundari speaking groups refer to themselves with one variation or another of the term ho, hor, or horo, - the people, while outsiders are called diku, which carries the implication of cunning usurious foreigners. At times when conflict between the peasant and the tribal has put tribal society under great stress, there have occurred revitalisation movements among the tribals such as the sapha hor or 'pure man' movements of the Santal in the 1870s.

With the exponential increase in India's population and the resulting scarcity of natural resources the aboriginal strategy of retreat into isolation came to an end in the 18th century at the same time as the expansion of British colonial interest into the interior of India. The cultural division now took on a new political reality. Numerous tribal uprisings between 1800 and 1870, such as the Kherwar Movements, the Santal Uprising, the Birsa Rebellion and the Kol Insurrection, led to the need for governmental intervention to preserve the security of the area, which served as a buffer zone between the British Empire in Bengal and expansionist policy of the Marathas to the west. To deal with the crisis the British recognised the aboriginals as a vulnerable section of the population requiring protection and 'civilisation' both by government and Christian missions. This new policy of tribal administration required territorial and social delineations to be drawn, and prior cultural divisions acquired a new bureaucratic dimension. What were formerly groups with fluid cultural associations were categorised and named. A broad conglomeration of various groups with local differences of language and culture all calling themselves the 'people' and generically referred to by the Hindu peasant as the Kols, now became administratively reified as the Munda, the Santal and the Ho. Only the Ho retained their indigenous name. The Santals derived their name from Soant, north of Balasore in south-west Bengal, where they were supposed to have originated, and the Munda were called after the indigenous term for their village headmen, no doubt because it was with the headmen that the British dealt in the formation of the new tribal policy. This new administrative realisation of a cultural division did not stop at the mere categorisation of culture groups. The tribal policy required that groups with an uncentralised political organisation be organised under a central government and administration. Indigenous political structures were adapted, as we will see later, to form a coherent structure of local level government. This local level was then dovetailed into a cadre of experienced and paternalist minded British administrators, many of whom have become folk heroes at the popular level. The administrative groupings of culturally distinct groups now became politically centralised communities, each with its own system of civil administration.

Variations between each section were the result of different historical events and local conditions. Each group jealously guarded its own particular system and many of the facets of the imposed political structure were internalised by the people. This system stressed protection rather than development. The main functions of government were the maintenance of law and order and the adoption of policies designed to ensure the co-operation of the people. Taxes were kept to a minimum and any form of transfer of land from tribal to non-tribal was prohibited. Policing and civil procedures were kept in the hands of tribals at the local level. The system of indirect rule upheld the status quo and development was not encouraged. The particular tribal reserve created for the Ho, the Kolhan, had the effect of protecting and isolating them from developments in the rest of India so that it may be said that they live today in an unreal environment. The Munda, who live to the north, were less well protected and this has resulted in their developing a greater degree of political muscle. But nevertheless the policies of the British did result in the realisation of a new form of tribal identity and political structure, that is largely responsible for the nature of the tribal groupings today.

The new political organisation that was created primed the tribals for the post-independence move in democratic politics. Under the new constitution their protection as Scheduled Tribes living in Scheduled Areas was further reified. The old colonial policy of laissez-faire was dropped for a new one of education and political development. At the same period the area came into the mainstream of Indian national economics and politics with the development of mineral extraction industries throughout the tribal belt of Chotanagpur. Under this new state of affairs conflicts of interest developed between the tribal population with their privileged rights to protection and a national desire to open up the area for the development of industries. The tribals were by now organised, but not in positions of power in that organisation. The higher echelons of government and administration were held by the diku (outsiders). The development of the tribal population as an organised political force was carried a stage further by the formation of a tribal political secessionist party called the Jharkhand Party. The overall intention of this movement was to create a new state of Chotanagpur which would have its own legislative assembly and administrative system under the federal organisation of the newly independent nation. The nature of tribalism in India has gone through many drastic developments since the pre-colonial days before 1770.

Chotanagpur, the area in which these people live, is one of those ill-defined tracts of India that means different things to different people. Geographically it is the north-eastern extension of the central plateau of India, an area of uplands that lies between the Gangetic and the Mahanadi Plains. It soon became a

hill station area for British officials escaping from the heat on the plains of Bengal. Removed from the main heartbeat of India with its forests, hills and tribal population, it attracted early travellers such as Bishop Heber, Hallet and Colonel Tickell.[1]

Today Chotanagpur has become an administrative division that constitutes the southern half of Bihar. In 1765 the East India Company took over the divani of Bihar, and John Camac became the first British Agent in Chotanagpur. In 1771 a settlement was made with the Maharaja of Chotanagpur, himself of distant tribal origins and presumed to be

the ruler of Chotanagpur. The area became one of those partially administered border zones separating the British empire in Bengal from the expansionist inclinations of the Marathas to the west. There was little immediate interest in expanding government in the area, but by the 1830s social unrest was so wide-spread, as a result of the exploitation of the tribals by Hindu and Muslim landlords, that the civil administration had to be made more sophisticated.

The present day administrative area of Chotanagpur was first formed under the title of the South-Western Frontier Agency and special regard was taken of the conditions of the numerically dominant tribal element. Captain Wilkinson, as the new agent, drew up a series of civil regulations that forms the basis of the socio-political character of the area even today.

My particular interest in this study is to describe and analyse the political organisation of the Ho and the relationship between the Ho and the nation of India. While I shall make a structural analysis of both arenas my aim is to understand the political process in the light of the cultural distinctions that have just been outlined. To this end I will concentrate on one particular aspect of political behaviour, namely the style of decision-making among the Ho. This is basic to an understanding of the political system. There is a noticeable lack of fit between the two systems. I will analyse the distinct styles and processes of politics and government which, despite their apparent conflict, do manage to live together, though this minimal modus vivendi may not be sufficient in a future in which relative isolation may come to mean relative deprivation. The argument of the thesis may be summarised as follows. British rule accepted the extant system of local level government and grafted it onto a centralised administration. Village level politics continued much as before while also adjusting minimally to the extended structure of which it became a part. Post-independent India has set up a pan-Indian system of local level government,

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1 See Heber, 1828, Hallett,1917, Tickell, 1840.

called Panchayati Raj, which operates in parallel with the older system. While the two systems are not openly in conflict there are basic differences. Both are constitutional realities and as such are in competition, as was recognised by the Kolhan Enquiry Commission [2]. Whereas modern style government is concerned with mobilising the local level to effect agricultural and educational development schemes, the older system was largely characterised by laissez-faire. The people at the local level managed their own affairs with only infrequent recourse to centralised authority. All matters to be decided at the village level were initiated from within the village and the process of making those decisions was well-adapted to indigenous needs, but ill-adapted to the modern system of local level democracy. Modern government in India requires that local level institutions contribute to central policy making, while also executing the policies of the centre. The local level's inability either to provide policies or execute them was not so much a matter of intransigence and apathy, as is the normal complaint of administrators, but rather a case of two incompatible political styles.

This is a study of one community, the village of Dubil. In chapters two and three I will describe and define the village community and its political structure. Chapter four will place the community in its historical and present day political environment and analyse the relationship of community politics to the wider national political arena. I return in chapter five to the process of village government and the way that it manages its affairs. Chapter six presents a detailed case study of the process of decision making, which is analysed in depth and subjected to theoretical analysis in chapter seven.

The Fieldwork

My wife and I spent sixteen months in southern Bihar. Our first task was to learn the Ho language. This language bears no similarity to any of the Indo-aryan languages and is classified as a member of the Austro-asiatic group which extends to Burma, Cambodia and Vietnam. The Ho dialect is generally subsumed under the subgroup of languages called Mundari or Munda languages, which are spoken by such other aboriginal groups in north-eastern and central India as the Munda, Santal, Bhumij, Tamaria, Bhil, Juang, Korwa, Kharia, Birhor, Bondos and Gadabas. It contains a number of Hindi loanwords and also many words that Hindi has borrowed from English to refer to various functions of government.

For the first three months we were based in Chaibasa, the sadar station, or administrative headquarters. Our main task during this period was to learn the

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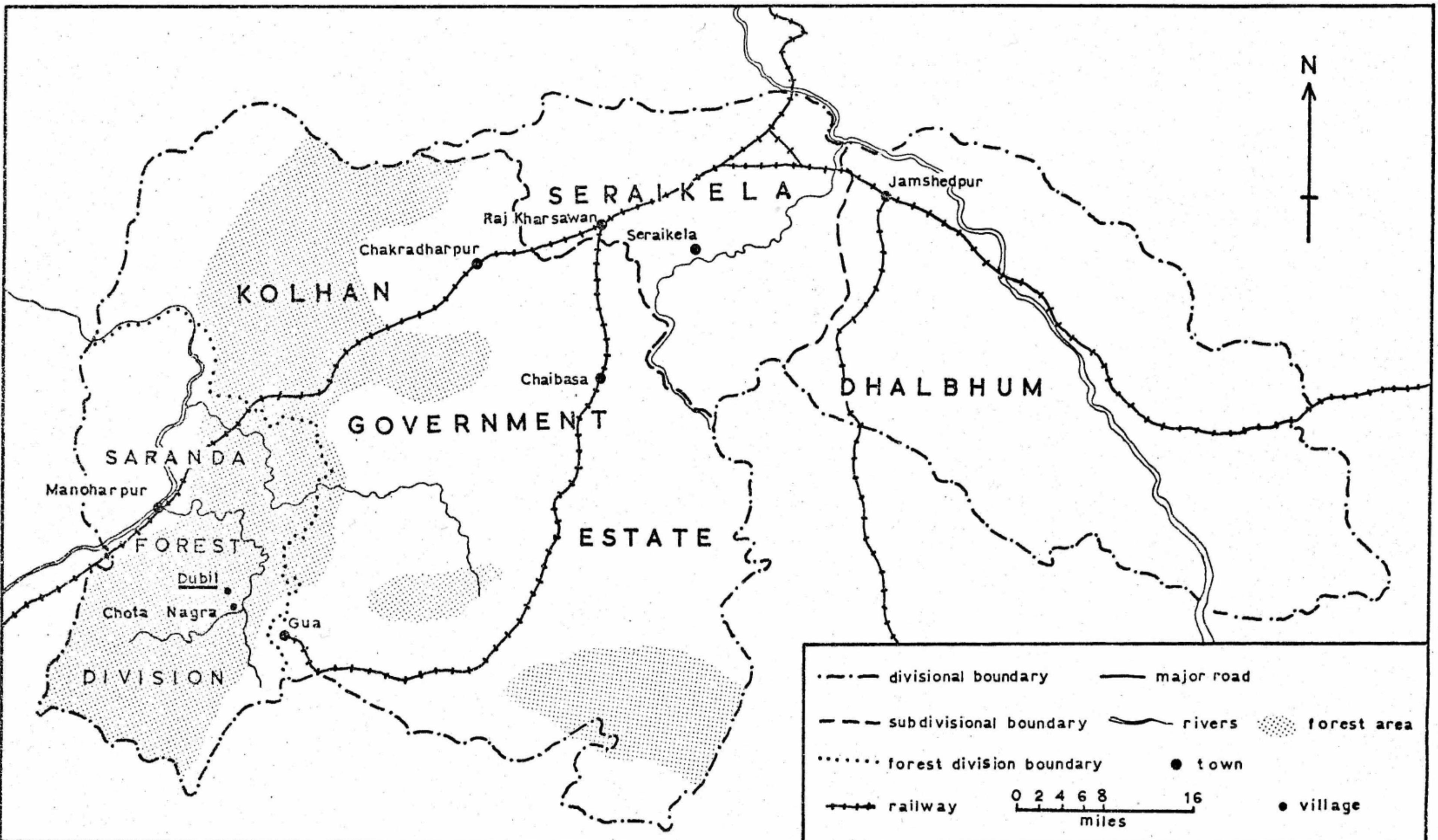
2 Kolhan Enquiry Committee, 1947.

language with the help of a mission educated Ho, and to come to terms with the unique system of administration in the tribal area. Chaibasa developed into a town as a result of British influence, subsequent to the creation of the Kolhan Government Estate as a non-regulation area for the protection of the Ho, in which the government was the direct landlord for all the land. Each tribal held his land by direct tenancy from the government, the normal system of zemindari subtenures having been abolished after the Kol Uprising. This was a period of armed insurrection by the Munda of the Sonepur area (now in Ranchi District) and certain of the Ho in the north of the present Kolhan. The direct cause for this was extensive land alienation to Muslim and Hindu zemindars resulting from new powers given to them by the land settlement acts. After the uprising a certain Captain Wilkinson was sent to enquire into the causes of the unrest in 1833. To prevent further unrest he created a special set of civil regulations and made the government the landlord of a delimited area of Ho population that was named the Kolhan. At the time the Ho were commonly referred to as the Kols by the politically dominant Hindu population, though today this term is greatly disliked by the Ho themselves. An agent was appointed to oversee the new system of administration, and the small village of Chaibasa was made the centre of administration and soon became a major market town. Today it is the administrative capital of Singhbhum District that includes the three subdivisions of the Kolhan Government Estate or the Sadar Subdivisions, Dhalbhum and Seraikela (see map 1:2).

The Kolhan, as I will refer to the area from now on, contains over half the Ho population, that is 250,000, with a further 200,000 scattered throughout Bihar and West Bengal. In the first three months five tours were made throughout the Kolhan in order to gain a general understanding of the tribal area and find a suitable village for study.

1:2 Map of Singbhum District and forests and plains in Kolhan Government Estate.



The Kolhan can be divided into two areas, the forested and the unforested. This distinction is related to the different settlement patterns in the two areas. The unforested area is found on the plains that stretch eastwards from the hilly eastern escarpment of the Chotanagpur Plateau. This is the more fertile area that was settled first by the Ho. Here the villages are densely nucleated, with the wards of each village forming clusters of houses on high stony ground between low-lying agricultural land. Each ward approximates to a local lineage cluster. The clustered nucleation has been caused by the exhaustion of new land for clearance to feed the expanding population. The only option left is to maximise the available land by levelling and embanking it to retain the monsoon rains for wet rice cultivation, thus forcing the houses up onto the higher stony ground to release more land for agriculture. In this area patches of scrub forest do remain on the periphery of the villages; but on the whole there is no visible change in land use when one moves from one village to the next. The plains areas have been settled for a longer time and the land is consequently sub-divided to a greater degree by inheritance, resulting in smaller fields and a higher density of population to cultivable land. The forested area consists of the hilly escarpment belt that surrounds the plains on the north, west and southwest. This is the region into which the expanding population on the plains has more recently migrated. Until the nationalisation of the forests to preserve them for timber extraction under the Indian Forest Department, this was the catchment area for overflow population from the plains. Here the villages are more recent and the density of population in relation to available land for agriculture is lower. Uncleared forest is still available. As the land holdings are being expanded villagers tend to live close to the most recently cleared fields as these require greater attention. This gives rise to communities scattered across the two to four square miles of cleared land surrounded by the forest wall. Houses are separated by trees and only just within hailing distance of each other, giving rise to a different pattern of daily interaction and co-operation, and the local lineage clusters are not so self-evident.

There can be little doubt that the shortage of land in the unforested area has lead to differences in lineage structure (see Sahlins, 1961) and also in the economic structure. The plains Ho have greater differentials of wealth than those on the forested escarpment. Majumdar,[3] who only investigated the plains Ho, speaks of rapidly developing class distinctions between the wealthier lineages of the village and paramount headmen, who marry between themselves in a fashion that amounts to preferential class endogamy. Also on the plains there is an extensive, though unspecified, class of landless labourers tied in a loose patron-client relationship to the wealthier landowners, which is not found in

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3 Majumdar, 1950.

the forested regions. Another feature of the plains Ho is the rapid inflation in brideprice, *gonon*. None of these factors is found among the forest dwelling Ho, and my brief encounter with the plains Ho supports all that Majumdar has said. Differences in economics and land tenure have led to differences of social structure in the area of Ho population. It was therefore of considerable interest to me to look at those Ho living in the area, and follow the lead that Dhan[4] had shown in her brief study of the forest-dwelling Ho, in which she points to the need for a distinction between those living on the plains and those living in the forests.

One of the main aims of the study was to understand political behaviour as well as structure. For this behaviour to be studied in detail it was decided that it would be advisable to concentrate on a small population and the smaller villages in the forest were an obvious choice for long term participant observation.

There were also economic factors that made the forest villages more interesting from my point of view. The plains have better communications and are generally supplied with more sources of paid employment. Today many Ho are taking up employment and on the plains a multiplicity of small companies employ labour. This meant that people often left the villages to work, many of them living out of the village for extended periods, only returning for the harvest. Contacts with such people would therefore be difficult to make. By contrast the forest, had little small-scale industry due to the difficulty of getting licences to set up businesses in a reserved forest area. However there has developed a large-scale mineral extraction industry by nationalised companies that employs a very large work force. [5] In the forest area the hills have a top strata of some of the best iron ore deposits in the world with seams of ore that are 67% pure iron. Also the forest department, and areas of forest contracted out to private timber extractors, provided wage employment close to the villages. Another temporary source of wage employment at the time of study was the extensive road building scheme intended to provide a communications infrastructure to enable the mineral extraction industries to expand. This development of the forest provided a more controlled environment in which to observe the relationship of the village to the national economy and the policies of national government; the two came into more direct contact in the forest area, where development was more controlled on account of the restrictions that forest reservation laws imposed on private exploitation.

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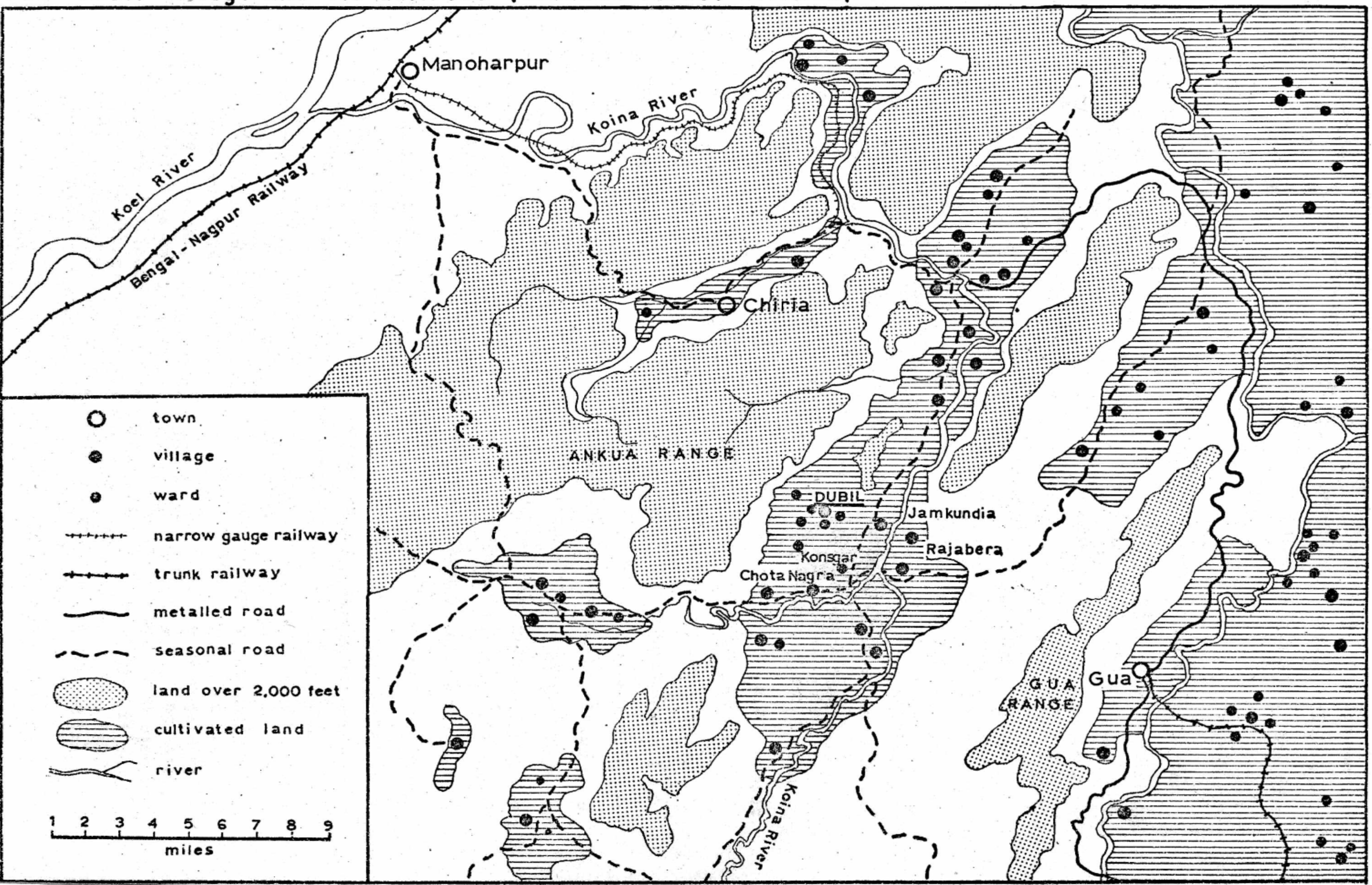
4 Dhan, 1961 & 1962.

5 The presence of smaller private mining companies should not be forgotten, but these usually employed migrant labour living in dormitories and huttings that were not from the local villages.

Two villages were eventually chosen in the Saranda Forest Division, in the extreme southwest of the Kolhan (see map 1:3). Both were villages in which lived paramount headmen and officers of the new system of statutory panchayats. The first choice of Jamkundiya village proved unsatisfactory as on our second visit the village headman seemed apprehensive of our staying in the village. Subsequently it turned out that he was only worried that the village did not have any accommodation that he felt was fit for a "white man". Our second choice, the village of Dubil, seemed satisfactory at the time. The resident paramount headman, whom we believed to be the village headman, was unperturbed at the thought of playing host to us for a year. Later we discovered that he had considered the idea little more than a joke, but that as we had said that we wanted to do reading and writing work, *olparao paiti*, and not agriculture, *ote paiti*, and that we needed no more land than was necessary to build a small house, if we did actually come to live in the village, we would do little that could interfere with them. Indeed it was thought at the time from our introduction that we were probably Christian missionaries, *kirstaden jati*, who wanted to teach their children how to read and write. The village had tried many times to apply to the development office for a school. In fact he even showed us the ruined shell of a house that the owner had abandoned some three years before, when he had left the village due to economic failure, to work and live in the mines. The site was admirably situated between the main source of water - a muddy stream and the paramount headman's house at the centre of the scattered village. Lt overlooked the main thoroughfare and was well shaded by trees. Using the foot-in-the-door policy we accepted this offer and he never expected to see us again.

1:3 Dubil Village and its Environs (Saranda Forest Division).



This village of Dubil, in which we lived for the duration of ten months scattered over a period of 13 months, had a total population of 441 persons.

It is on the western bank of the Koina river valley (see map 1:3), that is about six miles wide, between the steeply wooded ridges of the Gua and Ankua hill ranges that rise some 1000 feet above the valley bottom. Both of these ranges are capped with iron ore that is being open cast mined by the Indian Iron and Steel Company. Before the advent of the British, and the development of industry in the area, this valley was the active heart of Saranda Forest.[6] Where the valley is widest and the two tributaries of the Koina River converge is the now ruined palace and temple of the Raja of Chota Nagra. The temple is still used and kept up by the Oriya residents of Chota Nagra, who are Hindus of the Magadha Gowalla subcaste. The priest of the temple is however a Bhuiya, living in the Konsghar ward of Chota Nagra village. Konsghar is a subvillage of about 500 inhabitants all of whom are Bhuiyas. The Raja of Chota Nagra was in the past a Bhuiya though today, like all the local rajas in this area, he claims pure Rajput status and ancestry, even though many of the smaller rajas in the area are served by Bhuiya priests rather than Brahmans, and their deity is Paudi Ma, a Bhuiya goddess. The Bhuiya are the original inhabitants of this area. They colonised Saranda before the Ho migrated into the area and were the first people to clear the forest and start agriculture. There are 13 villages in the area that were formerly Bhuiya villages, but are now occupied solely by the Ho, and a further 20 that the Ho first colonized. All the 13 villages acknowledge the Bhuiya goddess of Paudi Ma as an attribute of their village guardian spirit and protector of the upland dry rice crop. They still contribute rice and goats to the sacrifice on Dosora to Paudi Ma at the court of the ex-raja of Chota Nagra (today called the Raja of Manoharpur), and there are many local myths relating to past aggression and friendship between the Ho and the Bhuiya.

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6 The District Gazetteers and other sources have perpetuated a myth that the word Saranda derives from the 'country of seven hundred hills'. But I believe that Saranda is a composite of two Ho words, saran, meaning plenty of, and da:, meaning water, as this is one of the :few areas in the region that have plenty of small streams that flow throughout the year, making it possible to irrigate land directly from the streams. This fact was no doubt the reason for the Koina river being the centre of this region in the past.

PLATE 1:1. A Typical Ho Household

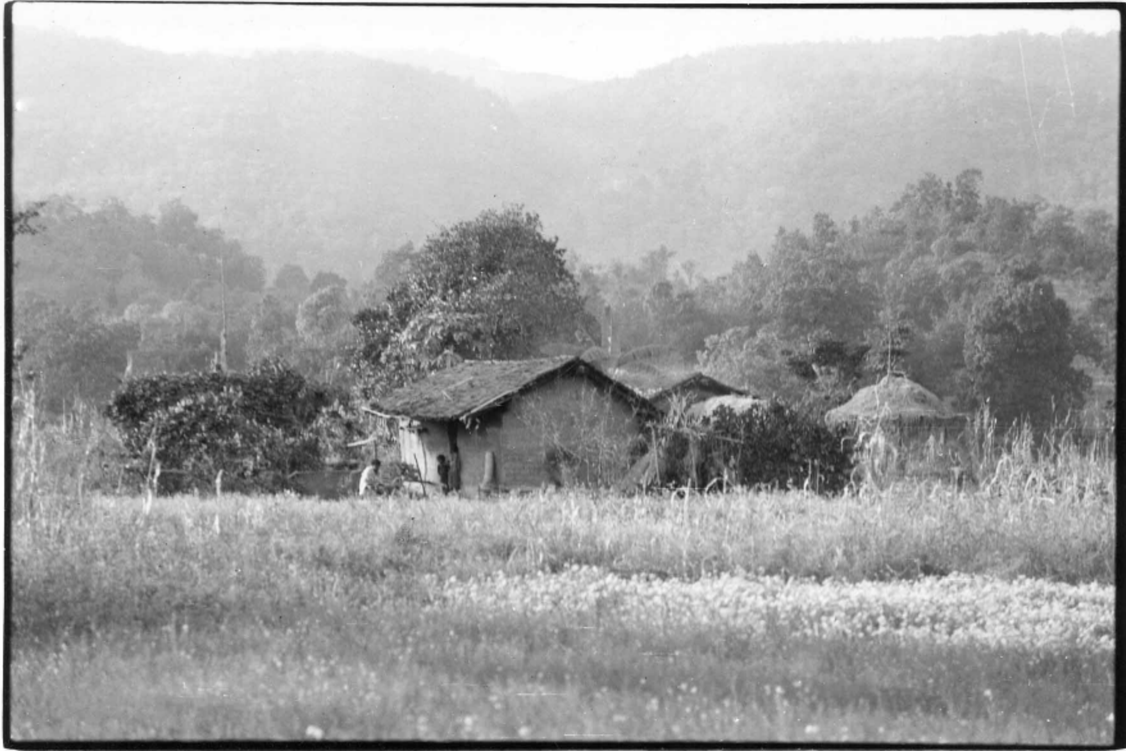
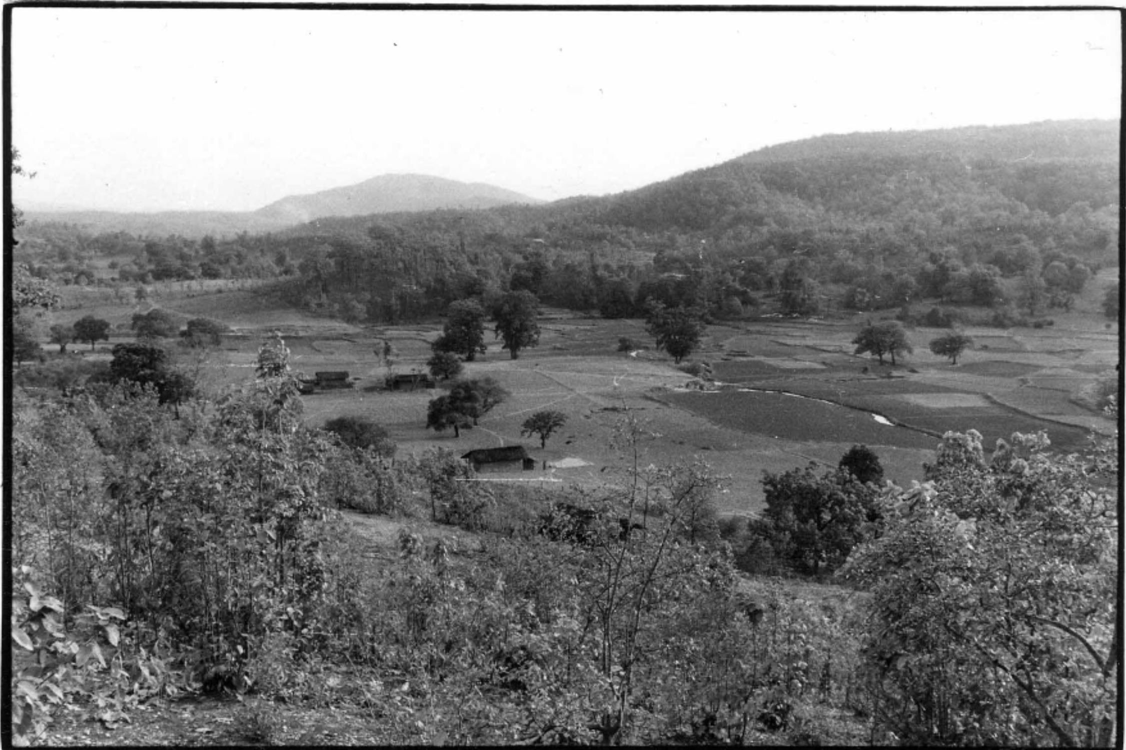


PLATE 1:2. Dubil Village; looking southwest from the centre of the village towards the Ankua Range of hills.



The Bhuiya are a Hinduised group of tribals that live mainly in the immediately bordering districts to the south of Keonjhar and Bonai, in the state of Orissa, where they developed many small principalities, such as Bonai and Nagra. Whether or not the tributary estate of Chota Nagra was in some way linked to the Nagra Estate is a point that I could not establish, but undoubtedly there were marriage ties between the two ruling families. The Raja of Chota Nagra, who has now been deposed, used to be the ultimate authority in what is now the Saranda Forest Division of the Kolhan and had 33 villages under him in the nineteenth century, many of which were Ho villages with their own headman and a Ho steward or representative at the court of the Raja of Chota Nagra. This officer was referred to by the Ho as *manki*, whereas the village headman was the *munda*.

Today the old site of the palace is a square raised area of ground in a densely wooded coppice that is avoided on religious grounds by all the Ho. The old palace or fort was presumably built of mud bricks that have since disintegrated. Sometime shortly before the advent of the British into the area, possibly in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Ho murdered the resident raja. The rani and her son fled the forest and set up a new palace in one of their outlying villages near to where the Koina river joins the Koel, close to the village of Manoharpur, that has since grown up into a town when the British built the Bengal Nagpur railway along the valley. Here the young raja developed a small estate called the Manoharpur. Estate that was recognised by the British[7], while allowing his influence in the Koina river valley to die out. When the British surveyed the area briefly in 1836 they did not realise that he had any influence over the Koina valley at all and the area was unwittingly taken away from him and made part of the Kolhan Government Estate. Subsequently this area became somewhat of a forgotten 'interior' outside the political scene. This was further emphasised when the Bengal to Nagpur railway was built along the Koel river, the other side of the Ankua range of hills, so that later when a Scotsman called Kelso developed the iron ore deposits on this range all his communications were with Manoharpur, to which he built a narrow gauge railway in 1911 that, even today, is used to take the iron ore from the quarries to the railhead. Later, when the company expanded to the other side of the Koina valley to exploit the iron capping on the Gua range, communications were with the Gua to Raj Kharaswan Railway to Chaibasa. This, so to speak, left the Koina valley and some thirty Ho villages in a deeply forested communications watershed, that was then made the Saranda Forest Division under the management of the Bihar State Forest Department. And today it is one of the more famous and jealously guarded areas of original Sal (Shorea Robusta) forests in India that supports

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7 See Sifton, 1914.

many herds of wild elephant, leopards and four carefully watched wild Bengal tigers, limping towards extinction.

For the anthropologist communications with the village are not difficult. There are only a few days during the monsoon season when the bridges over the major rivers are flooded and the minor rivers cannot be forded, though, of course, travel is very much more difficult. In the good season a jeep can make the journey from the administrative headquarters at Chaibasa in four and a half hours to Dubil village. And during the dry season when timber contractors' lorries are running on the forest roads, it is possible to get from Chaibasa to Dubil in about eleven hours by train, getting a lift on a lorry and walking the last ten miles. But for the Ho, given their economic position, this journey is very seldom made; in fact during the year that I was there only two men from the village went to the headquarters. This means that government is a long way off, from the point of view of communications with the special office under the Kolhan Superintendent who deals with tribal affairs. Although the Kolham Superintendent holds camp courts the nearest one to Saranda is held at Noamundi, a journey of about eight hours by foot, lorry and train, which is the only route open to a villager. This still means that it is impossible to do the return journey in a day. But perhaps more important is the fact that Dubil is not directly served by a postal service. Letters will get there, but they take at least six weeks from Chaibasa, being delivered by an informal network of friends from the mining town of Chiria, nine miles away. This means that although the camp court is not far away, notices of meetings regularly arrive after the event. To this extent therefore communications with the Kolhan Superintendent and all the special administrative machinery for dealing with tribal affairs is not very effective for this area.

Later I will describe the details of the administrative system which I am now only trying to put into its geographical context. The other major wing of the administration is called the Block Development Office. Generally speaking this is not organised as a special office to deal with tribal affairs, having been created under different historical precedents to the office of the Kolhan Superintendent. The Block Office is at Manoharpur. This is twenty-four miles by road and timber trucks continually ply the road in the dry season. This office deals with all land revenue and settlement affairs, rural development schemes and statutory panchayat affairs. In many respects it is quite distinct from the Kolhan Superintendent's office and I will explain this in detail later. But it is this office which forms the main link with government in this area.

Our third task in the initial three month period was to get to grips with the politics and administration of this tribal area. To a certain extent the

politics of the area was a sensitive subject. Already one Jesuit Father had been asked to leave on the basis of possible involvement with a strike. The main political feature is that Singhbhum District is one of the firm bases of the All India Jharkhand Party.

The Jharkhand Party grew out of a number of Christian-based economic and political revivalist movements into a political party under the leadership of Jaipal Singh in 1949-50. Earlier, in 1939, the Protestant Chotanagpur Unnati Sabha and the Chotanagpur Catholic Sabha had united to form the Adivasi Maha Sabha [8] and won a number of seats at local elections. Their main platform was, and still is, the creation of a separate state of Chotanagpur, that would consist of the eastern half of Madhya Pradesh, possibly all of Orissa, but particularly the Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar Districts in the north of Orissa, the Midnapore District of West Bengal, and the Singhbhum, Ranchi, Dhanbad, Palamau, Hazaribagh and Santal Pargana Districts in the southern half of Bihar State.

This movement started in the Ranchi District and was largely based on the notion that South Bihar, or the Chotanagpur Division, was economically dominated and largely exploited by the *diku raj* or rule by outsiders from the north of Bihar. The great majority of the senior government officers in the Chotanagpur Division are northern Biharis, who the Chotanagpuris feel do not understand the unique conditions of south Bihar with its large contingent of adivasis or tribals. The stress was therefore on self-determination and development of South Bihar as an adivasi heartland that would also include surrounding areas in which there was a large proportion of adivasis.

Under the leadership of Jaipal Singh the party remained a united body, that, in some senses, was more than simply a tribal party. It appealed successfully to the wider category of Chotanagpuris and admitted a number of Hindu and Muslim leaders, and at one time was largely financed by the Muslim League. Even today a major section of the votes comes from non-tribals. However with the death of Jaipal Singh the party leadership began to disintegrate so that now there are three separate sections of the party, the division being based on geographical areas that derive from the tribal territories of the Santali Jharkhand in the Santal Parganas, the Mundari section in Ranchi District and the Ho section in Singhbhum led by Bhagun Sombroi. There are also factional splits between those who want to align with the Congress Party and those that want to remain independent. This internal factionalism was summed up very neatly when a Ho said, 'First we gave our vote for the cock, but then the cock died from eating

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8 The word adivasi is a generic term used to describe the aboriginal or autochthonous peoples of India.

too much. It just died like a cock dies with a lot of kicking. It died and now there is only government left.' The cock is one of the symbols of the party, the others being the *sal*[9] leaf and the bow and arrow. While this statement is somewhat of an exaggeration, it sums up some of the feeling for the present state of the party. But the party is still one of the major threats to the stability of the Congress Party in southern Bihar. Due to its tribal appeal it will continue to gain the almost automatic vote of all the tribal population.

For the anthropologist the most interesting aspect of this party is not its political platform but rather its ramifications within the tribal organisation in the area. Firstly it is part of a long historical development of the crystallisation of tribal identity that started with to Kol Insurrection in 1833, the Santal Uprising in 1855, the Birsa Movement in 1895 and 1899 and the Kherwar Movements in the 1920s. In the Santal Parganas and the Kolhan these movements led to the creation of special non-regulation administrative districts that were withdrawn from the civil procedures code and in which local level government was specially adapted to allow for the integration of the existing political structure of the village and paramount headman into the administration as tax collectors, land settlement officers, policemen and magistrates. The previously uncentralised political structure of the tribals now became a new centralised political system, linked to the colonial administration. In the Santal Parganas, a special tribal area to the north, the equivalent of the Kolhan Superintendent, called the Hakim, became a focal point for tribal political activity, acquiring the status of a paternalistic leader. These developments reformulated tribal politics. Instead of being a backward and dominated group living in the interstices of a caste Hindu population, they developed a centralised structure that was capable of taking concerted action in petitioning the government of India.

With the creation of political democracy in India this crystallisation of tribal identity developed into the formation of the Jharkhand Party, so that the relatively recent idea of a special category of tribes has now become a fiction or convention for political manipulation.

The other feature of the Kolhan that had to be understood was the special system of tribal administration, and its status in relation to the parallel system of regular administration. This will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

After making a general survey of the Kolhan the next stage of fieldwork was the intensive study of one village. It was decided to split this into two phases,

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9 The Shorea Robusta tree

divided by a two months' period spent at the divisional headquarters in Ranchi during the rainy season. This enabled us to consolidate the material collected in the village, and also to study the tribal. policy at the divisional level. We also had a programme of work with the Bihar Tribal Research Institute aryl the Department of Anthropology at Ranchi University.

The first task was to survey each household and map out the structure of inter-relations. A house to house study was made of each of the 94 units to record the household membership, kinship network, lineage ties, marriages inside the village, land tenure patterns, field mortgages, indebtedness and livestock. Two families living close by were chosen for an intensive survey of their yearly round of economic activities, and in the second phase a detailed economic survey was made of the nineteen households of one ward in the village. This in fact turned out to be of little use in any y statistical form as the material gained from household to household was too inconsistent, but it was useful in providing background material for an understanding of economic complexities and for testing hypotheses.

Major problems were encountered in all the survey work. Whereas Majumdar had been able to operate on a question and answer technique near to Chaibasa where the influence of missionaries and education is significant, such techniques proved fruitless in the more isolated forest region. Any direct approach was countered by the subtlest of avoidance techniques, so that the style finally used was one in which the interpreter kept up as lively a conversation as possible with the anthropologist interjecting his inquiries. There was no resistance to notes being taken, though the card index did become an institutionalised joke to the effect that people did not like being put into a filing box where they would suffocate, and that I was very stupid filing others next door to each other as they would only quarrel. Ultimately, however, the filling up of a card for each individual proved extremely useful. The basic survey work was very time consuming. To survey one house required at least three half-day visits. But when complete this provided the essential ground plan on which to base observation of the political and governmental activity of the village. This involved a ceaseless game of leading the discussion onto the topic of current events. Outright questions had to be assiduously avoided, and discussion was best carried out while co-operating with the subject over some practical task, be it working in the fields, walking to market, collecting in the forest or keeping warm around the fire in the early morning. One of the main activities was the drinking of rice beer. While this provided an ideal forum for discussion at one level, it did involve us in a perpetual game of trying to decide who had to pay for the drinks, with an overwhelming burden being put on us to pay for as much as possible.

One important success was my wife's connivance in running the rice beer shop of the youngest brother of the headman. His wife had died and he was left with three children under the age of eight to look after on his own. It was therefore difficult for him to work in the fields, or to go collecting in the forest. He had decided to live by buying rice and selling it as beer. Valerie's co-operation in this venture gave us an entrée into one of the more important venues for intrigue in the village.

Our second main asset in trying to understand the process of village government was the close relationship that we developed with the paramount headman's family. Finally we set up home in the abandoned house of the headman's younger brother, and developed fictive kinship relations with the paramount headman. This enabled us to keep a close watch on the affairs of paramount headman, who informally performed the functions of village headman, as the real village headman was considered by the villagers inadequate in carrying out his ascribed role. We were also able to maintain a close observation on the village headman, as the immediately younger brother of the paramount headman, with whom we shared a courtyard, was the village headman's accountant and performed all the formal tasks of rent collection and land settlement. Having established confidence with these three pivotal characters in the village, we were in a position to investigate and record any event that seemed pertinent to the government of the village. A close watch was kept on both the paramount headman and the village headman's accountant to find out whether they had been involved in village affairs. It was generally necessary to make first hand observation of all significant events. The Ho do not articulate events in a post mortem fashion. This is part of the syndrome that Gardner describes among the Paliyans as a feature of the individualistic nature of tribal society. [10] Unfortunately it proved impossible for me to get them to understand what I was interested in and I could never rely on them to tell me if there were going to be council meetings. In the end however it appears that I did not miss any councils or meetings of major communal importance.

One of the main functions of local level government is to contain interpersonal crises. To study this it was necessary to keep a constant watch on the 'current affairs' of the village and to tape record all forms of public discussion. The translations of council meetings has provided the most valuable material while also being one of the most time-consuming tasks. Finally a file of eleven meetings was built up (see appendix note 2).

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10 Gardner, 1966.

While recognising the analytical significance of private decision making and the whole dichotomy of politics into a private or domestic, and a public or jural domain, which will form a major part of my analysis, it was almost impossible to observe the private process in any form among the No. The problem is that the Ho will not, even under the duress of the anthropologist's questioning, intellectualise verbally, or express personal opinion on issues. We will see later that the whole process of articulation, and perhaps therefore by inference, the system of logic, is regulated by analogy. That is, events are not described, or even seen in terms of their own characteristics, but are rather likened to analogous events. This implies that issues do not gain a substantive reality at their own level.

To illustrate the complexity of argument by analogy and to demonstrate the subtleties Vat can be contained in such a system of communication I will give an example of a striking piece of dialogue from a council. meeting. In this example the case under consideration was settled. It was decided that a man called Dolka should give the assembled meeting some rice beer and goat's meat to show that he agreed with their conclusions. The paramount headman said that Dolka should give fifteen rupees and one he-goat. The goat was for meat and the rupees for buying beer.

Paramount Headman

Calculating everything 15 rupees and one he-goat must be given. You cannot buy rice beer for less than five rupees. (Not true, in fact you can buy beer for a quarter rupee. He simply means that we will not accept less than fifteen rupees worth of beer).[11]

A villager

You may even have to pay seven or eight rupees to get beer. Ruidas
Or even ten rupees.

Paramount Headman

Anyhow you will not be able to make the rice beer yourself. As you cannot arrange that, we will buy it with the money that you give us.

Dule

Altogether with the price of the beer, you must give us enough for the price of the beer. (Meaning you must give us the full amount.)

Paramount Headman

On your own account you cannot buy beer for five rupees, it is not sold in such small quantities. You have said that you are prepared to give ten rupees for beer. But you cannot buy beer for ten rupees, nor for five rupees. That is our word.

A villager

Rice is very expensive.

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11 The brackets are my comments.

Ruidas
Two poilas (an inconstant volume roughly equivalent to a kilo) of rice costs six rupees.

Paramount Headman
And you won't get much beer from two poilas of rice.

A villager
If you bring four *poilas* of rice, it will only make five rupees of beer. (Not true: the meaning is that twelve rupees of rice will not even make enough beer for us.) And you cannot buy five rupees worth of beer from anyone (not true).

Paramount Headman
So altogether with the rice account you will have to give us ten rupees. Whether or not it is possible to buy a five rupee lot of beer does not matter. But if you want to give us beer it will cost you fifteen rupees, no, twenty plus five rupees, or even thirty rupees. Anyhow it will be expensive, so we are giving you some pity and we, the council, will buy from someone five rupees worth of rice. If you buy it then the price will be so much, if you say one pot it will not be full. If you purchase fifteen rupees worth of rice it may only be ten rupees worth.

The assembly all agree with this and say that he should give them fifteen rupees so that they can buy some beer.

Paramount Headman
At present no one is making beer for two rupees, even eight rupees, or nine, or even ten rupees: Ten rupees will be fifteen rupees, and eight rupees will be sixteen.

The discussion carries on in a similar vein for some time with some superb examples of what I can only call fluid mathematics. The point is that only one absolute quantity is being discussed here and even that, in western terms, is a flexible quantity, this quantity being sufficient beer to satisfy the assembly. Such seemingly quantifiable idioms as amount of money, or the market rate for rice at three rupees a poila, assuming that a poila is a fixed quantity of rice as far as the Ho are concerned and the amount of beer in a pot that makes a pot a full pot, and the rupees worth of beer that a beer-seller is prepared to sell as a minimum quantity are all here taken as qualitative measures that relate to the amount of beer that will satisfy the assembly. This is not a complex system of accounting that can allow for inflation, even though the rapidly inflating price of rice is an integral consideration in the discussion. The point of the discussion is not how much rice beer can be bought for a sum of money. If they were discussing this the mathematics would be very different. They are discussing how much rice beer is needed to satisfy them, and all the subsequent quantities relate to this. If this is understood then the mathematics become clear. It is in this sense that all the seemingly absolute quantities are in fact analogues or isomorphs of

what will give the required satisfaction. The object of the discussion is therefore to get Dolka to give the paramount headman fifteen rupees so that he can send a man off to buy the beer and that, as they have bought the beer themselves, they will be satisfied with the quantity they get. Whereas if Dolka went off and bought the beer for them they would probably complain that he had not bought enough. Although they may agree that Dolka could make more beer for fifteen rupees than they could buy for fifteen rupees, nevertheless it is better if they buy it as they will then be responsible for how much beer is provided and Dolka will be absolved of all blame. It must be remembered that cash is a scarce commodity in the village. Dolka. would very much prefer to get hold of the beer himself and pay for it in kind. If he has to give the paramount headman cash he will probably have to borrow it from a miner who earns wages and pay a relatively high interest rate on it. In this discussion we therefore have the original fifteen rupees worth of beer to be bought by the assembly as the only fixed quantity. All the other quantities are analogues to impress on Dolka that he must stick to the asking quantity. But to understand this it is necessary for the outsider to transcribe the words and go over them again and get the speakers to elaborate on their meaning. With such seemingly fixed signifiers having such strong analogic references it is easy to understand how the tribal can be made a fool of by the profit-motivated Bania or merchant in the markets. This is one of the more agonising things to watch in the market places. The Ho idea of the baker's dozen is in strong contrast to what I soon came to call the Indian dozen.

The Economic Setting

As I will not be discussing the economics of the Ho in the thesis it is important that I give some background information. Throughout the thesis an assumption is made that there is a high degree of equality in the village. This is referred to and established, as a structural feature based on land holding patterns and the lack of interdependence of household economies. As a structural feature this means that there is an absence of group interdependence along the lines that Bailey (Bailey, 1960) has identified as the caste-peasant ideal type. But this does not mean that there are not differences of wealth in the village. It merely implies that these differences of wealth are not based on structurally defined differences of access to resources and means of production.

The fluidity inherent in any Ho system of keeping accounts made it impossible to compile quantitative economic data and also it is probable that the conditions in the year of study were abnormal as it was the third successive year of bad drought. We tried to get information on the past economic performance of households, but received nothing more than exaggerated myths of the 'good old days' when rice grew so thick that you could make a flute from

its stem. The only hard data to indicate economic changes were a very brief survey of the village made in 1897 by Craven and by Tuckey in 1914 [12] during the land settlement and survey operations. Comparison with these figures is highly suggestive.

Craven's figures for 7.897 list 30 households. By 1914 this had risen to 53, and in 1974 it stood at 94. Unfortunately I do not have any figures for land holding at the time of Craven's settlement. However Craven has listed the household membership and how many cattle, buffalo, goats, ploughs and carts each household owned, which can be compared with the 1974 figures. The overall comparison of moveable property averaged out per household shows a greater degree of wealth in 1894 than today.

TABLE 1:4. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP IN 1894 AND 1974

Date	No. of Houses	Total Pop	Average per Hs.	Cattle		Buffalo		Goats		Ploughs		Carts
				Tot.	Av.	Tot.	Av.	Tot.	Av.	Tot.	Av.	Tot:
1894	30	151	5.0	105	3.5	29	1.0	84	2.8	41	1.4	5
1974	94	441	4.7	220	2.3	14	0.1	214	2.3	109	1.2	O

Household membership was greater and generally speaking each household had more beasts. The interesting difference is in the number of carts. In 1894 there were five, with 29 buffalo to pull them, whereas today there are no carts and fewer buffalo. Undoubtedly today the possession of buffalo is seen as a mark of great wealth. Not only are they expensive, costing about 500 rupees as against 140 rupees a pair for good plough cattle, but they also need individual tending and washing. They cannot be herded communally by the village herdsman. It may be that in 1894 more buffalo were required for the heavy work of ploughing virgin soil. Moreover at that time markets were fewer and more distant, necessitating buffalo carts.

But if we break these figures *down* to show the distribution of beasts and ploughs per household, we get an interesting picture that shows a more uneven distribution of wealth in !894 than in 1974.

TABLE 1:5. DISTRIBUTION OF CATTLE PER HOUSE IN 1894 AND 1974

No. of Houses	1894	15	3	3	1	1	1	0	3	0	O	1	0	1	1
	1974	38	3	17	10	8	8	6	4	0	0	0	1	O	0
No. of Cattle Per House		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

12 See Craven 1898 and Tuckey 1920.

TABLE 1:6. DISTRIBUTION OF BUFFALO PER HOUSE IN 1894 AND 1974

No. of Houses										
	1894	27	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
	1974	84	2	4	0	4	0	0	0	0
No. of Buffalo Per House		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

TABLE 1:7. DISTRIBUTION OF GOATS PER HOUSE IN 1894 AND 1974

No. of Houses												
	1894	11	4	3	1	6	0	2	1	0	0	0
	1974	24	11	19	8	10	4	2	4	1	1	1
No. of Goats Per House		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

TABLE 1:8. DISTRIBUTION OF PLOUGHS PER HOUSE IN 1894 AND 1974

No. of Houses								
	1894	16	6	2	0	4	1	0
	1974	26	30	21	5	3	0	0
No. of Ploughs Per House		0	1	2	3	4	5	6

All the 1894 figures show a smaller number of wealthy people owning a larger number of beasts than in 1974 except the figures for the goats that shows an even distribution. Also the figures show that in 1894 there were 10 households in the village that had no ploughs or beasts, that is 33%, whereas in 1974 there are only 17 households, that is 18.1%. The 1894 Census notes 14 household heads as labourers. It is difficult to know exactly what this means, but it is likely that they were agricultural labourers, as at this period there was no industry in the area. Those who work for wages outside the village today also hold land and have considerable holdings of animals. It appears probable that they were people with very small holdings that had not yet become established and were working for those with larger holdings. To this extent the distribution of wealth was relatively less egalitarian in the past than it seems today. These figures may simply illustrate that the village a recent settlement in which only a few people had established holdings of cleared land, rather than a demonstration of less quality in the village.

In this case we can assume that those without established agricultural holdings were dependent to a greater extent on forest produce. Unfortunately the figures provide no information on this. Even today more than half of a family's food supply is provided by gathering rather than agriculture. In the year of our stay the rice harvest only fed the average family for three to four months of the year, although it was admittedly a bad crop that year.

By 1914 we do have figures for the land holdings that were taken under Tuckey's settlement of the village. At that time the number of households had increased to 53 and the average acreage per house was 4.33; by 1974 the

number of houses had increased to 94 and the average acreage per house was 4.04. The data again shows a more even distribution of land with no extremes of wealth, though a larger percentage of people had less than an acre of land in 1974 than in 1914.

TABLE 1:9. DISTRIBUTION Or LAND PER HOUSE IN 1914 AND 1974

% of houses								
1914	5.7	32.1	32.1	11.3	11.3	0	0	3.8
1974	12.8	19.1	28.7	25.5	5.3	3.2	2.1	0
Size of holding in acres	0-1	1.1-2.4	2.5-4.9	5.0-7.4	7.5-9.9	10-12.4	12.5-14.9	15-29

The major factor contributing to the change in land holding patterns is the rapid increase in population and the sub-division of holdings by inheritance. This had generally reduced the size of holdings, which is determined by the number of surviving sons. As there is no shortage of available land, it might be supposed that households with small holdings would clear new land for their needs. But all houses cannot provide the labour for this task. To clear new land and level it so that it can hold rain water to grow rice, the family must be at that point in its developmental cycle when it consists of a father and mature but unmarried sons to help him, for it must at the same time continue to farm the existing land and live by hunting and gathering. It takes at least three years from the outset of a project to clear new land before any return is realised in a harvest, other than various intermediary crops that can be sown on half cleared land, which only give a light yield. These three years are a period of high risk in which the household's economics are under pressure. It only requires a slight upset for the entire scheme to fail. If there is sickness in the family, poor monsoons, or damage to crops by elephants and a multitude of other factors, the family is thrust back on expending all its labour on the short term business of feeding itself from day to day. It appears that since 1914 there has been an increase in the inability of households to build up a secure economic base to allow for expansion of land holding.

In 1901 Martin Burns Company began iron ore mining operations on the Ankua range of hills overlooking the village on the west. This introduced a new economic variable into the situation. Between the 1930s and 1965 this mine became a major recruiter of local labour. Until the Iron and Steel Industry Wage Board Award Act of 1965, labour was recruited through contractors. Under this system it was possible for any villager to apply to a contractor and do as many hours of casual labour as he required to get the necessary wages to make up any shortfall in his village based economy. At this time all the villagers, both male and female, frequently worked in the iron ore quarries and everybody speaks of a period of great wealth in the village.

They say that they ploughed their fields or collected food in the forests early in the morning and then went up to the mines to work. It was a period when everyone had plenty of clothes and the village festivals were very grand affairs. People used to eat off plates and drink out of glass cups and every house was able to afford paraffin lanterns. This contrasts strongly with the present situation where only one household in the village was able to afford the upkeep of a daily paraffin lantern. After the implementation o: the Wage Board Award Act the conditions of employment changed completely. The system of contract labour was abolished. The newly nationalised Indian Iron and Steel Company had to employ all its labour itself and was forbidden to subcontract labour. It had to give all its employees a pension, work bonuses, sickness benefit and job security and at the same time much of the quarrying work was mechanised, requiring less coolie labour. As a result only nine men from the village now work in the mines on a greatly increased wage.

This period, between the 1930s and 1965, when wage labour was readily available for all the village, has had far reaching effects on the agricultural economy of the village. Firstly it injected relatively large quantities of cash into the village economy. This meant that rice could be bought and in fact wages could be taken in rice by those who wanted it. It therefore became unnecessary for villagers to clear more land to obtain rice. Secondly it was relatively easier to do casual labour in the mines when the household labour force was at a strong period in its developmental cycle, than to clear new land with all its concomitant risks. This meant that between. the 1930s and 1965 most families did not clear new land and the size of land holdings fell as the population increased and holdings were partitioned. Also the mining authorities dispensed various welfare and health programmes that no doubt contributed to the population increase. This situation would have created no ill effects if the system of labour recruitment had not changed. The situation today is that only nine men from the village can work in the mines and the remaining 85 households have been forced to fall back on a depleted agricultural base. This has led to a return to the land and to gathering but with less land available for the increased population and a weakening of the entire economic structure. It is now more difficult for new land to be cleared and there has been an increase in the number of households that failed to support themselves especially during three successive years of poor monsoon rains. It is necessary that more sources of wage employment become available to these forest villages. This indeed is part of the government's plans for the area. At the present there is a major scheme for improving transport facilities in this forest region. New metal roads are being built throughout the forest, and there are plans for the siting of small-scale industries and the construction of a water purifying plant near the village of Chota Nagra. The situation is

complicated by the fact that this is a tribal area in which there is an anomalous system of civil administration. The land is protected for the tribals. They are forbidden to sell land to anyone who is not of their village and who o is a non-tribal. Moreover the village and paramount headmen are the ultimate authority, under Wilkinson's Rules, over all the land within their village boundaries. Therefore permission for any development on that land has to be approved by the headmen. Not only are there unseen conflicts of interest here, but, more immediately important, is the difficulty experienced by those interested in the development of the area in getting permission from the headmen for such projects as school buildings et cetera. The administrators are not close at hand and communications are slow and expensive. But more important is the cultural barrier that has to be crossed. The whole system of village decision making and council meetings at which the headman makes such decisions as required of him by the developers is not in fact geared to the requirements of those developers. It is in this field that my study of decision making processes in a Ho village has relevance for the political future of the area.

The 85 households who do not have access to the cash economy provided by the mines are desperately searching for other forms of wage employment. There is strong competition for the few jobs provided by the forest contractors in felling trees during the open season in the forests, and the programme of forest conservation and management of timber cropping means that this source of labour cannot expand. In the last year there was a limited amount of wage labour available on road building schemes, but this was not sufficient. More interesting is the effect that has been created by nine households capable of earning about Rs.150 a month who have members permanently employed in the mines. These households earn more cash than they are capable of spending in the village economy - an economy of finite needs until aspirations change. One man showed me a bundle of Rs.900 that he had collected and could not spend.

One minor effect of this situation is that enterprising individuals have the resources to set up as entrepreneurs. One villager in Dubil who had been to school. has set up a shop in the village selling spices, sugar, salt and cigarettes on a small scale. This shop is not patronised by anyone from the village of Dubil. The great majority of the customers are from other villages who pass through Dubil on their way to and from the mines. On the whole this entrepreneur is not involved in the affairs of his own village and has not once attended a village meeting. The villagers thought that it was a mistake to buy from his shop. Another development has been the growth of beer selling shops in the village. While I was there two households that would otherwise have failed economically, due to the death of members at a vulnerable period in the developmental cycle, took up brewing rice beer to

sell to exhausted miners returning, from work. Work at the mines is extremely arduous and this is aggravated by the 7 miles walk there and back each day. After work miners stride, in exhausted silence, to one of the beer shops. There they collapse on the ground and leaf cups of beer are put into their hands with absolutely no concern for the customary rituals of beer giving and accepting that form one of the major social activities of the village. After drinking about three leaf cups they gradually recover and go home. The selling of rice beer has not only affected the economy by enabling certain households to become beer shops for a limited time in order to recover from a period of economic difficulty, it has also spread throughout the village. Women now brew rice beer for selling on a weekly basis at local markets and cockfighting grounds. This has enabled a limited quantity of cash to flow around the village, which has resulted in a decrease of land development and reliance on agriculture. But its corollary has been that it has produced a further requirement for cash by people who cannot find wage employment.

In this situation of a shortage of cleared land, with certain wealthy individuals getting wages from the mines, and an increase in the failure of household units, there is an imbalance in the community that did not exist before. A household that has run into trouble can now let its land to a family that can afford to rent it for cash. The wealthy miners who do not have the time to clear new lard to increase their holding, but have excess cash, now simply rent or take on mortgage land on the system called *thika bhandar*. By law these contracts are forbidden to last for more than three years. This was a government law to protect the tribal from mortgaging his land to caste Hindu moneylenders.

The usual arrangement is that the owner of the land receives a sum of money and the giver of the money is allowed to cultivate a field for a given number of years. Four families in the village had, in this way, let all their land in order to get cash to buy rice. Under the old system they would not have let their fields to an unrelated person for cash. Previously they would have re-sorted to the sharecropping or *saja* system. Under this arrangement they would have entered into a contract, usually with a kinsman, that he work the field and perhaps also provide the seed grain, if the family had eaten its store of seed grain. After the harvest the owner of the field received a share of the crop. This is still done by certain people who cannot find tenants to rent their land. None of the wealthy mine workers will take more land on rent than they can cultivate themselves with their own labour and their own cattle. The mine workers can afford to keep more cattle than the average family. (Cattle do not breed well in this area, and it appears that a large proportion of cattle continually have to be brought in.) But they will not pay others to work their land for them.

The egalitarian structure of tribal communities restricts economic possibilities in the village. Wealthy people will not employ the labour of others so that they can farm on a cash or profit-making basis. They are only prepared to farm for their own household needs.

There are signs today that this is changing. The man who started the beer shop after the death of his wife rapidly built up a stock of cash. Due to the collapse of his household unit and his inability to rent his land out it had been left uncultivated for one year. The result was that his field embankments were swept away by the monsoon rains and a three inch thick deposit of sand and gravel covered his field. As his beer shop was doing well he did not have time to clear this off his field and rebuild the embankment, nor did he have any cattle left to plough his fields, or the time to do the ploughing himself. So he announced that he would pay someone to do the work. He fixed a piecework rate for moving each basket load of silt from his field. The suggestion caused surprise in the village, but nobody actually raised any objection to it. Unfortunately he was incapable of budgeting the scheme and at the piece rate that he fixed, the same as that offered by road contractors, he ran out of cash after less than half the silt had been removed, and the project failed. In effect the money was wasted. However this demonstrates an interesting feature of the early stages in the introduction of a cash economy into a non cash environment. The beer-shop owner felt that he had plenty of money to pay for the project. But he was judging this against the traditional method for doing the job. By this system he would have either brewed a few pots of rice beer or slaughtered a goat and cooked the meat. He would then announce that he was going to give a working party and that all those who came to the field would either get beer or meat. In this way it would have cost him a given amount and the job would be done in a day. But he would also have needed to organise the party, which he was not in a position to do. He therefore thought up this new alternative, weighing the traditional expenditure against the amount of cash that he had. But there was a dissonance of scale between the traditional economy and the outside cash economy. This makes wage labour relatively profitable for the villager, but means that a villager cannot acquire sufficient cash to become an employer. It is possible for a man engaged in regular wage labour outside the village to earn more money than he can spend. But it is not possible for any villager to gain sufficient money within the village economy to employ labour at the same rate that he can be paid outside. It should not be long before the two separate economies come into line with each other. If this happens then these forest villages will have moved a long way towards becoming integrated into the wider economy of India. But it is necessary for the village economy to be inflated for the two economic spheres to come into line with each other. This process has

perhaps already begun and is a contributory factor to the number of households that have failed economically in the recent past.

What then is the economic failure of the household unit? It usually turns on one major factor - the inability of the family to plough its land and prepare it in time for the monsoon season, so that it has to fall back on a purely gathering economy. The relationship between the gathering and agricultural aspect of the economy is a very complex one and is a subject on which I did not carry out detailed research owing to the difficulty of getting quantitative economic. data. I will therefore only attempt to discuss it in a general way.

Three households failed during the year of study. The first household to collapse was household number 87 (see lineage survey). I have very few details on this household as the collapse came soon after we arrived in the village. When we first came to the village in February the majority of villagers were eating the rice harvested in December, but this family was living by going to the forest and collecting edible tubers. They had no cattle, and their house was very dilapidated, implying at least three years of difficulty. The monsoons had washed away all the mud infill between wattle. They had rented all their land to their younger brother, Soma Uindi (H. 88). He had taken each of the four small wet rice fields for 12 rupees for two years. By the summer, in May, the father, Bamiya Uindi, had left his wife and five children to look after themselves by gathering food and was living by begging in the mining town of Chiria that serves the iron ore mines for the quarries overlooking the village. Later in the summer the rest of the family joined him there, and all the villagers said that they would not come back, and that the younger brother would probably keep the fields.

The next household to collapse was that of Gure Purti (H. S1). When we arrived in February Gure Purti and his third wife were living in a tiny house about six feet by ten feet with three children, a boy Mudu of 12 years, Lukuda, a girl of 6 years, and Jarka, a small boy of three. Gure was desperately thin and ill. He was only capable of walking slowly. He did not have the energy to protect the tobacco plants growing in front of his house from the goats. The two eldest children were living purely by gathering seeds from wild trees in the village and scrounging off others. The youngest child was chronically malnourished and died five weeks later. When he was buried the grave was lined with the door of the house, as the family did not have the energy to get any timber from the forest and nobody would help them.

Gure Purti was one of the larger landowners in the village with 10.39 acres. His father had been a very wealthy man with three wives and two buffalo.

Gure appears to have consistently squandered what was left to him. He sold most of the beasts and when he had no plough cattle left he mortgaged his fields to buy other cattle. By 1974 all his fields were rented out except for the garden around his house. Two wives had already left him to live with other men and taken their children with them. One of his daughters by a previous marriage lived as a prostitute in a mining town. His eldest son by the present wife had found work as a tea shop attendant in Manoharpur and occasionally brought some money back to his parents. Later in the year the 6 year old girl also died of malnutrition. The wife lived by gathering in the forest and the father by occasional wage labour. But when we left they were both becoming very ill and weak.

The third example of a household failing economically is that of Basu Kimbo's house (H. 67). Basu Kimbo lived with his wife and five children. The eldest daughter had left home and was married to a man in another village, leaving Dakua, a son of 12, Nandu, a son of 8, Dukuni, a daughter of 15, and Mongol and Chipiri, twins of 5 years. They had two plough cattle and the father and eldest son had a relatively good harvest from their 2.63 acres of land in 1973. But in the summer of 1974 they were unable to plough the irrigated land. The eldest son had gone off to work and the father got dysentery and was too weak to plough. The son, not hearing of this, did not come back to do the ploughing and they got no harvest from the summer irrigated paddy. Basu's illness got worse and it became evident to them that he was going to die. His wife tried to persuade her husband's younger brother to help them plough his fields. He was unmarried and looking after his aged mother. The mother died and Basu's family rented out two of. their best fields to pay for the funeral, while the younger brother offered no assistance at all. One of their cows died towards the end of the summer. In her attempts to get help from her husband's younger brother the wife became pregnant by him. A village meeting was called and pressure was put on the brother to look after his elder brother's wife. But he did nothing to help her. The eldest son was upset with his mother and went to help his mother's brother to plough his fields for the wet season and lived with them as an adopted son. He never returned home again. Dukuni. the eldest daughter had a runaway marriage, described graphically by the villagers as a 'dog's marriage', *seta andi*, with a man who already had three wives and worked as a wages clerk for a timber contractor. She became pregnant and after quarrelling with the other wives returned home to live with her mother. Realising that they could not plough their fields, they gave them on lease and lived off the money supplemented by gathering during the monsoons. D the monsoons the father died of dysentery and, having plenty of cash, they gave him a grand funeral, burning his body before the burial. Then the dysentery spread through the family. The mother became very ill and could not go out gathering. The eldest daughter got dysentery badly. Both she and her baby

died shortly after the birth. By the time the monsoons ended no one from the family was even going to the forest to collect food. They were eating the odd fruits from wild trees in the village and for their main diet they were roasting the rice husks from other people's harvest and grinding it into flour. Nandu, the second son, was sent to live with his mother's brother and the wife and two young twins were left hanging about their house that had largely collapsed in the monsoon awaiting death. None of their neighbours or kin felt inclined to help them. The husband's younger brother should have helped, but he did nothing. While the village felt that he was obliged to help to a certain extent, they also felt that the wife of Basu had largely asked for the trouble that she was in, So no great pressure was put on the younger brother who had made her pregnant. The wife should nct have slept with the younger brother while the husband was still alive, even though it is normal that a widow will go to live with her husband's younger brother after her husband's death. Also the behaviour of Dukuni making a 'dog's marriage' with a man very much older than herself and then quarrelling with the other wives was felt to be a mistake. The general feeling was that the mother had not cared sufficiently. She should have taken control of the situation and seen that the household held together. Ultimately the children will probably become integrated into various related households and the husband's younger brother will take on the land. It is possible that when one of the sons marries he will return to the village and claim back his father's land from his father's younger brother. However it is not easy to do this.

These case histories demonstrate the relationship between the agricultural and the gathering sector of the economy. Despite the fact that collecting probably constitutes more than half of the average family's source of livelihood, it is the agricultural sector that determines the economic viability of the household unit. Although one may say that the Ho are, largely speaking, a society of collectors, in that this is their major source of income, they are not totally dependent on collecting. They are not nomadic and live in permanent villages. On the other hand they are not exclusively cultivators. They do not have sufficient land for slash and burn nor do they adopt sufficiently sophisticated agricultural techniques to live off their land. Their social organisation is largely based on a rudimentary segmentary model determined by land tenure, and the majority of their religious ceremonies are based on the agricultural cycle rather than the collecting one.

It is not possible to take the view that the Ho are basically cultivators who make up the shortfall by collecting. The one household in the village that was capable of growing all its own cereal requirements not only collected many other carbohydrate foods such as tubers from the forest, but

also marketed large quantities of forest produce such as rope grass, *bachom* or *sawai* grass and broom grass. But nevertheless it is possible to say that this dual or mixed economy does provide a greater security of food supply in years of bad drought. There is no doubt a relationship between unsophisticated agricultural techniques and the ability to rely on forest produce. Perhaps the most significant feature of this economy is the independent nature of each household's economics. There may be large differences of wealth but a class structure of landless labourers and wealthy employers has not developed. The marketing of produce has always meant that cash has played a significant part in the economy. Forest produce is sold to buy rice and wage labour is sought for cash to buy rice in the summer. But a labour market has not developed within the village with a consequent interdependence between a landowning and a labouring class. When labour is required in the village people are invited to a working party and partial payment is made with a feast at the end. Irrespective of economic status all people attend these working parties on a reciprocal basis. Their function is as much for social entertainment as for crude economic need. The gradual incursion of the cash economy into the village is altering this situation to the extent that anything one might be tempted to call a 'tribal' economy is already subject to change.

The Ho have long been isolated in the interstices of political and economic developments in India. But, with the growth of industry and the expansion of national politics tribal cultures, formerly isolated, are becoming arenas of critical interaction.

Chapter Two. The Village.

Introduction

The village is the fundamental unit of Ho society. A man is initially identified by reference to his village. He not only belongs to it, but it belongs to him in the sense that it is the environment in which his personality has developed. The members of the village live together, sharing the common resources of the land, forests, streams and trees, and afford one another security and protection. The village houses the ancestors and, in a culture that has no written history, it represents continuity. There is a sense in which the tribe is little more than a collectivity of culturally similar villages each with its own headman.

The structure of a Ho village is very different from the caste dominated village of the Hindu peasantry. It is largely egalitarian and based on kinship and lineage relations. Marriage restrictions between groups are mainly reciprocal rather than hierarchical and are not associated with a structure of economic subordination and domination. They function as labels for cultural identity and have no profound structural significance. Marriage patterns suggest that the servicing castes, Lohars (blacksmiths) and Gopes (cowherds) are really Ho who became part-time specialists and acquired a position in the tribal village to some extent resembling the service castes in Hindu villages. It is possible that if the Ho should come into greater contact with Hindu culture this feature will develop into a full caste system. At present there is only one true Indian subcaste in the village, the Oriya Gowallas (cowherds), and the relationship between the dominant tribal section and the specialist groups, in spite of some caste-like features, is more egalitarian than hierarchical.

A Religious and Symbolic Community

The word for village, hatu, has a broader reference than to a simple collection of houses and fields contained in a two to four square mile clearing in the forest. It is one aspect of the two-fold division into tame, hatu, and wild, buru. As Hoffman says, 'this word (hatu) and its synonyms di, kel, etc., stand for what we would call civilisation, culture, although the range of what the Munda understands by civilisation is, in the material sense of the term, a very small circle indeed as compared to the vastness and complexity of our modern material civilisation' (Hoffman 1950: 1663). Human endeavour is the ongoing fight to pacify and live with the forest, buru, and its spirits, burubongako. New villages are pioneered by a set of brothers. And

even today many young men talk about clearing new villages in order to expand the are a of cultivation and 'civilisation', even though this is nowadays forbidden by the Forest Department which has the task of conserving the forest as a rational resource.

The ethno-history of the village serves as a mythical charter, both a validation of and a statement about how the Ho conceptualise their position in the wore: as village dwellers, haturenhoko. I will give a composite version, of the myth of origin of the village of Dubil and later draw conclusions from it.

> When new villages could still be founded, the pioneer consulted with the spirits of the area to discover whether or not they would co-operate in the founding of the new village. In Dubil they say that Old Man Kande, the paternal great-grandfather of the present village headman, who was living in the village of Rajabera some three miles away (see lineage survey No. 1, and adjoining map in appendix 1), came to the present site of the village. Deciding that it was a good place, he prayed to the spirit, bonga, of the place. He asked it[13] to give a sign of agreement with the project. He then balanced a billhook, du, (the tool used for clearing the undergrowth) on its end. If it were still standing next morning he would take it as a sign. of approval. He went to sleep and next morning found it supported on either side by a pair of great cobras. These were the spirit snakes - the servants of the guardian spirit of the new village. He returned to his natal village and persuaded others of his clan to come and join him in clearing the new site. First he was helped by Old Man Bisu, the paternal grandfather of Jintu (H. 22, see lineage survey No. 2, appendix 1), who was of a local lineage different from Kande's. In fact his ancestors were the original settlers of their natal village, Rajabera. After two years of difficulty in the new village, which they called Dubil, meaning the standing billhook (du = billhook, bid = standing or planted), Bisu gave up the struggle. But Kande persuaded him to try again, arguing that they were now worshipping the spirits of the new village, and that if they now left the spirits would be annoyed. It was their duty to look after this spirit and they should not forget it. Bisu returned and in the third year and fourth year they managed to cultivate some fields and reap a modest harvest. The village continued to develop successfully and all went well with Kande's worship of the new village spirit, so that they decided to define the boundary of the spirit's influence. They traced a line along natural features and marked it with standing stones and trees. Within this boundary Kande became the headman of the new village - the munda - and the deuri or village priest. Bisu was also a founder, but of a different lineage. His lineage was the lesser of the two, as far as the new village was concerned; it became the 'small' or huring lineage (see lineage survey No. 2).
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> Soon the village became subject to the sovereign power of the local Hindu raja, the Raja of Chota Nagra, and Bisu became the steward at the raja's court, the manki or paramount headman of all the Ho villages in the area. As the village grew Bisu invited Gopes, a quasi-tribal caste of cowherds and Lohars, blacksmiths, to take land in the village in order to benefit from their expertise.

The allegorical value of this myth sums up many significant features of the Ho village. It is a bounded area of land in which the spirits of the wilderness

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13 I will refer to bonga in the neuter as their sex is indeterminate. Many bonga can be either male or female.

and the forest - the burubongako - have been tamed, or, if literally translated, 'villaged' by the intercession of the village guardian spirit, the hatu bonga, on behalf of mankind. Having acquired the services of a spirit the contract that is created must not be broken. A duty exists to fulfil the contract and make the inhabited area a success. If this is done and the village spirit propitiated and given offerings, then success is likely. The spirit will act as a helpful agent in bringing under control the multitude of wild spirits, burubongako, that live in all parts of the 'villaged' area and will have to be disturbed in the course of clearing.

The worship of the village guardian spirit is not merely a symbolic representation of the village's relationship to its natural environment and a statement of its existence and viability; it also states its social and historical relationship with the previous inhabitants of the area. Dubil was the abandoned site of a Bhuiya village. This meant that one of the main spirits in the area of the deserted village was the spirit of the Bhuiyas, called Paudi Ma [14]. Being female Paudi Ma is today one of the main consorts of the village guardian spirit, hate bonga. At the time of Dosora Puja (Durga Puja), when the Bhuiyas perform the main sacrifice to Paudi Ma, the people of Dubil make a village collection, which is taken to a Bhuiya village in the area, where the priest offers it to Paudi Ma. This is necessary for the wellbeing of the dry rice crop. The taming, or 'villaging' of the wild spirits within the boundary is a contractual involvement with the attributes of the environment - both human and natural - a contract. that is reasserted at every village festival when the village priest sacrifices to the village spirit, hatu bonga.

The village is therefore a community living within a religiously defined boundary, that is realised through a contract with the village spirit. This contract still holds good when the village is devoid of inhabitants. Several abandoned villages, that have now been taken over by the ;Jungle are still villages in the sense that they are the abode of a village spirit, which has been abandoned and is no longer worshipped. This means the spirit is angry and must be avoided. The story behind one of these sites is that it was captured

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14 The Bhuiyas are a group of Hinduised tribals that dominated this area aid the northern states of Orissa until the Ho migrated into the south of Bihar. Bhuiya leaders adopted rajput status, setting up small valley kingdoms like those discussed by Bailey, in the Mahanadi valley (Bailey 1960). The local rajas, the Raja of Manoharpur, the Raja of Chakradharpur, the Raja of Seraikela and Kharaswan, though denying Bhuiya origins, still use Bhuiya priests at their court. And the Seraikela Raja is the jealous possessor of the supposedly original statue of Paudi Ma in a temple in his compound (see Singh Deo undated).

In saying that the Bhuiyas were in this area before the advent of the Ho I am disagreeing with Baden-Powell (Baden-Powell 1892;575). However his references to the Hinduisation of the Bhuiya rajas by Brahmans (ibid: 579) does tally with my version.

from a now unknown people conceived as being apelike, called the Chetn tribe, who sent a tiger every seven years that killed all the children. Finally the Ho deserted the village and set up a new one adjacent to Dubil.

This contract with the village spirit to protect the community enables people to live in close association with the untamed spirits of the forest. All the natural features, such as streams, springs, hills and large forest trees left standing in the village after clearing, still harbour spirits, against which the protection of the village spirit is necessary. Also animals and plants are divided into those that are domesticated and hence of the village, and those that are wild and belong to the forest. Ownership is not claimed over wild products. The fruits of such trees. even those still standing in the village, are communal. It is also strictly forbidden to use wild fowls for fighting. Not only would this be unfair, as the wild fowls are stronger, but it would be setting the spirits: of the forest against those of the village, in fact against the ancestral spirits of the cock's owner in whose name the bantams fight.

This opposition between the village and the forest is symbolised by the presence of the holy grove, sarna or jaherstan, in the village. This is a coppice of virgin forest left standing in the heart of the village. It is the residence of the village spirit and his consort. All major services to the spirit are held in this grove of sal trees (Shorea Robusta).

The people who live within this bounded area are described as the 'people of the village', haturenko, or 'the village brothers', hatuhagako. They are bound together by cultural. and emotional ties, relying on common spiritual and economic resources. Herein lies an anomaly. The village of Dubil has two holy groves, sarnaking, and therefore by implication two village spirits, hatu bongaking. One is the holy grove of the Ho and the other belongs to the seven Santal households in the village. It appears that the Santals came to the village shortly after the Ho, and were allowed to settle in it by the Ho. They have developed a separate ward, toli, within the village. When they began to clear the fields they also consulted a village spirit, and left a coppice for him. They state that the village is one and they respect the same ritual village boundary as the Ho. At all the major festivals when the Ho hold a service in their holy grove the Santals hold a separate service in their own grove.

This duality in the community strengthens the conception of the village as a religiously defined area, with the differing groups occupying it bound together by their contractual relationship to whichever spirit they see as their protector. This definition is given further meaning by its opposition to the external forces of nature. The following incident illustrates the shallow

nature of this division in the community. During the festival of maghe porob when all work on the land is tabooed, Dule, a Santal (H. 79) told his two sons' wives, kiminking, to dig some manure. When the paramount headman, manki, discovered this he ran to his house and blew the bison *horn* trumpet, orong sakuwa, and demanded that they stop work. He threatened that he would arrest Dule and beat him. But Dule said that he would not stop the work, nor would he pay any offering, danre.[15] After a struggle and a shouting match all dispersed. The paramount headman told Dule's sons' wives that since they were living in a village with the *Ho* they should keep the village rules. *He* said that should anything go wrong in the village, if cows or goats were to die, they would have to take the blame. In fact many cows were dying of liver fluke at that time. If any Santals died, then he, as paramount head, would take no responsibility for it. They decided to call a meeting after the festival, and all the Ho present agreed that the Santal were at fault. During the meeting Dule vanished to the forests and so the matter could not be settled, but the paramount headman, manki, said that Dule was responsible for the death of the cattle. Chara Dakuwa (H. 31) said that perhaps Dule believed that he had a separate holy grove, but that nevertheless the village was one. The headman replied that it was not necessary to discuss the matter as it was the village spirit who had been insulted and that if Dule did not want to settle the matter himself then the village spirit would.

Although claiming to be separate communities, subject to different regulations and rituals, the sub communities are bound together by the existence of one village spirit. Having failed to settle the matter at a secular level, the villagers left the settlement in the hands of the village spirit. This same norm applies to all the other non-Ho members of the village community.

The Statutory Village

In Government records villages are defined for the purposes of rent collection and general administration as an assembly of houses under one village headman. It was not until I had been in the village for two months that I discovered that, although the government defines Dubil as one villagp, it is two villages in the religious sense, going under two names, Dubil, 'the standing billhook' and Hendediri, 'the black stone'. For ritual and religious purposes these two villages are separate. They do not sacrifice to the two village spirits on the same day and there are separate holy groves and two village priests each from the founding lineage of the respective communities. The village priest, deuri, is the chosen servant of the village guardian spirit in the world of mankind.

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15 Danre is best translated as 'offering', though in this context 'fine' also seems suitable. However all 'fines' are in fact offerings that are demanded as reconciliation with the community. Danre also refers to the beast that is sacrificed to spirits. And if a man offers to buy another some rice beer, this is also referred to as danre.

The village founder entered into the initial contract with the spirit doing the relevant service to him. The priest is possessed by that spirit.[16] On the death of the incumbent, the village spirit chooses a successor by a complex ritual called tukubm nam (finding by tapping on the ground with a stick). The chosen person becomes possessed and, in the instance that I witnessed, shook violently and spoke 'with tongues' for at least an hour. This man was then obliged to serve, seba, the village spirit and act as his agent in continuance of the contract set up by the founder. The successor must be a resident of the village and a direct agnate of the founder. The case of Kusu Deogam [17] is interesting here. He had lived in the neighbouring village of Jamkundiya where he was the village priest. He had cleared some fields within the statutory boundary of Jamkundiya, but across the religious boundary and inside the religious village of Dubil. Later he moved house to live beside these fields and therefore moved out of the religious community, although he still considered himself to be a Jamkundiyan. Soon after moving his wife became ill and after many sacrifices to various spirits she died. It was decided that this was the work of the village spirit, hatu bonga, who was annoyed at his servant living outside the boundary. He was therefore allowed to relinquish his post by the villagers and a successor was found.

In this way there is often a lack of correspondence between the statutory and religious community. But as I am largely concerned with the secular aspect of the community, I will use the term village in the statutory sense.

Village Composition

The Ho village is not an homogenous social group. Firstly and most importantly the village of Dubil contains members of different clans, though this is not true of all Ho villages. According to Majumdar many villages contain the members of only one clan (Majumdar 1950: 89-95). In Dubil there are in addition two clans of Santal and three groups that perform certain caste-like functions in the village. In this section I will first explain the demography of the village. Secondly it must be p pointed out that although the clan system has relevance at the level of tribal organisation and has important functions in linking one village to another, as far as village social

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16 The concept of service, or perhaps worship, and spirit possession, are one ad the same in the Mundari language, seba. If a man does service to a given spirit a relationship of dependence develops, that can be translated as possession. The servant certainly possesses the spirit, in that through the relationship he has some degree of control over it, and, at critical times, after the appropriate trance ritual, his own spirit or breath of life, jibon, is overtaken by that of the spirit that he is serving. If a man takes a spirit and does service to it, he is bound to look after that spirit, so that if he fails the spirit will take retaliation. (See Deeney, 1975; 175).

17 Kusu Deogam has not been included in the household survey.

structure is concerned the significant unit is the local group, the subclan, or as I will later define it - the local lineage.

Dubil village consists of 441 persons living in 93 households distributed as follows:

TABLE 2:1 HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP

No. per house	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. of houses	4	13	13	15	14	13	12	3	5	1

The average size of the household is 4.74 with a range of 1 to 10. 85% of the houses have between 2 and 7 members evenly distributed among them. In Dubil there are eleven Ho clans and two Santal clans and one household of Hindu cowherds. As the following table will show there is one dominant clan that contains members of four subclans of the Champia clan.

TABLE 2:2 CLANS IN DUBIL VILLAGE

Tribe	Clan Name	Subclan Name	No. of Households	No. of Members
Ho	Champia	Chauli Chapi	13	60
		Huring [18]	20	98
		Bari Gara	15	74
		Lamdar	2	10
	Purti		7	26
	Hembrom		6	19
	Kimbo	Dang	6	29
	Balmuchu		1	6
	Surin		4	14
	Suri		1	7
	Sirka		1	6
	Angaria		1	2
Gowalla	Gope (cowherders)		1	5
Lo Lohar	Uindi (blacksmiths)		8	32
Santal	Hasda		5	39
	Murmu		2	12
Oriya	Maghada Gowalla (cowherder)		1	2
			94	441

As explained earlier it was two members of the Champia clan who founded the village of Dubil. These two original. co-founders came from the same village but were members of different subclans - the Chauli Chapis and the Hurings. The Bari Gara Champias are the sole occupants of the Hendediri ward of the statutory village that is in fact a separate religious community. They founded

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18 This term Huring always confused me. Some people said that the name was indeed Huring which means small, and they agreed that as far as Dubil village went the Huring Champias were the 'small Champias'. They were the numerically strongest but as a local lineage they were not the great lineage of Dubil. The great lineage was the Chauli Chapi Champias as they always held the office of village headman and village priest. When it was pointed out that the Huring Champias might be considered greater because they always held the office of paramount headman, this was dismissed as not being a village matter. Also it was asserted that while being small they were also the greatest and that whatever is small is always also great. This inversion of small and great is a very common feature of Ho logic that requires lengthy discussion on its own. It is a system backed up by mythical charter. But the, Subclan was also called Huruing. This is the name of a small fish that lives in the streams and irrigation channels. It is probable that in fact this is the correct name of this Subclan, though correctness as such has little significance in local ethno-history. A large number of clan and subclan names either follow the names of animals or places and both Majumdar and Risley attribute a degree of totemism to 1Io clan names, though I could find no justification for this (Majumdar 1950: 89-92). It seems most probable to me that the explanation must be found in local conditions. The Huring subclan of the Champia is recognised and found throughout the Kolhan. The fact remains that the Huring Champias of Dubil, while being the largest Champia subclan and also one of the founding subclans of the village, do not hold the major offices in the village. The phonetic similarity of Huruing to Huring has therefore allowed a transformation to occur that the Ho find an amusing double entendre. For convenience I will here refer to this subclan as the Huring Champias as it seems more relevant in the local conditions that I am talking about, though in the context of tribal organisation it would be more correct to call them the Huruing Champias.

this village. The Santal clan of Hasda can also be seen as a founding clan in the village in that they have their own village priest and their own holy grove within the bounded area of the religiously defined village. Their status in the village is obviously ambiguous as they once held the office of village headman for a number of years.[19] The remainder of the subclans in Dubil have arrived more recently and each subclan has a story of how it came to Dubil. One of the commonest reasons is that a girl from one of the founding clans was married to a boy from a landless local lineage in another village and that the boy was given some land in Dubil to cultivate by the village headman. In this way a new clan gained membership of the village. In situations where this has happened in single clan Munda villages to the north, this clan has changed its name to that of the founding clan after a few generations therefore preserving the single clan structure of the village. This does not appear to happen among the Ho.[20]

The Clan System

The clan system of the Ho is of considerable interest. It is a system of dispersed exogamous groups. Each group has its own name which is often the name of an animal or a natural feature. This does not have any significance at the symbolic level other than that the item referred to plays a part in the story associated with the origin of that clan. There is no association with an original ancestor. Many clan names are commonly found among the Santal, Munda, Ho and Birhor, though many are also unique to each group.

The term subclan is probably a misnomer for the dispersed local clan groups, particularly where the subclan name is that of a village or natural feature. This 'is the case of the Bari Gara Champias, where Bard Gara refers to the 'river of the Bari tree'. It seems probable that all the Bari Gara Champias once lived at the place of that name, but that, with subsequent migrations, they are now dispersed throughout the area of Ho population. It appears that there are insufficient members of one subclan for it to be likely that, after dispersal, they find themselves reunited in a new village. It is usually true that in any given village the representatives of the subclan are also a local

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19 From the records in Chaibasa it appears that the village headman who was of the Chauli Chapi Champia subclan was deposed by the British authorities due to ill conduct, and a new headman was appointed. The man chosen was a Santal of the Hasda clan. Some years later the administrators found that there was a Santal headman of what they considered a Ho village. They promptly deposed him and returned the office to a member of the founding subclan - the Chauli Chapi Champias. This is an interesting case of administrators imposing derived tribal values on a tribal community and thereby reifying what they see as immutable custom, when in effect custom is capable of greater flexibility than governmental law and expectations.

20 Standing has referred to this in an unpublished paper.

lineage with a known common ancestor. Therefore at the level of a village study the subclan becomes the local lineage.

The clan is not a corporate group which takes collective political action. Majumdar appears to have missed this point, believing that the clan can operate as a corporate unit. He refers to a killi punch (Majumdar 1550:103) or clan council that is capable of making decisions in cases where all the members of one village are also the members of one clan. However this is not strictly speaking a meeting of the entire clan but only of the representatives of that clan living in one locality, which can only assume the significance of a local lineage council. Even then this council cannot assume a parallel role to that of the village council. It does not have the same institutional structure with a headman or recognised set of elders who act as a focus of authority and continuity. What does happen is that the members of the local lineage may gather informally to discuss matters of mutual concern such as the payment of rent on their corporately held land. At these discussions there are none of the rituals found at formal council meetings. Such informal discussions were described to me as the 'boiling of the rice pots', mandi catu isingtana. The rice pot is the colloquialism for the local lineage.

The killi, clan, functions as an exogamous unit and also as a unit of identification and ritual practice. The clan name is always used as a means of identification by the administration. In all civil court cases, police matters and registration of land the individual gives his personal name and his clan name. But perhaps more significant is that when two strangers meet their first attempts at relating to each other will be to discover their respective clan names. The next stage will be to find with which local clan groups their respective local clans have established enduring marriage alliances,. In this way the two strangers will map out for each other a complex and often highly abstract and fictive pattern of kinship links. But it is this 'clan map', comprised of local clan preferences for alliances with certain other clans, that is a major factor in tribal organisation. Also, each clan worships a specific marang bonga or great spirit. This suggested to me some form of totemism, but I was unable to verify it. The marang bonga of each clan is named and will only accept certain meat in sacrifice. This spirit certainly plays a central role as a sanctioning authority for the maintenance of clan rules of exogamy and incest. Also if one particular local clan group (local lineage) seems to be suffering in any particular way and a shaman, deonwa, traces the cause to the marang bonga, a sacrifice will be held to that spirit. It was said such sacrifices could be performed at the supra-village level, but this has not occurred within living memory.

The Tribal Groups

One significant feature of Dubil village is that both Ho and Santal live in the village. Ho and Santal are variants of the same major cultural and linguistic family. Although we cannot be certain of the exact dates at which the Ho began to migrate into the Kolhan, it has been suggested by Roy that the Ho split off from the Munda before the inauguration of the Nagbansi dynasty of the Maharajas of Chotanagpur (Roy 1970:71). Roy suggests that this dynasty began. somewhere around 64 A.D. (ibid: 77). As mentioned earlier this migration was initially into the eastern plains of the present Kolhan, with subsequent expansion northwards and westwards into the forested area and onto the Chotanagpur plateau escarpment. The village of Dubil, which is probably one of the most recent villages in the Kolhan, was pioneered in the 1830s.[21] We know that during the 1820s a major migration of the Santal took place into the Rajmahal Hills to the north, now called the Santal Parganas. This migration was due to the famine of 1770, the Permanent Settlement Act of 1790 and the consequent changes in the zemindari system that subjected the Santal to extensive exploitation and usury by zemindars, landowners, and mahajans, moneylenders.[22] It seems probable that during this disturbance of the Santal population certain groups, rather than going northwards from the central Chotanagpur Plateau, made their way southwards into the district of Singhbhum. Large groups of them now live in the old estates of the Raja of Seraikela and Rajkharaswan and around the area of Jamshedpur. If this is so, we car. posit that the Santals came to live in Dubil shortly after it was founded, probably in the 1850s.

The Ho are the dominant group, but the relationship between the Ho and Santal is not hierarchical. Both communities can be mutually polluted by each other, as will become clear from a discussion of marriage regulations. The Santals comprise a culturally distinct unit within the political framework of the village. They live in one ward, toli, in a small valley where they have cleared land. They have their own holy grove, sarna, and village priest, deuri, who, at festival times, holds a service according to their variation of

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21 The Craven survey and Settlement (1898) records the existing paramount headman being in office in 1890. Chaibasa miscellaneous records note his son taking over in 1897 at the age of 13 due to the old age of his father. This boy's grandfather started the village of Dubil. Calculation on the basis of a generation lasting 30 years, puts the date of foundation at 1837. Also we read in Tickell (1840) that Dasu Babu was recognised as the "master of Saranda Pir" in 1831. This man was the Raja of Chota Nagra. And we know from local history and myth that the founder of the village became the steward at his court. Therefore we can assume that the village was probably founded in the 1830s or 40s.

22 For details of this argument see Yorke 1972: 86-90, chapter three, section 6, an unpublished thesis.

the ritual, but to the same spirit as the Ho. But even though the ward, in which the Santal live, is called Santaltoli, it co-operates in close association with other Ho households. It is still true today, as it was in 1895, that the Santal, who are assiduous clearers of new land, hold a proportionately large amount of the wealth of the village, which gives rise to conflicts between the groups. The Santals are frequently referred to as greedy, jimbui, and they are said to serve dhan bonga, a wealth spirit. If served and brought into the household, the spirit makes the family rich, but it is said to become more greedy and difficult to satisfy as time goes on. The family may eventually wish to get rid of the spirit, but this is a risky undertaking. Dhan bongas are said to steal paddy and take it back to the household of their owner. Such accusations express the tension between the Ho and the Santal.

Among themselves the Santal usually speak in the Santali dialect, but when speaking to their non-Santal co-villagers they always speak in the Ho dialect.

Both Santal and Ho state that they cannot eat rice from each other's rice pot. The rice pot is an object of great significance. It should never leave the inner room of the house where it is kept on the hearth in the middle of a small raised dais, ading, which is the resting place of the ancestors of the local lineage. The rice pot itself represents the unity of the local lineage. People who are not of the tribe or race, jati, are forbidden to touch it. If the pot is touched it should be broken and replaced with a new one, The rice cooked in the pot is generally reserved for the family and certainly may not be eaten by members of another tribe. Ho may not take cooked rice from a Santal and vice versa. In practice, however, I frequently saw a Santal sitting very close to, and once even on the raised dais, an act that should, presumably, have polluted the rice pot. The barriers of pollution have probably been weakened by intermarriage between the two communities. The Santal who was sitting on the paramount headman's raised dais was his wife's brother, an individual to whom he should show great respect. This particular marriage typifies many of the salient features of inter-tribal relations. The village laughs at the paramount headman because he has a Santal wife, who is unable to cook for her own. children, who are Ho, so that he has to do all the cooking. In fact, however, the prohibition is not observed, and the Santal wife does all the cooking. The flexibility of norms governing behaviour between the two communities is illustrated by the following story of the marriage between Bamiya Huring Champia and Palo Hasda.

In all but two cases the Santal have married within their own group. The ethno-history of the marriage between Bamiya Champia, the paramount headman, and Palo Hasda, a Santal girl from Dubil, contains sufficient factual evidence

to demonstrate how a marriage between a Santal and a Ho is achieved against all the ideal prescriptions against inter-tribal marriage.

When a dirt road was being built through the villages some twenty years ago to enable a timber contractor to gain access to the forest, Bamiya, the son of Bisu Manki, was working as the wages clerk and Palo Hasda was working as a coolie. Bamiya liked Palo, but Palo did not like Bamiya as much. One day Bamiya told the people of Palo's family, owa:renko, that he would take their daughter (there would be no point in Bamiya asking his parents to arrange the marriage as he and Palo were of different tribes. Normally the parents first try to arrange marriages with the help of a go-between, datom. This initial approach of Bamiya's to the girl's parents was therefore very brazen in its directness, apart from his proposing an inter-tribal marriage). Palo's family discussed Bamiya's threat and said that they would resist it. So Bamiya decided to capture her, orti:, drag by the hand.(This is a recognised form of marriages.) One day Bamiya and some friends took a pot of rice beer to the road works and offered it to the boys and girls. In the evening they enticed Palo to sit against a tree and drink some beer.. Bamiya was hidden behind the tree. When Palo was drunk Bamiya smeared her forehead with vermillion without her being aware of it. That was the marriage (andiokedkija:, the ceremony of marriage between them was done). Palo did not like it. She covered her head with her sari and set up a great wail and rushed home. Palo told her father Moso: what had happened and the mother grabbed a pole to beat Bamiya to death. Bamiya ran home and hid inside the storage baskets in the inner room, ading, where those of other tribes cannot go. For a month she hunted Bamiya with a pole and nobody tried to stop her. Bamiya stayed inside the basket and was unable to go out, or even to urinate. A meeting of the village was called but nothing was settled. Palo was too ashamed to go to her own home and hid in a maize field, but she was also frightened to enter Bamiya's house as it would break tribal rules. She knew now that no Santal boy would ever take her, so she slowly crept over to Bamiya's house and began to live with him. Her family did not try to stop her. After this the other Santal of Dubil decided to outcast, jutta, Moso;'s family. They fixed a pole with a red flag in front of his house. As they did this Palo's mother screamed at them that she would never speak to them again. Palo's parents did not borrow anything from the other Santal and they could not go to the Ho. If they had no fire they had to make it themselves. Finally Palo's parents decided to call a meeting in order to bring peace to the village. They called an old Santal from Salai (a predominantly Santal village some nine miles away), and paid him five rupees. It was decided that he would purify the family. They paid him ten rupees for this and all the family were ceremonially cleansed. Then Palo's family killed a goat, served rice beer and a conciliation meal was held with all the Santals. They agreed that the marriage should be held. Palo's and Bamiya's parents talked together and the marriage was agreed. A brideprice of two bulls and thirty rupees was paid. (As the families are the

two we wealthiest in the village this can be considered as a relatively small brideprice). All the exchange feasts were held and the full links of affinity, bala, were created. Later Bamiya also gave a purificatory offering to the Ho people of the village.

Tribal distinctions within the village are preserved at the ideal level, but in practice the two groups live and co-operate closely together. While I was in the village the marriage of Bamiya's second son was being arranged and the son's mother's brother, a Santal, was acting as the go-between.

The Servicing Groups

The servicing groups are local lineages, whose position in the village is dependent. on their carrying out a specific professional service for the inhabitants of the village and also for neighbouring villagers if it suits them. Two professional groups live in Dubil, cowherds and blacksmiths. Professional groups living in neighbouring villages also provide specialist services for the inhabitants of Dubil, such as weavers, basket makers and potters. Another group which fulfils a similar function, but is distinct from these permanently settled groups, are the Birhors. These are nomadic hunters and gatherers, of the same cultural and linguistic family as the Ho, who periodically come and settle near a Ho village for about a week at a time and provide them with rope products made from the bark of the rung creeper.

Although the status of these groups in the village is analogous to that of Hindu castes, the resemblance is largely superficial. A number of the servicing groups are simply local lineages that have taken up a professional task as a hereditary occupation. Two of the groups are culturally indistinguishable, except in matters of detail, from the Ho. The prohibition on commensality and intermarriage with the two groups is not regularly observed and the marriage pattern suggests that they are in origin Ho, who, as a results of occupational specialisation, have acquired a position analogous. to the lower castes in Hindu villages.

The blacksmiths in the village are represented by eight households of thirty-two people. The Ho word for blacksmiths is Lohar, but this group is often called the Ho Lohar, implying a direct recognition of their tribal origin. For this reason I will call them quasi-tribal. They have a clan ideology similar to that of the Ho. The local lineage in Dubil belong to the Uindi clan. Ideally they should only marry into other Lohar clans. But of the marriages recorded among the Uindi clan nine were between Lohars and five between Ho and Lohar.

It appears from the records that Sambhu Uindi was allowed to settle in Dubil in 1903 and given land that had been vacated by weavers, Tantis, in 1902 (see Kolhan Miscellaneous Register, Case No. 799 of 1912-13, decided 8.2.13, at present catalogued with Craven's Settlement Papers and Notes 1896-1915). it is usual for such groups to hold land on an absolutely equal basis with any other villager. The standard economic practice of mixed agriculture and collecting forms the major part of their economy, whereas blacksmithy only provides a supplement to their income. In fact, of the eight Lohar households only two practise ironwork at all; that is, they have developed the skills and are utilised by the villagers. The other six households are economically indistinguishable from the tribal villagers. Of the two engaged in ironwork, only one (household 90) does so on a regular basis and maintains his forge and his implements. He also does blacksmith's work for three other villages beside Dubil. He is paid on a simplified jajmani patron-client system. The most important job that he has to do is to re-sharpen and reshape the iron points to the ploughs which keeps him busy during the ploughing season for a few hours every evening. There are also a number of other jobs that he takes on throughout the year. In the past the Lohars used to smelt iron and make the tools required by the villagers. But today nearly all the tools are bought in the local markets and any iron required is available as scrap from the iron ore mines. The main task is, therefore, repairing axes and arrow heads and making a varied array of small metal objects such as door hinges, knives and sickles.

The blacksmith will do any work that is required of him by a household that uses him to look after their ploughshares. In return for this he claims from that household a fixed measure of rice for the number of ploughs that it owns, the quantity being 10 seers of rice for each plough. This is referred to as his chanda or commission. Each year, after the villagers have reaped their harvest, he goes to the house of his clients when he knows that they have brewed some rice beer. He will sit and drink with them and discuss the work he has done for them. He is given his commission and the families agree to continue the arrangement next year.

Intermarriage between the Ho and Lohar has frequently taken place even within the village. Of the marriages recorded among the Uindi clan, 9 are between Lohars. These all involved marriages in distant villages that made affinal visiting almost impossible. 5 marriages took place between Ho and Lohar of the village, and in a sixth case the widowed Lohar wife of a Lohar remarried a Ho inside the village. In this case, as it was a remarriage, it involved no form of marriage ceremonial. No brideprice was paid and no purification was necessary. If a Lohar girl is taken to live with a Ho boy, ideally the girl's parents will not get the brideprice, gonong. If a brideprice is paid, it establishes an affinal relationship, bala, which is not appropriate with lower

castes. In these circumstances the girl's parents will have to make an offering for purification, or else the Ho villagers will excommunicate the girl and the boy's parents, as their action has given offence to the village spirit, hatu bonga. This happened in the case of Susuku Uindi (Lin. 6), when she married Sergeya Hembrom (H. 60). However whey. Gurbari (11. 90) married a Ho boy from the neighbouring village no fine was paid. In fact she was captured while dancing during *a* festival. When the boy's family told Gurbari's parents that their daughter had been captured they said that they deserved to take an offering and the boy's parents agreed. *In* fact a very high offering was given of two cows, two goats and 100 rupees. However this should not be confused 'with a brideprice, even though Gurbari's parents claim that it was a brideprice, gonong. This was purely an offering for capturing, orti:, a girl without the parents' permission. It was not followed up with the full feast that establishes affinal relationships, bala jom. In this case no offering was demanded by the inhabitants of the neighbouring village. It was said that as she had been captured no offering was necessary and anyhow all were pleased with the marriage, as Gurbari was a particularly strong and hard-working girl. When Mageya Uindi (H.89) took Etewari Hembrom from H.59, which was seen as an exchange far the marriage just mentioned, no brideprice was given, and again no purificatory offering was considered necessary, as this had already been done in the previous marriage. In the case of another marriage between the Uindi and Hembron clan, between Buduram Uindi (H.92) and Kaera Hembron (H. 59), the same arrangement was observed. Regular marriage exchanges have developed between the Ho and the Lohars even though they are considered polluting. The regularity of the exchange has meant that no purificatory offering is required. It appears that once a purificatory offering is made it is then possible for the two groups to intermarry without any offence being given to the village guardian spirit thereafter. The other servicing group in the village are the cowherds, generically referred to as gowalla or gao or gope. In the Kolhan there are two types of cowherd. One is quasi-tribal and the other is non-tribal.. I will first describe the quasi-tribal as their status in the village is similar to that of the Lohars. This group has been called the Magadha Gowalla by Tuckey.(23) It is represented by one household of five people (H. 86) and is distinct from the Oriya Gowalla, who are represented by one household of two people (H. 85).

The Magadha Gowalla, commonly called a Gope or Gao, is a quasi-tribal. Tuckey says that 'from his appearance he must have a large admixture of He blood in his veins. He-is a necessary adjunct to the communal. life of the Ho, and is

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23 This report by Tuckey was not available in the original. I have only read a typescript of it and cannot give page references. See Bibliography under Tuckey 1920

not considered a Dikku (Hindu outsider) by him' (Tuckey 1920).[24] In villages where there are many Gope they usually live together in a separate ward. They own land in the village on an equal basis with the Ho and have a similar clan structure to the Ho. The Gopes of Dubil are of the Honhaga clan, a clan name that is shared by many non-cope Ho. Their mother tongue is the Ho dialect of the Mundari language and their belief system is the same as the Ho. They have a particular association with Bageya Bonga, a spirit that lives in the cattle sheds and on the paths of the village and in the jungle, causing cattle to wander and be attacked by tigers and leopards. This association emphasises their role as cattle herders.

Like the Lohar they do not depend solely on cowherding for their livelihood. They also have fields and engage in gathering. But in comparison to the Lohar their task is more time-consuming and they receive a greater reward. Their payment is also referred to by the Ho as a chanda or. commission. At a particular annual ceremony called Gao mara each cowherd is paid according to the agreed rate by the family for whom he works. This ceremony comes after the rice harvest and is part of the week-long new year ceremony called Maghe porob, at which all the yearly contracts in the village are renewed. These include contracts both with spirits and men. The rate of payment annually is 10 seers of unhushed paddy for every mature cow (8 kilos),[25] 2 seers for every idle cow or calf and one seer for every goat. But over and above this commission the cowherd can claim a daily handful of rice from each of his patrons after returning the cattle in the evening. He usually goes to one of his patrons and asks for sufficient rice to feed his family that evening. This quantity if referred to as his nala or wages.

The cowherd does not herd all the cattle of the village. Many Ho households, who cannot afford this arrangement or else have sufficient children of an age to herd their own cattle, do not use his services. Also many households co-operate in herding each other's cattle. Kaera Gope (H. 86) herded the cattle of 10 of the 94 households in Dubil.

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24 This report by Tuckey was not available in the original. I have only read a typescript of it and cannot give page references. See Bibliography under Tuckey 1920

25 The Ho and their cowherders are very unsophisticated cattle husbandmen. Many have to be brought in. One of the cowherders' many roles is to locate saleable cattle for his clients. This he does from nomadic groups of people who buy and sell cattle. It is possible that this forest area is not suitable for cattle. Most of them are very small, not much larger than a normal donkey. The Ho use both bullocks and cows for ploughing. They do not milk any of their animals, goats, buffaloes or cows.

Plate 2:1. THE GAO MARA FESTIVAL; Jamdar Purti (H.54), the cowherd, on all fours before an altar of termite mound, date palm and offeerings of rice beer and rice. Bamiya Champia (H.14), the *manki,* acting as a shaman, is about to whip the cowherd.

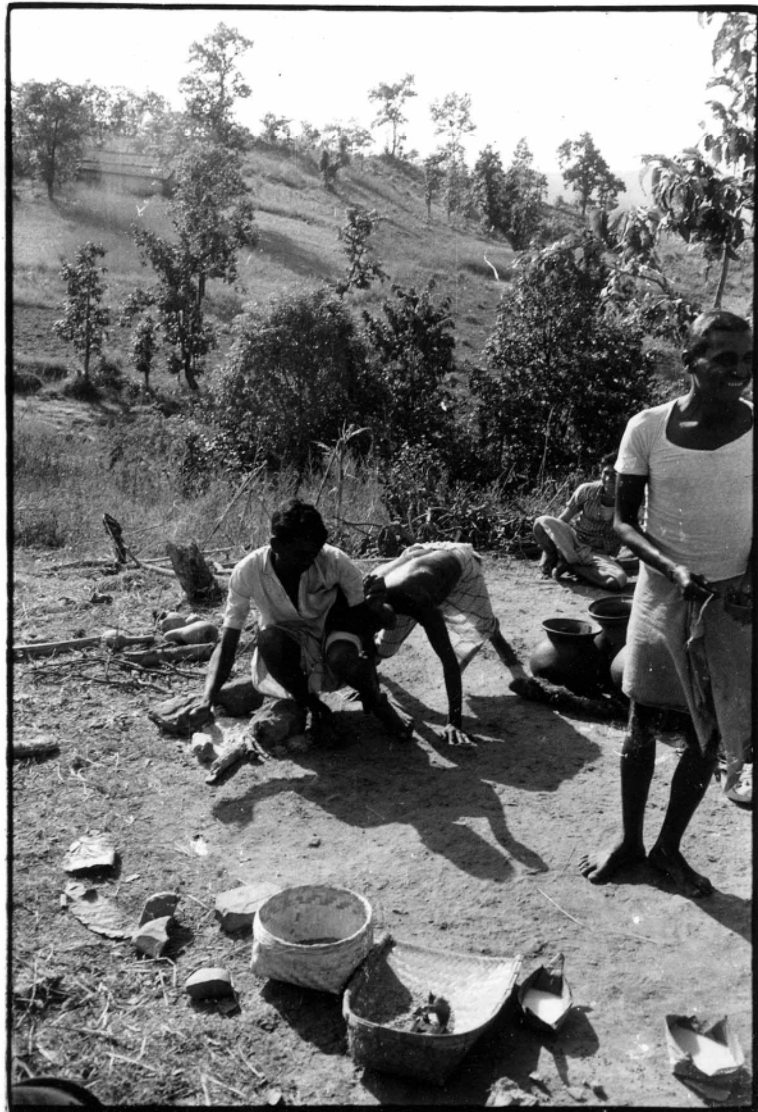


Plate 2:2. THE GAO MARA FESTIVAL: after being whipped the cow-herd, pretending to be a cow, charges one of his patrons.

At the Gao mara festival the cowherd's contract with his patron is reaffirmed. This festival is held on the first day of the Maghe porob or new year festival, between the end of December and the beginning of March. The Gope announces in advance that he is going to hold the festival on a particular day. His patrons then prepare the necessary rice beer in advance. He cuts his hair and oils himself heavily and puts on his best garments. A shaman, deonwa, makes an offering of rice beer in front of an altar, deep, that is erected in the courtyard of the Gope's house. The rice beer of all the patrons is then offered to the village guardian spirit, Singbonga, the omnipotent creator spirit, and to Bageya Bonga to protect their cattle for the coming year and to ask for their cooperation in helping the Gope do his work well. Then the shaman shouts at the Gope as if he was a cow, telling him to get down on all fours. He sticks a handful of grass under his belt to symbolise the tail of the cow and whips him with another frond of grass, ordering him not to leave the herd. The Gope, still on all fours, butts the altar over with his head and amid roars of laughter charges round the courtyard on his hands and knees butting all his patrons. The rest of the day is spent drinking the rice beer that the patrons have brought to him. They discuss the events of the pr evicts year. The contract is usually renewed and the Gope is paid his commission .for-the last year.

One factor that can help us to understand the relations between the Ho and the Gope is that it appears to be possible for a Ho to become a Gope. An event occurred in the village which suggests that this is possible and that, to all intends and purposes, the quasi-tribal groups are little more than ordinary villagers who have taken on a specific profession.

> The dead father of the existing Gope household head used to worship Bageya bonga as his guardian spirit and was said to have been an excellent cowherd. The cattle thrived under his care and none were ever killed by leopards or tigers. However his son, Kaera Gope (H.86), the present cowherd, was a lazy man and gave up the worship of Bageya bonga. He neglected the cattle and in the summer of 1973 a leopard killed nine goats in the period of one week. The owners of the goats were angry and called a meeting at which they decided not to give their livestock to him anymore. For a week the owners herded their own cattle. During that week the son of Goma Murmu (H.84) became ill and three shamans, deonwa, divined that the cause was Bageya bonga, who was angered by not being worshipped properly by his inherited servant on earth, Kaera Gope. In order to help cure the boy Jamdar Purti (H.54), a Ho of the Purti clan (Lin.5) said that he would take the spirit and worship it, as he had already worshipped many other Bageya bongas. He had inherited very little land and was largely dependent on forest produce. It was therefore decided that he should take on the job of cattle herding. This decision was strengthened when it was seen that the afflicted boy improved as soon as Jamdar Purti began to worship the particularly angry Bageya bonga. He became the village cowherd and was given a daily wage. All Kaera Gope's old patrons immediately took their cattle to him. At the next Maghe Porob he announced that he was going to hold a Gao Mara ceremony. All his patrons turned up in the traditional way. By this time Kaera Gope was totally ashamed and did not even announce a ceremony. He had found it extremely difficult living without his wages. And on account of his laziness and inability to look after his family, his wife had taken the children away and was living with her elder brother in her natal village. Kaera struggled to make ends meet living alone with his aged mother. In fact over the summer he was able to get plenty of wage labour.

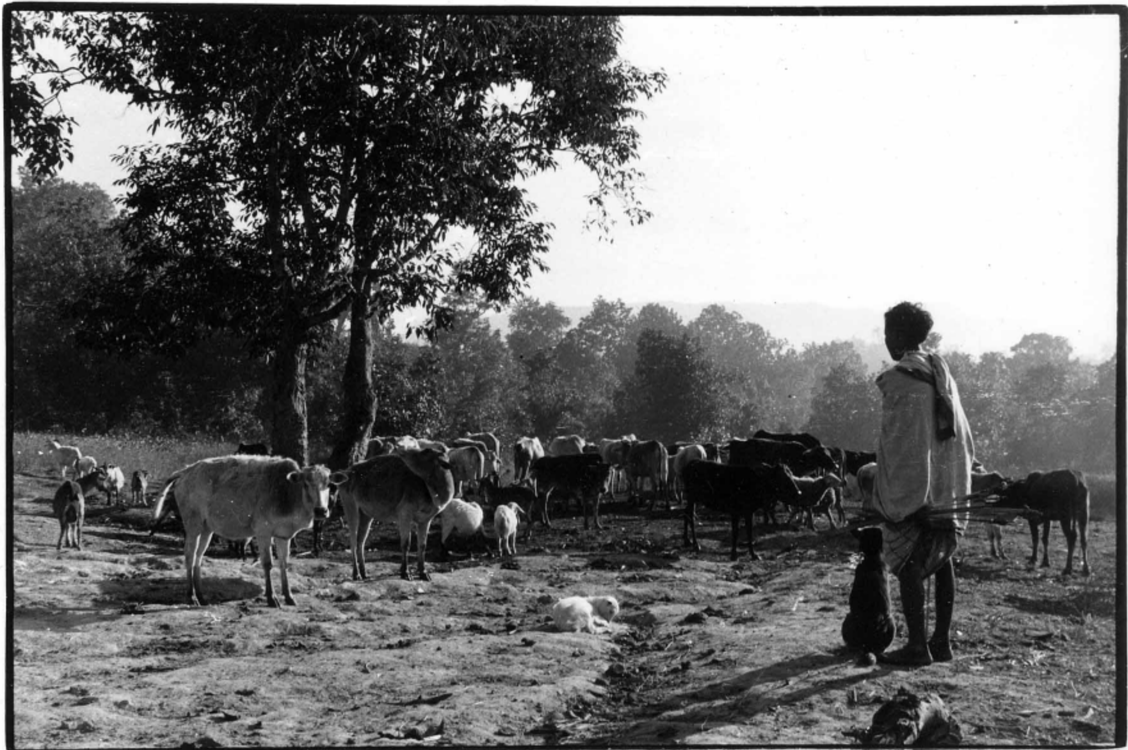


PLATE 2:3. JAMDAR PURTI (H.54) in his new role as cowherd with dog and bow and arrows to defend his animals.

The significant feature of this case study is that during the Gao Mara ceremony called by Jamdar Purti there was a great deal of joking about Jamdar Purti having now become a Gope. His clansmen did not resent this overt drop in status to a servicing level and he was pleased because it helped him economically. It seems likely that the epithet Gope will stick if he continues to carry out his new task. It will be interesting to see if it will apply to all his other clansmen in the village. I doubt this, but if his children carry on this role it is possible that they will become Gopes, in which case it would be necessary for them to split off from their local lineage and develop a separate graveyard, which is unlikely to take place in one generation. If Gopes can be recruited from ordinary Ho clansmen in the village this would provide a significant insight into the structural position of these quasi-tribals, though to confirm this impression it would be necessary to observe the change over a period of time.

Before discussing intermarriages between the Gowallas and the Ho it is necessary to describe the other type of Gowalla present in Dubil village as both types of Gowalla are linked to the Ho by marriage .

Tuckey has referred to the other type of Gowalla as the Oriya Gowalla and I will keep to this nomenclature. Strictly they are not tribal at all. In appearance they do not resemble the Munda-speaking people, and their mother tongue is Oriya. The Ho refer to them as diku, or Hindu outsiders. There is a rigid prohibition on commensality between them and the Ho. Both see each other as polluting. To the Oriya Gowalla the Ho are beef-eaters and non-Hindus. To the Ho the Gowallas are diku. On the other hand the presence of an outsider inside the village makes the one representative of the group, Pulsingh Gowalla (H.85), a useful marginal man in the village. By being both a villager and an outsider he is frequently used to entertain Hindu guests in the village which no Ho would otherwise do. On the only occasion that a Hindu stayed overnight in the village he could not be offered hospitality at any tribal house.

The village headman therefore took uncooked food to the Oriya Gowalla's house, where it was prepared by his wife for the visitor and the visitor spent the night at that house.

As a cowherd Pulsingh Gowalla herds cattle under exactly the same conditions as the Gape and performs the same Gao mara ceremony. Unfortunately in studying one village with only one household of Oriya Gowallas it is difficult to reach any generalised conclusions about intergroup relations. The Gope is allowed to hold title deeds to village land. Indeed Kusu Gope, the father of Kaera Gope (Lin.15), was invited to Dubil by the last paramount headman, manki, and was given land. As a diku, or Hindu outsider, the Oriya

Gowalla is forbidden to hold a title deed to land in a Ho village by the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act. Pulsingh Gowalla (H.85) cultivates three fields that he has taken on mortgage, thika bhandhar. Pulsingh came to the village some 10-15 years ago from a village in Orissa. This supports Tuckey's observation that the Oriya Gowallas, who live mainly in the south of the Kolhan, have gradually spread from the Orissa States. They were probably displacing the Bhuiyas and the Dhuruas or Gonds from the south at about the same time that the Ho were driving them out from the north' (Tuckey 1920).

It is difficult to be categorical about marriage relations between the Gowalla and the Ho. It is said that Gope and Ho may intermarry though it is not liked. If a Ho marries a Gope girl he must make an offering of purification to the village. If a Gope man marries a Ho girl he must do the same. Beyond that, the marriage is considered normal and acceptable. Both Kaera Gope and his father, Kusu, married Ho girls, though in both instances from distant villages, This meant that the affinal tie would be weak. The tie of affinity and alliance between the Gope family and the Ho family did not present much of a problem as the man's kin and the girl's kin seldom visit each other, because of the distance between their villages. Ideally any marriage between an Oriya Gowalla and a Ho is totally forbidden, as it breaks all tribal regulations. However this has been overlooked in Dubil as Pulsingh Gowalla has married Kaera Gope's father's brother's daughter. There is a general blurring of the boundaries between the groups. It is even possible to suggest that, if it were not for the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, Pulsingh Gowalla might well have been given land in the village, as this was the only reason that the villagers gave me for his not holding title deeds to land. The only conclusion that one can draw is that, in the close-knit pattern of life in an egalitarian tribal village, communal distinctions are only relevant as loosely conceived cultural labels. Once inside the village the distinctions of a caste-like hierarchy tend to be forgotten, becoming insignificant in the structure of relations in a way that is not true of the classical Indian caste-based village. Bailey has defined the difference between caste and tribe on the basis of the degree of political and economic interdependence of groups within the community. Caste-like structures have a high degree of interdependence, and tribe-like structures greater equality and less interdependence. The situation in Dubil is that the village lacks relations of hierarchically arranged interdependent groups. If a caste Hindu becomes integrated in a tribal village the ideal distinctions of the caste hierarchy are a hindrance to interaction and soon lose their meaning. But on the other hand distinctions associated with caste, such as commensality, retain some significance in tribal social structure when they involve relations outside the village. An Oriya Gowalla from another village would be treated according to the ideal norms of caste. This happened in the case recorded on page 17, when a visiting Hindu had to stay overnight with the

Oriya Gowalla. Here the Gowalla household provided a convenient frontier zone, or situation of marginality - at one moment inside the egalitarian community and at another moment outside.

The Household Unit

The fundamental social unit of village activity is the household. Each household passes through a series of developmental stages. At different points its composition varies and therefore so also does its status. Although there is an overall cycle to the development, not every household will follow the same pattern. A new household comes into being when a man marries his first wife. It can be said that a part of marriage is the starting of a new house, though there are many instances when the physical separation of the new couple is delayed for a few years. In some cases the separation may at first be only partial: they are either given a separate room or they build a small single-roomed house just across the courtyard from the boy's father's house. Marriage is usually virilocal. At this stage of partial separation the new couple are dependent on the man's parents for a great deal of assistance, be it economic, religious or political. But throughout this period of partial separation the new unit will want to establish its separation and independence. The division of the household into old and new is usually precipitated by the necessity to clear new fields. Either the new unit or the old will make the decision to clear a new plot of land. This will require intensive work and the unit involved in the work will move its house close to the new plot for ease of access. One of the major childhood activities is the perpetual building of embryonic households. Children are always building small mud houses and when they become adolescent there is a period each year, while the crops are ripening, when they build small huts beside their parents' fields where they sleep at night guarding against herds of marauding elephants, which are one of the major natural hazards in this area. The final separation of the household comes when the father gives the married son his share of the local lineage land. The timing of this is variable. Some fathers give certain fields to their sons soon after marriage, while other sons may have to wait until their father dies. Most families value a formal division of the land, i.e. a government land survey officer, amin, is brought in to draw up the division and make out the new deeds of ownership that are entered in the khatian, the village's continuous record of land rights. The written record often prevents disputes later. However the villagers recognise that this is an expensive process and the money required is often better used to clear new fields.. Even if the land is not formally divided, the new householder is given fields that he can cultivate on his own as 'a separate unit.

The establishment of a new household is symbolised by the setting up of an independent ading, or ancestral shrine. This is a small raised dais along the foot of one wall, against which the cooking hearth, chula, is built. This area is the abode of the spirits of the patrilineage, owa:goe. It is an area of purity, that can only be approached by the members of the local lineage. On it is kept the rice cooking pot, mandi catu, that has the same status as the ancestral shrine. It represents the unity of the patrilineage and is found in all fully developed households.

After separation from the parent household the next stage in the development of the household occurs if and when a second wife is brought in by the household head. Until the second wife bears children she will usually live with all the other members. When she has children a separate room is usually built for them. If relations between the two wives are not amicable, which is often the case, the new wife may build a small separate house adjoining the main house, or it may be some distance away, but nearly always within hailing distance. This sub-unit of the household will not have an ading of its own. The whole household will gather as one corporate religious unit at festival and ceremonial times.

The last son to be married usually remains in his parents' household to look after any aged parents that are left. The occasional dependent will live in the nuclear family unit, as it is difficult for a person to live alone. The household is a separate religious and economic unit. It holds rights of usufruct in a share of the local lineage land. The household head is its political spokesman. Until a man *has set up* a separate household he will be subject to his father's authority both at home and in the village council.

Given this ideal definition of the household there are many units that I have counted as households which do not have all these criteria. Six of my household units do not have ancestral shrines, H.8, H.35, H.50, H.52, H.64, and H.94. Two of these, H.50 and H.8, are eldest sons *who* have recently built a new house, with a new wife, in the courtyard of their father's house. They have not yet developed a separate shrine, though they do have a rice cooking pot of their own. These two married sons are considered old enough to speak for themselves at council meetings and they make a considerable number of economic decisions separately from their parents. For instance their forest produce economy is entirely separate, but they do not yet farm their land entirely separately. Three of the six, H.52, H.64 and 11.94, are young unmarried boys, who do not have any parents. Although they *hold* their share of the inherited land, they mortgage it out for cash, thika, as they lack the cattle and labour required to cultivate it themselves. They live largely outside the village, doing wage labour. Besera Uindi, H.94, does have a house

in the village, where he often stays, but Dursu Purti, H.52, only has the ruined shell of a small hut. Both of these are one-person households. The third of these households is that of Doko Purti, H.64, consisting of four siblings. The father died of snakebite and the mother returned to her natal village and set up a household with another man. All the four children stay at various houses in their natal village, except the eldest, Doko. They help in the houses in which they live as adopted orphans and earn their keep, dasi. Doko is an inveterate thief. Three times he has stolen considerable sums in the village and immediately run away to distant towns to work in tea shops. During my stay he came back, two years after his last theft and, after promising the headman not to steal again, he was allowed to stay. He has the fields of his father but gives them on mortgage e. On his return he attempted to restart his house. Doko, who is 16 years old, with his two sisters and one brother, aged 14, 12 and 7, began to build themselves a new house. However six months later he again stole and ran away. It is said of him that his mother's mother was a witch, and when he was born she fed him the afterbirth of a cat, so that he is now like a cat, that steals and can get into houses unobserved. But he does own land and pay rent for it when he is in the village.

There is only one household that consists of more than one cohabiting and co-operating nuclear unit. This is the house of Dule Hasda, H.79. Dule and his wife live together with their two married sons, their two wives, and the three children of the eldest son. They live in one house and sleep in the same room, though the house is big enough to permit a certain amount of privacy. They cultivate the land held in the name of Dule entirely cooperatively and they market forest produce and all other commodities in common.

In the cases of polygamous households I have classified the two sub units as one household except in one case. Bamiya Champia, H.14, has two wives, who live in separate rooms of the same house. The younger wife has two fields apportioned to her, but most of the land is cultivated co-operatively, and there is one shared ancestral shrine. Huri Champia, H.9, who is now dead, had two wives, who still live together with the eldest son cultivating the fields together with his brothers. One of the wives has no children. They all share a common room and have a single ancestral shrine. The case of Turu-Budu Champia, H.12, is difficult to classify. Owing to a conflict between the two wives, the first wife left the house of her husband and built a new house some 150 yards away on the other wide of a small valley, but within sight and earshot of the main house, where she lives with her 16 year old son. Both these households market forest produce separately, but the land is held as one unit. Turu-Budu even holds the land of his first wife's eldest son, Debera, H.13, who is married and has two children, but each year Debera is given some fields to cultivate. And when Debera needed cash his father arranged for two fields to be mortgaged for him. On the basis of co-operation over cultivation I have

classed the two separate houses of the wives as one household, while that of Debera does have a separate ancestral shrine. The exception to classifying two wives and their children together as one household is that of Chumbru Champia and his two wives. lie has had four wives. The first two died without issue. The third now has twin daughters, but owing to a conflict with her husband and co-wife she now lives with her husband's father, Jintu, H.22. He is a very old man, and she looks after him and cultivates the few fields that he has not yet handed on to his son. I have therefore categorised her as a member of Jintu's household.- The fourth lives with her husband and one son, H.23, and they cultivate the fields that the father has handed down to his son. The third and fourth wives do not market forest produce together, and they both use separate ancestral shrines and rice pots. Their houses are only about fifteen yards apart, so there is considerable day-to-day co-operation.

The last example of a marginally separate household is that of Tupura Champia, 11.30. Tupura died in the middle of the fieldwork period. His wife was already dead and he had one son, whose wife died leaving a grandson and granddaughter. Tupura had inherited half of his father's land and his younger brother, Dakua, H.31, the other half. Some years previously he went mad and believed that the world was coming to an end. He mortgaged all his fields, spent all his money and burnt his house down. But the world still carries on and he became sane and penurious. He and his family lived in the cowshed of his younger brother, while Tupura worked as a servant, dasi, for a more wealthy man, getting a share of the crops. Some of his fields that he got back are cultivated co-operatively with his brother, and his son and grandson live in the brother's house. However they do own land and pay rent for it, though they are helped in this by the brother and Tupura speaks with a separate voice at the village meetings. I have therefore categorised the households of Tupura and Dakua as separate.

The remainder of the households, that is 79, or 84.9%, are the normal nuclear family household in the sense of consisting of a mother, father and children, and sometimes a dependent relative. In 24 cases, that is 25.8%, one or other of the parents was` dead. In 4 of the households both the parents were dead, leaving a group of unmarried siblings living together. In 14 households the father was dead, leaving the widow living with her children. In three of these cases the elder son was married and had children. He was in effect the head of the household and held the land and looked after his elderly mother. But in the case of the other 11 none of the other sons was married and the widow was holding the land for her sons till they reach maturity and married. In 6 cases the mother was dead, leaving the father and children in the household. In one such case a widower and his children, and his younger but unmarried, middle-aged brother lived together and worked together in all ways.

We have here a picture of independent nuclear family units living in houses scattered throughout the cleared area of the village. The Ho say: "Where brothers live together, there is no room for their horns." Only in two instances were brothers living together in close co-operation. One, H.79, was under the guidance of a very domineering father. The other, H.63, was the case just mentioned of a widower and his younger brother. Mrs. Dhan states that it is usual for the Ho of the Saranda Forest Division to live in scattered villages, whereas those on the plains are closely nucleated. She re marks that, "they were not so afraid of the wild animals and bandits, as the bitterness of the quarrels between neighbours," (1961, p.42). Although, as we will see later, there is a good deal of co-operation between households, the first impression is of substantial. mud and tiled houses and the equally common wattle, daub and grass thatched huts, dotted about under clumps of matkom (Bassia Latifolia) and mango (Mangifera Indica) trees on the small hills that lie between the complex tracery of cultivated valleys, all unified by the deep forest stretching up the hills on either flank on the main valley. Even in the harshness of the summer heat it is difficult to see many other houses from a verandah. If they are not in another small valley, then they are hidden by trees, giving an impression of intimacy.

The house has a main inner room, in which the harvests are stored on a table-like rack, tantara, that fills up the greater part of the room along with the cooking hearth and its raised dais, ading, with the rice cooking pot (see diagram 3;1). The outer sleeping room is where most. of the indoor private activity takes place. It is only lit by the door, which has a raised step below which medicines, retn ranu, are buried to prevent the entry of harmful spirits. Outsiders rarely cross this threshold uninvited. Outside the house is a small raised verandah, pindigi, under the eaves of the house. It looks over the courtyard, rancha, in which the public daytime activities take place. The courtyard is surrounded by a fence cohered with climbing pumpkins, marrows and beans which creates an effective visual barrier in the rainy season. The cattle byre and pigsty are either on one side of the courtyard or at the rear of the house.

The household is the fundamental social unit. It is based on the nuclear family and holds rights of usufruct over a portion of the ancestral land. It cultivates this land as a corporate unit and it co-operates over the collection of forest produce and its marketing. It owns livestock in common. It is bound by ritual ties and its members worship together at the ancestral shrine, ading. The senior male member is the household head who co-ordinates the day's activities and is ultimately responsible for nearly all the affairs of the household. He represents the household to the village and speaks for the children at village meetings. The community of household heads make up

what can be called the village elders. The household acquires membership of the village through the position of the senior male as a member of an established local lineage.

The village is an egalitarian community of household units, which recruits and maintains its members on principles of descent and kinship. In spite of cultural and professional divisions in the village, which have caste-like attributes, there is no hierarchical structure in the village. All the household units have equal access to the economic and religious resources of the village.

Chapter Three. The Lineage Structure

Introduction

In Dubil people co-operate chiefly with their neighbours, who are more often than not also their kin. The patrilineal descent system unites people at the ideational level of kinship into maximal, major and minor lineages. Descent is not only stated through blood, but also through the medium of shared land. Land and blood can be considered as homologous substances. The relationship between kinship and land tenure, or blood and land, gives rise to a pattern of lineally related kin living together in clusters or neighbourhood units, which form the basis of daily interaction in village life.

The maximal lineage is indigenously referred to as the 'people of one rice pot', miad mandi caturenko. This unit often extends beyond the limits of one village. The major lineage or local lineage consists of the descendants of an original ancestor within the religiously bounded area of the lineage. This is also referred to as the 'people of one rice pot' though, as we will see later, the tense used can distinguish the maximal from the major lineage. An important principle here is that membership of the village is ascribed by birth in a local lineage. The local lineage is initially established by the original ancestor who either founded the village or was allowed to clear land in the village with the permission of the village members. Full membership of the local lineage is sealed by the establishment of the graveyard of the local lineage in the village. The role of the graveyard will be taken up separately. The minor lineage, indigenously referred to as the 'people of one deed', miad parcharenko, is a variable unit of inclusion, that can be as large as the major lineage or as small as one set of brothers. The minimal lineage or nuclear family is termed the 'people of one house', miad owa:renko. These four levels form the basis for political behaviour and interaction. The village structure is based on kinship and land tenure realised in neighbourhood clusters, which form the basis for recruitment of political action sets.

The Lineage

It has been pointed out that; 'It is often difficult to draw a clear distinction between a lineage and a clan' (Notes and Queries on Anthropology 1971; 89). So far as the Ho are concerned the lineage is the local group of the clan. It consists of all the descendants in the patrilineal line of a known or fictitious common ancestor. It is usually confined to the residents of one village, though in a village such as Dubil which is only four generations old, the maximal lineage may reach beyond the village to a parent village. It is a corporate group of people in that all the members know each other and cooperate

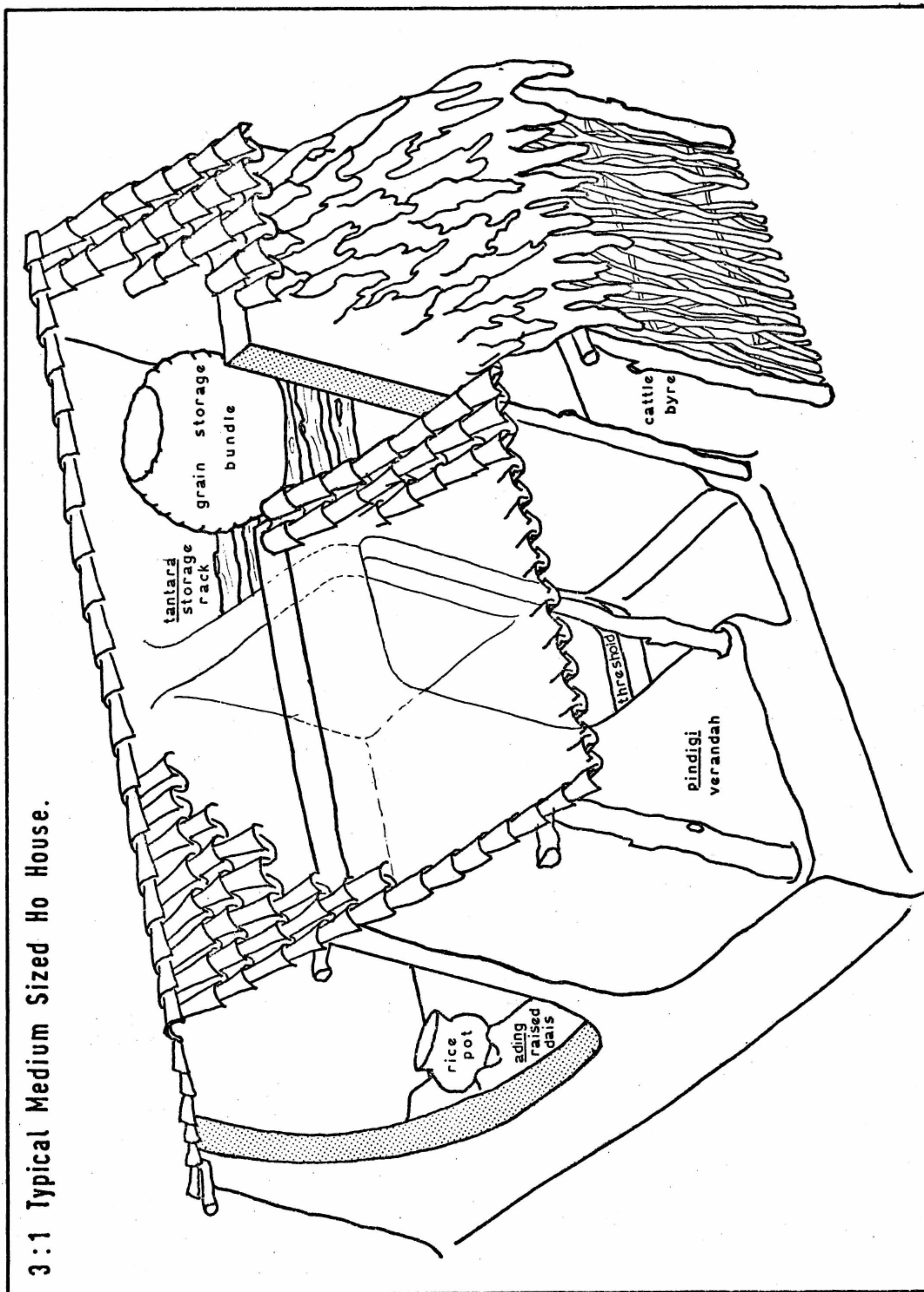
in their daily lives, and often hold joint rights in the communal land of their lineage. Two indigenous terms are used to describe the lineage. One is the 'people of one stomach', miad potarenko. This refers to all having a common 'mother', the wife of the original male ancestor. The more common term is the 'people of one rice pot', miad mandi caturenko. This term symbolises the unity of the local lineage. The rice pot is considered sacred. Only a new rice pot can be used for cooking the family rice and nothing else can be cooked in it. Strictly speaking the pot should not be seen or touched by anyone who is not a Ho. It is kept indoors, and never taken to the well for cleaning. If it becomes polluted it can no longer be used for cooking rice, and will probably be used for the lowly job of boiling clothes to kill the lice, the liga: tiki catu.

The rice pot is the abode of the family ancestors and is kept in the ading. This is a small raised dais with the family cooking hearth in the centre, which is built along one of the darker walls of the inner room to protect it from prying eyes. Normally only kin and villagers are allowed into this room. If the house has only one room, as is common in the forest area, guests will sit close to the doorway with their back to the ading.

If a member of the household dies, and his kin are wealthy enough to burn his remains, the ashes are placed in the rice pot and hung outside beneath the east end of the eaves of the house for a week before the burial ceremony. At the burial, either of the ashes or the corpse. The rice pot is taken to the graveside, where, after interring the remains, a pole is thrust through the bottom of the pot which is placed beside the path leading from the house to the graveyard. At the same time all the households of the local lineage must throw out their rice pot and get a new one. During the night after the burial, the householders of the dead man will place a new rice pot on the cooking hearth and the shadow, umbul, of the dead man will be enticed back from the graveyard into the house and the ading and the rice pot, where it will rest with all the other ancestors of the local lineage. In this sense the local lineage is a corporate unit, serving the same set of ancestors, whose unity is collectively represented in each household by the rice pot.

The unity of the 'people of one rice pot' can be qualified by the tense used in saying either 'we are' or 'we were of the same rice pot'. The local lineage is that part referred to in the present tense. However this rule is very flexible. I have heard a son saying in fury that he had once been of the same rice pot as his father. This differentiation of tenses is used to signify that although a man knows he is descended from certain people with whom he now seldom has any dealings and who are to all intents and purposes not part of

his local lineage, they do in fact have a common ancestor. This is the case with the Huring Champia local lineage of Dubil (Lineage 2).



3 : 1 Typical Medium Sized Ho House.

The maximal lineage of the Huring Champias is distributed in three villages within sir miles of Dubil, and the connections between en the different local lineages are known (see Lineage Survey No. 2 in Appendix 1). In the search for more land the maximal lineage has split up and its members have settled in different places where they have started new graveyards. As a result any member of the maximal line age will state that any other member 'was' of the same rice pot, but only the members of the local lineage, who bury their dead in the same graveyard and therefore live in the same village, 'are' now of the same rice pot because it is only these people who co-operate at the death of a member in buying new rice pots.[26]

The unity of the rice pot and the local lineage is always idiomatically preserved. A man with whom one has known or even fictitious agnatic links will always be 'of the same rice pot'. His membership may be expressed in. the past or present tense. Also it may be said that a man broke or cracked the rice pot, and fractured the unit.

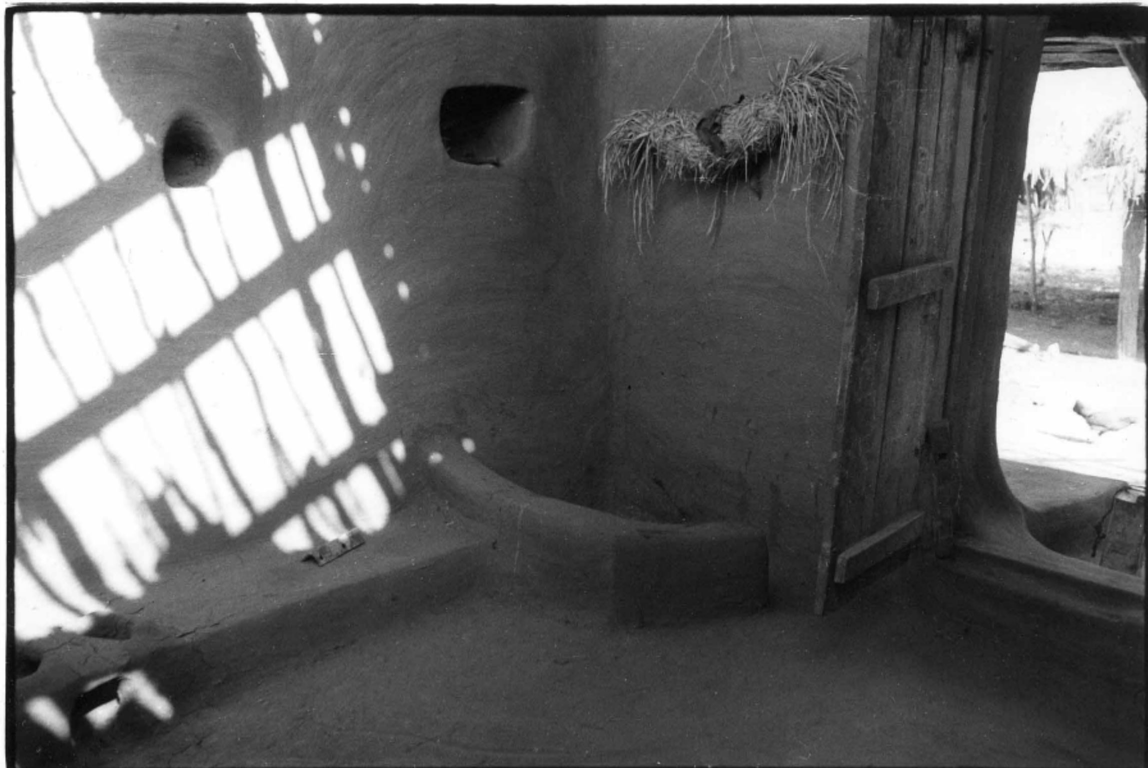
Divisions or breaks in the rice pot are created in a number of ways. The commonest of these is by migration. For instance, when Old Man Bisu, the paternal great grandfather of Bamiya Champia (Lineage 2), came to Dubil from Rajabera, he did not break the rice pot; he had his body buried in his natal village. However when his son died the monsoons were in full flood and it was impossible to take the body across the river, so he was buried in Dubil underneath the mango grove that his father had planted and the rice pot was broken. But despite the fact that Chumbru was the one who actually broke the rice pot, leaving Bisu on the other side of the break., Bisu is still seen as being of the same rice pot as his son's, son's, son, Bamiya, due to the fact that he is the original ancestor of all those Champias of his lineage living in Dubil, who now hold shares of the land that he originally cleared. The unity of the lineage is conceived in terms of common property rights in land cleared by the founding ancestor. In fact the founding ancestor only cleared a part of the lard held today by his lineage descendents. Subsequent sons and sons of sons also cleared land. When a man clears land his brother's sons do not have any claim on it, so that subsections of the lineage are created on

26 It is interesting to note in this context that the Ho use tenses in a much wider and more idiomatic way than is at first apparent. The past tense is used to express certainty. If a man is convinced that an event is going to happen he will emphasise this by stating that it has already happened tomorrow. Therefore to say that a man was of the same rice pot does not mean that he is not still of the same rice pot. It merely qualifies his degree of membership.

the basis of land tenure. But nevertheless the land first cleared by the founding ancestor is now shared by all his descendents.

PLATE 3:1. THE STORAGE ROOM; although empty during the hungry season, it shows the storage rack, *tantara*, and household implements.

PLATE 3:2. THE MAIN ROOM; showing the raised dias and the cooking hearth (extreme left) and the threshold (extreme right). The chicken coop is in the centre.



Dubil is a fairly recent settlement, started some 100 years ago, and is now only in its fourth generation. All genealogical links can be remembered within this span, so that if a man dies without male offspring it is known. which ancestors cleared the land and therefore among whom it should be divided. In discussion I have heard that in older villages, where all the land was cleared so long ago that it cannot be remembered who cleared it, the custom is that when there is no direct heir to the land it is either shared throughout the total lineage or taken by the village headman, munda.

In Dubil the British policy of surveying and registering land ownership has affected the system of land tenure. The first survey was made in 1895. Until then tax had been collected on the basis of a plough tax. For every pair of plough cattle that a man owned he had to pay a fixed rent. However this proved inadequate as British rule expanded in the tribal area. In 1895 Craven visited all the villages of the Kolhan. He mapped and recorded all the permanently cultivated land of every village. Each household head was given a deed showing the land that he held. This was called a parcha. It was understood that the land was held as his share of an ancestral heritage, so that in effect the land was registered in his father's name as one holding divided into equal shares between him and his brothers. On each plot number was recorded the name of the man who cultivated it and was responsible for paying the rent.

In the subsequent survey and settlement of rent made in 1913 by Tuckey the same system was preserved. The deeds recorded by Craven were now subdivided among the grandsons, so that each deed was still in the name of the grandfather and divided into equal shares of equal shares. For any new land that had been cleared since the last settlement a new deed was drawn up and divided among the sons if any. This set of brothers were therefore a new 'people of one deed', miad parcharenko.

In the e settlement and survey made by Prasad in 1964 the deeds were again subdivided and new deeds issued for newly-cleared land. This created another set of 'people of one deed'. This means that the local lineage shares the land cleared by the original ancestor and is recorded by the first settlement and survey; subsequent settlements have recorded the minor and minimal lineages. The Ho have adopted this system referring to the lineage subdivisions as miad parcharenko or the 'people of one deed'. As the process of clearing land and registration has continued an individual has become a member of three or even more inclusive units of 'people of one deed'.

The Affinal Tie

A young girl is a member of, her father's local lineage and clan until she becomes married. Either immediately on the day of the marriage ceremony, when the groom takes her back to his house or shortly afterwards, a specific ceremony is performed that integrates the young bride into her husband's local lineage and clan. At this ceremony she is given food to cook in the husband's _ading_, the ancestral shrine where the spirits of the ancestors live in the cooking hearth and the rice pot. While she cooks in the ading she is taught the names of the spirits. Until she does this she cannot cook in the _ading_ and, in effect, cannot perform the duties of a wife, but only of a servant. Nominally speaking she is now a member of her husband's lineage and clan, but she still retains strong ties with the lineage and clan of her father, and, indirectly, of her mother's father. This is symbolised in the names of the spirits of the ading. These spirits are classified in two groups, the _owa:goe_ and the _hortenko_. The _owa:goe_ are the spirits of the dead agnates and, at all offerings to them, the names of all male agnates that can be remembered are chanted and rice beer is poured onto leaves that have not been folded into leaf cups. This is in the ceremony of ote _illi_, 'pouring beer on the ground'. After offering has been made to the _owa:goe_ a further pouring is made to the _hortenko_. These are the spirits of all the dead women of the lineage, that -is the mothers and paternal grandmothers. But also included in this group are all the ancestors of the affines, that is the mother's patrilineage, the wife's patrilineage and the sister's husband's patrilineage. All these spirits are integrally bound up in the welfare of the household. The new wife is still subject to the protection and potential anger of her natal patrilineage and the whole household is subject to the influence of the sister's husband's patrilineage as they received cattle from them as part of the brideprice. These cattle are now part of the family herd. The distinction therefore between the _owa:goe_ and the _hortenko_ is that the _owa:goe_ are the spirits of all those buried in the local lineage's ancestral graveyard - the agnates, while the _hortenko_ are all those buried in other graveyards but related through affinity.

Affines play an important part in the social life of the household in that they will often come to its aid in times of sickness and other difficulty. The mother's brother, _mamu_, plays a particularly significant part throughout life, his most important duty being to help in the arrangements for marriage, performing the role of a go-between en, _datom_.

In to case of a second marriage a woman breaks all her ties with her divorced husband's lineage and becomes a member of the second husband's lineage and clan, though in such marriages there is usually an absence of ritual and ceremony. It can be said that a woman's lineage and clan is the house in which she is living and the lineage land that provides her maintenance. Her clan and

lineage membership is therefore always potentially impermanent. As a result she retains strong links with her natal patrilineage and patriclan as it is her only firm religious and emotional base though she can never have rights of usufruct in its land. Affines are generically referred to as bala and it is generally preferred that bala do not live in the same village and therefore wives are usually taken from other villages.

Lineage and Land

I have already stated that the unity of the local lineage is conceived in terms of rights over land cleared by a common ancestor. The lineage is not merely a descent group, it is a landholding group. Rights over land are of two kinds. There is the right to dispose of the land and the right of usufruct - to cultivate the land and take the produce from it. The local lineage reserves the right to dispose of the land of all its members and each individual member holds the rights of usufruct in his share of lineage land. If the individual wants to sell his share of ancestral land he is subject to the veto of his lineage mates.(27)

The principle behind this is that if an individual has no male heirs his land reverts to the lineage and is divided up among the membership who therefore retain residual rights in the land. The individual does have the right to rent his land for a limited period, usually three years, under a system called thika bhandar that is normally referred to as a mortgage. Under this system he receives a sum of money from the mortgagee who cultivates his land and takes all the produce for a limited period. Rights of usufruct are inheritable by agnatic descendants.

The custom of gorjowe (see Archer 1974: 350 and Hoffman 1950 Vol. V: 1496) indicates the relationship of the local lineage to its land. If a man has no sons he may arrange an uxorilocal marriage for his daughter with the husband coming to live in the house of his wife's father. The husband does not have to pay a brideprice, so it is a convenient form of marriage for a poor man, and if he comes from a landless family it is a way in which he can obtain land. Although the gorjowe husband will not change his clan, he will temporarily hold the land of his wife's father in trust for his wife's father's grandchildren - his own sons, who will be taken into the clan of their mother's father, not their father.(28)

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27 The government now limits this right to sell land. Under the Scheduled Areas Act no Scheduled Tribal may sell his land to a non-tribal. And under Wilkinson's Rules, that apply specifically to the Kolhan Government Estate, no tribal may offer his land for sale outside his village unless he has the permission of the village headman and the witness of five of the village elders.

28 Superficially this may seem to be a case of matrilineal succession in a society that is otherwise patrilineal. Indeed the precise status of this

Thereby the grandfather's lineage will not be discontinued. The gorjowe husband becomes the head of the household after his wife's father's death. He relinquishes all rights in his own local lineage land and becomes the nominal holder of the land of his wife's father. He will decide how it is to be farmed and be responsible for paying the rent. He will also have a place at the village council. meeting. The land is registered in the name of his wife, as only she is of the correct lineage, but, being a woman, she is excluded from the political arena. The gorjowe husband is borrowed for a generation in order to maintain the continuity of the unit, but he will always remain an outsider to the village, subject to the emotional pressures of his own local lineage kin. His position is that of an outsider temporarily holding rights in the lineage land. Such a marginal situation clearly puts the community at risk and is therefore a matter of common concern to the entire village. To bring a gorjowe husband into the village for his daughter a man must obtain permission from all the members of his local lineage before a village meeting. Although the lineage is responsible for the management of its affairs, it is subject to the overall authority of the village.

The lineage is therefore not only held together by its common ancestry and ancestral spirits, but also by its common ownership of the land cleared by the ancestors. The conception of the local lineage as the people of one rice pot expresses both the relationship of the lineage to its ancestors and the relationship of the lineage to its land. The rice pot is the place in which the fruit of the ancestors' land is prepared for human consumption and as such it is seen as the abode of the ancestors. To put it the other way round, it is the ancestors who have given the household its rice. Descent, like land, is transmitted from generation to generation.

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form of succession is a subject that requires more detailed research. Archer has looked into this form of marriage in considerably greater detail than I have, but even his detail is not sufficient to make a full analysis (Archer 1974: 349-353). Perhaps the most significant aspect of this type of marriage is the point made by Archer, that I did not verify in my fieldwork, that during the gorjowe marriage ceremony the girl takes on the male role and the boy the female role. This would denote a fictional preservation of the patrilineal norm. However to understand this properly it would be necessary to follow up certain customs that Stranding has recorded among the related Munda. Here Standing has noticed a ritual opposition of male and female roles (Standing 1975). If there is a role inversion during the marriage ceremony one must assume that this inversion is carried on at a ritual level for the duration of a gorjowe couple's lifetime. If this is so then at the ritual and symbolic level, this type of marriage would preserve the patrilineal norm. However as far as I am concerned this must be left open to debate and further research.

Lineage and Village

The local lineage is not a community except where the whole village consists of the members of one local lineage. Whereas to the administrator the village is defined as a collectivity of household units for the purposes of civil administration and tax collection, for the anthropologist the Ho village is a collection of local lineages united by their common residence in, and dependence on, a given area of land under the protection of a single guardian spirit. All the local lineages worship this spirit together at the relevant festivals under the aegis of the central figure of the village priest, deuri. As a community they all share in the authority vested in the village council under the village headman.

If the agnatic lineage provides the basic structure of the village, it is through membership of the local lineage that the individual obtains membership of the village community. Membership of the village is ascribed through the naming ceremony held soon after birth which incorporates a person into his lineage and places him under the protection of its ancestral spirits, owa:goe. Until a child has been cleansed and named the entire village is polluted and no marriages can take place. The village guardian spirit, hatu bonga, the symbol of village unity, will be offended should there be any delay in the naming of a child. Archer reports an interesting case from the Santal (Archer 1974:168). When it was impossible to establish the identity of a child's father and the mother could not hold a naming ceremony and incorporate the child into a patrilineage, the village remained polluted for six months and finally resorted to forcing an old man to take the child into his patrilineage.

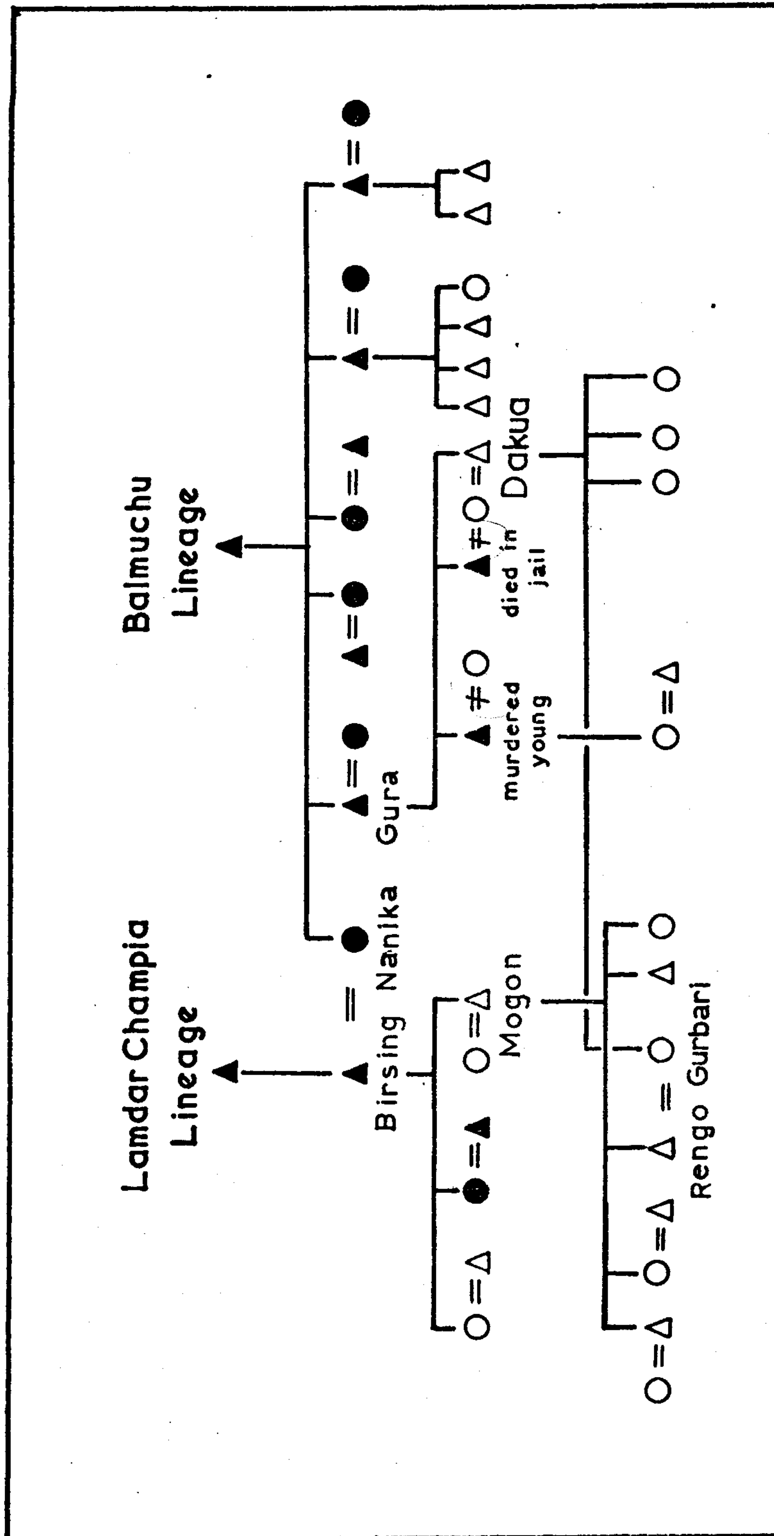
An individual becomes a member of the village through birth in one of the resident lineages. Any member of the village is allowed to clear unclaimed land within the village boundary and can claim to have the land registered in his name by the headman at a village meeting in front of witnesses. An outsider wishing to clear land in the village is heavily censored. Even if he is given permission, his family is subject to distinct disadvantages and may be expelled until such time as the establishment of a graveyard gives the lineage rights in the village. Final and irrevocable membership of the village is sealed by the headman allowing the new resident to set up a graveyard. This is illustrated by the case of Mogon Lamdar-Champia. Mogon was of the same clan as the founding lineage; he was a Champia. But he had no known agnatic link to any member of the village. He had been a landless member of a local lineage in a nearby village. Some 15 to 20 years ago Mogon was allowed to take up land

and residence in Dubil. He was able to bribe the headman to let him cultivate some poor land in the village beside his mother's household. (After his father's death his mother, being landless, returned to Dubil to live with her wealthy brother, Gura Balmuchu.) Mogon seldom cultivated this land which was of little more than symbolic importance, but it gave him a foothold in the village. He was a worker in the mines and used his wages to take land on mortgage from the villagers. He married a girl from outside the village, but his second son, Rengo, had a runaway marriage with his father's mother's brother's son's daughter, Gurbari Balmuchu (see Table 3;2). This girl and her three younger sisters were the only representatives of their father's, Dakua Balmuchu's, clan in the village. There was no agnate to inherit the lard in Dubil. However′ through his affinal ties Mogon Lamdar-Champia is likely to gain usufruct of the land of his mother's brother's son, who is also his son's wife's father. A quarrel developed over this marriage, culminating in murder threats. The possible alienation of lineage land came out into the open in the village meeting which was called to settle the matter. In the meeting Mogon Lamdar-Champia was at a disadvantage because of his recent arrival. He was asked to leave the village. He had made the mistake of allowing his son to marry within the village - an act usually considered undesirable as it creates complications. The case also illustrates the importance of residence in the village as a factor in influencing rights in land. By the principle of agnatic descent the land should have been inherited by Dakua Balmuchu's father's younger brother's sons. Both of them lived in other villages, one 12 miles away and the other 18, and there was less likelihood of their claims being realised than that of Mogon, although Mogon was of a different clan. Non-resident agnates are unlikely to press their claims.

This case demonstrates that the clan has no structural significance in the Ho village. Land rights are vested in local line ages that acquire village membership on establishing a graveyard within the village boundaries. Even though Mogon was a member of the Champia clan it gave him no claim to village membership. His membership was based on his owning land within the village, but this was not secure until he had ancestors buried inside the village. During the meeting it was stated that Mogon could bury his dead in the forest and leave the village. The villagers said that as he had no ancestors buried in the village, they were not obliged to let him stay unless he behaved better and did not threaten to kill Dakua Balmuchu.

If the local lineage is established in the village by the presence of its graveyard (a point that I will discuss in detail later), all the members of that local lineage, recruited either by birth or by marriage, have full rights and obligations as members of the village. Village membership is therefore

acquired through lineage membership. The local group of the clan, which Majumdar calls the subclan, I have called the local lineage. When strangers meet they exchange clan names and build up a clan map whereby the two can interrelate. Information is also sought on marriage links with other clans, as these differ for every local lineage depending on the distribution of clans in villages within marrying distance.



3:2 Diagram of Link between Rengo Lamdar Champia and Gurbari Balmuchu.

Although membership of the village is acquired through membership of a local lineage; the village is not conceived as a collection of lineages but as a community. The lineage itself is subject to the overall authority of village government. Although Majumdar has referred to the killi panch or clan council, it only has very limited jurisdiction. It can only deal with breaches of the rule of clan exogamy, and even these will not be dealt with exclusively by local lineage or clan council. All matters within the village, even those involving members of the same lineage, are settled by the village council. The following case involved the local lineage of the Kimbo clan (Lin. 7). Basu Kimbo (H.67) had been ill for some months and was expected to die. Without the household head the whole family was in difficulties. They had been unable to plough their fields and were facing starvation. His wife, Chomanu, looked to her husband's younger brother, Doya, for help. If a man dies prematurely, it is customary for his younger brother to manage his land until the children are old enough to farm it themselves and also to look after his widow who is, to all intents and purposes, married to him. However in this case the elder brother was still alive when Doya took an interest in his elder brother's wife and she became pregnant by him. The elder brother, died in about the fourth month of the pregnancy. The widow now began to rely heavily on her husband's younger brother, but he soon found her problems too much for him and refused to help her. In her desperation Chomanu called a meeting of the village council, which decided that Doya should accept paternity of the unborn child and look after his elder brother's wife and her children as he had already started cultivating his elder brother's fields.

This case dealt with the affairs of one local lineage, the members of a clan, but it was settled by a meeting of the entire village community. The same is true in the case of granting permission to bring in a gorjowe husband. Although the members of the local lineage will take the leading part in the discussion, the meeting is attended by all household heads who state their views, act as witnesses to the decision and join in the feast of reconciliation at the end of the meeting. Authority in almost all. matters lies with the total community.

Lineage and Graveyard

The graveyard has two main functions. Firstly a lineage becomes established in a village by the physical. presence of its graveyard. When the village wanted to expel Mogon Lamdar Champia from the village they told him that he could bury his dead in the forest. Secondly the graveyard is a public monument to the unity of the local lineage. It is a large structure around which the members of the local lineage build their houses. Where the local lineage has

more than one graveyard, it indicates that the lineage has been split and is a public sign of a fracture in the rice pot. In a subsequent section I will show that this is a significant factor in the formation of the neighbourhood unit, which forms the basis of interaction in the affairs of daily life.

The graveyard is the site where the remains of members of the local lineage are interred. A wealthy and influential person will usually be cremated before burial whereas the ordinary person will have his corpse buried in a grave lined with wood. The graveyard is considered to be the final resting place of the bodily substance of the deceased, the jang-jilu, as distinct from the character or soul, the umbul.[29] The soul is the element of the dead ancestor that resides in the rice pot on the household cooking hearth. The graveyard is therefore the place where the bodily substance of the local lineage ancestors return to the land which they cleared and which provided their food. It symbolises the link between a lineage and its land. The graveyard is nearly always built under the tree that shaded the house of the founding ancestor, that is, on the first land that he cleared in the village.

In the case of the burial of an influential man a large slab of stone is placed over the grave immediately after the burial. The stone is carried from the forest by all the male members of the local lineage that are able to attend the burial. They are given a feast of rice beer for their efforts by the widow or widows of the dead man. They decide the size of the stone, which should correspond to the status of the deceased, but in the instance that I witnessed it was seen in terms of being a stone that would satisfy the widows. The graveyard is thus composed of a large number of raised stone slabs under the

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29 The Ho have a conception that the human being consists primarily of three elements, the breath of life, jibon, the bodily substance, jang-jilu, and the soul or character, umbul. The breath of life is given to the body and taken away by the creator spirit, Singbonga. The bodily substance is its natural form, the biological element. Jang is a term that applies to the hard kernel of any fruit or body. It can therefore be the seed or the skeleton. Jilu is the flesh or meat that is returned to the earth that was cleared by the common ancestor of the local lineage, thus again stressing the association of blood and land. The umbul, literally translated, is the shadow of the individual. This is his character as it has developed over his lifetime. It is the personality that makes a man the social being that he is. This element is loath to leave the bodily substance after the breath of life has been taken away. It is buried with the bodily substance and a special pathway is left by means of a thread and long blade of grass from the bottom of the grave to the open air. Some days after the burial, when the body has begun to decompose the shadow must be enticed up the pathway, out of the graveyard and back to the ading, sacred dais, and rice pot in the family house, where it will join the community of other shadows of the local lineage ancestors, the owa:goe. After the shadow of the newly-deceased has been successfully housed in a new rice pot all the members of his local lineage will throw out their old rice pots and buy new ones. This communal act of the destruction of the rice pots further symbolises the unity of the local lineage

PLATE 3:3. BURIAL, male members of a dead man's lineage are laying the stone slab over the grave.

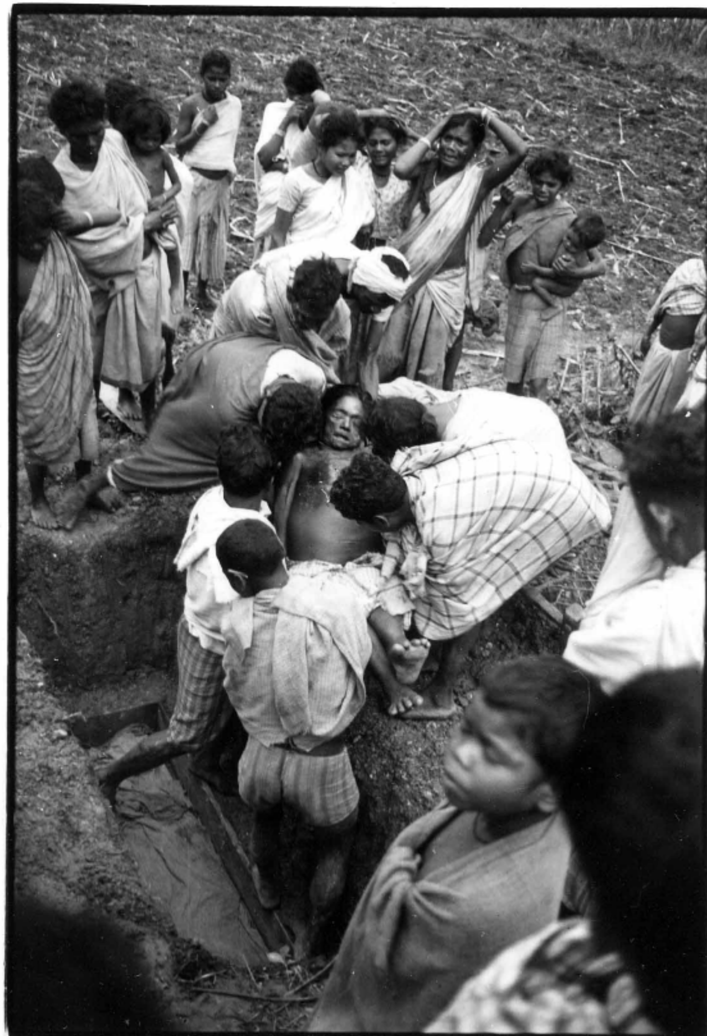


PLATE 3:4. BURIAL of a non-influential widow in a simple wood lined grave. It is unlikely that a stone slab will be placed over this grave.

shade of a large tree at the centre of the land holding of the local lineage. It forms an ideal spot for meetings and discussions. The large slabs are used as work tables in the preparation of many foodstuffs, such as the husking of various seeds and the cracking of hard shelled nuts. It is a centre of social activity - the focal point of the local lineage.

The establishment of a graveyard requires the permission of the village community in the same way as the clearing of new land requires the permission. of the village headman. This is further emphasised by the government land registration office requiring that land for a graveyard is registered not under the deed, parcha, of an individual, but under a communal parcha for the entire lineage. The request: for permission to start a graveyard implies that the local lineage, having resided in the village for a generation, now considers itself permanently established; the presence of a graveyard confirms its status in the village. If the permission is given, the entire lineage is required to offer the assembled villagers a feast of goat's meat and rice beer, which acts as the witness of their consent. If at a later date the permission is challenged reference will be made to the fact of a feast having been given.

Although one of the major local lineages of Dubil, the Chauli Chapi Champias, has a single graveyard at the heart of the village many of the other local lineages have more than one graveyard. As the lineage expands in membership it needs to clear further land for cultivation which often gives rise to new wards, toli, within the village. If a minor lineage becomes successfully established in a new ward, it will shift its focus to the new area of cultivation, where its members have their houses and the majority of their lard. Although the founder of this new ward will probably be buried back in the original graveyard, as he was the sole occupant of the new ward, it is highly probable that all his children will want to be buried in the new ward. They will therefore ask the village for permission to start a new graveyard there. Again this will usually be set up beside the house site of the founder of the new ward. This graveyard will then be a subsidiary of the central local lineage graveyard - a minor lineage graveyard. When this happens there is a split in the rice pot: the new local lineage will say, "We are now of a different rice pot, though we were of the same rice pot."

'Breaking the rice pot' and the Minor Lineage Segments

As explained in chapter one the plentiful supply of uncleared land in the Kolhan is associated with a pattern of dispersed villages. The houses are built close to the fields of the owner, rather than clustered together on high

ground in the typical pattern of plains villages. The houses themselves are usually flimsy wattle and daub structures compared to the substantial mud and tiled houses of the plains. This again is a feature related to the physical mobility of households in the forests¯.

When a man first comes to a village, or founds a new village, he builds his house be beside the fields that he is in the process of clearing. The land that he clears in the first generations will subsequently be divided among all his male descendants, the 'people of one deed', that :is, the major or local lineage. The graveyard will be situated in the centre of the land. The land first cleared is usually the most productive land in the village and is further improved by the work of subsequent generations in levelling, lowering it and raising the embankments for better irrigation. In time, however, as the lineage grows, it will become insufficient for their needs. In the second generation all the sons will live close to this original area, the core of the local lineage, clearing land that is close to hand and a local lineage cluster of households will grow up forming a distinct ward of the village. Five of the eight wards of Dubil are such clear-cut local lineage wards. (see Hende Diri, Koche Sal, Lohar Toli, Rodowa Toli, Santal Toli on map of house sites, Table 3:5). Four of these wards contain the local lineage graveyards of the inhabitants. (the exception is the Santal who always bury their dead outside the village boundary). In the third and fourth generations all the land around these core areas will have been cleared and new land can only be found further afield. The work of clearing and levelling new fields is the most rigorous task that a man undertakes in his life, requiring a considerable amount of wealth. Depending on the number of plough cattle that he can muster, it will take between three and six years before he will have an embanked field that will hold monsoon rain. When a man begins to clear a field he builds a temporary shelter nearby, where he can sleep and stable his cattle when the clearing work is heavy or the crop needs protection from marauding beasts. This shelter will become the family house for five months of the year, and, if it is more than three-quarters of a mile from the core settlement, it is likely to have a threshing ground in situ. In time this settlement is likely to become permanent, or at least as permanent as any house in this forest area.

What then happens to the old house in the core area? A man is most likely to clear new fields when he has mature sons to help him. This period in t the developmental cycle of the family is one of general expansion. The eldest son is about to marry and set up a new household. In some cases the parents live in the new house, and in others the son. If the new household becomes successful and the new 'people of one deed' continue to expand, this single

household settlement develops into a new ward. For the first generation it remains small, without a graveyard and still looking back to the core settlement. If it manages to survive the first vulnerable period it becomes a new ward. The founder of this ward and the new 'people of one deed' will want to be buried near the new house and the owner will apply to the village headman, munda, for permission to start a new graveyard.

The original graveyard will then be split and it will be said that the 'rice pot has been broken'. It is the relationship to the land that is the basis of the 'people of one deed', the 'people of one rice pot', the neighbourhood unit and the graveyard.

In the course of a life-time every man clears new fields and sets up a new house outside the core area of his local lineage. Many villagers move three or even five times. During periods of expansion and relative wealth the household will attempt to increase its landholding and move out to peripheral areas. If the venture is successful a new ward or neighbourhood unit will develop. But success is dependent on a stable core area that can be relied on in the difficult period of expansion. The case of Goma Murmu (11.84) demonstrates this well.

Goma built a house after his marriage in Santal Toli near his father's brother - the only other member of his local lineage (Lin. 14). When his eldest daughter was 11 years old and his eldest son 10 years old, he began to clear some land in the northern area of Marang Toli (see Table 3•3). By the end of the first year his shelter had become a substantial house. After the next monsoon he did not bother to repair the old house, but he re-mudded the new one. By the end of the second year he had cleared two fields, and reaped a crop of mustard. He was beginning to level one field with his four cattle when his son died and his wife went mad. She used to take her clothes off and wander around the village. She believed that everything belonged to her and ultimately stole the sacred objects from the Hindu temple in the nearby village of Chota Nagra.

Goma was intensely worried and, after consulting numerous shamans, deonwa, he sacrificed all his chickens and his five goats and also sold his four cows in an attempt to cure her. However after a year she died and he was left with his 13 year old daughter and his twin sons of two years. He was living in an isolated area, where it was difficult for him to arrange co-operation. Next year he cultivated three of his four irrigated fields in co-operation, saja, with Mogon Lamdar Champia (H.49). He provided the land, while Mogon did the ploughing and d provided the seed grain, and they shared the labour sand the

crop 50-50. The fourth irrigated field he mortgaged to buy food. Fifty rupees of the mortgage money was lent to Jarka Hasda (H.82) in return for a pair of plough cattle. But without a son he was unable to cultivate any of his other fields, except for the garden around his house, from which he got a poor crop of maize, tomatoes and vegetables. The loan to Jarka was at a very beneficial rate as Jarka was his mother's brother, mamu, and bound to help him.

That year Goma's attempt to cultivate failed. The following year Mogon Lamdar Champia fell into disgrace. (He was a recent immigrant to the village and had quarrelled with his mother's brother, whom he was threatening to kill.) Goma felt that it was not possible to co-operate again with Mogon, so he made arrangements to co-operate with his father's brother and mortgaged three embanked fields in order to buy new cattle. The first disaster came when one of his twin children fell into the fire and was burnt. Goma was out working all. day, leaving his 14 year old daughter to look after the house and the twins. The nearest well in general use was half a mile away and the daughters had to leave the twins on their own for at least an hour while she fetched water. This disaster forced Goma to return to the core area - to his old house beside his father's brother in a cluster of six houses in south Santal Toli, where all the children could look after each other.

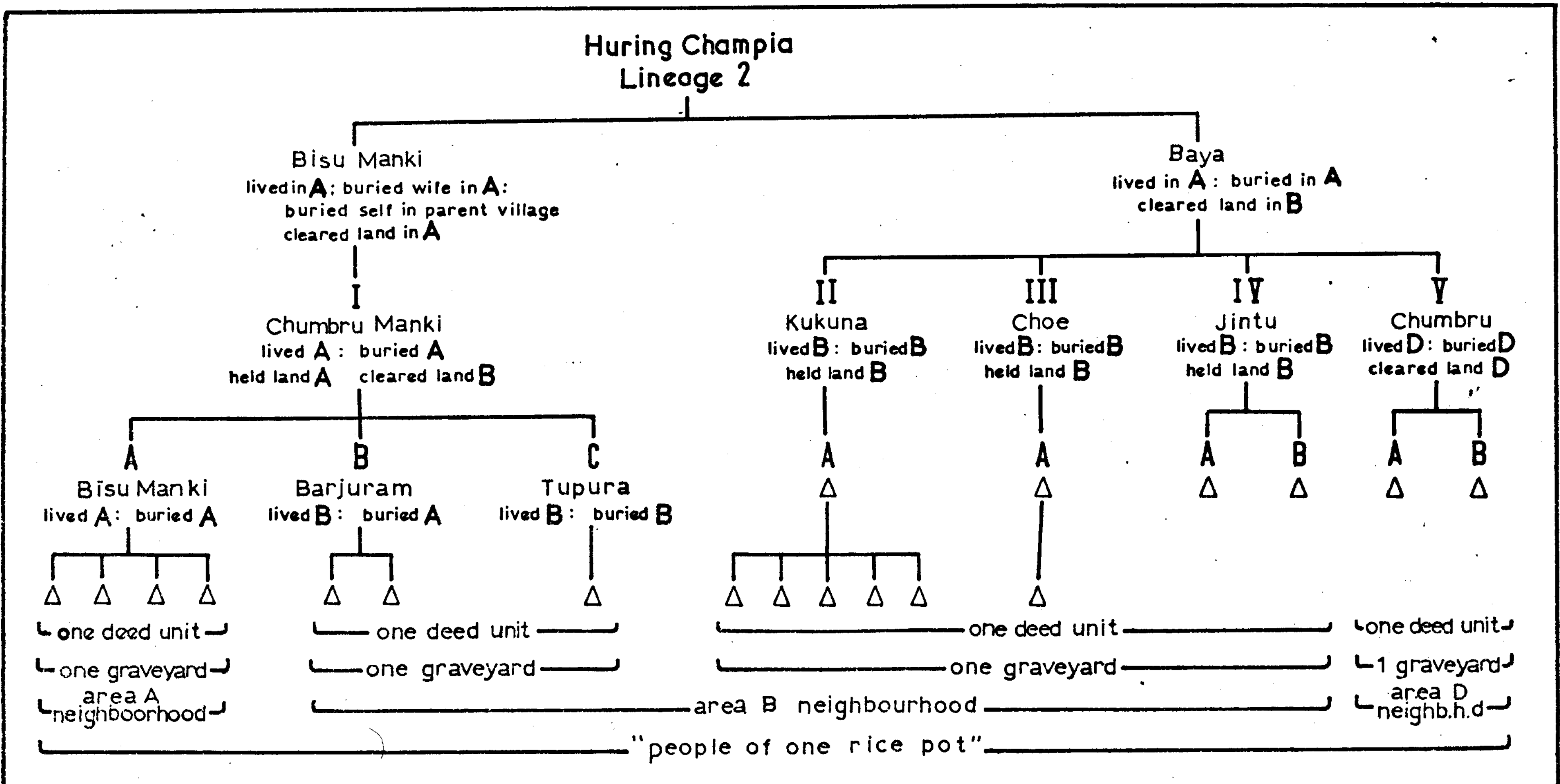
Goma's attempt to expand and start a new neighbourhood unit failed due to two factors: firstly, the sickness and death of his wife and son entailed sacrifices which eroded his capital; secondly, the death of two working members of his household reduced his available labour force.

There is a continual flux of households expanding into the periphery and contracting back to the core area. Every attempt at expansion is a gamble, which, if successful, will lead to the creation of a new ward or neighbourhood unit.

Rodowa Toli, a Case Study

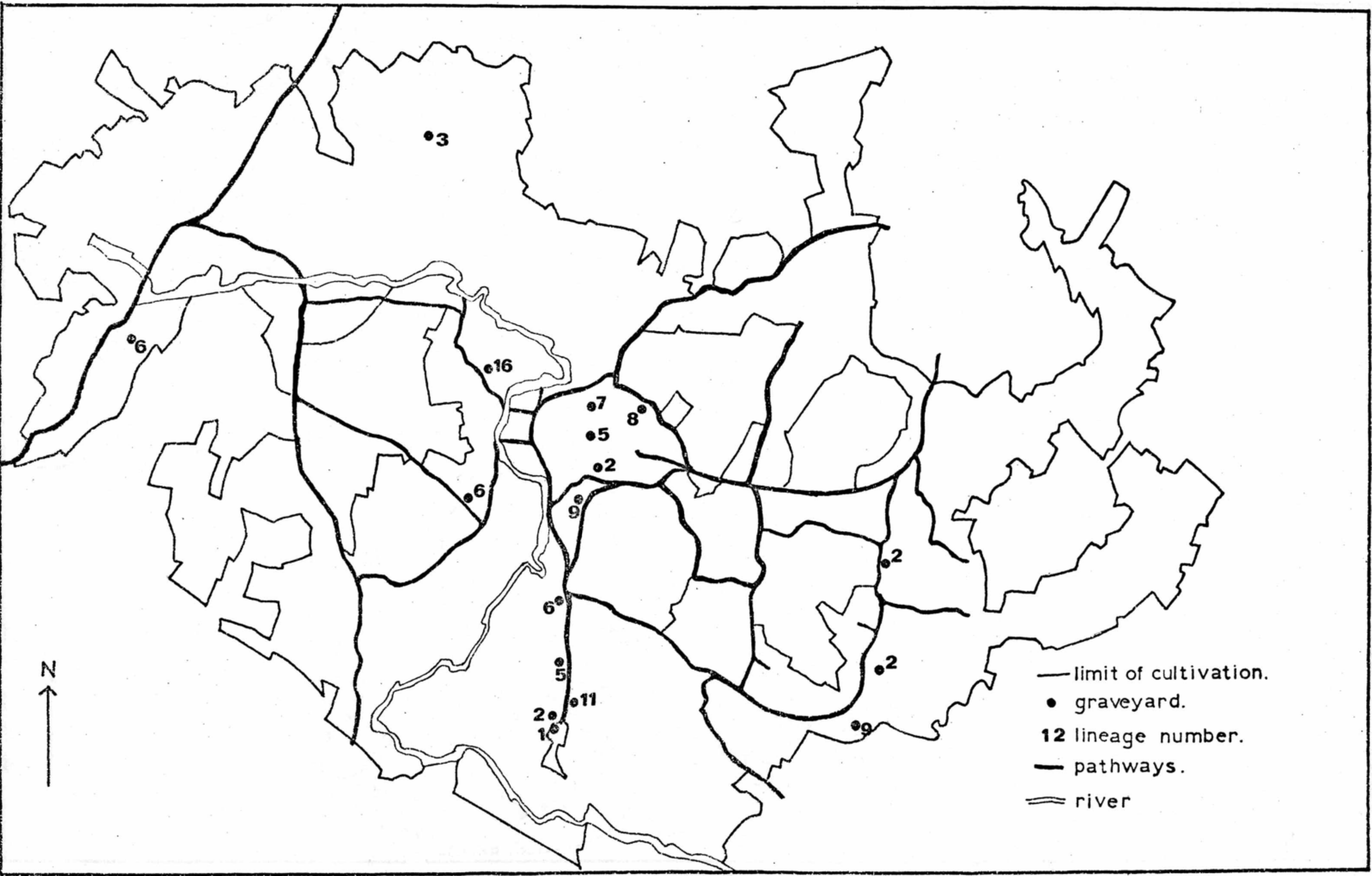
The following case study of one neighbourhood unit illustrates the relationship between lineage expansion, 'the people of one rice pot', the 'people of one deed', the graveyard and the land tenure system.

3:3 Diagram of Rodowa Toli Lineage Structure.

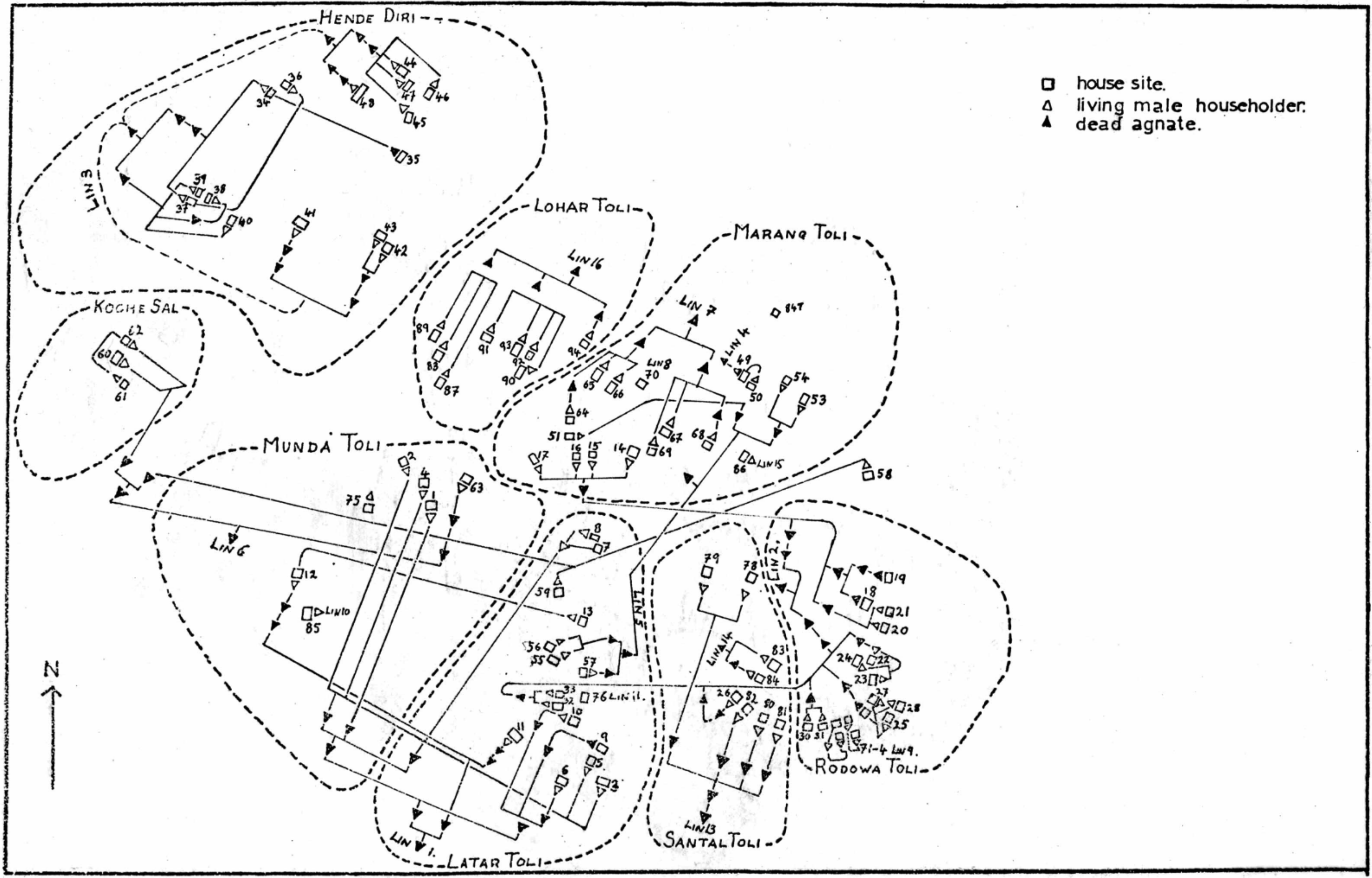


A, B, C and D refer to neighbourhood units. 2, I, II, III, IV, V, A, B and C refer to lineage land holdings, see map 3:5.

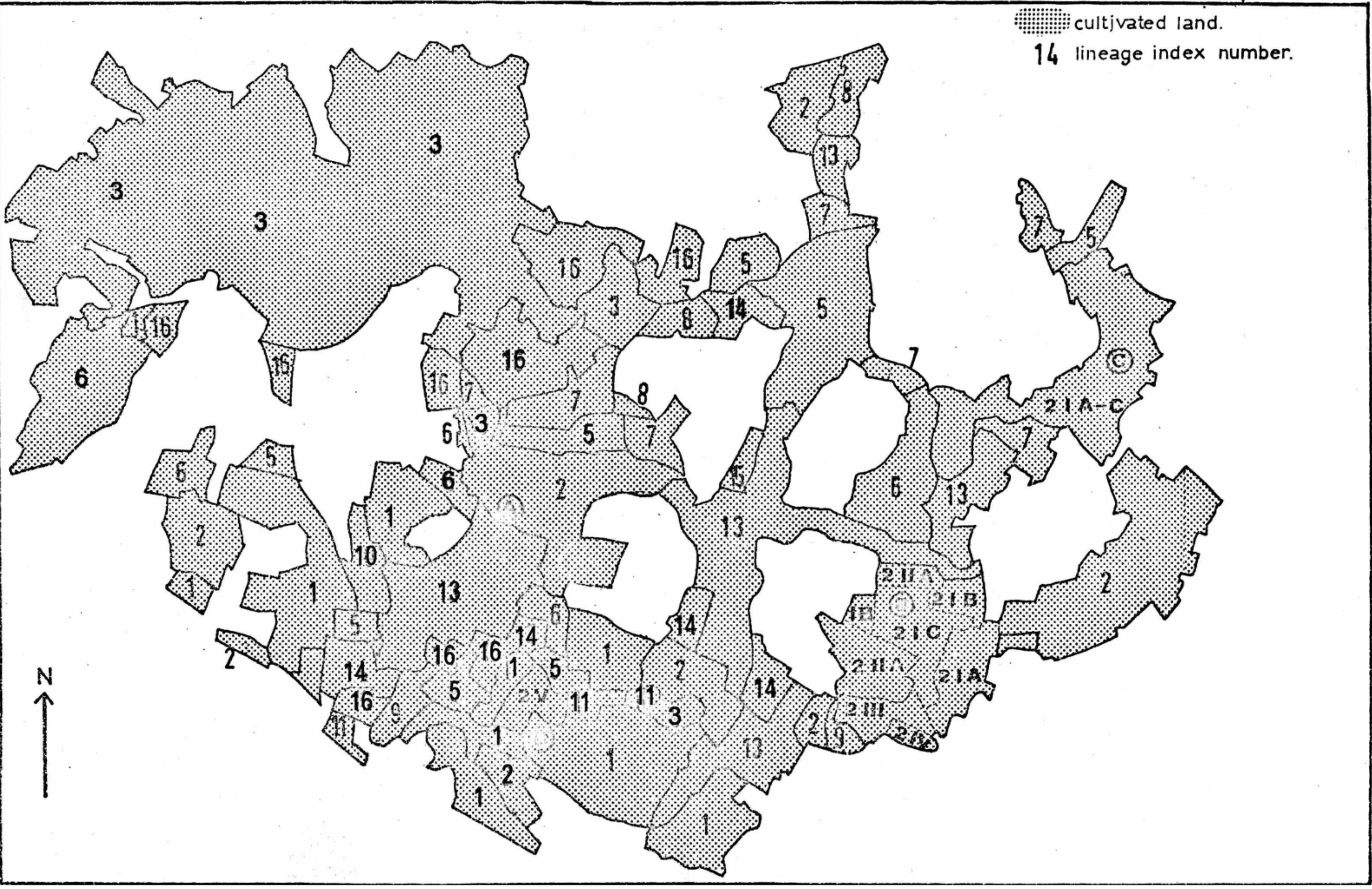
3:4. DUBIL VILLAGE : map of paths and lineager graveyards



3:5 DUBIL VILLAGE : map of house sites and agnatic links.



3:6 DUBIL VILLAGE : map of local lineage land holdings.



Rodowa Toli (see Table 3:3) is an established ward that has split off from Marang Toli. Both are core settlements of the Huring Champia local lineage (Lineage 2 in the lineage survey, see Appendix 1). The founder of the local lineage in Dubil was Bisu Manki (see Table 3:3). He migrated from the nearby village of Rajabera some time in the 1830s and started a new household and graveyard in Marang Toli (area A, see map of house sites and agnatic links, Table 3:5). Later his brother Baya came from Rajabera to join him. Bisu first cleared the land beside the river in area A and built a high embankment to protect the fields from flood. When Baya, his brother, arrived in the village he lived beside Bisu and was finally buried in Marang Toli, area A, but he cleared fields in Rodowa Toli, area B.

In the next generation Bisu's son, Chumbru Manki, began to expand. He cleared land near his father's brother in area B (2 I A-C). Three of Baya's sons, Kukuna, Choe and Jintu., do not seem to have extended their holding in area B, though no doubt they improved it (land marked 2 II-IV on map Table 3:6). But the fourth son, Chumbru, began to clear new fields in area D, (marked 2 V on the map), which is in the core area of the other main local lineage of the Chauli Chapi Champias (Lineage 1). He even started a new graveyard in this area and all his descendants, the 'people of his deed' have been buried in this graveyard. The other three brothers continued to live in area B, There they cultivated land and were buried.

Meanwhile Chumbru Manki, the son of the original founder Bisu, continued clearing land his father had started in area A, while also carrying out extensive new clearing in area B. He had three sons and on his death the eldest son Bisu inherited his land in area A and the two younger sons, Barjuram and Tupura, inherited his land in area B. Bisu continued to live in area A and, although he was buried in his parent village, his wife was buried in area A. Barjuram then moved his house out of area A to area B where he developed his land (2 I B on the map). Tupura later joined him in area B. Tupura died before Barjuram and started a new graveyard in area B, where later the wife of Barjuram was buried even though Barjuram himself was buried back in his father's old graveyard in area A.

The area B is today called Rodowa Toli. Although people move out to live near their land in spite of a feeling of attachment to the core area, Barjuram buried his wife in the new settlement of Rodowa Toli, but he himself was buried in the core area of Marang Toli. There is therefore an overall unity of the local lineage that is symbolically represented not only by the unity of the rice pot but by the graveyard in the core area. The divisions of the local lineage into overlapping subsections around the deed units is approximately realised on the ground by neighbourhood clustering. This is achieved through

the bond of land ownership. But the deed unit is always threatened by the individual's desire to expand his land holding and clear new land, which is nowadays only available on the periphery of the village (c.f. the case of Goma Murmu). On the other hand new settlements are difficult to achieve because of economic factors which tend to draw the fissive households back into the bosom of the parent unit.

The Neighbourhood Unit

Ideally one neighbourhood unit is composed of the members of one local lineage. In fact, owing to the shortage of land, lineages are seldom in a position to clear discrete areas of land. It is inevitable that one local lineage may surround a part of the holding of another local lineage so that the neighbourhood unit does not have exactly the same composition as the minor lineage. Neighbourliness, like lineage and descent, is subject to degrees of relative inclusion and exclusion. The entire village makes up a neighbourhood unit, although one that is not particularly noted for its neighbourliness. The important neighbourhood unit is the ward or toli. Within the ward there is a further clustering of houses, that only becomes clear when the agnatic linkages are diagrammatic-ally superimposed on the map of house sites (see map 3:5), because few wards are the exclusive preserve of one local lineage. This further clustering of houses on descent principles is visible on the ground by a number of physical features: the direction in which front doors are placed, and the situation of the courtyard and verandah which are the public aspect of the house. As one walks down the paths between the houses, one moves through zones clearly dominated by a given lineage in the way that is recorded for the Santal village (Archer 1974: 19-24 and Biswas 1956:13-18). The position of the graveyards on one side of the path at the centre of the cluster gives it a strong focal point.

There are eight wards in the village ranging in size from three to eighteen households. The map shows the proximity of the houses within the ward. It is difficult to make any generalisations about the lineage composition of the wards. Three of them, Hende Diri, Lohar Toli and Koche Sal, are all inhabited by members of a single lineage. Hende Diri and Lohar Toli contain all the members of the two lineages of the Bari Gara Champias (Lin. 3) and the Uindis, or blacksmiths, (Lin. 16). Koche Sal contains a pioneer group of three households of the Hembrom lineage (Lin. 6). These three households are the descendants of one man who pioneered this small area of irrigable land isolated from the main village in a small valley in the forest, where they have set up their own graveyard. The other three houses of the lineage are scattered in other wards, only one being close to the original graveyard in Latar Toli (11.58). One household (11.58) is on its own and not within any recognised ward. Lohar Toli consists of all the eight blacksmith households,

clustering on a hill top round their graveyard. Hende Diri, as discussed before, is also a separate religious unit, and the houses are scattered in five clusters, but all looking towards a single graveyard.

Santal Toli contains all the Santal houses, *which* are divided into two lineages of different clans. Goma Murmu (11.84) as mentioned above, temporarily moved out, but then returned. In this ward there is one member of the Huring Champia lineage (Lin. 2, H. 26), who is living in a neighbourhood unit of three Santal houses of the 2 II to IV subsections of Lineage 13.

Therefore of the eight wards four are almost entirely made up of the members of one local lineage.

Munda Toli is a ward of recent expansion, started by pioneering groups of the Cauli Chapi Champia lineage (Lin. 1), the founding lineage of the village. Pour of the seven households are of the Chauli Chapi Champia lineage. Three of these have common parchas, or land deeds, (H.1, 2 and 4), and live in one cluster, though other members of the parcha unit live in the core lineage settlement of Latar Toli, in which the Chauli Chapi Champias have one immense undivided graveyard. The other member *of* this lineage in the ward has no known common parcha with the other lineage members living in the same ward. He moved here some five years ago to develop new land (H.12), and his son (H.13) has moved back into the core settlement chiefly for economic security. The other two households (h.75 and 85) are recent arrivals to the village. H.85 is the Oriya Gope, who lives on the very outskirts of the ward, on an isolated hill top. The position of H.75 is unusual. He is a recent arrival of the Suri clan. Formerly he lived in the nearby mining township of Chiria, where he was a landless labourer. He married the sister of H. 3 and 4, who, in order to give their sister some economic security, asked the village headman if their sister's husband could clear land in the village and settle beside them, as they did not :like their sister living with a beggar in the mines. This request was granted by the village and this household has joined the cluster, with which it has affinal links.

Rodowa Toli is more complex. Thirteen of the seventeen households are of the same local lineage - Huring Champia (Lin. 2). As mentioned before this lineage came here at two separate times, and the two minor lineages have no known parcha in common and as a result are in two separate clusters of the parcha or land deed unit. Until some six years ago this ward consisted entirely of this lineage. About twelve years ago Runka Surin (H.71, Lin.9) left his house in Marang Toli, as it became infested with snakes and rats and moved to some other fields. Since his move all his three sons have got married and live in separate households in a closely-knit cluster. Runka is now very old and wants to rebuild his original house beside his father's graveyard in Marang Toli.

But while I was in the village a new graveyard was constructed at the time his wife died and it looks as if the family will become established in this ward.

The two remaining wards of Dubil, Marang Toli and Latar Toli, are the original wards of the village. Each was started by the two founding fathers of the village, who were of different local lineages from the nearby parent village of Rajabera. As these wards have been in existence for five generations, the situation has become extremely complicated although the principles involved are the same. Latar Toli has six households of the Cauli Chapi Champia lineage (Lin. 1) all in the south of the ward grouped around the only graveyard for all the 13 households of this lineage. There are two households, both brothers, of the Huring Champia lineage (Lin.2) close to their graveyard. Two brothers of the Purti lineage (Lin.5) live beside their graveyard, a relatively short distance from another member of the same lineage. These three household heads are the grandsons of one man and are the sole members of this parcha, living equidistant from the original graveyard of their lineage. All the other members of their local lineage, who are not connected to them by land deed, live in the other ward of Marang Toli (see Lineage 5).

An interesting case in this ward is household seven, which is from the dominant Chauli-Chapi Champia lineage (Lin. 1) in this ward. The householder lives separate from his lineage kin to the north. His father left the: village and renounced any claim to his share of the lineage land. When the father died the son was unable to get employment in the mines and finally, after much wandering, returned to his father's natal village and was allowed to clear some land and rejoin his local lineage, *though* he was not attached to any specific corporate land holding group. The land that he was given was away from the core settlement though still in the centre of the village, and he has built a house on this land. No members of his family have yet died, so it is not certain whether or not he will use the original graveyard of his local lineage.

Marang Toli houses the four sons of Bisu it9anki (H.14-17), who are the only survivors of the lineage that started this ward. They live close together, clustered around the large graveyard in which all the mankis, or paramount headmen are buried, and they all share a common parcha as a minor lineage. At one time the youngest son, Ruidas (H.17) attempted to expand and set up a house on the village periphery. But his wife died and he had to return to the core settlement.

The only complete local lineage in this ward that consists of more than one household is the Kimbo lineage (Lin. 7). All its six households live in the

ward. The reason for their location in this ward goes back three generations to the time when Bisu Manki (Lin. 2) was young. The present paramount headman, Bamiya Manki, said that Bisu Manki, his paternal great grandfather, 'was a very greedy man for women'. One day, at a certain festival, he ran off with a fat girl of the Kimbo clan. He then visited her parents in the village of Jeraikela, some twelve miles away, in order to arrange the marriage. fie found that the girl's family were landless, so, as paramount headman, he told them that they could come and live in Dubil[30] and he would give them some land. The girl's parents came to the village and set up house beside Bisu Manki in Marang Toli. Their descendants today live in two neighbourhood clusters in the ward, each cluster being equidistant from the central graveyard. Both the clusters are minor lineages, in fact the sons of two brothers (see Lin. 7).

There is one cluster of two brothers of the Purti clan (Lin. 5), whose original graveyard is in Latar Toli, that share one deed. They live at a distance from the other members of their local lineage, H. 51, with whom they do not share common land.

The role that topographical proximity plays in the political life of the village is discussed below.

The Neighbourhood Unit in the Political Organisation

The neighbourhood unit does not coincide with lineage membership except in cases where the ward is a single lineage. It is rather an association of household heads whose residential proximity increases the level of interaction and communication. Both descent and residential proximity are factors in the recruitment of action sets in the political arena.

The mobilisation of action sets was demonstrated at the organisation of Dosora Porob. This festival takes place in October, immediately after the Hindu festival of Durga Puja.[31] The whole village is required to contribute to an offering sacrificed by a Bhuiya priest at the court of the Raja of Manoharpur.

On the second market day in October the Bhuiya priest visited the paramount headman in Dubil and asked him to bring the contribution in seven days' time. The paramount headman immediately visited the informal leaders of each ward,

30. This is normally considered beyond the powers of a paramount headman and reflects his personal charisma.
31. For details of this festival see Chapter One.

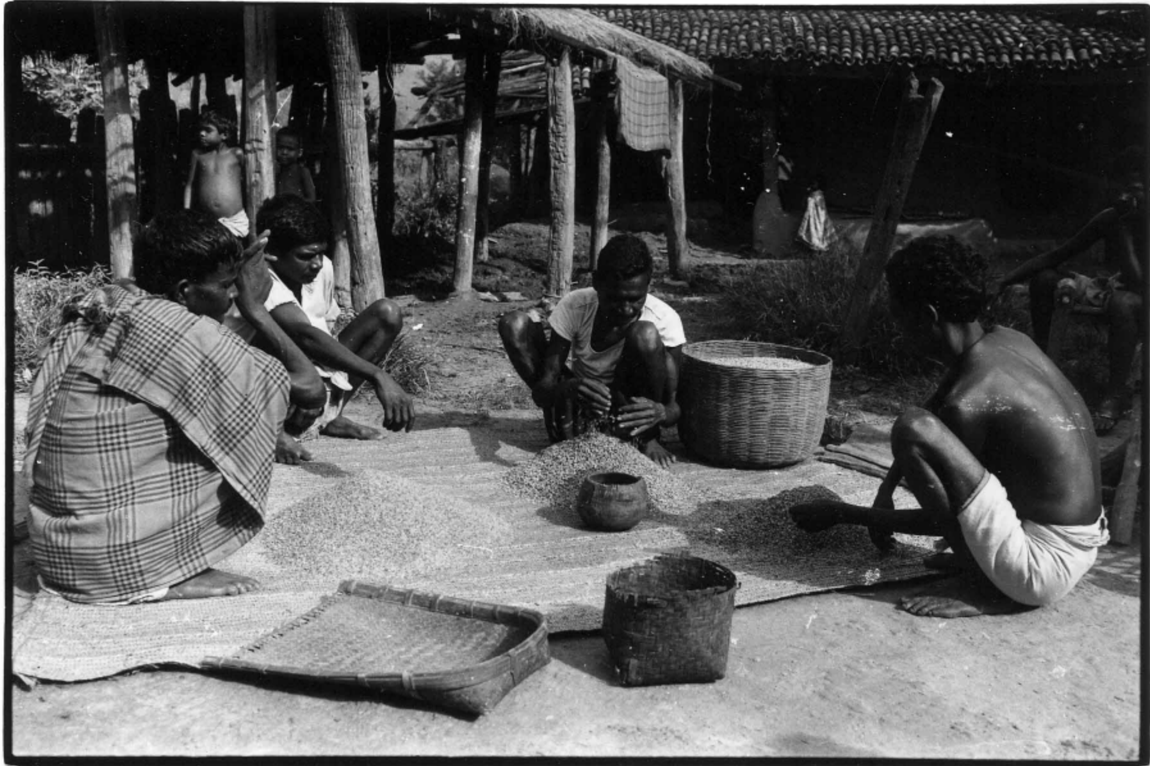


PLATE 3:5. **THE CONTRIBUTION FOR DOSORA, the village accountant helped by the paramount headman's messenger and one ward leader, take account of each ward's contribution, the quantity to be kept for brewing beer and the quantity to go to the Bhuiya priest.**

asking them to collect fifty paise and as much rice as possible from each household in the ward. These ward leaders do not hold any formal position. They are not named as such. The only fact that points to their being in any sense leaders is that it is always the same individual who is asked to organise ward-wise co-operation. When one looks at their position in the lineage structure it becomes clear that they are the eldest direct descendants of the ward founder. Kaera Burha (H.34, Lin.3) was asked to collect the contribution in Hende Diri, and he also collected in Koche Sal and Lohar Toli. Joto Munda H.1. Lin.1), the village headman, collected the contribution in the ward of Munda Toli and also in the original ward of his ancestors in Latar Toli. And Chumbru Huring Champia (H.23, Lin.2), the eldest son of the eldest son of the ward founder, was delegated to make the collection in Rodowa Toli and Santal Toli, as his father, Jintu (H.22) was too old. The Manki himself took the role of collecting from Marang Toli, and, as is proper, delegated this to his messenger, or dakua.

The Manki told them all to assemble on the seventh day at the graveyard of the village founder. With the money a black goat was bought from a villager and some rice was taken out of the collection to provide food for those making the journey. Account was taken of the fact that Latar Toli had already provided rice for the priest's meal, when he came to the village. Sufficient measure was

taken out of each ward's contribution for giving to the Bhuiya priest and the balance was returned to each ward head to be made into rice beer for the festivities when the party returned from the priest's village three days later.

Neighbourhood units provide the chief basis for mobilisation. The individual household head, who wishes to mobilise support, turns first to the neighbourhood cluster - that group of immediate neighbours having an agnatic base. This can be seen in Rodowa Toli, where an action set has been mobilised for co-operation in the herding of cattle. The herding of cattle is a logistic problem that has to be solved by every household. Cattle are an absolute necessity in household economics for without them land cannot be ploughed. The breakdown point in a household's economic survival comes when it is no longer able to support a unit of plough cattle. It is possible to hire another man and his cattle to plough land, but the shortage of cattle makes the hiring rate higher than the cost of casual labour and this is only done by wealthy families. Once a poor household cannot support a ploughing team its first option is to sharecrop its land with another household owning cattle. But this means that the owner will lose 50% of the crop. In most cases the owner gives the land on mortgage and resorts to a low-level cash economy based on selling forest produce and casual labour.

Every household therefore owns at least one pair of cattle used for ploughing and for brideprice payments. There are strong sanctions against allowing the cattle to roam for fodder in the village. Fields are not fenced and the owner of the cattle is held responsible for damage done by his cattle. It is felt that the cow, and therefore the owner of the cow, benefits if it eats another's rice crop so the owner must pay compensation. It is then up to him to penalise the herder, who has allowed the cow to steal. The cow is not felt to be intelligent and responsible for its actions; it is muruku, obstinate, stupid and primitive. Only if a cow becomes a rogue and continually wanders from the herd, does the responsibility resolve on the cow, which is then senya, or wise, clever and civilised. If this happens the owner will try and dispose of the cow as profitably as possible. It is necessary that the herder has strong links with the cattle owner, for, in the case of irresponsible herding, the owner can only marshal diffuse sanctions, which increase their effectiveness with social proximity.

It must be pointed out that this situation is different in the case of the Gope and Oriya Gowalla castes, who herd cattle on a more professional and institutional basis.

Cattle that are not herded by the Gopes and Gowallas are looked after by the young children of the household, between the ages of five and eleven, who

spend almost all their time herding the family cattle. However not all families have children between these ages and they have found it inconvenient to give their cattle to the cowherds. A number of families therefore co-operate in the herding of cattle.

In Rodowa Toli the four brothers, Tungiya (H.25), Kukuna (H.27), Choe (H.28) and Tuti (H.29) co-operate in herding their cattle and they have also included in the group two households in their neighbourhood cluster, that are of different local lineages, Kande Surin (H.72) and Daso Champia (H.24). Of this group H.72, H.25 and H.24 have sons who can herd. H.27, H.28 and H.29 do not have sons, and according to the number of calves, cattle and goats that are herded they give the other households an annual quantity of husked rice after the harvest.

Fishing parties are also organized on the basis of the neighbourhood unit. Sections of streams are owned communally by the 'people of one deed', miad parcharenko, and registered in the name of the eldest agnate. A joint decision is made by the 'people of the deed' that the stream will be fished the next day and the news is spread around the neighbourhood cluster. In the case of the fishing party on the 12th of May, 1973, Bamiya Huring Champia decided to fish the stretch of stream owned by him and his three brothers. They communicated the news to the neighbouring households (H.67, 68, 69 of Lin.7, H.70 of Lin.8, H.79 of Lin.13, H.70 of Lin. l). A member of each of these households was present except H.51, who had other business. When the catch was completed, shares were distributed on the basis of work done by adults and children were allowed to keep what they had collected by hand. No extra share was given to the owner of the stream, though an extra share was given to the owner of the tree from which the poison was made to stun the fish.

Here again is an action set based essentially on land and lineage, but radiating out into the wider neighbourhood cluster from the four core households of the deed unit that owned the stream. Certain individuals were also invited from outside the immediate neighbourhood cluster, namely 11.79 and 11.7. Not only are these two households the closest of the next-door cluster, but also the head of H.79 is the wife's younger brother of the eldest agnate of the deed unit owning the stream. Moreover the head of H.7 had been practising spirit possession in the household of the eldest agnate on the evening when the news was sent out. The unit of the deed holders forms the basic structure which may combine with other deed units who own land in the immediate neighbourhood and are therefore topographically allied to the basic unit. Further links were made on the basis of affinal ties, plus the coincidence of one fortuitous meeting with a close neighbour.

All the houses of a neighbourhood unit are within hailing distance and people are perpetually shouting to each other. From time to time an appeal is made to the neighbourhood by an ill-used wife who sets up a ritual howl of frustration. This is probably due to the lack of any immediate kinship support for a married woman living in her husband's village. In the absence of kin a woman must make a generalised and less directly personal appeal to the community.

A woman plays no direct part in political events and is subject to the authority of the male household head, usually her husband. If she feels ill-used she has little redress and her sense of grievance may mount until she resorts to the howl of frustration. She will wait until evening, when all the neighbours are in their houses and are fairly quiet, preparing to go to sleep. The husband usually has ample warning as she will probably not have cooked an evening meal for him and he may have unsuccessfully tried to calm her, or else absconded. The wife then sits opposite the open door and begins screaming abuse about her husband. This rapidly develops into a special wailing song, that is not dissimilar in rhythm and tune from the funeral wailing.

Pellon, the wife of Sukuram Huring Champia (H.15) reached such a pitch of frustration one evening. Sukuram had spent the day distilling arki, a liquor from fermented matkom flowers (Bassia Latifolia). Pellon, short of money, had collected mangoes in the morning and taken them to market in order to buy some pants for one of their son's, who had been going naked for want of clothing. She returned at three o'clock to find her husband in the house drinking with friends. She immediately fulfilled her duty as a wife, offering the drink around despite her exhaustion after a: eighteen mile walk. By the time night fell, the guests left and Sukuram started shouting at her to make some food, saying that she was lazy. They argued volubly for at least an hour. She said that she would not cook, but that he could eat her if he wanted to, and anyhow, if he did not she would kill him in the night. This was done quietly, so that no one could hear. To insult her Sukuram went to sleep with the chickens in the hen house saying that they could look after him better than she.

At eight o'clock, when all was quiet, she began to howl. She complained that her husband misused her sexually. The three brothers of Sukuram (H.14, 16 and 17) and their three wives heard the howl and one by one they gathered in the courtyard that was immediately beside household 15. For some twenty minutes all listened and heartily enjoyed the song and its revelations. Finally Sukuram woke up from his stupor in the hen house and shouted at her to shut up. His two younger brothers felt that the situation was getting serious and that a fight might break out. They went into the house avoiding Pellon, and dragged their elder brother out. The wife of Sukuram's elder brother said that 'his brother had gone to save him'; because he was drunk it could be dangerous. But it was

significant that Sukuram's elder brother, <u>bau</u>, did riot go in to 'save' Sukuram. Pellon is his younger brother's wife, <u>kimin</u>, and he is Pellon's husband's elder brother, <u>bau honyar</u>, between whom there must be mutual respect. If he had gone in she would either have had to desist or else have aggravated the situation. By his staying behind, and by the entry of the younger brothers, to whom she did not have to show respect, they were condoning her howl. In fact Pellon has a joking relationship with her husband's younger brother, <u>iril</u>, so that this structural position was utilised to show her sympathy. Jokingly the two younger brothers, <u>boko</u>, dragged their elder brother past Pellon and took him off to one of their houses. Pellon's husband's elder brother, <u>bau honyar</u>, and his two wives, <u>tenga</u>, stayed behind, continuing to enjoy her howling for a further fifteen minutes. However when Pellon showed no signs of desisting, her husband's elder brother's wife, <u>tenga</u>, said that it was bad to howl so much as it would create trouble. It appeared that some kind of threshold had been reached and that if she continued her brother, from her natal village, would have to be called in to settle the matter. This would have meant a breakdown in the neighbourhood cluster and a failure of the village to keep peace within the community. Pellon's brother, as is the norm with wives' brothers, <u>bau honyar</u>, is of a different clan, <u>sasuraireni:</u>, and living in another village, To bring him into the dispute would be interpreted as a breakdown in the marriage. The husband's elder brother's wife, <u>tenga</u>, therefore entered Pellon's but saying that it was her duty to save the marriage as she had been responsible for arranging it, and that as she had brought Pellon to the village Pellon should behave. Pellon retorted that if her husband's elder brother's wife had brought her, then she would have to feed and look after her as her husband did not. The brother's wife agreed that she would look after Pellon, even if there was a divorce. This took the wind out of Pellon's sails and the row cooled off. The elder brother's wife said that Pellon should not fight if she were not really angry. This was an obvious reference to the fact that Pellon had continued howling too long and threatened to create a fight that would involve outsiders in the settlement.

This case shows the significance of agnatic ties in the neighbourhood cluster. The minor lineage lives in a cluster that values its unity so that the whole neighbourhood will exert pressure to arrive at a settlement of disputes. At the same time agnatic ties within the cluster provide a basis for mobilising households to avert the threat of one of their number appealing for help from outside the unit. These factors work together to make the neighbourhood unit a closely-knit and well integrated group.

<u>Summary</u>

The structure of the Ho village is very different from that of the hierarchically organised caste village. It is largely egalitarian and based on

kinship and descent. The restrictions on marriage and commensality involve some notions of purity and pollution, but these operate on a reciprocal basis except in situations when the village has to interact with the surrounding Hindu population. The symbols of purity and pollution act mainly as labels for cultural identity with little structural significance. Marriage patterns suggest that the Lohars and Gopes are really Ho who have become part-time specialists and occupy a position in the village analogous to that of the lower castes in Hindu villages. It is possible that if the Ho come into greater contact with Hindu culture this feature could develop into a caste system. At present the Oriya Gowallas are the only true Hindu subcaste in the village, but their relation to the dominant tribal group has few of the features associated with caste. It can be concluded that as a result of its transplantation to the egalitarian environment of the Ho village, caste has almost entirely lost its hierarchical significance and no longer functions as a structural principle.

There is a close link between kinship and the pattern of land tenure. Descent is not only stated through blood, common paternity and maternity as in the idiom of 'the people of one stomach' and common ancestry as in the idiom of 'the people of one rice pot', but also through the medium of shared land - 'the people of one deed'. Land and blood are homologous. The ideal of living near to recently cleared land leads to a clustering of minor lineage units. The lineage graveyard provides a spatial and ideational link between all the minor segments of the local lineage. This is further reinforced by the fact that many of the wards are also major lineages.

The overall structure of the village is therefore a complex interweaving of institutions and norms based both on kinship and on land rights. Analytically the two are separable, but the homology between land and blood suggests that for the Ho they are different aspects of the same reality. Land rights are held by a group of kin, but kin themselves constitute a group chiefly in relation to their land.

Lineage ties operate at four different levels which may be summarized as <u>the unity of the maximal lineage</u>, those who 'were of the same rice pot' which can extend beyond the village; <u>the unity of the major lineage or local lineage</u>, the 'people of one rice pot' having a common ancestor resident in the village and a graveyard within the spiritually protected area of the village; the <u>unity of the minor. lineage</u>, the 'people of one deed', that is a variable unit of inclusion as large as the major lineage or as small as the single household, but bound together by ties of neighbourhood in a single cluster; <u>the unity of the minimal lineage or household</u>. Political action sets are recruited at these four levels but the commonest basis of mobilization is the neighbourhood unit which, although agnatically based, does not always correspond to a single agnatic group.

Chapter Four. The Political Environment.

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the way that the social topography is overlain by institutional forms of government. I will be following a development from social structure through institutions to behavioural process. This chapter deals with government as distinct from politics. It will start from the local level and expand outwards and upwards.

The present system of government is the result of an interesting historical situation. Current institutions depend on historical developments for their rationale. Their form must be discussed within a diachronic perspective. To do this I will take a heuristic zero point, or historical baseline from which to follow subsequent developments.

The obvious heuristic baseline to take for an historical study is the Ho village as it existed before recent historical developments. However since there are few adequate records of the period, it is only possible to suggest what a typical village might have been if stripped of all its present innovations so that the base-line will be to some extent fictional and incomplete.

History.

The Ho are one of the Mundari-speaking tribes, sometimes described as the Kolarian people. They form a branch of the Austro-Asiatic speaking population that are known to have developed from a population that lived on the Chotanagpur Plateau of north-eastern central India. Roy (1970) argues that an easterly chain migration was set up from the high Chotanagpur Plateau down on to the lower plateau that is now called Ranchi District, in the 6th century B.C.[32] Here lineage groups cleared the forest and set up villages. There were village headmen, mundas, who acted as primus inter pares. Later, with the need for defence and military activity against incursions into their territory by Muslim and Oroan [33] settlers, neighbouring groups of about 15 villages came together into federations with one man chosen as a paramount headman, or manki. It appears that the existence of paramount headmen was not universal.

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32. See also Hoffman 1950; 1763-1770.

33. A Dravidian tribe living mostly in the west and north west of Ranchi District. The Oroans believe that their migration into the area forced the Ho to move out. (see Prasad N. 1961: 81).

after the _munda_ had. become established on the Ranchi plateau, another chain migration took place, probably aggravated by a shortage of land. the movement was southwards onto the heavily forested and indented escarpment of the plateau into the area that is today called Singhbum. Roy (1970:69-71) suggests that this migration was somehow due to an "ethical" split in the tribe and that a more traditional section decided to set up on its own, which today makes up the ho. I doubt this idea, as the loose nature of tribal organisation would make it impossible for a split to be effected at tribal level. also it appears to be a commonly held myth among those who have worked with the Munda and not the Ho that the latter are more backward and traditional. in fact the traditional form of Munda village, the _khuntkatti_ village, appears to have changed as the ho migrated south.[34] However, it appears quite clear that a rigid split has taken place as the two groups do not intermarry, even though many of the clans have the same name and both dialects are mutually comprehensible.

There is possibly some truth in Roy's suggestion that the Munda adopted a raja, or centralised figure in the 5th century A.D. - the Maharaja of Chotanagpur, and that as a result many small groups might have migrated south as a move towards independence and later gained a separate and therefore unitary identity. This independence is a trait that can be followed throughout the history of the Mundari-speaking peoples. The Santal, who are now scattered over large tracts of Bihar, West Bengal and Assam, have migrated many times to escape domination by centralised authority which frequently led to their exploitation (see W. W. Hunter 1872: and Yorke 1972)

At an early period., before 1750, all the branches of the Mundari-speaking people did not have such strongly held political identities as today. This was largely created by the British system of administration and nomenclature. Differences of culture and dialect were little more than local variation.. All the groups seem to have referred to themselves by the same name. The Santal called themselves _hor_, the Munda _horo_, and the Ho used, and still use, the word ho. These are all variations of the term 'man' or 'male'. This word is polysemic, and open to extensive examination (see Sinha S.C. 1969). At one level man is held distinct from _diku_ - the outsider or foreigner. The major distinction is made between the Mundari and the non-Mundari-speaking peoples, the in-group and the out-group.

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34. H .Standing makes the interesting point in an unpublished seminar paper that the different structural forms are not to be characterised as old and new, but rather different responses to different experiences of British revenue and land registration laws. I have very strong sympathies with this interpretation.

However this term is highly flexible and as a means of inclusion and exclusion it can be used at many different levels.

With the extension of British influence to the area in the 1760s the Mundari-speaking peoples became known as the Kols. The origin of this term remains unknown, or at least subject to wild conjecture.(35) The area was known as Ramgarh District and became a military collectorate. British forces were stationed there and the local rajas paid taxes to the British authorities. This elevated the rajas to a new status. For the next seventy years a period of oppressive tax farming developed. This gave rise to the tribal uprisings against the Hindu and Muslim tax collectors between 1789 and 1832. The Ho, who had migrated south were not involved in the earlier uprisings, but in 1830 they joined in the uprising of the Sonepur Munda in the south of Ranchi District on the borders of the Ho area. As a result of this the Ho came into contact with the British forces that were sent to quell the trouble. Owing to their fiercer military zeal the Ho became known as the Larka Kol, or Fighting Kols, and were seen to be separate from the Munda.(36)

Consequent on these uprisings a new district was created to make up the South West Frontier Agency with special non-regulation administrative and civil procedure codes. Later Captain Wilkinson toured the area inhabited by the Larka Kols and a special tribal reserve,called the Kolhan, was created to protect the tribals from oppression and land alienation (see Sinha S. P. 1972). Wilkinson drew up a series of regulations, today known as Wilkinson's Rules, whereby a system of indirect rule was to be adopted. The unique feature of these rules was direct administrative communication between tribal headmen and British officials at Chaibasa. This town has since become the administrative capital of Singhbum District.

The creation of the Kolhan Government Estate gave the Ho a territorial identity that had not existed before. All police, civil, criminal and revenue matters were dealt with by officers from the ranks of the tribal population (except for a few special circumstances). All land was made the direct property of the government and the revenue was collected by the

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35. Mr. Justice Campbell, in the Ethnology of India, 1866 says, "Although I have very little doubt that the ordinary word COOLIE (COOLIE, COOLY) as applied to a bearer of burdens or labourer is the same word, and it is generally applied to N. Indians to designate the Aboriginal tribes, most of whom they reduced to the condition of Harlots". See also the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1866, Vol. 35, part 2, p.27

36. See Hoffman 1950: 1763-1770.

village headmen. Villagers were allowed to hold title deeds to the land by right of conduct and contract (see Fazal A. 1969:6-7) upon which they had to pay rent. In order to realise these regulations a survey was carried out of all villages and paramount headmen in the Kolhan. The existing headmen were appointed as government servants, made aware of their rights and duties and, in areas where there here no paramount headmen[37], they were appointed in consultation with the villagers. For their authority they looked to the central figure of the Kolhan Superintendent[38] and his personal Officers, thus creating a focal point for the newly formed tribal territory. At this early stage he held direct authority as agent to the Governor General of Bengal[39]. He therefore became a central Hakim, or local judge (see Carstairs 1935).to whom all could apply.

In pre-British times no form of centralised authority existed among the Ho. The countryside was covered by a network of villages linked by affinal ties

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37. The Settlement Report of the Kolhan Government Estate by D. A. Craven in 1898 says that, "In the Kolhan it appears that before the British occupation of the country there were only headmen in those parts which were under some control from the neighbouring chiefs and which paid rent or taxes for each village".

38 Initially there was no specific post of Kolhan Superintendent. The post was called that of the Agent to the Governor General of Bengal in the South West Frontier Agency. Later when the area became a standard collectorate the Collector held the position. However as the administrative work increased a special officer was appointed to fulfil the conditions of Wilkinson's Rules. This officer was called the Kolhan Superintendent. There is no specific record of the first appointment to this post. However it appears to have come into being in the 1870s. The post is never mentioned in the government ordinances on the area as this post was not recognised anywhere else in India. The Kolhan Superintendent had all the powers of a District Commissioner and Collector in the limited area of the Kolhan. He was a special assistant of the District Commissioner for tribal affairs. Thus in Tuckey's Settlement of the Kolhan in 1918 the Kolhan Superintendent is referred to throughout as the District Commissioner. This settlement was the first time that the powers of the Kolhan Superintendent were laid down on paper. This report reified the post which had really only evolved through practical necessity as a result of the attempt to carry out the conditions of Wilkinson's Rules, that were very badly expounded.

39. In fact this whole position is subject to great controversy. Today there are certain interest groups that would like the Kolhan to be run along the regulation lines laid down in the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act as part of the Scheduled Areas Code. They claim that the Kolhan system of administration as embodied in Wilkinson's Rules is not constitutional. Wilkinson set up his rules under Regulation XXX of 1833 and gave it- authority with his own signature as the Agent to the Governor General of Bengal. However no known copy of these regulations bearing a signature is known and it is believed that as part of the Regulation XXX of 1833 it was never sanctioned by the Governor General. However the Rules became common law and the only copies of the original rules are today almost undecipherable. As legal documents they are useless, added to the fact that in the original they were obviously very badly worded. However when Tuckey settled the Kolhan in 1918 he recorded the system as he found it and it is this record that the present day Kolhan Superintendents use as the guideline.

and by descent, as groups from one village left to start new settlements. The village of Dubil is conscious of its links with three villages in the area where there are members of the same clan, all claiming common ancestors. At the supra-village level there were no governmental institutions that held them together. If there is any locus of government to be looked for it must be seen in the cycles of festivals, markets and cockfighting grounds, at which people gathered and communal actions were discussed. The market place, nowadays the most important of these, was probably of less significance in those early days. The markets of the Kolhan are often centres of foreign influence. Whereas for Dubil there are now three markets within three hours' walk, they have all been set up in the last fifty years; two depended on mining towns, started by the British, and the third resulted from grain smuggling by Oriyas from Orissa, where grain is now cheaper than in Bihar.[40] Before British influence and the development of increased trade, the nearest market to Dubil was 22 miles away at Jaganarthpur, a centre of Muslim occupation that could not have been visited frequently (see Tuckey 1920: appendix A).

More important were the cockfighting grounds that each village set up during the season of plenty, sardi chandu:, from December to March. Even today the headmen collect their rent at these meeting places. They are centres at which household heads bring their cocks to fight and the wife brings her rice beer, which is given to affinal kin from other villages and forms the essential lubricant for discussion, betting and cockfighting. At these meetings distant kin met and marriages were arranged. Market places later developed on these sites. Although they were ostensibly cockfighting grounds, they must also have served as small markets and seasonal centres of exchange, as they still do today. These grounds provided neutral territory where people could gather for discussion without being bound by the hospitality of a particular village. Although each ground is held by a given village it is always held on high uncultivated ground away from the centre of the village and any houses. It is therefore more or less neutral territory.

The other institutional cycle that provided a locus of supra-village government is the Ho custom of staggering all village festivals in any given neighbourhood. The Ho have a complex annual cycle of festivals (see Majumdar 1950: 221), characterized by inter-village visiting. This means that villages have to stagger their dates, so that they do not clash, and consequently form a diachronic network of exchange visits, whereby individuals may travel up to

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40. This situation has resulted indirectly from the imposition of modern state frontiers.

24 miles and occasionally further afield. These visits are structured by affinal ties.

One can only posit a network thesis for supra-village government. This is backed up by a story about the organisation of the Santal uprising among the related people living to the north in the Santal Parganas in 1855 (see Datta 1940). Rumours were spreading across the country such that all knew something was going to happen. The final moment of the uprising was announced by the appearance of men in all the market places bearing branches of the Sal tree, with leaves folded to convey a given date.

Next to this diffuse network at the supra-village level was the institution of the paramount headmen, mankis. It is difficult to pinpoint their institutional role in pre-British days vis-à-vis political organisation at the tribal level. Their equivalents are known to have existed among the Santal as parganaits, where the term appears to have Hindi references, and among the Munda where they were also known as mankis. However they were not universal. Roy (1970:65) suggests that when the Munda migrated to the Ranchi plateau there was no manki system, but that

> 'as time went on, the Munda saw the necessity of making himself stronger so as to be able to effectually protect his brotherhood against the aggressions of other village units that were growing apace all round. This led to the wider organisation known as the patti system, (and among the Ho as the elaka system). The villages by batches generally of twelve - but" sometimes more, sometimes less - came to be grouped together as a patti (or elaka) with the strongest most :influential amongst the headmen as the manki or patti chief ... Military service was the primary, and, in the beginning, perhaps sole condition'.

From this it appears that the federation of villages into elakas under a manki grew out of local circumstances and became institutionalised. In the area that was studied the first manki developed during the third generation of settlement, by which time sufficient tribal villages had grown up to require separate representation at the court of the local Bhuiya raja. The first manki, the great-grandfather of the present manki, was the sardar, or steward at the raja's court. He acted as a broker between the dominant semi-Hinduised Bhuiya system and the tribal population. Later, when the raja's palace was decimated by wars with the neighbouring rajas from the states of Bonai, to the south in Orissa, the sardar remained, and his title became hereditary as a manki over a federation of 33 villages in the Saranda forest area, that had all owed allegiance to the Chota Nagra Raja, (now the Raja of Manoharpur) . Later, when the British made the mankis government officers, the elaka, or

area of jurisdiction, was divided and two mankis were appointed for the Saranda forest division. Once again we get the suggestion here that originally the manki had very little to do with the internal management of Ho tribal affairs. He was rather a broker who rose to a position of leadership in relation to an external force. The existence of the position gives some idea of possible supra-village organisation. Villages saw themselves bound together into a loose federation, based on proximity. However the elakas were in no way bounded units pertaining to a hierarchical organisation. There appears to have been no council of mankis representing the entire tribe. Rather mankis were an innovation to deal with local historical circumstances and were then perpetuated.(41)

Roy states (1970: 65) that gifts were given as marks of respect and that these later came to be regarded as rightful dues. However there is no evidence to support this in the Kolhan. In fact it was not until Majumdar studied the area in the 1930s (see Majumdar 1950) that he noticed the development of a wealthier class among the mankis due to their being able to exploit authority granted them under the British administration.

At the early period the manki appears to have acted as a primus inter pares among his own people. Even though his position had been created as a consequence of external forces, he must have played an important part in inter-village disputes, within his elaka. He was also called on to preside at village meetings where it was felt that the village headman, munda, was either incapable of dealing with the matter or was himself involved in the dispute, and also the manki would have been a munda in his own village.

Without going into the subject of cultural unity, integrity and identity, it is difficult to specify any institutional form of political organisation at the supra-village level in pre-British times beyond diffuse networks. We therefore have the picture of village-based communities largely looking inwards, but having developed loose federations in response to external forces. It is perhaps this lack of any supra-village level organisation that resulted in frequent migration to escape oppression and land alienation by the diku outsider, as is so strongly emphasised by W. W. Hunter (1872:219) among the Santal.

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41. Here I am disagreeing with Baden-Powell. After outlining the contemporary manki system he says, "The Dravidian did not alter this organisation, but their chiefs and Rajas took the rule over the mankis, who, having no special estates, dropped into a secondary or inferior official position" (Baden-Powell 1892:576). However it should be remembered that Baden-Powell is talking of the whole of Chotanagpur, and there are extensive variations to be found in the indigenous type of political organisation as it is found today. Whereas among the Ho mankis were not ubiquitous at the time of British accession in the area, there were to be found in all areas of Munda occupation.

We can now return to the discussion of a heuristic baseline for the institutions of Ho village government in order that subsequent :innovations can be understood. So far we have a picture of communities with membership based on a residential group of local lineages segmenting from the ancestor, who originally cleared lard in the village, down to the extant household heads and their wives, brought from other villages "in order to draw the water", with the mien identifying with their lineage and the unity of the rice pot, and subdividing into parcha units. Within this structure the ritual importance of the original founder and his relationship with the village spirit gives the village a focus, whereby the eldest agnate inherits the position of village headman, munda, and a member of the founder's local lineage is chosen as the village priest, diuri.

Traditionally the village headman received no reward for his office, which was an inherited position. The role formed a focus of secular community activity. As an hereditary office it represented the continuity of the community and was the corporate memory for all matters relating to dispute settlements and ownership of immovable natural resources. The headman had to be present at all village meetings. If a man wanted to clear waste land within the village he had to get permission from the village. It is impossible to arrange that all household heads attend every meeting, but the presence of the headman provides a degree of continuity so that the sum total of all meetings represents the whole community.

This is one of the essential functions of the headman, from which derive many other roles and duties of the office. It is the headman's duty to be a repository of information on rights in natural resources, such as land, trees, streams, et cetera. In order to fulfil this he may demand the presence of any member of the community at a meeting to provide information. To do this he appoints a younger brother as his messenger, dakua, who is empowered to demand the attendance of any villager.

The authority of the village headman derives from his ancestors. At one meeting the defendant claimed that he did not have to attend unless he was summoned with a written notice and that he would not recognise the meeting. This happened before the headman had arrived at the meeting. With this tactic the defendant managed to throw the meeting into chaos, so that it seemed that no case would be brought. When the headman arrived he made the following speech:-

> From the very beginning our ancestors have been calling people to meetings without "notices"[42]. There have always been <u>mankis</u> and <u>mundas</u> and villagers in our country. Have any of these people ever used "notices" of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, or did they manage without them? Wasn't the defendant born because he had grandfathers and great-grandfathers? From which "government"[1] does he want a notice? I don't know anybody in my country who wants to be given a notice. The man who wants a notice can U et out of our country. Anyhow who here can read and write? In England and America and 'foreignland' (<u>belayat</u>), they call each other by paper. Even to sleep together and make love they use paper. They write and give it to each other. We do not follow these countries. We shall not give them a place. When we sacrifice to all the spirits <u>burubongako</u>) do we send them notices and then do we recover from our suffering?

With this tactic of ridiculing the defendant in the face of traditional norms, he waived the challenge to his traditional authority to call individuals to the meetings with a verbal message.

I will discuss the position of headman at such meetings in greater detail later. Let it suffice to say now that he does not adjudicate at. the meetings at all. He cannot lay down the law within any traditional form of authority, though with recent changes in the political environment this has become possible, whereby he can appeal to the field of state legislation and authority.

A good headman is one who can keep the discussion from wandering, generally act as a chairman and, in an unbiased way, sum up the feeling of the meeting, while also tacitly giving authority to its decisions.

The village headman's main role is as a focus of the political power diffused throughout the community. He does not, per se, hold any power himself, but is rather the symbol of community power. Headmen in the past have varied in their skill at manipulating this tacit power. The last headman of Dubil involved the village in considerable public works such as the planting of trees, clearing of village paths and springs, but this was exceptional.

Individuals bring all community matters to the headman, as the focus of the village political arena, who then calls a meeting of those concerned. He forms a communication hub along with his messenger. When a. man calls a muting, he must also provide a reward for all those who attend. To do this he will provide rice beer for the discussants and the headman will be offered the lion's share. And again on the satisfactory conclusion of the meeting he will be required to offer more to the meeting, commensurate with what he has

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42. These are loanwords from English, that are also found in Hindi.

received from it, agreeing in this way to a contract with the villagers over whatever decision has been reached. If he has applied to cultivate some wasteland or to start a new graveyard, he will probably have to provide a small feast of a he-goat and rice beer. This will be offered to the headman and distributed among the discussants. If the matter was the settlement of a dispute, the man who called the meeting will pay the initial cost, and the contract will be agreed by taking an offering or fine from the guilty party or parties.

The other major duty of the village headman is to represent the village to the outside world. He must speak on behalf of the village at inter-village discussions. He is the central figure in the fixing of festival dates, which are arranged not to clash with those of the surrounding villages linked by affinal ties. If an unbiased chairman is needed at inter-village disputes, either the headman of a third village or the paramount headman is called in. The village headman had further duties when the village was included in the old feudatory states that dominated a large part of the tribal area in pre-British days. I have already described the role of the paramount headman in this respect. The paramount headman would have had the duty of collecting feudatory dues, which would no doubt have been done through the respective village headmen.

The institutional structure at this period was of independent villages, each with a focal officer dealing with internal government. Beyond this was the arena of inter-village affairs, where a third party headman or paramount headman acted as the locus of diffuse power. Paramount headmen were not found in all areas but tended to emerge where there was an ongoing relationship with a dominant external power. Tribal government was not represented by any established institutional complex.

The British Period.

During the period. of British influence government institutions became greatly ramified with the tightening, of administrative control. The need for this became evident during the Kol uprising of 1830-32. This uprising by the Ho and Munda was caused by abuses in the legal, police and revenue collection system that had been established in the earliest period of British rule, 1750-1830, (see Hoffman 1950: Vol. VIII, K, p.2388, Roy 1970, S. P. Sinha 1972-, Meudler, undated. Jha 1964: and Papers Relating to Chota Nagpur Agrarian Disputes, undated). It became evident that due to the 'backward' nature of the tribal population it was necessary to institute non-regulation administrative codes.

The area was defined as the South West Frontier Agency in 1834, and Captain Wilkinson was put in charge as the Agent to the Governor General of Bengal, under Regulation XXX of 1833. He began by making a detailed study of the indigenous civil code and came to a certain understanding of the situation. He decided that the tribal population would not be able to operate the complex mechanisms of the regulation civil code due to illiteracy, lack of education and differences of cultural background. If a regulation system were adopted it would involve the appointment of officers who would not understand the tribal system, culture or language. Past experience had taught him that this had led to abuse and exploitation of the population by officialdom. Also we may presume that he was struck by the effectiveness of the indigenous tribal system of government in preserving law and order. Early commentators remark on the honesty of the Ho (Hoffman 1950: 1768-1770). If the tribal system could be maintained and protected from external corruption, it would suffice for the needs of an imperial power, whose interest lay in maintaining peaceful conditions and gaining the sympathies of the inhabitants, who could act as a buffer zone along the borders of the empire against any possible incursions by the Marathas, who had recently been threatening the borders of Bengal.

Captain Wilkinson was aware that to dispense with the regulation system of administration would have been cheaper and less cumbersome, and that with a small tax on each plough of eight annas the government could balance its books. This was achieved in 1898 after the settlement by Craven, when the cultivated land was first surveyed.

After four years of study Wilkinson set out his rules fox' the civil administration of the region. Though there is no contemporary record giving the exact boundaries of the area it appears that he included almost all of the present day area of the Kolhan, only excluding the feudatory states of Porahat, Kharaswan and Seraikela. It appears that out of ignorance he removed all the rights to revenue that the Rajas of Manoharpur., previously the Rajas of. Chota Nagra, exercised over 33 villages in the south west of the Kolhan, in the Saranda forest area. Later there was an enquiry into this estate when the raja made petitions to the government trying to find out what had been done. (see <u>Final Report of the Survey and Settlement of the Manoharpur Estate in Singhbum</u>, by J. D. Sifton, 1914 [43].

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43. This report suggests that the estate was confiscated from the rajas as a result of -the disturbances in 1835, but that because of the help that the raja gave in making arrests for the British during the Indian Mutiny, he was allowed to repossess six villages adjacent to his palace in Manoharpur. He held these villages right up to the Land Reforms Act of 1947. But many of the old villages of the previously larger Saranda Estate still owe him.

This area he called the Kolhan Government Estate after the Kols who inhabited it[44]. This being the name that was used for the inhabitants by outsiders. It was a government estate because land was made the direct property of the British government and with a few exceptions[45] all land holders were the direct tenants of the government. Thus he abolished the revenue intermediaries of the regulation system of revenue collection such as zemindars, jagirdars and thikadars, who had previously farmed the tribals. Initially the village headman was to declare the number of ploughs owned by each of his villagers, who had to pay eight annas per plough. This rent was collected by the village headmen and paid to the administration through the paramount headman. As remuneration the village headmen were entitled to 16% of the rent and the paramount headmen to 10%. He thus used the existing indigenous institutions for the collection of this very small land revenue and avoided the involvement of outsiders.

In the field of civil justice the same policy of supporting and modifying the self-sufficiency of the indigenous system was adopted. The village headmen, in the presence of the village meeting, panchayat or moo hor, meaning 'five people' respectively in Hindi and Mundari, was recognised as the lowest court of the Kolhan administration and allowed to deal with cases up to 300 rupees. A meeting in the presence of the paramount headman acted as the appellate court and also sat for the settlement of inter-village matters. More serious offences were referred to the Kolhan. Superintendent, who passed them on to the Subdivisional Magistrate's court. Minor cases that the paramount headman was also unable to settle could be sent up as miscellaneous cases to the camp court of the Kolhan Superintendent. Here they were heard without lawyers and by verbal submissions from the parties without the payment of court fees, a simplified procedure considered in keeping with indigenous customs.

Initially the paramount headmen and the village headmen were given the police powers of a sub-inspector of police and an assistant sub-inspector. They were required to report all cases involving more than 300 rupees and all major criminal cases to the Kolhan Superintendent[46].

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allegiance at Dosora and still look on him as their raja, though in name only.

44. See Tickell, 1840, Memoir on the Hodesum (improperly called the Kolhan) .

45. Lakhirajdars, see Tuckey 1920: 28.

46. For details see the Report of the Kolhan Enquiry Committee, 1947.

These rules were framed to provide ordered government for the tribals and at the same time to protect them from further exploitation by Bengali and Bihari officials. It was an early experiment in indirect rule, if not one of the first. The essence of the system was a low level indigenous administration linked directly to well-trained high-ranking European officers sympathetic to the tribal cause. To achieve this Wilkinson created what is today known as the Munda-Manki system. This was part of the broader Kolhan system of administration, which I will not describe in detail here` (see Bihar District Gazetteer). The Munda-Manki system was created by a combination of indigenous and administrative norms. All the existing headmen here appointed as government officers, given tenure of office and a record of their rights and duties, hakuknama (see Tuckey 1920). In areas where there were no paramount headmen they were appointed and in other areas where their jurisdiction, elaka, was considered too large, it was divided and new officers were appointed to each division. It was pointed out that they were not tenure holders, or landlords, but government officers, who could be hired and fired by the Kolhan Superintendent and received a commission for their work for the Government. 'They are primarily officials, but were chosen from the people and to some extent by the people ... They have been recorded as tenure holders as it is not possible to record them otherwise under the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, but in fact their position cannot be correctly defined within the four corners of the act. They are under the executive control. of the Deputy Commissioner, and the whole administrative system of the Kolhan depends on the retention of that control' (Tuckey 1920). The man who 'exercises the greatest degree of local influence, for the best purpose, was the best qualified for the office, and if there is a good heir then he should be appointed'. The Agent to the Governor' General noted in 1851: 'The Coles should continue to feel that the authorities have unrestricted control in such matters'.

The advent of the British and the creation of the Kolhan and the Munda-Manki system brought about changes at all levels of tribal life. Supra-village political institutions immediately developed so that today the Ho have a territorial homeland - an area within which the Munda-Manki system holds sway and outsiders, diku, are not allowed to buy land[47]. Within this territorial unit there was a centralised focus of political power in the Kolhan

47. One of the main features of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act was to prevent the alienation of tribal lands by outsiders. After the first cadastral survey of land. holdings by Craven in 1208 the increase of alienation was realised and special measures were taken to prevent it (see Tuckey, 1920, Chapter TV). Today, under section 71a of the Bihar Scheduled Areas Act of 1069 amending section 71 of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1008, there is a special officer for the restoration of illegal transfers of land from tribals to non-tribals in scheduled tribal areas, such as the Kolhan.

Superintendent, who became known as the Kolhan Sahib. This added a new political arena. At roughly the same time the administrative capital was set up at Chaibasa, which soon became a major trading centre and large town giving an administrative focus to the district. The mundas and mankis were required to make occasional visits there, and the Kolhan Superintendent held camp courts in the interior. Large meetings were called of all the paramount headmen in order to hear and discuss charges in administration and policy. These gatherings provided a focus for pan-tribal political activity that had never existed before. Headmen from all over the Kolhan gathered and saw themselves as a group with mutual responsibilities and authority. Rather than being the typical primus inter pares in the village context they interacted in an arena where they were all leaders - spokesmen between their villages and external authority.

This changed the distribution of power. Not only were the headmen foci of traditional authority within the village, but they were now the holders of bureaucratic authority. They owed responsibility both to their villages and to the government, as represented by the Kolhan Superintendent, and for this they were rewarded by being given the right to a commission on their village rents. To this extent they became brokers between the government and the village, which in their situation as integral members of the village community led to certain conflicts in their role. The result of this has been the development of a separate class of mundas and mankis distinct from the villagers. The authority given them as government officers to distribute land enabled them to accrue benefits, so that in 1942 Majumdar was able to distinguish a separate class of munda and mankis employing landless labourers and intermarrying among themselves and asking higher brideprice than was normal in Ho society. However this feature has only developed in areas close to the administrative capital, where proximity and better communications have enabled the village and paramount headmen to utilise their authority. There are few signs of a separate class of mundas and mankis in the south western area, in which fieldwork was concentrated. In the areas around Chaibasa the situation has led to considerable conflict. The headmen have begun to look for support from the administrative hierarchy rather than from their villagers. There have been instances of misuse of the summary powers of justice whereby villagers in a position of wealth and local influence have been supported out of a. class interest. This has led to many villagers not using the village courts, but taking their cases direct to the regulation civil courts that I will describe later[48].

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48. See Kolhan Enquiry Committee Report 1947.

To summarise the effect of political innovation in the imperial period, the British succeeded in creating an expedient and minimal system of government to preserve law and order. Towards this end a system of indirect rule was set up to strengthen and preserve the indigenous organisations and institutions. The Munda-Manki system was extended and bureaucratised, thereby creating a new balance of authority. The only significant arena of political action - the village community - was now an adjunct of the newly created arena of tribal politics. As brokers between these two areas the headmen were placed in a situation of divided interest. In doing this a great deal was achieved to preserve the structure of the village. Firstly incursion and land alienation by outsiders was prevented and a tribal organisation was set up that later was to have great significance, in that the ground work was laid for the emergence of a tribal political party after the introduction of an electoral system. A new and changed form of tribal political organisation was established in an unrivalled position of security, that allowed for the preservation of the tribal cultural system.

The governmental structure thus created in the Kolhan was of village units with the village headman as a focus of authority, combined with federations of villages centring on paramount headmen. The Kolhan territory was administered by the Kolhan Superintendent with a body of clerks and inspectors. The Superintendent was under the authority of the Deputy Commissioner in charge of the entire area of the District of Singhbum, of which the Kolhan was one of three subdivisions. The Deputy Commissioner in turn was subject to the Commissioner of Chotanagpur Division of Bihar. As the governmental process expanded the principle was preserved that the Kolhan Superintendent should be directly in charge of all tribal affairs, and be in contact with the headmen. He remained in control of all civil, revenue and development matters, and his office gradually expanded into a multiplex institution so that a simple system of administration could be preserved, that would not present a complex and therefore alienating procedural structure to the tribal population.

Later in the British period the regulation police system was brought into the Kolhan and separate criminal courts were introduced. But once again the headmen were recognised as the lowest criminal courts. They kept their powers as sub-inspectors and assistant sub-inspectors of police. In effect they operated as reporting, arresting and enquiring officers of the police system and no policeman could enter their jurisdiction without their permission. Although they were required to report all such matters as murder and serious theft to the police, the onus was on them to report what they felt fit and to settle what they could within the community. Later we will see that these

bureaucratic powers were frequently used by them to support their position in the community. They now had the deterrent power of threatening their villagers with being 'sent up to the government courts'.

The system of government was unique in India. It was an isolated area with an anomalous system of administration, allowing the tribal population to follow a path of separate and isolated development. This was made possible by the area being economically isolated from the rest of India. Economic inputs and outputs were minimal. Government was financially self-sustaining.

Towards the end of the British period the missions began to develop a strong following and set up an efficient schooling system that enabled a number of tribals to rise to lower administrative positions. The higher positions were held entirely by British officers. New roads and market places were built on funds from internal revenues. Rural development schemes were initiated by interested Kolhan Superintendents in cooperation with forward looking headmen. And a very efficient system of government bungalows was erected where the Kolhan Superintendent held camp courts, so that no village was more than a day's walk away. The population of the area expanded considerably, but a serious shortage of land was never experienced comparable to that of the Munda population in Ranchi District immediately to the north, and in the Santal Parganas. In areas of land shortage many tribals took to paid employment as wage labourers. It was probably the greater economic independence of the Ho and the preservation of their village life structured around land tenure and the lineage system with a comparable lack of reliance on wage labour that led such commentators as Roy to feel that the Ho were more traditional than the Munda. A limited, but unrecorded, number of Ho did emigrate to the brick factories of Calcutta and the tea plantations of Assam, but it never reached the extent of emigration that occurred among the Munda and Santal.

The two major economic innovations were the development of forestry and mining. Both of these industries employed a great deal of casual labour from the nearby villages. At the early stage of mineral extraction there was little problem of adaptation to the idiosyncratic system of the Kolhan. most of the exploitation was in thinly populated areas and there was little conflict between the headmen and external powers[49]. The same was true of forest exploitation. Large tracts of the south west of the Kolhan were made over to

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49. With the further expansion of mineral extraction in the 1950s and onwards the encroachment of mining on agriculture has created local and intense conflicts.

the Forest Department and administered separately. All cultivated and village lands were excluded and villagers were forbidden to extend their lands into the conservation areas. Once again the changes were largely local and the Kolhan system did not come into conflict with the regulation Indian system. In fact the creation of the Kolhan served as a barrier against change. In other areas of Chotanagpur, where this protectionist policy was not applied, social changes went ahead rapidly with the development of industry, mineral extraction and trading centres, thus leaving the Kolhan as a backwater.

The majority of the development and welfare projects were carried out by the missionaries based on Chaibasa, though at the end of the British era the District Development Boards did begin to scratch the surface. However it was not until after Indian Independence that major changes affected the Kolhan, and by that time Wilkinson's Rules had become accepted and the Kolhan and Munda-Manki system was institutionalised.

The Independence Period

Under the five year planning programmes instituted after Independence the emphasis of government policy in the tribal areas changed. One of the first measures of the new government was the introduction. of the Land Reforms Act. This abolished all private land ownership and made the state the landlord, with powers to collect rent. The consequent changes in the land ownership pattern did not affect the Kolhan, as it had been a government estate since 1833. However the administrative system created to deal with the new governmental responsibility of land administration and revenue collection changed the structure of authority.

A new land revenue department was set up throughout the state of Bihar although there was already in existence an adequate system of rent collection through the mundas and mankis and the Kolhan Superintendent. Indian government officers were appointed between the tribal headmen and Deputy Commissioner's office, as represented by the Kolhan Superintendent in his role of Assistant Deputy Collector. This destroyed the paternalism of the Kolhan system. The Kolhan Superintendent was still the superior revenue officer, but the estate was divided up into a series of revenue Circles, each under a Circle Officer. This Circle Officer held all the village rent rolls, jamabundi, and was responsible for the registration, surveying and settlement of land ownership and rent:. This meant that any villager wanting to take a land case to the government now had to appeal to the system of Circle Officers.

Unlike the old paternalist system of the Kolhan Superintendent's office the new system relied on a complex bureaucratic ideology. It was no longer possible to make verbal representation to a travelling camp court. Complex application papers in Hindi had to be filed in triplicate by villagers who could not write. This required them to utilise their agnatic and affinal ties to the utmost to find individuals who could help them. In many cases individuals were unable to obtain help, which prevented them from making an application. The necessity for brokers between the local village government and the bureaucratised officers of the circle gave rise to a socially institutionalised, but bureaucratically unrecognised grouping of individuals who could be mobilised to bridge the barrier.

What then is this barrier? It is more than just a state of apathy and lack of political mobilisation between people and government, although this is undoubtedly an important part of the barrier. Nor is it a feature of an uneducated group of villagers trying to cope with the differing motives and objectives of bureaucracy. Such features of the relationship between village and government are common in both the old and new system. Nor is it just a problem of villagers being more acquainted with the old system than the new, as both have nor existed for the better part of a generation.

This barrier is a cultural problem. It has been aggravated by political manipulation at the level of democratic party politics. In order to understand this it is necessary to expand on the political history of the area. In doing this we will also be able to see how British rule created a supra-village tribal political organisation, which has enabled the Ho community to play a fairly active part in the democratic party process.

By the time that India gained independence the indirect rule of the Kolhan and the Munda-Manki system was firmly established. It was a system that the tribals appreciated. The protection that it afforded them against the diku outsider was considered advantageous. Also it was a system of government, jealously guarded by the administrators of the tribal area (see the Report of the Kolhan Enquiry Committee, 1947, and S. C. Sinha, 1972), even though they were all aware that changes were required. During this period an ideology of separatism: had been unconsciously fostered, and the special tribal status was jealously guarded by the tribal people as well.

At the time of creating the new constitution clauses were carefully included to preserve this special status. Under the Bihar Scheduled Areas Regulation Act of 1884 all new legislation that affected the tribal area must first receive the approval of the Central Government Tribal Council. However the

Bihar Land Reform Act of 1947 appears to have been implemented without any special amendments by the council. The legislators were unaware that they were making additions to an already satisfactory system of land administration and revenue collection in the Kolhan.

The creation of Circle Offices changed the structure of the administration and affected the Ho's perception of the locus of authority. Though the senior revenue officer for the Kolhan, the Kolhan Superintendent still retained his powers as revenue collector; he now had a series of subordinate Circle Officers, who carried out the actual collection. It was the Circle Officer's job to supervise the *mundas* and *mankis* in the payment of rent and forward it to the Kolhan Superintendent. The change was that a paternalist centralised authority did not come out to the carne courts to consult with the *mundas* and *mankis* and collect the rent. Rather regional offices were set up in each circle to which the *mundas* and *mankis* went. These offices also dealt with all matters of land registration and kept the village rent rolls.

Let me give one example of this to demonstrate the conflicts that were created. At the end of the 1973-4 fiscal year the village-wise se rent collection was conducted in the following manner. The Panchayat Accountant, *gram sewak*, received a notice from the land's records officer, *Karamchari*, an officer of the Circle Officer's department, that the rent would have to be collected by a certain day. The land records officer gave the rent receipt forms to the Panchayat accountant and told him that the education cess tax was being increased and that they would have to calculate the increase for each rent payer. The panchayat accountant went to the village headman, *munda*, to get a copy of the village rent roll that he has to keep in the village for the Circle Officer. However the *munda* had lost it. He consulted with the *munda's* accountant, *tahsildar*[50], and then had to make the 24 mile journey to the circle office to get a new copy from the Circle Officer. The land records officer carne back with the new rent roll and talked to everybody to make sure that they knew what had to be done. The panchayat accountant and the *munda's* accountant worked out how much each household head had to pay and they filled in the receipts. The receipt books had been issued by the Circle Officer to the land records officer, who gave them to the panchayat accountant, who gave them to the *munda's* accountant. Only the *munda* is allowed to collect rent from the villagers and sign the receipts under the old Wilkinson's Rules. From this it is quite clear that the whole process of rent collection is dominated by the state government system through the circle office, with a great deal of

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50. The term tahsildar is used in the Kolhan to refer merely to the village record keeper, which is different from the rest of India.

help from the panchayat officials, that will be discussed later, under the same cultural umbrella as the circle office.

The munda then summoned all his villagers to pay their rent at a certain spot on a certain day. On the morning of rent collection day the panchayat chairman, mukhiya, and his accountant arrived in the village, and contacted the munda's accountant. The munda was told to fetch the villagers. When all were assembled the manki arrived looking very smart and took the best seat. He had recently returned. from his only trip in the last three years to the district capital, where he had attended a meeting of mankis and mundas at which the District Commissioner and the Kolhan Superintendent had made announcements. The manki immediately launched into a long speech against the land records officer. He said that the Kolhan Superintendent had told him that the land records officer did not have any work to do in the villages, but that the mundas and mankis should do it all. 'The land records officer has taken a lot of money from the villagers for his own pocket. He is a dog, and comes to eat chickens in our village. The land records officer is well paid by the government, and if he comes to the villages he should not depend on the village people for his food and alcohol, not like we mundas and mankis have to do when we go round the villages. The mundas and mankis get their money (karcha = sustenance) and strength (pe: = power) from the villages, the land records officer gets his from the government. He is a different "line"[51]'. He then said that he and three mundas should go to the Kolhan Superintendent and. complain about it. He spoke privately to the panchayat accountant and they both agreed that the Circle Officer had not announced that there would be any rent increase this year and that if there was any news the land records officer must have got it direct from "Dilipatna"[52]. They agreed that the question had to be asked, 'Who are we to believe? Is the Kolhan Superintendent different from the Circle Officer? Doesn't the Kolhan Superintendent have the same power as the Circle Officer?' The manki said the village people did not know the rules. And that 'as they were far from them (the officers) they (the villagers) could not speak with power and authority, and are quick to believe others'. He said that their words would be more powerful if they made reports to the Kolhan Superintendent every two or three months, but that it is difficult as they live a long way from him. An argument then broke out between the panchayat chairman and the manki. The chairman said that the manki should not say what he had about the land records officer, as he did not know where the orders came from. Both the manki and the munda's accountant agreed that

51. This is an English loan word.

52. Dilipatna is seen as the seat of government. It refers to Delhi and Patna, the state and national capitals. However it is only vaguely conceptualised by the villagers as being in another region.

they should not pay, as he, the chairman, and the land records officer did not have the power to do any work in the village concerning rent collection. They only received orders about what rent should be collected, but today he, the chairman, had only come along to see what was happening, and not to do any work.

The rent collection went ahead with the munda's accountant signing the receipts and being helped by the panchayat accountant, who was better at additions. The munda collected the money and gave the change as ordered by the panchayat chairman. The munda was helped by a young school-going boy, as he himself was illiterate and could not work out the change needed. The panchayat chairman attended the meeting and got very drunk, arguing with people as to how they should pay their rent. The manki went home, saying that if he did not stay in the house the chickens would eat all his belongings. When he had gone all laughed that he was taking a long time to urinate. This laughter seemed necessary because the manki had fouled the air by bringing the conflict into the open and now seemed to be making his get-a-way.

This incident teaches us a great deal about the tribal perception of the changes created by the Bihar Land Reforms Act. The Kolhan Superintendent has equivalent powers in the tribal area to those of the District Commissioner: he is in charge of all revenue collection, with a body of Circle Officers who see to the day to day affairs of the revenue collection. Before the Land Reforms Act this would have been carried out by a body of Kolhan First Officers, directly supervised by the Kolhan Superintendent. Also many of the mundas and mankis would have paid their village rents directly into the Kolhan Superintendent's treasury. The Kolhan Superintendent explained to the mundas and mankis at the meeting that the education cess tax was to be increased and. that shortly they would have to collect the village rents at the new increased level. He also stated that the rents would have to be paid into the Kolhan Superintendent's treasury. The manki, while having forgotten or not heard, that the rent was to be increased, understood that the rent should be returned as Usual to the Kolhan Superintendent. He favoured the old paternalist organisation to the exclusion of the Circle Officer's system. His interpretation of what the Kolhan Superintendent said was based on his cultural prejudices in favour of the Kolhan s system and against the' 'foreign', diku, system.

Culturally he perceived the Circle Officer to be an element in a state government organisation and not part of the tribal government organisation. He stated this point of view when he said, 'The mundas and mankis get their money

and strength from the villages, the land records officer gets his from the government. He is a different line'. He sees the old paternalist system, centering on the Kolhan Superintendent and getting its authority from the Kolhan Superintendent, as a system of the tribal people supporting their own organisation, that employs officers and gives them an external authority to govern in the tribal area. He continues by saying that the old Kolhan system seems to be getting weak as the mundas and mankis. are not communicating sufficiently with their central authority - the Kolhan Superintendent Therefore in contrast. the state government organisation is gaining in strength. Therefore he suggests that action must be taken. The mundas and mankis must close the gap of authority by raking more frequent representation to the Kolhan Superintendent. In this way, by reducing the social and organisational distance that has developed in the old system, the mundas and mankis can gain more power and knowledge to combat the distant power of Dilipatna - a mythical source of foreign power and authority. It is a force that is respected as long as it is seen to be acting fairly. However when it comes into contrast with the Kolhan system, it is seen to be in. conflict with it. The indigenous thinking on this appears to be very muddled as both the Kolhan Superintendent and the Circle Officer are described as being part of the sarkar, the government. And the government is respected. Its ownership of land and right to rent is granted. The conflict only comes in the two contrasting processes that have developed in the overall structure of government.

The Opposition between Tribal and Non-tribal.

The opposition that Is used to define the contrast between the tribal and the non-tribal is referred to by the Ho as ho and diku. It is a cultural distinction that has overlain all political relations throughout their recorded history (see Sinha 1969: Hoffman 1950: 1062).

Ho, hor and horo are the three terms used by the three major groups of the Mundari speaking tribes, the Ho, the Santal and the Munda (see Hoffman 1950: 1763-70). In all cases it is a polysemic term. It can mean mankind in opposition to the other animals, or man as opposed to woman. But more important here is that it refers to the cultural in-group in contrast to the out-group. It summarises the cultural contrast between the tribal, or adivasi (aboriginal), and the peasant or Hindu Indian.

The social organisation of the Mundari-speaking peoples is such that the highest level of centralised organisation is the local lineage. Both the clan and the tribe are acephalous and non-corporate. The tribe has never manifested any internal cohesion until the creation of special. tribal reserves and administrative organisations by the British, for example the Santal Parganas Civil Procedures Code and Wilkinson's Rules. Historically the identity of these Mundari-speaking peoples has not been based on the ideology of a cohesive tribe within a pluralist society. What are today named and defined as tribes had traditionally no crystallised identity, territorial unity of political centrality. Rather there was a qualitative distinction between the Ho and the outsider. The concepts of ho, hor and horo did not refer to specific tribal groupings, but purely to contextual oppositions between cultural opposites. All these tribal peoples lived in the interstices between the peasant Indian populations.

This ideology of a cultural rather than a politically unified opposition gained significance during the early period of British influence, between 1770 and 1833 in Singhbum and Ranchi Districts, and in the period of frequent tribal uprisings between 1820 and 1833. At this period the term diku gained the epithet of pusi, meaning cat, that is still used today. This originated in the idea that the Hindu outsider is like the cat that prowls round the house waiting till the householders are off guard, when he creeps in under the rafters and makes off with the household valuables[53]. This in turn refers to the belief that when a cat walks across the roof at night it is the visitation of a witch. There is also the idea that a witch can gain powers of invisibility by eating the after birth of a. kitten. There was one inveterate thief in the village of Dubil. It was said that his mother's sister had been a witch who had fed him the afterbirth of a kitten. He was therefore capable of entering anybody's house without being seen.

In the political arena this opposition between the ho and the diku colours all relations. The paternalist Kolhan system is the ho system. Whereas the regulation administrative system is seen as a diku system.

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53. Hoffman, 1950 p.1062, gives the reference diku-medn that is also interesting in this context. He translates it as "a Hindu's eyes; occurs in the proverb: diku-medn ci seta-medn, the eye of a Hindu is like the eye of a dog. Understand: a dog fawns on those from whom it gets its food and snarls and bites at all others; so the Hindus and other nor. aborigines fawn on those from whom they expect some profit and snarl at all the ethers".

The Panchayat System.

The ideology of ho-diku is also extended to the system of panchayati raj that was finally introduced in 1952 under the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act. In the post independence era the development of nationalism was accompanied by plans for the education and development of the rural population as citizens of India. This led to the creation of panchayats as a system of local government that could act as the instrument of a comprehensive scheme of rural development. The question was posed by the Kolhan Enquiry Committee in 1947 in its terms of reference:-

> 'How can the people be developed to exercise their full status as citizens of free India, able to stand. side by side with their neighbours within the shortest time possible, without upsetting too rapidly the present structure' (Kolhan Inquiry, 1947).

By 1952, after the institution of the Bihar Land Reforms Act and the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, the situation was summed up by the Commissioner of Chotanagpur for the Governor of Bihar.

> 'I fully agree with the views expressed by the local officers in the matter. With the growth of political consciousness, and democratic institutions, the system of village headmen is now becoming outmoded. 'Their duties have not been discharged with diligence or competence and in order to render better service to the community, government have ultimately taken over all these responsibilities on themselves.
>
> 'I would therefore recommend that the system if village headmen) should be abolished forthwith. It is much better to make a clean sweep of the. old and useless system and bring this area into line with the rest of the state.
>
> 'We shall however. have to take simultaneous action to strengthen the democratic forces like the Gram Panchayats and the Cooperative Societies in this area'.
> (Letter from the Commissioner of Chotanagpur Division, dated 30.12.52).

From these quotations it is quite clear that the panchayat system was a potential threat to the old paternalist system. Before analysing this it is necessary to describe this new system.

Under the slogan of 'service through guidance and assistance and inspiration to self-help', areas were demarcated for the allocation. of funds and personnel. Each area, termed a Block, of some 50,000 acres of cultivated land, embraced about one hundred villages. Manoharpur Block, the area of fieldwork, was one of the four pilot projects. In 1955 the Community Development scheme

went into full swing. New Blocks were created in phases of 10 to 12 at a time, and the officers were given full powers under the Community Development Department of the State at Patna. The District Development Office was set up at district headquarters and Block Development Offices were set up in the blocks under the Block Development Officer (B.D.O.). The blocks tended to be smaller than the circles just described under the Bihar Land Reform Acts, but where they coincided the same officer was both the Circle Officer and the B.D.O. And where a circle was divided into two blocks then one of the B.D.O.s was also the Circle Officer. Under him were a series of agricultural advisers, co-operative officers, seed grain bank officials, clerks and others. The vital link between these officers and the villages was the Village Level Worker (V.L.W.) whose job it was to liaise between the villages and the block office. Armed with the land records officer and the advice of experts his function was to supervise the realisation of the development schemes in the villages and to gauge the modifications necessary in respect of local conditions. He was also responsible for supervising all contracts for schemes carried out by the villagers and for communicating their desires and requests to the block office. The V.L.Ws were a crucial link, acting as brokers between the government and the tribals. However it is this aspect of the Community Development scheme which has met with the greatest problems. The V.L.W. is torn between political involvement and responsibility in the village panchayat and administrative responsibility to the B.D.O. Therefore this link often tends to be a weak one.

Hanson writes Hanson, 1972) that the creation of village panchayats in India has tended to mobilise the villages in uninvited and often undesirable ways it has been the common experience throughout India that the Panchayati Raj has changed the basis of local leadership. However, due to the inapplicability of the panchayat structure to the structure of the tribal village I want to demonstrate that it has not and probably will not affect tribal. political structure, and that the Panchayat Raj in its present form will have little effect in tribal areas. But to do this I will first describe the nature of the village panchayats.

Village committees, or panchayats, were planned as the essence of a new system of local level government. The large Hindu village of northern Bihar was organised into one panchayat. A chairman (mukhiya), secretary (sarpanch), village accountant, (gram sewak) and elders (panches) were elected as the executive members of the self-governing units. They were given powers to settle local disputes in a summary manner and to direct the form of

development schemes within their jurisdiction. Initially they were directed by the block office in the hope that after a period of education they themselves would utilise the services and funds of the block offices in realising the schemes that they felt necessary. It was intended that the panchayats should develop a degree of political autonomy. The idea was to regularise the traditional. village panchayat, forcing it to be more representative of the entire community, and to offer it the help of greater funds and the services of trained government experts.

The idea of a community acting as a self-governing body was in theory excellent. However, in Manoharpur block, the tribal villages, scattered over large distances throughout the forest, average a population of less than 450 persons. A panchayat was therefore composed of thirteen villages. The panchayat, in which fieldwork was carried out, was divided into two units by a 1,200 foot forested hill range with many of the officers a full day's walk from each other. Perhaps quite rightly elections were considered impossible owing to the illiteracy of the inhabitants and the officers were appointed. The only well-educated man was made the accountant, his father, a highly respected <u>manki</u>, was made the chairman, and it appears that the offices are already becoming hereditary through inertia, as his son has taken the pest after his death. Two of the elders or inches have neither been reappointed or elected after the deaths of the existing office holders. As a self-governing community the panchayat is not a functional unit and has not become an instrument of rural development. But more importantly the government panchayat system has in no way superseded the existing system of village meetings under the <u>mundas</u> and <u>mankis</u>. Internal village matters are only discussed within the village and inter-village matters are only discussed between the two villages.

In the area under study all land revenue, development and panchayat matters have to be channelled through the one officer who is the Block Development Officer and the Circle Officer. In the creation. of this system many of the previous functions of the old paternalist system have been transferred. All land disputes must in effect go through the Circle Officer as he holds the rent roll and the record of land rights. All development and local welfare is now in the hands of the B.D.O., who has become for the village the apex of the administrative hierarchy. But the panchayats, designed to refer all matters to him through the V.L.W. and the land records officers, are not fully operative and do not deal with local disputes. All local disputes and matters of internal welfare, such as the preservation of village roads and forests, are settled at the village meetings under the auspices of the <u>mundas</u> and <u>mankis</u>,

who see their authority as coming from the villagers and the Kolhan Superintendent. These two systems, the block. representing the central government diku arena, and the Munda-Manki Kolhan system representing the paternalist Ho arena, are organisationally separated. Both systems have suffered at the expense of the other.

To those interested in national development the Kolhan system is an outdated encumbrance to national integration. Land developers and mining interests found that it hindered the economic expansion of the area. At the village level there was less dissatisfaction. Despite the distinctions made between the two arenas they have become integrated. This integration is due to the weaknesses that their coexistence has created. I must first explain these weaknesses. At the village level the government panchayat arena is weak because it has no structural correspondence with the organisation of the tribal villages. Being spread over a large forest area it lacks cohesion and its links with the block office - through the V.L.W. - are not strong. The strength of the central government arena lies in the B.D.O., in his combined position as the Circle Officer. He distributes all financial aid and government contracts for well building, etc. He and his officers must be consulted in matters of land disputes as he holds the register of land rights. Orders come from his office for the increase in land rent, road, health and education cess tax. And it is at the B.D.O.'s office that the mundas and mankis pay their rent and claim their right to a commission. As the Circle Officer, the B.D.O. is the subordinate of the Kolhan Superintendent in his ancillary role as the Assistant Deputy Collector. But he is seen by the villagers as the B.D.O., who is independent of the authority of the Kolhan Superintendent, part of the diku arena and not the ho arena.

In a complementary fashion the Kolhan system is strong at the village level, and incorporates the traditional structure of the He village. Despite a certain fall from grace by some of the mundas and mankis, they still hold the loyalty of the people. But more important, they are an integral part of. the structure of tribal society. The weakness lies in the higher levels of the Kolhan system and the loss of the powers of the Kolhan Superintendent occasioned by the increase of powers of the Land Reforms Department and the Community Development cum Panchayat Raj Departments who, together with many of the functions of the Kolhan Superintendent, have taken over some of his junior officers and clerical staff and also many of his bungalows. The existence of these bungalows is a vital element in the operation of any Indian bureaucratic system in the interior. A munda or a manki visiting the Kolhan Superintendent or making any kind of report to his office from the fieldwork area would be involved in a minimum of two days' travelling and in expenditure that would

only have been possible two or three times a year. A system has therefore evolved whereby the Kolhan Superintendent tours through his subdivision and stays at a series of bungalows where he holds Camp Courts. In the fieldwork area the bungalows have either not been kept up or have been handed over to the block office for the quartering of personnel. The Kolhan Superintendent is therefore unable to visit a :large area of his subdivision and unable to carry out his functions there. Administration being dependent on communications, is therefore non-operational at this level. But despite these structural weaknesses frequent Kolhan Superintendents have complained about the content of the system, blaming the low level of education of the mundas and mankis, their inability to use the postal services and to keep appointments. This has meant that even the functions for which the Kolhan Superintendent still has complete authority, such as the registration of land and the settlement of waste land on new tenants, the signing of the title deeds called parchas and tie disciplining, appointment and dismissal of mundas and mankis, are now channelled through the B.D.O. in the isolated areas.

At the local level these complementary weaknesses in the two separate arenas cancel each other out and are fused together. The mundas and mankis, with their records of rights and duties tucked away in the thatch of their houses and signed under the authority of Wilkinson's Rules of 1833 and the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act of 1908 continue to function in their traditional roles. They see the Kolhan Superintendent as some far off symbol called the "Kolhan Sahib", while also acknowledging that it is from him that they hold authority. This enabled the munda of Dubil to say in one of his more drunken moments:

> 'For many years we have known how to do the work of mundas and mankis. Now it seems that we do not know as the government tried to stop us. But it could not succeed as nothing was at fault. We the mundas and mankis - are the "officers" of this country. The "Kolhan Sahib" is only the "Kolhan Sahib" in name. He only sits in his office. How can he see from there what happens in the villages? We the mundas and mankis are the real workers ... How can he know about people chopping each other with their axes and shooting each other with arrows ... The "Kolhan Sahib" has become the "Kolhan Sahib" through our work. If not he would not be the "Sahib". He does less work than we do and he gets a. lot of money'.

While the manki of Dubil said at the summing up of one meeting,

> 'We do not know who is great or who is small. Whoever is great in this country we do not know. But when one becomes great, then the work gets done. Therefore the mundas and mankis have got their rights from the 'Kolhan Sahib". But now everything is done through the panchayat. Their strength is coming fully. But even

our daily work is not seeing any strength (<u>abua: paiti musigo: Jan pe: kae neletana</u>)'.

In this case he had asked the plaintiff to make an application to the block office for a surveyor to measure and record the land that he had cleared, so that there should be no more quarrelling about it in future. To do this he must go to the panchayat accountant who would apply for a form of application, bring it back to the village and fill it in for a fee. In almost all the meetings the chairman, be he the <u>munda</u> or the <u>manki</u>, will mention that he has the right to hand the matter up 'to the panchayat line', which imposes heavier fines than the '<u>munda-manki</u> line', and that the 'panchayat line' can pass it up to the police and even to the courts in Chaibasa. The threat is not only that the wrongdoer could go to prison but that the costs of such a case would be heavy. In reality this ultimate threat is seldom carried out. When village meetings cannot resolve matters then they are often left to resolve themselves. Three cases of a criminal nature were unsolved, all were threatened with referral to the panchayat, but none were in fact referred. In every case the plaintiff preferred to let the matter rest and never paid the <u>manki</u> the fee for submitting a report to the panchayat. Nevertheless the ultimate authority of the panchayat is used to strengthen the traditional authority of the <u>mundas</u> and <u>mankis</u>. And the panchayat looks to the <u>mundas</u> and <u>mankis</u> to carry out a large number of the functions that are delegates to it.

<u>Encapsulation</u>.

The material shows certain resemblances to that of Bailey on Bisipara (Bailey 1970). In both there is a similar process of encapsulation of the village and of changes in the structure of tribal communities as a result d' changes in the encapsulating structure over the past century and a half. In order to give a clearer idea of this relationship we must outline the different stages of encapsulation. Once this has been done it should throw a great deal of light on the process of village structure in later chapters.

The heuristic baseline of an historical zero point for the village structure discussed above, shows that the Ho had attempted to preserve an independent isolation from any potential encapsulating structure by migrating from areas of political domination. The related tribe of the Santal, who have been better documented at this early period, manifested a similar desire for isolation and dread of encapsulation. W. W. Hunter (Hunter, 1872) describes them as desiring to preserve a high degree of isolation. They continually moved their villages from encroaching Hindu civilisation into undeveloped jungle. He

describes them as a people, 'who dread the approach of a Hindu toward their village more than the night attack of the leopard or tiger' (Hunter 1872: 149).

This same ideology appears to have been the basis of migrations of the Ho and Munda since 1,000 B.C.[54] They appear to have migrated from the hills of north India to the Bundelkhund in central India, across Rajputana, back to northwest India, from there east through Rohikhund and Oudh to Bihar, Ajodhya and Azimgarh, and finally south to the Chotanagpur Plateau, as Roy suggests (Roy 1970: 34). I would suggest that the most recent migration of the Ho, their chain migration and gradual split from the Munda, was a result of the increasing power of the Nagbansi Rajas, the Maharajas of Chotanagpur. This last attempt at preserving their isolation brought them into the present area of Singhbum. Once in Singhbum they avoided being encapsulated for some time, but they could not remain totally independent. We must understand that isolation in the context of Ho social structure only means isolation for the village communities. The overall tribe, having no unified structure or organisation, was tolerant of other communities in. the same geographical area. Indeed it appears that Ho villages coexisted with Muslim, Bhuiya and Mahto villages in Singbhum. However this was a situation of coexistence and not domination. The greater political power of the small tributary rajas of the Maharaja of Chotanagpur was kept at arms length, no doubt through the agency of the manki as a broker. Certainly in the Saranda Forest area the 33 Ho villages inside the estate of the Raja of Chota Nagra, now the Raja of Manoharpur, appear to have cooperated peacefully with minimal interaction. It is possible that the Ho even fought alongside the Raja's forces in defending the area against the frequent raids of the Rajas of the Bonai and Nagra Estates of Orissa and even today allegiance is shown through the annual offerings given at the festival of Paudi Ma. We can refer to this minimal stage of encapsulation as being Nominal Rule (see Bailey 1969:149) in which encapsulation is nothing more than a matter of geographical location of the encapsulated within the encapsulator, both communities keeping their distance arid not interfering in each other's affairs.

With the expansion of British influence in Chotanagpur, the rajas were giver: powers to collect taxes, and the nature of the encapsulation changed to one of Predatory Rule. The Maharaja farmed out areas under his jurisdiction to build up his personal following and a period of oppression followed. Tribal lands were increasingly alienated (see Hoffman 1950: 2388-2404, Sinha S. P.

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54. S. C. Roy gives us this historical information, though it must be treated as highly conjectural at the best of times.

1968, Finer 1958, Frykenberg 1969), and the encapsulator began to interfere in the internal affairs of the Munda and to a certain extent in the internal affairs of the Ho villages in the north of the Kolhan. This finally resulted in the Kol Uprising of 1833. Troops were used to quell the uprising, but no permanent success was achieved until a political change was created whereby the nature of encapsulation became that of Indirect Rule rather than predatory rule. The intention of this policy was to secure a frontier zone for Bengal by creating an administrative system within the indigenous culture capable of carrying out the minimum functions of government. Under this type of encapsulation the governmental organisation was radically changed. Supra.-village organisation was universalised and a basis of tribal organisation was laid, whereby central authority was institutionalised. The system was non-regulation and specifically tribal, or ho rather than diku oriented.

After Indian independence the type of encapsulation again changed. Today the emphasis is on the creation of national unity, as against the previous policy of divide and rule. This has been promulgated through a two-pronged drive for modernisation through education and rural development, and secondly by instituting a pan-Indian system of local. self-government within the structure of a multi-party democratic government. Increased taxes were paid direct to the central government and channelled back through the system of development schemes controlled by the village panchayats. This economic feedback was intended by government to achieve its objectives of modernisation and mobilisation towards national unity.

But in the Kolhan this later stage has come up against a cultural barrier that was administratively institutionalised by the divide and rule policy practised under the indirect rule type of encapsulation. With the rise of a multi-party democratic system, this gained expression in the emergence of the Jharkhand tribal party which was mobilised to manipulate in the political field the tribal ideology created by the centralised governmental institutions of indirect rule. A further obstacle to the policy of national unity was the constitutional protection that was afforded to areas inhabited by minority groups such as tribal populations, viz. the Bihar Scheduled Areas Act. The designation of 'backward' sections of the populations, including the Ho, has further reified tribal divisions and strengthened cultural ideologies at variance with the policy of national unity (see R. K. Burman undated). The end-product of these historical developments is a situation of double encapsulation. The national unity phase has encapsulated the indirect rule phase, which in turn encapsulates the tribal system. There is therefore a system of indirect encapsulation. But it is this fact that frustrates the

development of national unity, that would prefer direct encapsulation of the tribal system.

This is a conflict situation. Conversely the tribal system has adjusted to encapsulation under indirect rule. To some degree it has incorporated it culturally by making British officials into local folk heroes who set up a system that is now seen to defend and preserve the indigenous structure. The structural and cultural incongruence between the tribal and national system has created a barrier between them. But despite this the national stem offers two forms of support to the tribal system that have been politically manipulated. The tribals are now able to organise a political party to defend what they feel are certain rights within the democratic structure. And administratively the national system also supports village structures by providing an indirect sanction for traditional authority. The village headman utilises this authority as a supporting power tool to threaten recalcitrants with sanctions of sending them "up to the panchayat courts". This sanction not only includes subjecting them to greater authority of the diku system that can impose heavier sanction, but it also means that if an individual is 'sent up', that he has implicitly rejected the ho system, where authority is muted by familiarity and social closeness. Furthermore the diku system has taken over many of the administrative functions needed by the villager, who does not understand the hierarchical link between the Circle Office and the Kolhan Superintendent. The most important of these is that land has to be registered through the Circle Office and the Block Development Office.

<u>The Indigenous Concept of Government.</u>

If a villager wants to clear new land for cultivation, he first goes to the village headman to ask his permission. The village headman, who represents the community has been present at all meetings concerning, the ownership of land. He therefore holds in his head, as well as in the village maps - which by no means includes all the cultivated land - the pattern of land owning in the village. He can tell the applicant if there is any prior claim to the land. If not, he will give his permission to the man to start clearing.

When the villager has successfully cleared the land and grown one or two crops, it is in his interest to register his ownership of the land with the community. This is done by offering a feast to a meeting of the village in the presence of the village headman, called <u>salami</u>. Should any dispute over the land arise at a later date, he or his descendants will refer to this feast as

a contract whereby the village accepted his ownership of the land. The goat and rice beer that were offered will. act as a permanent witness. If he has not done this he have a great deal of difficulty in proving his claim to the land.

This system of registration was presumably the system used before the advent of centralised government, and it still suffices today for the registration of wasteland, parti. Strictly wasteland is referred to as anabad malik Bihar Sarkar, or land that is "without a name belonging to the government of Bihar". This refers to the conditions of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, that made the government the landlord. If land is unclaimed and uncultivated, only government has rights in it. While recognising the government's rights in all uncultivated wasteland, the villagers look on all waste land as a village resource that can be claimed by any individual who is prepared to put it to use. Most villagers carry out odd bits of slash and burn cultivation on this land, and at the annual rent meeting in 1973 it was decided that every man paying rent on land should also pay a further nominal rent of 50 paise to the government for any wasteland that he might or might not cultivate. The villagers felt that if they did this they would then be able to claim that they had paid rent for any waste land they had used that year. Having thus established their title to wasteland the community considered it had the right to distribute this unclaimed wasteland as it thought fit by the system of salami.

However the government sees the village headman as the custodian on their behalf of all the land inside the village boundary, cultivated or uncultivated, and considers it is his duty to register all land owned by his villagers. Under the Kolhan system of indirect rule when the village headman has given a man permission to cultivate some land, he should give the man a rough note stating his ownership of that plot, a kucca bundobust paper. The headman should report this to the Kolhan Superintendent. At the next camp court the Kolhan Superintendent will call the new tenant to produce a paper signed by the two adjacent land owners and by five other villagers to the effect that there is no objection to his taking up tenure of the plot. His rights will then be recorded in the village record of land rights, khatian, and in the village rent roll, jamabundi. The Kolhan Superintendent will then issue him with a duly signed parcha, or title deed. This entails a surveyor, amin, measuring the lands and recording it in the village map.

Every villager car therefore apply for this formal type of registration through his village headman who, as government custodian, has the authority to give a kucca bundobust paper, which will later become a full government

registration. A landowner may prefer to register his land in this formal way, even though it means paying a greatly increased rent, as his rights are now fully recognised and cannot be challenged. However it is a very expensive business to register land in this way. Villager. state that it costs as much to register a field as it takes to make a new field. Also the complications required mean that many villagers do not bother. Application forms for a surveyor have to be filled in, they must be fetched and sent to the circle office fourteen miles away. And tips will also have to be given to all the .relevant minor officials. The expense of putting the surveyor up in the village is also considerable.(55)

There is therefore a dual set of rules concerning the valid ownership of land. The area of the village is seen as a communally held resource that can be utilised by members of the community with permission of the community through the headman. This can be backed up by the bureaucratic set of rules that are represented in the village through the village headman. This bureaucratic set is only seen as being pragmatic, even though the headman, in order to bolster his authority in the village, will often stress his position as the normative upholder of bureaucratic rules. In fact this dual set of norms can often create conflict over the rules that should be applied in matters of titles to land. In one dispute when it was impossible for the discussants to reach a compromise, the headman abrogated the village normative rules and applied the usually pragmatic bureaucratic rules as normative. This in turn was a pragmatic use of. the rules to sort out an impasse. Thus in a quarrel between H. 79 and H. 83 the headman solved the problem by forcing the meeting to accept that in reality the field belonged to neither disputants but to the government and that, as the government official, he would settle the matter as he felt fit and without listening to their arguments. This nearly forced a compromise, but it later broke down, so that finally the headman gave the field to the man who was prepared to pay the highest salami. (see chapter 6, translation of case between Rupa Murmu and Dule Hasda, section 69-80).

We can therefore define the indigenous conception of government, referred to as sarkar, as something external to the village which is introduced when considered expedient. An outsider may also force the village to recognise the importance of the government in any given situation and this cannot be opposed. But rights, although sanctioned by government, are considered to derive from the village. Similarly the village headman, in his village, is

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55. In one meeting the paramount headman pointed. out to the owner of a disputed field that if he wanted to register his field he would have to 'pay five rupees as a fee, and the <u>amin</u> will eat two chickens, and he will need some "road fees", perhaps fifteen rupees'.

primarily a member of the community, who may only govern through the community. Should his traditional authority prove insufficient to maintain order, he may resort to the bureaucratic authority granted him through the government, sarkar.

The rights of the government, while being seen as external to the village, are recognised as having a bearing on village affairs and are assumed in the person of the headman and his links with higher government officers. Thus he can send cases up to the government panchayat courts or up to the Kolhan Superintendent's camp court. As I stated before the panchayat system has no structural relevance for the tribal village. Any functional relevance that may exist from time to time must be channelled through the village headman as a broker. In this way the panchayat system does give the village headman increased authority, as by his inherited position as the government's representative in the village he has a monopoly of brokerage.

Sarkar (government) is used in many senses, with situational variations. As a non-indigenous structure or arena, sarkar is defined as being diku, or outside. Thus the paramount headman, manki, once said at a village meeting in which the village headman had proved ineffective in producing a settlement:

> 'First you must get the right to go ahead (with the case from the villagers). In the very beginning it was done by mouth (through discussion among the villagers). Nowadays it cannot always be done like that. If you get permission from the village headman, the sarkar will not stop you. You may carry on. The inspector of police, daroga, will also not ::top you. But nowadays if the village headman talks diku-te (the adverbial form. of diku, meaning like an outsider, or, as he is the headman, one can read 'within the authority given him from the outside'), then the matter will go smoothly and be settled so that there can be no doubt about it'.

Another discussant followed him up by saying:

> 'If the village headman speaks like that, then even the inspector of police will be afraid, as the village headman has the power to do what he did. The inspector of police may be powerful in other ways, but the village headman has the power in his village as long as he works properly. As long as we keep the rules we can keep our power'.

The panchayat accountant then said:

> 'Let the village headman be hanged or taken to prison or anything else. It is up to him. In these times nobody bothers about this kind of thing. In this village everybody seems to

> agree with each other after getting two leaf cups of rice beer'.

After discussion we found this to mean that nowadays everybody still likes to sort Things out inside the village by holding a village meeting and getting drunk, but that this can often exacerbate the problem. And therefore as the village headman is responsible to the government for keeping law and order in his village, he can be punished for this. But the villagers do not seem to care about that. They should protect their headman, if the village wants to preserve its independence and internal authority. The panchayat accountant thrust his point home saying:-

> 'It is true what I am saying, I am always saying to the people that they have grown up now, but they are still behaving like children'.

Undoubtedly the government is granted full authority in the village, but by preserving the indigenous political organisation., the villagers see that they can keep the government at arm's length and still continue to preserve peace and order in the village. This ideology is compatible with the system of indirect rule, but it is now being applied in the modern phase of national unity when it is no longer applicable as it is divisive and tends to preserve separatism.

The tribal system of local level government is supported and heavily protected by the Kolhan system which is in turn protected not only by constitutional rights, but also by political activity in the arena of democratic party politics despite pressures by parties with other interests. But, in spite of the conflicts between them, the indigenous village organisation, the system of indirect rule and the national government co-exist and are interdependent.

Segmentation in Ho Politics.

Mandelbaum uses segmentary structures to characterise Indian tribal political organisation as distinct from caste social organisation.

> 'Tribal societies are more "segmentary". Tribesmen see the component groups of their society as more autonomous, viewing each group as similar in function and status to any other segment of tribal society. Jati societies are more "organic" in that each jati is part of an organic whole; its members provide necessary, specialised functions for the whole'. (Mandelbaum 1970: Vol.2, 579)

I have suggested that a segmentary system can be found at the level of internal village structure and that it does not exist at the supra-village level. To understand this we must look at the ideas of Sahlins (Sahlins 1961: 322-345). At the time he wrote, the whole concept of descent and segmentation was under review as a model of political organisation and structure in tribal society. Segmentation provided a key to the political organisation of many seemingly amorphous tribal societies. It solved the problem of an acephalous society in structural terms and provided a framework for analysing political organisation. Sahlins wrote:-

> 'A tribe is a segmental organisation. It is composed of a number of equivalent, unspecialised multi-family groups, each the structural duplicate of the other: a tribe is a congeries of equal kin blocs. The segments are residential and (usually) proprietary units of the tribe, the people that settle or wander together in a given sector of the tribal domain and that separately exploit a sector of strategic resources.' (Sahlins 1961: 325)

It is undoubtedly true that such principles apply to the abstract group called the Ho tribe. However it is not true that these principles are a real basis of the political process among the Ho. Groups do not carry out political manipulation within this framework, even though the framework is there to be manipulated. Sahlins realised that this was true of many tribes and was concerned to suggest a reason. His conclusion was that the segmentary lineage system is a feature of general cultural evolution which is only resorted to during periods of predatory expansion. At such, periods opposition develops between groups and the inherent cleavages of the lineage structure, being coincident with proprietorial configuration, become real factors of the political organisation. During periods lacking in competition and predatory expansion, small segments become discrete and autonomous, primarily linked through mechanical solidarity. This thesis relates a segmentary lineage structure to competition for scarce resources.

Between the Ho and the Munda, there are definite differences of lineage organisation, whereby Munda villages only contain members of one clan and the lineage is central to village organisation,[56] whereas among the Ho the village contains several. clans and the lineage principle is weak. Certain historical events can be seen to account for this. Although segmentary opposition as such did not occur there is a comparable principle to that posited by Sahlins that

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56. While this is true of all the villages described as Khuntkatti villages it is not necessarily true of all Munda villages. Other villages described as broken Khuntkatti villages often contain the members of many clans. But this has been caused by changes in the land tenure system due to the intervention of Hindu and Muslim landlords.

predatory expansion and competition for scarce resources has tended to create a strong lineage organisation. Land became scarce among the Munda, which led to competition for resources and a strong lineage based organisation. Among the Ho on the other hand, who have experienced no shortage of land, the lineage lacks cohesion. In Singbhum, to which the Ho migrated and began agricultural expansion at a later date, land shortage and competition did not develop until more recently. In the forest area, where fieldwork was carried out, there is still a surplus of wasteland for development.

Although land is becoming a scarce resource in certain Ho areas, the segmentary principle is not used as the basis of political mobilisation and manipulation. In the absence of other supra-village organising principles it is possible that lineage segmentation would have developed, but since the period of indirect rule under the British and the development of an administrative structure of supra-village and tribal organisation through the creation of the Kolhan and Munda-Manki system, another principle was present. This principle has subsequently become operational. Later, when discussing conflict and the management of disputes, we will see that disputes are dealt with through the administrative structure. Kinship is only mobilised at the minimal structural level, beyond which mobilisation is along bureaucratic lines. The reasons for this structural discontinuity relates to the period when land became a scarce resource. The Munda and the Ho experienced this in a different order. Among the Munda land became a scarce resource at a period before indirect rule[57] and led to the development of a strong lineage based organisation. The onset of predatory rule, however, acted to break down the lineage principle in areas where villages were rent farmed by the Hindu rajas and were given as grants to Hindu and Muslim zemindars. In the Kolhan agricultural expansion came later and the Ho, having split off from the Munda, moved into a new region of ample land. A cohesive lineage system never developed to any significant degree among the Ho before indirect rule provided an alternative system of organisation.

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57. In an unpublished paper Standing discusses how this segmentary structure developed in relation to land tenure patterns and was bureaucratically reified as a result of certain recommendations by Father Hoffman to the government (Hoffman 1950; 2388-2403).

Chapter Five. Village Government

Introduction

In this chapter I am going to analyse the maintenance of civil and criminal affairs. I will discuss the structure of village government. What are the logistical problems of mobilising the community? And what are the structures and organised patterns of behaviour that deal economically with crises? I will first discuss the organisation and then the process of operation.

The village meeting

It is said by many Ho that in the past villagers used to meet weekly to discuss the affairs of the village and if the household heads did not attend these meetings they were fined. Hilary Standing, in a recent Ph.D. thesis, reports that this was true until very recently in many Munda villages. I have never heard of anywhere in the Kolhan where this happens today, but if it is true the village meeting must have fulfilled very different functions in the past. It must have been concerned with day-to-day administration of village affairs and have exercised executive authority.

Today the village headman is still a focus of authority in the village, but he no longer performs an administrative role in any continuous manner. This is the main reason why the system of indirect rule is not functioning as well as it did in the past. Kolhan Superintendents claim that today the village and paramount headmen have become lazy. The paramount headman in Dubil is aware that the Kolhan system, as a support to village government in its contest with the government panchayat system, is not fulfilling its role in administering internal village affairs.

Internal village government has changed. Village paths, wells and embankments are not being properly maintained. Matters such as village festivals appear to be organised on an ad hoc basis. In 1973 the major village festival, called mage porob, which comes after the rice harvest in December, was delayed owing to the protracted illness and final death of the village priest. By the time the village had been purified after the burial of the priest, all the neighbouring villages were engaged in the next festival, called ba: porob. In order to catch up with the round of festivals, the paramount headman[58] sent round word that he was calling a meeting to discuss when the festival should be held. On the day of

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58. A peculiarity of Dubil village is that the headman does not perform his duties well, and therefore the paramount headman, who is a resident, has taken over many of the functions of the headman.

the meeting he sent a crier round the village but nobody turned up. He therefore simply announced to his brothers that the festival would be held in two weeks' time and the word gradually spread around the village. Finally the festival was held in a rather half-hearted manner.

Next year, when there were no factors to delay the festival, discussion began in the market place as to a suitable date and the paramount headman was made aware of the general feeling. One day, at a meeting called for another matter, he said that perhaps they should fix the date. He went through the preparations that each family would have to make such as the collection of forest produce in order to obtain cash and the purchase of essentials in the market. He finally stated that it would be best to hold the mage festival in two weeks' time. All said that he had been sensible and they began to make the arrangements. In arranging the date of the festival he had done little more than to restate village consensus and act as a focus of authority.

This was the greatest degree of administrative responsibility that was ever undertaken by a village meeting concerning general matters that did not involve an individual presenting a particular case before the meeting. It required no initiative or risk-taking.

All other village meetings were called by individuals with specific complaints to make in front of the community. Once the village had assembled to discuss a particular petition it was common for the meeting to discuss communal matters. At one instance all the villagers, while discussing a dispute over joint ownership of a tree, began to discuss the failure of hunting parties to find any game. Many villagers felt that it was caused by the spirits of the forest

who had been offended by the killing of a pregnant wild pig. While the paramount headman was still considering the matter of the tree, a group of villagers decided to perform the symbolic sacrifice of a pumpkin, which represented a pig, to the forest spirits. In this way the village meeting does carry out certain administrative functions even though it is never called for this purpose by the villagers.

I exclude meetings called by the state administration for the collection of rent because they are not part of the internal government of the village. In calling these meetings the paramount headman and the village headman are acting as officers of the state government and Kolhan system. At such times the village is visited by outside officials who are the real initiators. The headman is present as he is the only man who can sign the rent receipts under Wilkinson's Rules. He is also used by the government officers to co-ordinate the meeting. Here

meetings are initiated by external agents and the headman performs the function of a broker between the villagers and the external government.

During the year of fieldwork the paramount headman spent some twenty days visiting other villages in connection with administrative tasks, such as co-ordinating the rent collection in his elaka, reporting to the Kolhan Superintendent on the appointment of a new village headman and inquiring into the registration of new land in the twenty-three villages in his jurisdiction. Twice he was called to settle disputes over land and once he had to enquire into a suspected murder.

I now turn to the subject of disputes within the village and analyse their method of settlement.

Dispute and conflict

The village is an egalitarian community with no horizontal cleavages. The vertical divisions between lineages have no significance in the field of executive and governmental activity.[59] I have already stated that there are no lineage councils, elders or headmen, who settle disputes within the lineage. When a dispute arises either within a lineage or between lineages it is usually resolved by amicable discussion between the participants. If this fails, it is then taken to a village meeting through the office of the headman. Any household head can bring a case before the village meeting. He does not take his case to a senior member of the lineage who then presents it to the village officer. He does not muster support within factional groups of the community in order to get his case heard. Anyone can take a case directly to the headman, whatever his ethnic group or clan.

Disputes arise as a result of a conflict of interest between two parties. The great majority of disputes that arose in the year of fieldwork were between individuals of different households. Since the household is the basic corporate unit in the Ho village, these disputes therefore involve two households and the household head is responsible for taking action. In most cases the dispute is confined to the two households concerned and may be resolved by amicable discussion, which probably happens more frequently than the anthropologist realises. Should, however, the conflict of interest be insoluble by direct negotiation between the parties concerned it will develop into an open dispute requiring settlement. The relationship between the two disputing households will condition the way in which settlement takes place. If the two household heads are brothers, the settlement will be conditioned by norms of sibling relations

59. See Sahlins 1961: 322-345.

and the respective seniority of the brothers. It is possible that a third brother will act as a mediator, but it will not go outside the sibling group. At this level there are strong pressures on creating an early compromise or allowing the dispute to lapse, although it is likely to colour future relations. Such disputes are common and usually kept private. The Ho have a saying that 'When two brothers live in the same house their horns grow too big, until there is no longer room for them'. In this way nearly all households preserve a careful distance between each other. But strong pressures exist to preserve the unity of the rice pot and the deed unit by perpetuating some degree of interdependence between the household units. When disputes arise between distant members of the same lineage living in different neighbourhoods, relations are naturally governed by their kinship links. But factions do not develop along segmentary lines, whereby the members of each segment align against each other, and the dispute remains the affair of the two household units affected. If they come together to resolve the dispute, other members of the lineage will show interest, but they will not take sides in a process of escalation along segmentary lines.

When a dispute arises between two households of different local lineages or ethnic groups, it will again be a confrontation between the two households involved and not the groups to which they belong. The distance between the two households does not increase the difficulty of resolving the dispute. In all cases it is left to the households to settle the matter without the active help of other parties. The independence of the household forms a definite organisational principle in the Ho village.

Independence

In referring to independence I find myself dealing with the same feature of tribal society that Gardner calls the structure of an individualistic culture (Gardner 1966: 389). He puts forward the suggestion, which is also taken up by Mandelbaum (Mandelbaum 1970: Vol. 2, 576-589), that tribal society is distinguished from caste society by its individualism and atomism. By looking at such cultural features as socialisation, non-cooperative behaviour, avoidance of competition, social control mechanisms, memorate knowledge[60] and absence of formalisation, he attempts to describe the social and ideational culture of the

60. Gardner takes the concept of memorate knowledge from Honko (Honko 1965:5-19). He states that memorate knowledge is a revival of the idea of private opinion that Malinowski expresses in his distinction between private opinion and social belief.(Malinowski 1954: 237-242). Memorate knowledge is therefore distinct from Durkheim's collective representations. It is that body of knowledge that the individual has accumulated from his own personal experiences.

Paliyans of South India. His intention is to provide an ecological and psychological explanation of individualistic culture.

Although there are elements in Ho social behaviour that can be described as individualistic, non-competitive and non-cooperative, I do not believe that it is possible to use such notional categories as universal descriptions of the Ho. Ho behaviour may be individualistic, non-competitive and non-cooperative in one situation, bit they are capable of acting together, co-operating and competing in other situations.

But households are autonomous and independent units, while remembering that as a community there is also a degree of inter-dependence. In the case of disputes the households concerned do not attempt to recruit the support of other households, nor do other households attempt to interfere between them. But the independence of households in relation to one another co-exists with the dependence of all households on the community which consists of these same households acting with a high degree of co-operation and arriving at decisions by consensus.

The Total community Arena - Dependence

If a dispute develops so that conflict cannot be resolved between the independent households and it has not been forgotten by the passage of time, the stage arrives when opposition can reach an intolerable level. It may even curtail the economic activities of the parties. Under these circumstances the conflict must be moved into a new arena in which it can be resolved.

In order to understand this critical point when a dispute is taken to another level for resolution I want to consider two examples. The movement from one level to another refers to that stage in the development of a dispute when it is taken out of the minimal private arena and into the public total community arena. In the first example the move to take the matter to the public arena was used as a preventative mechanism when a violent conflict became apparent. In the second example the move towards resolution in the public arena was essential as a cure after the conflict had been escalating over a period of at least three months and was curtailing the economic activities of those involved.

The first case is that of Mongol Champia versus Buduram Uindi (H.14 versus H.92).

> Mongol was the son of the resident paramount headman, Bamiya Champia. Buduram Uindi was a young man of the Lohar or blacksmith group, recently married with a six month old daughter. Buduram had already been caught stealing twice in the previous year. His

continual unpaid borrowings from his elder brother had lost him the support of his family and even his wife's parents, who are Ho clansmen of the same village, no longer supported or cooperated with him in any way except in trying to safeguard the position of their daughter.

After the monsoons Bamiya Champia (H.14) had sown a field of masuri dal, pulse, in the plot of land between his house and the major thoroughfare of the village. Not only had the rains been bad, but he had failed to build a fence between the plot and the path. As a result the crop was being damaged by children and wandering animals. One day Mongol, the third son, was sitting in the courtyard putting peacock feathers in a new set of arrows. A mature she-goat began to graze in the plot of masuri dal and he shouted at it to go away. But it returned. He threw a stone at it. It left only to return. In a flash of sultry rage Mongol took a snap shot at it, some forty yards away, and hit it under the tail. The goat took a few paces and collapsed. Mongol removed the shaft from the goat but the iron head was deeply imbedded. He left the goat lying there and promptly started shouting at the top of his voice, "Whose goat is that eating our masuri dal? Take your she-goat away. It is eating our masuri dal." He set off on a tour round the village shouting as he went. People gathered to inspect the goat. They realised that it was being looked after on a contractual basis, called saja,[(61)] by Buduram Uindi for Kuda Champia, who was a watchman in the mines and gave most of his goats on contract as he did not have the time or the children to care for them.

Mongol then returned to his house. The other villagers told Buduram what had happened to his goat. Soon Buduram arrived. Mongol did not go over to see him but chided him from a distance that he should look after his goats better. Feeling sorry for himself, Buduram picked up the goat and carried it home. Kuda, the owner of the goat, heard what had happened but he had to leave the village for the mines. During the night the coat died. Next morning Buduram took the corpse to Kuda, but Kuda said that he would not accept a dead goat in place of a live one and that it was Buduram's duty to produce a live goat. For the rest of the day Buduram tried to find out where he could get a replacement. Having already lost all his support, he returned to Kuda empty-handed in the evening. The entire village was alive with discussion over the affair. The general opinion was that Buduram had not done his duty as

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61. Saja, directly translated, means sharing. It here refers to a contractual partnership in respect of the care, ownership and produce of an item of punji. Directly translated, punji means increase, or more correctly here, capital. A female goat, or something that is capable of increase, or an item that has potential dividend is referred to as punji. Saja arrangements are only made for items that have this quality of punji. The Ho do not have a grammatical classification of male and female. But the fertility or potential increase of the female is often used to distinguish it from the male. The value of a female is never fully known as its reproductive capacity cannot be known in advance. It cannot be sold at a higher price as there is not yet any hope, asora, that it will produce issue. On the other hand to sell a she-goat simply as a goat would be to lose that hope. Only he-goats are used in sacrifice or killed for meat as an offering to the village meeting or to a working party.

    The system of sharing the capital value of a she-goat is that the owner makes a contract with the herdsman who looks after the goat for him. If the herdsman loses the goat he must make recompense in kind. The owner cannot recall the she-goat until it has given birth to a she-goat that the herdsman keeps. If there are two offspring the herdsman takes the female and the owner the male. The owner may recall the original female. If there are two male offspring they are shared and the contract continues until there is a female offspring. If at any given time there are unequal offspring, the odd goat is killed and eaten by both the owner and the herdsman. This arrangement is made for goats, pigs and chickens, which all have more than one in a litter. Cattle are not given in saja.

the goat herder and also that Mongol had no right to shoot the goat without having first warned Buduram. All agreed that there should be a meeting about it.

On the twenty-first of January, 1974, all those who had been discussing the matter the previous day gathered in the house of a young man where the village headman was completing a contract over the sale of a goat. Kuda arrived and took the village headman inside the house for a drink and Buduram was called and given a drink. Then all went up to Bamiya's house where the meeting sat down to discuss the case.

The other case was that of Behera Champia, H.8, versus his father, Dolka Champia, H.7.

Dolka Champia was a poor man with only 1.24 acres of very stony land on the steep hillside around his house. His father had gone to work in the mines some nine miles to the south and had left his land in charge of his father's two sons by the first wife. He was the son of the second wife. While in the mines Dolka married a girl from the village next to Dubil. When his father died, Dolka and his wife went to live in this village, working as labourers for her brother. Later he persuaded her to live in Dubil. By this time the land that was his by right had been registered in the names of his father's father's son's (by the first wife) sons and Dolka had done nothing to reclaim this land. He considered it lost. He had three sons and three daughters. His eldest son, Behera, was married and lived beside his father working as one economic unit in almost all matters. The younger sons lived with relatives in return for herding their cattle and goats along with those of Dolka, Dolka, Behera's wife and Behera worked for other people in their fields in return for wages in kind. Behera and his wife were owed a considerable amount of rice by Behera's mother's brother for their work. Dolka told his son Behera that it would be better not to collect this debt, so that they could claim it at the next harvest and use it for seed grain. If they collected the rice now, he felt, they would eat it out of hunger before they could sow it. But Behera thought that his father was lazy and undeserving so he fetched the rice and made beer for the spring flower festival, ba:porob. He did not offer ay to his father, which made him angry especially when he discovered that Behera had invited his mother to drink with them. Dolka went off and got drunk at the house of various friends. He returned and demanded that his son give him some beer. Insults started to fly. Dolka picked up a pole and beat his son. The son picked up an axe and wounded his father with about five blows on the legs. Dolka's wife protected her husband by lying on top of him and had to fight her son to prevent him from strangling his father. Then Behera ran away and Dolka set fire to his son's house. For the next two months Behera lived with his father's father's brother's son's son, the man who eventually got Dolka's land. Initially all expected Behera to kill his father and nobody did anything to prevent it. People were worried that if this happened the police would have to be called in. However Behera did not try to kill his father, instead his father issued public threats that he would kill Behera and he was even seen with a bow and arrow hunting for his son after his wounds had healed. Although nobody in the village discussed the case openly. Dolka was avoided and spent most of his time skulking in the forest. The economic condition of the family deteriorated further and Behera's wife had to give birth to her child in her brother's house in her natal village. Behera and his wife urgently needed a new house. They wanted to call a village meeting to settle the quarrel, but they could not find the rice necessary for the meeting. Two months after the incident Behera managed to persuade the woman of the house in which he was living and working to make a pot of rice beer for him. He immediately told the paramount headman that beer was being prepared for a meeting and would be ripe in three days' time. The village

> gathered for the meeting. That morning Behera took the pot of rice beer to the paramount headman's house. It was offered to the paramount headman and to the village headman's accountant and one or two other leading household heads of the village. Then they all went off to the meeting.

In the first case it was arranged that the dispute should be referred to a meeting for settlement almost as soon as it arose. Any open conflict over the case pre-empted. In the second case the dispute continued to a very late stage. But in neither case did the headman or any other persons attempt to influence the parties to call a meeting for the settlement of the dispute. Each household is considered independent and responsible for its own affairs.

When one of the parties refers a dispute to the village for resolution, there is a total change of arena from a situation of two independent units in conflict to a situation of two conflicting units forced into dependence on the community. One important feature of this change is that it is a voluntary decision by one of the parties. It is accompanied by certain ritual forms associated with beer drinking which signify the movement of the action and the actors into the collective sphere.

In the first case Mongol made an impetuous mistake of which he was aware. Being the paramount headman's son, he immediately made the dispute a matter of public concern, thereby diffusing his responsibility into the public arena, the arena of the entire village, which I will call the total arena as opposed to the minimal arena of the two disputing parties. He immediately gained community support in trying to settle the matter. Other villagers went off to find the owner of the goat and sent Buduram to collect it. This enabled Mongol to avoid direct confrontation with Buduram, as the public was acting as a mediator in all subsequent developments. The dispute was arrested when Mongol made a public announcement. At this stage Mongol had to avoid any further development of the dispute. He retreated to his courtyard and only told Buduram that the goat should not have eaten his crops. Fortunately for Mongol, Buduram had already lost his standing in the community, and, aware that he could command little public support, he did not take an aggressive stance towards Mongol. He knew that if he did so the community would have accepted responsibility for his actions and punished him. Rather than completely sidestepping any further development in the dispute and leaving the goat to die in the field as outside his responsibility Buduram picked the goat up and took it away. By this action he accepted responsibility for the final death of the goat, as it died under his care. Later at the meeting the villagers openly said that Buduram had acted wrongly in picking up the goat; by doing this he had accepted responsibility for the goat's death, whereas what he should have done was to leave the goat in the field, saying that he was not responsible for its death. The goat was not his; his goat had been alive and well; Mongol had wounded the goat; he, Buduram, was

only responsible for a live and well goat; Mongol was responsible for the dying goat. This would then have been the state of the dispute that the community was asked to settle. At the subsequent meeting all present agreed that Buduram's action effectively confined the dispute to himself and Kuda. When the community finally met to resolve the matter they could not find any dispute between Buduram and Mongol. The only point at issue was that Buduram had presented Kuda with a dead goat and to compensate for this Buduram should replace the dead goat with a live one. This was the way that the case was finally resolved. Mongol was told that he had done the right thing to tell everybody what had happened and was not censured. However, from talking to people afterwards, it appeared that there was a general feeling that Mongol should not have killed the boat without first warning Buduram, and that it might have been better if he had made an offering of rice beer to the meeting and to Buduram for his mistake, even if it had only been a small quantity of beer. Mongol's decision to make the issue a public one was obviously felt to have been desirable in that it forestalled any development of the conflict. The dispute was no longer subject to the usual escalation between two opposing parties but the concern of the whole village acting in concert to effect its resolution.

In the case between Behera and Dolka the dispute was purely private until the moment when Behera attacked his father with an axe. At this point Dolka might have appealed to the community. There was a considerable crowd of people watching and laughing at the fight and bloodletting from the bottom of the hill on which the two houses were built, but neither party made any appeal to the crowd and nobody interfered. They even watched Dolka set fire to his son's house without intervening. This action was interpreted as the murder of a son by his father. This can be understood in two senses. Firstly, by burning down his son's house Dolka had desecrated his son's shrine to the lineage ancestors; he had 'broken the rice pot'. Thereby he had killed the ancestors of Behera and left him without spiritual support which in effect meant he was dead. But second and more important, it was explained to me, now Behera would kill his father. Therefore had not Dolka, in effect, killed Behera? I questioned this asking whether it was meant that if Behera killed the man who created him he was therefore without creation and metaphorically dead. The answer was that it did not matter that Dolka was Behera's father. But that since Behera was going to kill his father, then was he not going to pay his father back as if he himself had been killed? This way of thinking is based on a recognition of the consequences of an individual action: the reactions that it is likely to provoke are seen as encapsulated in the action and assimilated to it. In the case given the father burns the son's house signifying ritual death which is likely to provoke the son to murder his father in retaliation, which will cause the father in turn to murder his son. The initial burning of the house, which according to our way of thinking is the cause of the subsequent actions, is seen by the Ho as

already containing them. As a result whenever conflict arises between two units, it is immediately seen by the village as a potentially murderous situation. The cause of the conflict is not important, but only that conflict exists which will lead to murder. It is therefore not surprising that when disputes break out among the Ho that threats of murder are so frequent. Disputants are perpetually threatening that if the other party does such and such, they will be shot and beaten to death and buried in the forest and many minor disagreements turn into open conflict on the basis of these threats.[62] The community as a whole does not concern itself with the rights and wrongs of the affair, but with the threat to the peace of the village. The presence of disharmony is said to 'make the air of the village smell foul, which the guardian spirit does not like.'

At a certain point a dispute moves from one arena into the other - a threshold point. As with all thresholds it is not possible to anticipate the precise moment of change from one to another. In the case between Mongol and Buduram the threshold was reached very quickly, while in that of Behera versus Dolka it was greatly delayed. The decision to take a dispute to the total arena is made by one of the parties, who at some indeterminate point in the build-up of conflict feels the need for resolution. It is an individual decision which flips the issue from the minimal arena of two individual households into the total arena of the village community.

Relations between households are structured on lineage and land holding patterns, whereas community relations are characterised by the typical tribal type of organisation that Bailey describes as the tribal end of a caste-tribe continuum, that is, an egalitarian structure with a lack of dependence between the constituent units. Ethnic and caste variations are not significant in the internal government of the village although they may be activated in relations with neighbouring Hindu, Oriya and Bhuiya villages, so that in political relations with other non-tribal villages the total arena framework is capable of changing to adopt a multi-arena structure temporarily. But for internal village government the public forum of the village is a forum unstructured by horizontal or vertical cleavages, in which all the composite units are equivalent and symmetrically disposed.

Dispute Resolution and Convening a Meeting

In order to settle a dispute one of the parties may decide to call a village meeting. In a sense he puts himself in a focal position in the community, demanding that it come together under his aegis. This conflicts with the egalitarian ideology of the village according to which the individual household

62. Majumdar makes a study of the high murder rate among the Ho (Majumdar 1950:242) from police records. He attributes it to their emotional nature.

head cannot place himself in a focal position. To bypass this problem the man who wants to convene a village meeting transmits the responsibility to the physical process of beer brewing, thus making the beer the focal point of the meeting. The Ho say that 'Men will gather round the beer pot and chatter, as minah birds gather in the branches of the bau tree in fruit, to satisfy themselves and sing.'

Beer plays a multiplex role in convening a meeting. Firstly, it times the meeting. When a man wishes to call a meeting he informs the village headman and all those whom he wishes to attend that his wife has set a pot of beer to ferment and he invites them to drink it. According to the climate the rice will take from three to five days to ferment and then it must be drunk within eight hours or it will go sour.

Secondly, the presence of beer draws people together. When it is known that someone has rice beer to offer people gather to drink it. The wife of the household prepares the beer by sieving the fermented rice and mixing it with water into a milky fluid inside the house or in the fenced threshing ground. The convenor invites those whom he feels should be present to settle the dispute into the house or threshing ground. First he invites the headman and often there is some preliminary discussion about the case. Then both the convenor and the headman invite others, carefully gauging how the beer can be shared out among the discussants.

In offering beer the wife serves each guest in turn. She sits him down on a stool, gandu, and squats in front of him, giving him a leaf cup. From the large pot of beer she fills up a small pot that varies in size from a half a pint to one and a half pints. She keeps a whole series of these pots hidden, bringing out the one that fits the occasion, regulating in this way how much beer each man will get. Holding this small pot, matiya, with both hands, she bows her head and makes a hissing noise of respect while she fills the guest's leaf cup. The guest usually drinks the first cupful immediately and it is filled again. She then engages him in conversation while he slowly drinks the second cup, entertaining him with jokes. According to the nature of their kinship link, she either teases him or another member of his family. The symbolism of offering rice beer is played on in the discussion, with the word tela, to offer beer, being used in a multiplicity of different ways to symbolise their relationship. A small game then ensues, whereby the guest tries to manoeuvre the situation so that the hostess must offer him a second small pot of beer. At some time in the proceedings he is required to offer her some beer. To do this he must grab the small pot from her hands as she is about to fill his cup. The hostess must then pick up her leaf cup and allow him to fill it. He will then engage her in conversation. His game is to grab the pot when there is not enough left to fill her cup, so that he can refill

the pot. Her game is to keep her cup full so that the small pot does not run out. She will have to entertain some twenty men and must stay relatively sober.
The game she plays is to keep his leaf cup as full as possible so that both his hands are engaged in preventing it from spilling. If she manages to empty the small pot she puts it away and invites another man to take a stool beside the first guest. She then turns her attention to the new guest.

In the play between the wife and the guests relationships are established that, it is hoped, can be preserved throughout the discussion. The first guest then turns his attention to the men who have already had a drink and have moved into the body of the house or threshing ground. The guest leaves the stool and sits on the ground with the others. The headman is in the centre of this group sitting on a cot. They discuss the case and other similar cases but do not touch

Plate 5:1. Tela Diyang; the ritualised exchanging of rice beer between host and a guest. Note the large storage pot for the sieved beer and the small pot, matiya, for serving it.

on the specific details of the case in question. If it concerns land they will discuss land and the respective rights in land of the government and the

village. In this way precedents are established. The male head of the household usually has a large version of the small pot and he makes sure that everyone has a little beer. But no one will do any hard drinking at this stage.

When it is known that beer is to be offered in this way, as many of the villagers as possible attend the meeting, which in its initial stages resembles a small household festival with intense social interaction. They hate to miss these occasions, besides which their absence might be noticed. In this way beer draws people together.

Beer drinking also has a symbolic aspect. In the Ho myth of origin beer plays a central role in the creation of mankind. The relevant parts of the myth are as follows:

> Singbonga, the great lord in the sky who is often analogised with the sun, is the source of existence. He is omnipotent and omnipresent. By his order to the creator spirits, upun guruko, the world was created. But it became full of sinners. So Singbonga sent a rain of fire that killed everybody and even melted the rocks. However Singbonga preserved two people, who were brother and sister, by keeping them under water. The brother and sister were too shy to make love and procreate, so Singbonga asked them if they knew how to make rice beer. They said that they did not. So he taught them what to do. Together they prepared the ingredients and then left it to ferment. But in those days the sun did not set in the west (it was permanently daytime). Later Singbonga came and asked them if the beer was fermenting and producing juice. But, as they could not tell what time it was, they did not know how long it had been in the pot, since the sun did not move. Singbonga saw their problem: they were unable to tell how long it should be left to ferment. So he said that he would help them. That day the sun rose in the east and set in the west. After a few days there was a lot of juice in the rice beer. Singbonga came and taught them how to sieve the fermented rice.' He stayed in their house and they all got very drunk. Then Singbonga said that he would go away and say some sinful words, papi kaji. Both the boy and girl were very drunk and the words excited them and they had illegal intercourse, lambi,[63] that made the girl pregnant. Then they lived together as man and woman, and gave birth to seven girls and seven boys who founded the seven races of mankind.

The symbolic importance of rice beer is stressed in a number of idioms. Before drinking most people will dip their finger into the beer and sprinkle a little on the floor for the ancestors. Also the making of beer is only done by the women. It is a statement of woman's role in society which is jealously guarded. The preparation of the yeast is a complex task that is passed on from mother to daughter. Each family takes pride in its variation of the recipe which the woman of the household keeps a close secret. Only she is involved in preparing the yeast and she bolts the door against any intruder. When it is drying only her

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63. Hoffman, 1950, p.2592, under lambi gives "to render pregnant out of wedlock", but in this context it is more likely to refer to intercourse between brother and sister being illegal.

husband is allowed into the house to offer a chant asking Singbonga to ensure its successful fermentation.

The ritual serving and drinking of beer acts as a social communion before a meeting begins its serious discussion. It is a statement of cultural unity and an effective regulator of any disagreement beneath the surface. There is a Ho saying that 'without beer there is no knowledge or understanding'. Beer has the acknowledged ability, if taken in moderation, of providing happiness, states of understanding, narcissism and even sycophancy. Drinking is the most enjoyable of the pastimes. Beer not only convenes the meeting, but also reminds the participants of their cultural origins and unity, thereby imposing a set of expectations about the way in which the meeting is best conducted and what it can achieve. It is only offered with full ritual for important matters, especially when a man is asking the community to register land, or to give permission to cultivate new land or start a new graveyard. In the case of Behera, who was asking the community to resolve the serious disagreement between himself and his father, the ritual was elaborate, given the limitation imposed by the fact that Behera was dependent on his father's father's brother's son's son's wife to make the beer. In the case of Mongol versus Buduram, when the whole community was interested in the case, Kuda only took the village headman and Buduram into a beer shop to have a drink; it was not necessary to convene the meeting as a large number of villagers had already arrived. In cases of theft, when there has been a hue and cry, the ritual is usually minimal and only those involved in the hue and cry and the headman will be present. In the ritual serving of beer a man expresses his subordination to the total community. Although each household is an independent unit in relation to other households, all are equally dependent on the community of which they are members. The offering of beer is a direct statement of that dependence through the religious symbols that are an integral part of beer drinking.

Is the Village Meeting the Village?

I have distinguished the total arena, in which disputes are resolved, but I have only done so in terms of the structure of the village. As Swartz says, there should be 'no attempt to deny the significance of structural commitments in the political process. These processes do cross structural boundaries (see Bailey 1960: 243) and the structures concerned may be changing, but the fact remains that actors are affected in their political activity by their commitments in the relationships they maintain.' (Swartz 1968: 8). Swartz goes on to say that an arena is 'a social and cultural space around those who are directly involved with the field participants, but are not themselves directly involved in the processes that define the field' (ibid. 9). In this study the field that I am taking is the process of dispute and conflict management as part of the wider

field of village government. Within this arena there are factors other than structural determinants which are essential to an explanatory model of Ho politics. These consist of cultural values.

The Ho are not shy of open conflict. The divisions that exist at different levels of lineage structure provide occasions for conflict which often erupt into violent disputes. A lineage is composed of units related to one another by varying degrees of inclusiveness, which the language is particularly adept at expressing. The subject or object of any sentence can be emphasised by a bound pronominal marker in the verbal form. Thus 'Rupa and I are going hunting' can be rendered straightforwardly and without particular emphasis, '<u>Rupa ondo: aing sensangartana</u>'; 'Rupa and I go hunting are.' If more emphasis is required to imply that the two of us are willingly going hunting together, the sentence can be reworded to include the dual inclusive pronoun as a marker within the verbal form, thus <u>'Rupa ondo: aing sensangartanaling</u>'; Rupa and I go hunting are we two/you and I. If the desired emphasis is that I am going hunting with Rupa, but Rupa is not so willingly included in the party from my point of view, the dual exclusive pronoun is inserted as a marker within the verb. Thus '<u>Rupa ondo: aing sensangartanalang</u>'; Rupa and I go hunting are we two/he and I. This linguistic form also exists in the first person plural, as well as the first person dual.

Another idiom in Ho that is frequently used to denote inclusion and exclusion is the word <u>haga</u>. Standing on its own it means brother, not in the sense of a sibling, but rather of comrade. As a word it is seldom used on its own, but is compounded with another word that qualifies the degree of brotherliness. So <u>hatuhagako</u> is the brethren of the village, <u>hagakilliko</u> is the brethren of the clan, and <u>hagajatiko</u> is the brethren of the race or tribe. The idiom of brethren can be dropped from any of these references, thereby denoting a lesser or greater degree of inclusion and unity within the given frame of reference. The concept of brethrenship can thus be turned from statements of unity into statements of disunity.

The structure of the lineage may serve as the cause of disputes as well as the unit within which disputes are reconciled, and the ideology of the lineage may be manipulated by individuals to exacerbate or resolve conflict. To this extent structural processes enter into the shape of disputes. But the conduct of a dispute and its final resolution by the village meeting are not determined by lineage structure but by the cultural value attached to households as equal and independent units. The village stands aside while the two households fight it out. At the same time, although outsiders do not interfere or align themselves with either side, they recognise the germs of violence which threaten the

harmony of the village and adopt a general air of disapproval which acts as a powerful sanction on the parties to desist or move the dispute into the final stage of resolution at a village meeting. This is the signal for the village to come together and recreate harmony by reconciliation.

The village meeting is largely composed of those who have some concern with the dispute. The basis for this concern is varied, ranging from an indirect interest in the matter, as when they own an adjoining field, to a simple wish to join a drinking session. No pressure is put on an individual to attend unless his evidence is directly required. No quorum is necessary. But, although the entire community is not present at a meeting, it is open to any member to attend and in this sense it can be said that the village meeting is the village community in action. But the village meeting is not the institution of village government. The meeting is only the enactment of the function of government, which is diffused throughout the daily activities of the community. We can only distinguish between government, administration, legislation and the power game of politicking at the theoretical level. At the level of human behaviour politics and government in Ho society are inseparable.

Chapter Six. A Council Decision

Introduction

So far I have only dealt with the intangible aspect of politics - its structure - that abstraction from political activity which is a ground-plan for the reality of politics. I now want to look at the tangible reality of politics, that is people confronting each other with options and ideas as to how life should be managed and governed, so that we can see how a community reaches conclusions and makes decisions affecting their common life. To this end I present a transcript of a village meeting and analyse the tactics involved in the making of one major decision by the community.

Bailey has made a valuable contribution to the study of decision making processes. He is interested in relating styles of decision making - consensus and majority voting to social structure. He admits that this is a minimal frame of reference and that other factors play a part in affecting the style of decision making. He suggests a more detailed examination of internal structuring and rules of procedure in councils and a closer analysis of the actual steps by which disagreement gives place to unanimity - the tactical rhythm of committee behaviour. To these factors I add some further considerations: the position of the parties in relation to the total community; changes in oratorical style according to tactical rhythm; and the logical frame of reference in which disputes are discussed which forms the basis of the polemical style.

Background to the Case

The case that I analyse was chosen from full transcripts of tape recordings taken at eight meetings in which fourteen cases were considered. Some of the problems and biases of tape recorded transcripts are discussed in an appendix note.(64) Although the transcription of a council meeting may appear to be very close to the primary data, this is an illusion. Tape recording, translation and transcription all involve successive distortions of the original event, but at the same time they yield material available by no other methods.

The case between Rupa Murmu and Dule Hasda has been chosen for presentation here for three reasons. Firstly, it is a case dealing with rights to land and therefore involves consideration by the village of the external government administration. Secondly, it is a case in which the issues are reasonably clear cut. I am interested in the style of decision making rather than the particular support aid power structures of manipulative politics. Lastly the case is one

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64. See Appendix, Note B. Tape Recording, Translation and Transcription of case between Rupa Murmu and Dule Hasda.

that presented relatively few problems in transcription. The discussion was self-contained and made good sense in the original while other cases require copious reference to other affairs in order to be understandable.

This case was brought by Rupa Murmu (H.83) against Dule Hasda (H.79). Both are Santal households. This does not materially affect the case except that the Ho were able to say that the Santal are 'greedy' for land and cast aspersions on the Santal as being unable to live together in harmony without stealing from each other.

Reference to the diagrams of the lineages 13 and 14[65] will show the kinship links between the two parties and others concerned. These are the relevant relationships. Rupa Murmu (H.83, Lin.14) is married to Ranki Champia, a Ho woman, the sister of the paramount headman, Bamiya Champia (H.14, Lin.2). Rupa Murmu's dead brother, Tibu Murmu, is married to Dule Hasda's father's brother's daughter, Turi Hasda. Also the defendant's sister, Palo Hasda, is the wife of the paramount headman. These relationships do not play a significant part in the discussions, though during the meeting the term of respect, mamu, mother's brother, was used as a convention by the headman's accountant and the panchayat accountant when trying to pacify both the convenor and the defendant.

The background to the case is as follows. Rupa Murmu called a meeting of the village ostensibly to have a plot of wasteland registered in his name. To do this he told his wife to brew some beer. The day before it was ready he told the village headman, Joto Champia (H.1) that he wanted to hold a meeting to register the land and that it would be good if his accountant, Sukuram Champia (H.15) and the panchayat accountant, or gram sewak, Sahu Deogam, were also present. Both of these played an important part in the discussion.

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65. See Appendix. Note B.

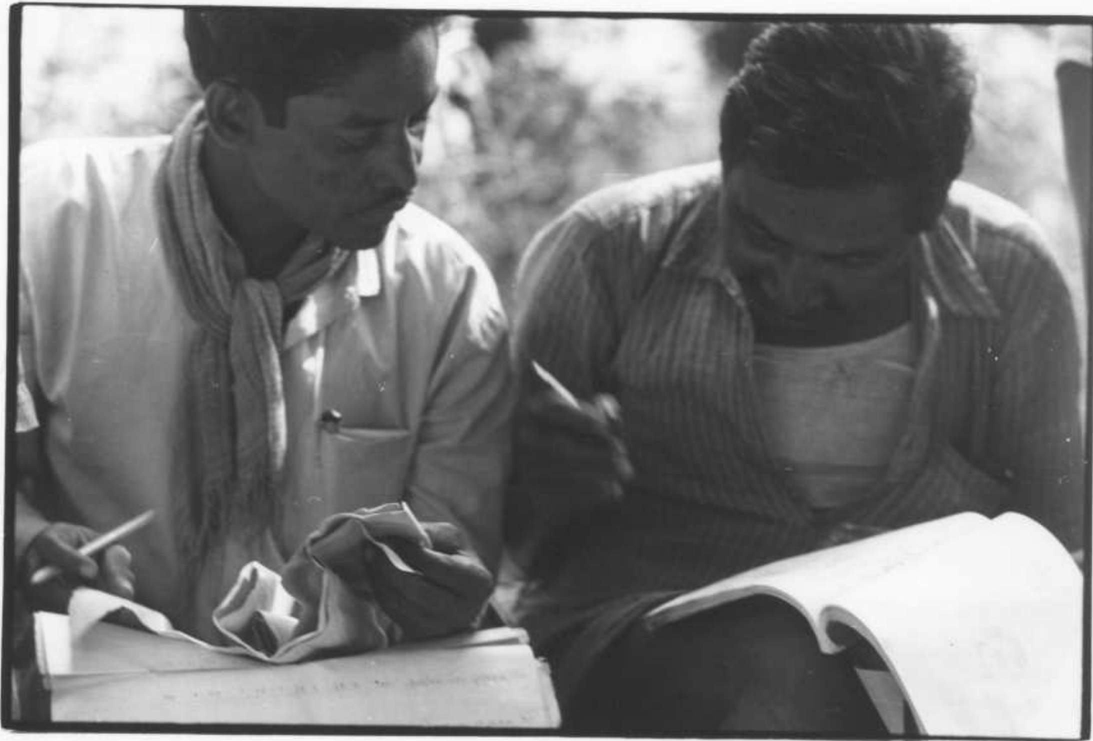

Plate 6:1 SAHU, the panchayat accountant and SUKURAM, the munda's accountant

Plate 6:2. RUPA MURMU, the Convenor

Plate 6:3. JOTO CHAMPIA, the village Headman, s speaking to the paramount headman.

Sukuram Champia (H.15) is the younger brother of the paramount headman. He and his elder brother are the only two fully adult members of the village who are literate. Their father, the last paramount headman, sent them both to school, where they stayed for three years and learnt to read and write and do simple sums. Sukuram is perhaps the most progressive member of the elder generation in the village and has built up a considerable political power base. He spends a good deal of his time drinking with the panchayat secretary, mukhiya, who is a Hindu Oriya from the nearby Hindu village of Chota Nagra. All the development schemes for the village, channelled through the Village Level Worker from the Block Development Office, have been carried into effect by Sukuram. He obtained the contract to build a well in the village, which he built beside his house. But the scheme was never finished and the well did not reach water, as the funds were embezzled by the Village Level Worker and money for the labourers ran out.

This and other experiences have given Sukuram Champia a great deal of contact with the operation of government bureaucracy. He knows the personnel at the Block Development Office. He organises the annual rent collection. He works out the amount due from each man and fills in the receipts and signs them on behalf of the village headman. His ability to do this has made him the village headman's accountant, for which he receives a small commission on the rent. The skills, both literate and bureaucratic, that he has acquired make him a very useful member of the village. He is usually asked by the village headman to attend meetings and often sorts out minor bureaucratic problems without the headman.

There is conflict and friction between Sukuram and his elder brother, the paramount headman. Sukuram is a bluff personality who frequently gets drunk. His personal power has been gained through support outside the village from the officers of the panchayat. Indeed he was appointed sarpanch, panchayat chairman, although this position is purely nominal as the statutory panchayat has never met. If a case was 'sent up' to the panchayat court, he would in theory hear it. As an official of a higher court, he possesses greater nominal authority than his elder brother, the paramount headman, but he has never attempted to exercise this authority. In two cases he had the opportunity to take matters out of the hands of his elder brother, but in neither did he encourage the case to be 'sent up'. At the meetings it was announced that the case was to be 'sent up' and that the convenor was told to write a petition to the sarpanch and pay him a fee of one and a half rupees so that the case would be settled in the panchayat court. But in neither case did the convenor do this and Sukuram did not attempt to influence the situation. He told me that it was for the convenor to pay the fee and that if the convenor failed to do so then why should he do anything. 'These were the laws of the dikus, outsiders,' and a person must pay if he wanted these laws.

PLATE 6:4. A TYPICAL VILLAGE MEETING, the paramount headman, gesticulating, the village headman and the convenor are seated on the cot (right), other elders are seated on the gravestones. The paramount headman's messenger stands to call someone.

The panchayat is not operative within the field of village level politics because the idea of paying a fee and making out a written report, which will in effect put the matter into a non-village arena, is entirely foreign to the customary ways of the village.

Sahu Deogam is in a similar position to Sukuram Champia as regards his power support. He is not a resident of Dubil village and lives in the neighbouring village of Jamkundiya. There are strong ties between these two villages, both historical and through marriage ties. These ties are summed up in the following myth, which also demonstrates the fluidity of the Ho clan system.

> "One day the people of the Deogam clan were digging roots in the forest. One of them struck a root. It spoke to them and told them that it was a king. A baby came out of the root and grew into a man in fifteen days. The Deogams wanted to become the kings of the area and they brought this man up to be the king. It is for this reason that the Deogams of Jamkundiya are today called the Raja Deogams. Then the king had a son who became very powerful over the land. He was capable of miraculous deeds. But he could not (or perhaps would not) walk and the Deogams had to carry him wherever the went. They did not like doing this, so one day they took him out hunting in the forest and killed him. When the king's son grew up he swore that he would kill all the people of the Deogam clan. So the Deogams went into hiding and changed their clan name to Champia. The word was passed around that there were none of the Deogam clan

> in the region. At that time the British took over and a survey and settlement of the land was made. The Deogams were registered as Champias. In this way the Deogams were saved from their fear of the king. Later they changed back to their old name and the registration was changed. It is for this reason that the Champias and Deogams are 'Kakaledale, gunguledale, ondo: hagaledale, ond: na:jaked aleya: Champia erakoke idikotanako.' We are the people of the same clan and people who have married each other, we share the same grandparents and great-grandparents and even today they themselves are taking the women of our Champia clan."[66]

On this basis there is a close co-operation between the two villages. Champia women married in Jamkundiya come back for all the festivals in Dubil and help their patrilineal kin at harvest time and vice versa. Both villages are intimately involved in each other's internal affairs. But more important in our context is that Sahu Deogam is a very progressive person, who understands the operations of the government bureaucracy. He runs the government fair price shop (although it has no stock). He owns books and entertains all the government officers who come to the area. For these reasons the presence of Sahu and Sukuram at village meetings is a great help to Rupa Murmu. They can tell him what is needed to register the field. Sahu is known to have a copy of the land register and a copy of the village map and he knows how to measure a field and fill in the application for surveyors.

The reliance on Sahu and Sukuram is increased by the incompetence of the present village headman. Although as an individual he commands no respect, as the village headman he must be asked to village meetings, and his permission must be obtained before anything is done in the village. He has been to prison twice, once for embezzling the village rent, and once for being caught in the local mining town drunk with an unlicensed gun that he had confiscated. He was in disgrace for trying to sell some of his lineage land to a miner without permission from his lineage. He owns 7.48 acres of land (average acreage per household is 4.04), but he has mortgaged all the good fields. At last year's rent meeting he had lost the village rent roll and maps. Despite all these failings he provides a focus of authority when taken in conjunction with his accountant. He lacks the wisdom and oratorical style to act as a chairman at meetings and this function has been taken on by Bamiya Champia, the paramount headman. Bamiya is paramount headman over Dubil and twenty-one other villages, and is also headman of a very small village, consisting of eleven houses, just beside Dubil. At all meetings in Dubil he takes over the function of chairman and is highly respected for his

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66. This quote is an interesting example of the concepts of inclusivity and exclusivity mentioned in chapter 5. In this quote the pronominal marker "ale" is after the kinship terms kaka, gungu and haga. The implication here is that the Champia clansmen and the Deogam clansman are inclusively and together husbands of our mothers' younger sisters (matrilineal grandparents), great grandparents, and generally brethren. Again the use of the inclusive possessive pronoun apeya: implies that we, the two groups of clansmen, together take each other's women, rather than we, the two groups of clansmen, take each other's women separately.

ability at speaking. As we will see later this skill consists in making apt analogies that summarise the feeling of the meeting. He manages to remain aloof from the emotive details of the dispute and puts forward a dispassionate view of the situation. Although not as closely in touch with the workings of bureaucracy as his younger brother, he travels widely in the course of his duties and is well informed on law and general government policies. He has strong, but traditional, views on the relationship of tribal and government politics.

Dule Hasda, the defendant in the case, is the head of the only extended family and the wealthiest household in the village. It is difficult to compare his economic standing with that of the mine workers. They have more cash than they can spend, but they cannot become involved in village economics and political affairs, as they have to spend at least eleven hours, for six days a week, out of the village. Dule has been going through a period of rapid agricultural expansion. His family is the only one capable of producing a subsistence crop off their fields and he is among the five largest land holders in the village with 11.77 acres of land. He also takes land on mortgage, so that he probably has about 15 acres, which he claims is as much as his family can farm. He lives in the same neighbourhood unit as Rupa Murmu.

Rupa Murmu is one of the five elderly men of the village. He is a belligerent man of about fifty-two years old, in spite of his infirmities. He is almost blind, has bad tuberculosis and is probably crippled by arthritis. His eldest son, Gura, is married and lives in a separate house close beside his father. They cultivate some fields separately but were co-operating over the clearing of the disputed plot. The next son, Buduram, is educated up to the seventh grade and can read and write and do mathematics. He lives with his father and helps in their fields.
He often speaks for his elderly father at the meeting, but is told not to be so forward. The eldest son hardly speaks at all. Rupa's elder brother's son Goma Murmu, is also present, but he never says anything (see diagram 7:1 of seating arrangement).

Fifteen other households in the village were also present out of the total of 94 households in the village. Very few of them played any part in the discussion and the one man who spoke is of the same local lineage as the paramount headman. What he says is always impartial, and he is respected as a good chairman in the same sense as the paramount headman.

Ostensibly Rupa Murmu called this meeting to register some land. This requires the agreement of the plot owner to the north and the south and of five other

household heads. The village headman then writes out a paper stating the situation and size of the plot, which is signed by the headman, the owners of the two adjacent plots and the five witnesses. Through the paramount headman a copy of this paper is sent to the Kolhan Superintendent, who calls the parties to a camp court and listens to the evidence of the headman and witnesses before granting the title deeds. This is under the old Kolhan system. However another channel is also open for the registration of land which is preferred in this village as the nearest camp court is held some thirty miles away, which is a very expensive journey for the villagers. Under this system Sahu Deogam, through his connections at the Circle Office and the Block Development Office, is asked by the meeting to make an application for a surveyor to visit the plot. The surveyor measures the land, obtains evidence of the meeting from the village headman, collects the signatures needed and makes a report through the Circle Officer for this land to be registered in the name of the applicant. If the Circle Officer agrees, papers will go to the Kolhan Superintendent, who is the only officer allowed to sign title deeds in the Kolhan government estate.

When Rupa Murmu called the meeting to register land, he had a motive of which the villagers were not initially aware. The meeting was a ploy by Rupa to anticipate a claim by Dule. Rupa had started to clear the plot some years back, but had been unable to finish it. Two weeks before the meeting, Dule began to clear this same plot again. By the time the meeting took place, he had even ploughed it and was preparing to sow it. Rupa saw the work that he had put into the land going into the hands of another. As will appear in the transcript, there had been a muddle over permissions given by the village headman. Rupa felt that if he could get the plot registered in his name, Dule would forfeit any claim to the plot. It is possible that Rupa intended to mislead the village elders, hoping that they were not aware of Dule's claim to the plot, and get it registered in his name without Dule's knowledge. The matter in any case came into the open and a full scale dispute developed between Rupa and Dule. The meeting turned from a simple case of registration to a complicated dispute.

Transcript of the Case Between Rupa Murmu and Dule Hasda

Paramount Headman

1:1 Look, it is like this. If we cut down trees in the forest, we are cutting down the government's trees and we must give them to the government. The reason for this is that the government passed laws and laid down boundaries. There are boundaries for the village and boundaries for the protected forest. Inside the village all trees are under the charge of

the headmen - the *mundas* and *mankis*. But in the protected forest they belong to the government. However we have forgotten how government made these laws and what they are about. It was done a long time ago. Whenever we go into the forest and by chance, without knowing the laws, we are greedy and take some timber we should be arrested. We accept that and agree to it. Once when I was speaking 15 to the Kolhan Superintendent I said to him, "Certainly we will not take timber from the forest" and he got up, scratched his head and went away without saying anything. If some of the forest is protected then we should not cut it down. If we are allowed to cut it down, then what rights does the government have; we have taken them? The government allows us to take timber from the forests for certain reasons. We are allowed to take the wood for making ploughs and we can collect dead and dry firewood. And, if necessary, we can take large beams and poles for building 25 our houses. The government has made these special exceptions for the good of the villagers. But, nevertheless, the government has left it to us to observe the rules, even though the laws are made by the government. It is for us, and our village and paramount headmen, to see that we do not plough and graze our cattle in the forest.

The Village Headman

2:1 The Kolhan Superintendent, even though far removed from us, has given his greeting to the village and paramount headmen and said that now we are the rulers.

Rupa, convenor.

3:1 So you say that the Kolhan Superintendent has made these rules. And I agree that this rule is good. And that is why I have brought you here in peace to talk with you all. What I want to know is where will these children turn around? (*analogy*; to the action of a dog turning in circles to flatten the vegetation before lying down, *reference*; in this thicket of rules, where can we find a place to lie down; *interpretation*; what I want to know is how my situation fits into or can be interpreted within these rules.)

Paramount Headman

4:1 Yes, indeed. Well, there has been some quarrelling over a plot of land, hasn't there? I am paramount headman and I have no interests in this case. My purpose here is to say

the words that make peace. If we village and paramount headman had interests in this matter how would we be able to make peace. We headmen do not have the right or authority to do this job, but only because the people ask us to and offer us rice beer. Once I made peace in a quarrel and they did not even offer me meat, let alone even one pot of rice beer, absolutely nothing. But I did it. If it were otherwise and we had the power and right to create peace it would also be necessary to have force on our side. There was one case that my father dealt with that concerned as much as one hundred and twenty rupees. The Kolhan Superintendent had come and said that the land was going to be reserved for the government and taken away from this man. But my father said, "No, this has been in the hands of our people from the very beginning. The government cannot have it. It must remain with the people." The people made a great profit out of this settlement, but my father was given nothing for what he did. The trouble was that this land had not been measured in the previous settlement, and we must beware because where no absolute right has been established to something the diku can come and take it.

Sahu

5:1 In the middle here there is' a spring of water. Is it true or isn't it? (analogy; to the possibility that under any plot of land there could be a source of water more valuable than the land itself, reference; that the plot of land we are to discuss, over which there is a quarrel could be the source of more important matters, interpretation; it is true isn't it that although we are here to discuss a plot of land, this is only the symptom of more important things.) Is it tobacco that it can be solved? (analogy; to one of the more insignificant items of life that is bought and sold and is of relatively little significance, reference; that this plot of land is more important than just the buying and selling of tobacco, interpretation; that we must take this case seriously.)

Sukuram, village headman's accountant.

6:1 To discuss this case we are going to need certain things. Firstly, we must have all the people who were involved in clearing this plot of land. Secondly, all the people who own the deeds to the adjacent land must bring those deeds here, as we will need their permission to give this land away.

Thirdly, we will need a measuring rod so that the land that we give away can be recorded.

Buduram, son of convenor

7:1 Dule (the accused) has sown the plot without anyone's permission.

Sukuram, village headman's accountant.

8:1 Well then, Rupa (convenor) and Buduram (his son) must ask permission to cultivate this plot.

Paramount Headman (teasing the incompetence of the village headman who has allowed this muddle to happen by not giving clear permissions in the past)

9:1 I have something to say to Joto, the village headman, You have been talking and eating and not doing your job properly. I will send a report on you to the Kolhan Superintendent. Because of your negligence 9:5 both of these men are quarrelling. When that happens nobody gets anything.

Sukuram, village headman's accountant

10:1 We must go and find out how much land the two people on either side of the disputed plot own. Then we will know the size of the plot and we can tell how much either Rupa (convenor) or Dule (accused) are going to get.

Paramount Headman

11:1 Yes, then both will get the correct share.

A Villager

12:1 But what really matters is who has permission to own this land?

Sukuram, village headman's accountant

13:1 Whoever has permission should give us the evidence of it. Only then can we find out who is the rightful owner.

Paramount Headman

14:1 Yes, unless we axe shown the permissions we cannot do anything.

Buduram, convenor's son

15:1 If Dule (accused) has got permission he should tell us about it.

Paramount Headman

16:1 And, quite possibly, he won't bother.

Sukuram

17:1 If I knew about this discussion I would certainly have brought my permission paper and shown it. But maybe they have been called to do something else, such as a sacrifice, or by the spirits.

Paramount Headman

18:1 If that is so he should have sent a message. If he has cleared some wasteland without permission, couldn't he have waited for permission before clearing it?

A Villager

19:1 But it may not be so simple, there is a tug of war between them.

Paramount Headman

20:1 And Dule has rocked the boat.

Sukuwa, brother of Dule, the accused.

21:1 We (the set of five brother) all claim that the disputed land is not registered land and that nobody has sought permission to cultivate, but that it belonged to our father and is now ours. (Everyone shouts angrily at this direct and uncompromising claim.)

Paramount Headman

22:1 Don't quarrel.

Sukuwa

23:1 Rupa (convenor) you shouldn't make vain accusations. You are trying to reserve this plot without getting permission.

Paramount Headman

24:1 Keep quiet. Don't say things like that now. We must discuss this properly. It doesn't matter if it takes two days to discuss. If anyone is clearing wasteland that belongs to

the government, then I am in charge. This quarrel is over wasteland, and wasteland belongs to the government. If you go around making a confusion of such matters then the government will put the village and paramount headmen in prison for not being able to sort out such problems. A man can have the land that he has cleared only if he gets permission from the village headman

Rupa, convenor

25:1 We have cleared that land and it is ours.

Paramount Headman

26:1 It is no good saying that because you cleared the land it is yours. A man could go around saying that about the entire forest, claiming that it was his. You have to get permission first.

Buduram, son of convenor

27:1 But we do not mean it like that

Sahu, panchayat accountant

28:1 If I ask you to show me the receipt of the title deed, could you do it? The receipt on which is written the plot number, the size, how many acres and whether it is bounded by wasteland or other owners.

29:1 Rupa, convenor, looks stupid as he cannot produce the -receipt that shows he has registered the land with the government. This would be the ultimate proof of ownership. Lesser proof would be if he had evidence of permission from the headman, such as having paid salami, or discussed this plot at a village meeting.

Paramount Headman

30:1 So Rupa has not got the title deed papers. If not then tell us how much (salami you gave (to the village headman) to get permission and for how much land was the permission given, and how much you have since cleared?

Rupa, convenor

31:1 I only want to take that much land and no more.

Paramount Headman

32:1 Then all of you go and get the measurement of that plot. Find out exactly who has cleared what. Take the measurement

and agree about it on a piece of paper. Then the matter will be solved. Go and take the measurements and write them on a slip of paper when you have agreed about it. Then bring the paper back here, which will have the final agreement as to who should have how much of the land. When you have brought the paper back we will finish the job and solve the problem. But now you must go and by standing in the right places you will explain the boundaries of the plot.

Rupa, convenor

33:1 Then, in the future where will it go? The land cannot run away.

Paramount Headman

34:1 Whoever takes it then will be called a thief.

Sukuram, village headman's accountant

35:1 It is like this. You are feeling hot. You have got a headache and a belly ache. What do you do? You go and get medicines and herbs from the forest (analogy interpreted; that if you have a problem then you will solve it yourself. That will mean that you have to do some work. So now you must go ad do some work to solve this problem.)

36:1 All agreed with this pearl of wisdom and the claim was considered as closed. The meeting then set off to inspect the field, ordered by the paramount headman to go and collect the evidence, write it down, bring it back and then the papers would be prepared. The paramount headman stays in the house and drinks, while Sukuram goes off to Dule Hasda's house to tell him what is happening.

The party arrives at the field. They take out the map on which all land registered with the government is outlined and establish that the disputed plot is unregistered wasteland. Rupa, the convenor, shows the panchayat accountant the portion of land that he cleared. It becomes evident that he did this some years back. However he never finished the work and sowed a crop in it. The land was left fallow for some years. However the area that he cleared was visible and was established. Adjacent to this plot was the registered land 15 of Dule, the accused. Dule had recently been clearing a great deal of land in this small valley on the outskirts of the village. In the past few years he had cleared a lot of land and even levelled and embanked many fields

for wet rice cultivation. This plot of land was right beside one of his embanked fields. About a week ago he and his family had started to clear the fallow scrub off the disputed land, possibly thinking that it was part of their registered land. Having discovered them doing this, Rupa immediately set some beer to brew and called this meeting to get the disputed land registered in his name. Rupa claimed that he had previously gained permission to clear the land and now wanted to register it with the government. By registering it he would have an undeniable claim and could prevent Dule from establishing any claim. However it will appear shortly that Rupa's claim to having permission is not a proper one, nor is Dule's.

In the meantime, Sukuram, the village headman's accountant, has been to Dule's house. I will take up the discussion again where Dule comes storming across the field to the group of discussants. He has a stutter, and is in a furious temper, bright red in the face and screaming at the top of his voice. A villager in the group hearing him coming shouts jokingly,

37:1 In which language have you been speaking. It should have been the Ho language, but I think that it was the diku language (Hindi). (analogy interpreted; there has been some cunning talk going on out of earshot).

Dule, the accused

38:1 Well, what did you say, Sukuram? (interpretation; were you speaking in Ho or Hindi?)

Village Headman

39:1 Dule, tell us your side of the story.

Dule, the accused, shouting furiously at the village headman.

40:1 Did he (Rupa, the convenor) ask you if he could clear this field?

Village Headman

41:1 Let me finish what I am saying. Then I will be able to tell you.

Dule, still shouting

42:1 Right, munda, did I not ask you, "There is some thick forest over there, may I have your permission to clear it?" And did you not reply to me, "Bau Honyar (my wife's elder brother, a

term of great respect), the fields over there all belong to you. Of course you may clear them."? Did you not say just that, "It belongs to you, you clear it"? And then I said to you, "Then I shall begin clearing it tomorrow." Then you said, "You may start clearing it." After that what happened. I gave you some money for salami. Now what can you say? You have to admit that the village and the paramount headman have given me permission to clear this land.

Village Headman

43:1 What he says is true.

Rupa, convenor

44:1 So, I see, the village headman did give Dule permission.

Buduram, convenor's son.

45:1 But Dule did not complain when we gave a goat to a party of workers when we were clearing the same plot.

Sahu, Panchayat accountant

46:1 Let us hear about this claim of Rupa's that a party was paid to clear the plot. Tell us, Rupa, who ate the goat meat - the people who helped you clear this land? Tell me at least one or two of their names so that they can be witnesses.

Rupa, convenor

47:1 Why should I tell you who was there. Didn't Dule himself see who cleared the land? Let him tell us and admit that he knew that I was clearing the land. And yet he didn't complain then.

Dule, the accused

48:1 If you have got eyes you should be able to tell us, I can't.

Buduram, son of convenor

49:1 These are the people who helped clear the plot. Goma (the convenor's brother's son) was one of them. But let me give you other evidence that my father has got permission from the village headman to clear this plot. Didn't the village headman find us out clearing this land without permission at that time when we had a party of workers. And he took an offering from us. We paid him an offering.

Village Headman

50:1 Yes, I took a fine of ten siccas from them.

Rupa, convenor

51:1 Yes, ten siccas, that is the custom. Is it wrong, village headman, what we have said?

Dule, the accused, baffled and still angry

52:1 But I too asked the village headman for permission and got it for this field.

Sukuram, village headman's accountant

53:1 I can't believe what is being said. Come on, let's all sit down if only for a short time, sit down ... sit down ... let's talk about this.

54:1 All sit down and talk about the muddle for some time. It appears that Rupa's claim is genuine. He had started clearing the land without permission. There are witnesses to this fact. Also the munda admits taking an offering from him, thereby giving him permission to clear the land. Dule's claim is also largely correct. He claims that his father's brother had once got permission to clear this land many years ago. And that it therefore belongs to his local lineage. When he again wanted to clear the land he went to the village headman's house and asked him if he could clear another plot of land in this valley. The village headman did not bother to go and see the plot, but he told Dule that he could start clearing it as he already had a lot of land in that valley. The village headman said that when he had time he would come and see which plot Dule was clearing. So Dule went ahead. The village headman's laziness created the problem. Dule puts up a great show of self-righteousness by getting very angry with the village headman. Many of the villagers accuse the village headman of not working properly and being greedy taking salami from two people for the same plot of land. He is given a thorough dose of ridicule. This ridicule builds up, until Sukuram, the village headman's accountant thinks up a joking solution that will ridicule the village headman,

55:1 All right ... so let the village headman give back the salami of the land that Dule cleared, and let him give back the salami of the land that Rupa cleared.

Buduram, convenor's son

56:1 Whatever we cleared should belong to us. Why should we accept a compromise, so that Dule can take a share from our plot of land.

Sahu, Panchayat accountant, tries another solution

57:1 The "connection" (an English loanword) is like this. Rupa had to make an offering. Dule was there - he didn't have to pay - but why didn't he stand up (for his rights) at that moment? When they paid the offering, why didn't 5 you come forward? But now that there is an argument another Dule is coming forward, isn't he - an angry Dule?

Dule, the accused, now furious

58:1 And now yet another one will comeout!! And who else do we have to look at coming out here??

Sahu, backing down from the onslaught.

59:1 No, it's not like that. I don't know anything about this matter. When the offering was being made you didn't stand up. And now when people are asking for their rights - now you show your face.

A Villager

60:1 That is why we joked at the village headman.

Village Headman

61:1 So you all want to send the village and the paramount headman to prison?

Dule

62:1 I don't know ..... I don't care.....

63:1 The meeting breaks down into chaotic shouting. Both Rupa and Dule shout at each other a lot and everyone joins in. Finally Sukuram, the village headman's accountant, says,

64:1 Everyone is guilty.

Sahu, Panchayat accountant

65:1 All are guilty, The mistake is this... When Rupa paid an offering, he felt that he had a claim on the field. I want to say just this. I have not eaten from anybody (analogy interpreted; I am impartial). If one man is beaten on account of a woman, then he will be all the more determined to abduct

her, because he took a beating an her account. (This refers to a common Ho aphorism. If a man wants something that he cannot obtain it is often said of him that he is like a boy who has been beaten for trying to capture a girl against her parents' wishes and thereby only wants the girl all the more. Analogy interpreted; you are both so insistent about this field because your claims are being contradicted.) This old man - Rupa - being very old, did not dare to say to Dule, "Why are 15you clearing my land?" And also he did not go to the village headman, which he could easily have done.

All villagers agree volubly with the analogy.

Dule, the accused

66:1 The trouble is that the village headman will never give a straight answer when we ask him if we can clear such and such a field. He says that he doesn't know which field, but that we should carry on and clear it, then we will talk about it later.

Sahu, the Panchayat accountant, ridiculing the village headman,

67:1 Oh, the headman will say, "Clear over here, clear over there, clear it all - wherever you like." The headman will give you any permission for five rupees. But when you do that you get into trouble don't you? Then the 67:5 other man will want to get what is his own back, and he will try to chop your head off. It's quite natural that he should be cross with you.

Dule, the accused

68:1 Well, anyhow, I cleared it because I was given permission. And where I have cleared it, that belongs to me. And that bit that he cleared is his.

Sukuram, village headman’s accountant

69:1 It's about time you both stopped fighting. I think that they should pay salami again. Then we will divide the land between them. Both of them can get the same. After all if it is cold and you need some clothes you have to pay for them. You can't get necessities for nothing. If a man gets cold and hungry and he refuses to pay for things, then he will just have to remain cold and hungry. When I get cold I pay out some money. I make my belly happy and send away the cold. What else can you do?

70:1 All villagers agree with this analogy.

Buduram, son of convenor

71:1 Since the land was cleared by our ancestors we have rights to it without paying any more for it. You seem to be suggesting that if a man goes around clearing land that belongs to another, then the original owner loses his rights to the land and must pay for it again.

Sukuram, dispelling this sarcastically

72:1 Ohhh, what infinite wisdom???

A Villager

73:1 I think that we might as well give this plot to the dikus (Hindus). It is not difficult for village people to find land elsewhere in the village.

Buduram, convenor's son

74:1 That is stupid. It is very difficult to clear new wasteland. And because it is difficult and we cleared it, we are saying that it is ours. What you appear to be telling me is that if someone tells me to go and clear another's land, I have every right to do that.

Sukuram, village headman's accountant

75:1 Rubbish, if you have cleared it already then it is not illegal to clear it again. Both of you have legal right to this plot and therefore this plot cannot belong to either of you. It belongs to the government. Isn't that so... it belongs to the government? That is what you should both be getting bothered about and stop being unhappy with each other. If you quarrel any more then all ownership in the plot will be cancelled.

Buduram, convenor's son

76:1 Yes, I agree with you. If we go on fighting then no one will get it.

Sukuram

77:1 Therefore I say that nobody should get the land.

78:1 All villagers agree volubly with this suggestion.

Sahu, Panchayat accountant

79:1 Actually it is the village headman who has really made the mistake here. He should not have given this land away when it belonged to another.

Village Headman

80:1 I don't know who the field belongs to.

Buduram, son of convenor

81:1 What use are you to anyone if all you do is to sit in your house telling people what to do? You should have gone to the. field and done your job properly.

Dule, the accused, with finality

82:1 Right, I am prepared to pay for all the wasteland here and maybe for more elsewhere. That is what I have to say.

Sukuram, village headman's accountant

83:1 That is well said... If all of you paid the price you would all be able to eat. If nobody gives money then nobody can eat.

Dule, now feeling that he has got the field as he can afford to pay and he knows that Rupa cannot.

84:1 Right then, I will pay the government and clear the field after getting the munda's permission.

Rupa, the convenor, with self-pity

85:1 I would not have done it. I cannot do that. I have got two children. Now they will have to leave my house. They will have to go and do wage labour and live by that. Don't you lot worry about us. It will be alright if we go and live by begging and wages. Dule, you may eat. We are giving up.

Buduram, standing up for his father

86:1 Dule, how can you take land that we were the first to clear? What right do you think you have got to give money for it? We cleared it long before you did. How can two people stack their rights up on top of each other. When we had to pay the offering for clearing the land why didn't you stand up and state your interest in the land?

Dule

87:1 What are you worrying about? There is plenty more good land over there, which you can clear.

Buduram

88:1 Then you must be a blind fool. Why didn't you go and clear that land instead of taking ours?

Dule

89:1 Me ... a blind fool???

Rupa

90:1 That is what you are. You didn't come forward when you could have.

91:1 At this point the discussion went round in circles for at least an hour. Nothing new was said. Dule stood to his stance that he would pay for the plot and for many more. Rupa held his ground on the fact that he had been the original clearer. Every5 one blamed the village headman for causing the trouble. Finally they came to the conclusion that there was nothing more that they could do in the field and that the only way to settle this case was t o measure up who had cleared what land and note it down. Then the land could be divided between the two of them. But how exactly they were going to make the division was not discussed, as it would have been an insoluble problem. But the principle was established that the land should be divided. They took the measurements of the field. Dule then went back to his house cursing the village headman. And Rupa, with all the discussants, went back to his house where the paramount headman had been waiting.

On the way back a villager told Rupa a story which, through the use of analogy, exemplifies the need for cooperation. The story teller and his brother had shares in a field that their father had left them. During the monsoons the embankment broke and a gulley eroded the field away. The elder brother accused the younger one of damaging the embankment. But the younger one said that he had done nothing. It was all the work of the rain. But the elder brother would not understand this and he became very angry with his younger brother. As they were quarrelling they never repaired the embankment, so that next year they lost the field completely.

On arriving back at Rupa's house Sahu, the panchayat accountant, reported the following to the paramount headman.

Sahu, the panchayat accountant

92:1 We have all seen the field and we asked Rupa and Dule what the history was. Dule said that he had cleared the field. When asked by whose order, he said, "On the munda's order". So we asked the village headman, "Did you give the order?" The village headman said, "As I was fat I did not give the order". But the village headman said that he gave a different order. When asked by Dule, "Can I clear the field of my brother Bhotal who is dead", the village headman answered "You may. It belongs to your brothers so you can clear it." But Dule never showed him exactly which field he was referring to. The village headman and Dule spoke to each other with those words. Then we asked Dule whether the field had really belonged to his brother Bhotal. But Dule would not give us a straight answer to this. He just kept on insisting, "I spoke to the village headman. He gave me permission and I cleared it." However the trouble arises at this point. We asked Rupa when he had cleared the field. He said that he had cleared it before it had ever been cleared. And that the village headman had taken an offering from him for clearing it without permission. When asked the village headman said, "Yes I did take an offering. I took it because they were clearing new wasteland without permission." I then asked Dule, "Why did you go ahead and clear that field when you knew that Rupa had already done some work on it?" But all that Dule gave for an answer was that he had got permission to clear it from the village headman. And that he blames the headman for that.

Paramount Headman

93:1 Does Dule have a written paper to show his permission?

Sahu

94:1 For that very reason I asked him if he had papers. He said that he did not. But he said that he was prepared to give salami for the entire field. And that he was not prepared to let anybody take any of the field away from him.

Paramount Headman (speaking in Hindi to give his words authority)

95:1 What then are we going to do about this. We have got to show them both the straight way.

Sahu

96:1 If there is still a quarrel between them, why should only one of them ride roughshod over the other? Neither of them should get anything.

97:1 All villagers show their agreement with this.

Sahu

98:1 But it was Dule who cleared the field last. Should Rupa, who cleared the field first, now have to give the field up. He has paid an offering as it is written in the village headman's record of rights. But Dule has not made any offering. Therefore he cannot have it. Rupa has done what the law says should be done and the government is the lord here.

Paramount Headman

99:1 Maybe that is the way we should be looking at this. Should the man who has most recently cleared the land get it? Or should a man get the land who has not done any work on it, but claims that his forefathers once owned the land, get it? And it is always doubtful whether these claims about forefathers are true, because those who can give evidence are dead. Maybe we should think along those lines. But the matter remains that if Rupa and Dule are not prepared to agree on anything then I have no responsibility in the matter at all. After all it is the custom nowadays that whoever clears the land - he gets it. I can only give the land to the man who clears it. That is the law. And the land belongs to the Bihar government, not to me. We can only obey the law. If the matter becomes more complex then the law states then neither I nor Singbonga (the great spirit that oversees all doings) can do nothing. Only the government understands. (Long pause.) But in the end the whole thing depends on us mortals. Only through our actions can we avoid problems.

Buduram, convenor's son

100:1 My father cleared it first. We cleared it. We gave a whole goat for a party of people to clear it. And they ate it.

A villager, laughing at the truculence of Buduram

101:1 This young fellow can't stop talking, can he?

Rupa, convenor

102:1 Did you ask Dule whether he would admit that we had already cleared the land?

Sahu, panchayat accountant, sarcastic at being expected to ask such a question when he would have no chance of a straight answer from Dule,

103:1 Ohh, did he clear the land here somewhere??

Paramount headman

104:1 Who cleared the land first and who cleared it last?

Sukuram, the village headman's accountant, now slightly drunk and referring to the chaos of counterclaims,

105:1 Who can see who is working buried up to his hair in the undergrowth?? How do you think we could see who got in their first?? (analogy; to the fact that when a man is clearing new forest he will be invisible in the undergrowth, interpretation; that the field was cleared so long ago that it is no longer possible to get firm evidence as to who cleared it first.)

Paramount Headman

106:1 Yes, but if a man was standing close by at least he would have seen his arse sticking up over the bushes, even if he did have his head down in the leaves. (analogy; having similar references to above but here interpreted; I accept that, but nevertheless one can perhaps get a glimpse into the past through the confusion of counterclaims that could give one a clue.)

107;1 There is then some longish factual discussion to establish who had cleared which portions of the land, to find out if Dule's and Rupa's areas coincide, overlap or whatever. There seems to be some hope the two areas of land may at best not coincide, or at least from the way they have cleared it it might be possible to divide the area between the two of them according to what each has done. However Rupa is not prepared to accept losing any land that he once cleared to Dule. And it is also evident that Dule re-cleared almost all Rupa's clearance and extended it further. Also Dule wiped out the boundary markers that Rupa left.

Sukuram, the village headman's accountant

108:1 Look Rupa, Dule laid down the law for himself(and said, "I have cleared up to here, and I am not going to leave any of it." Why didn't you say that too. If I were you I would have stated categorically that I was not going to leave any land that 1 had cleared. You should have told us this. You have made a mistake there. You did not stand up to your rights.

Paramount Headman

109:1 That was why I told you to go to the field and to stand on the area that you had cleared and Dule should stand on the area that he had cleared. You were told to do that.

Sukuram

110:1 But nobody stood where they should have stood, they just shouted at each other.

Rupa

111:1 Look, we only want what we had cleared and Dule knew what we had cleared. Therefore why should I show him what we had cleared. He should have been made to show us and admit to us that he knew how much we had cleared. We only wanted the land up to that little rivulet.

Paramount Headman

112:1 There is no question at any stage of anybody wanting land the other side of the rivulet. Look, you have fermented rice for us and made beer, which we have drunk. We are here to discuss the problem of the land that both you and Dule have cleared. You have asked us here to discuss that. And therefore we owe it to you to settle that. It is not our responsibility, but a responsibility that you have thrust on us. Let us say that we had divided the disputed field between you and Dule and you started cultivating it. But then you extended your cultivation beyond the field that we divided, over and across the rivulet. Then it would be our responsibility alone, because we would be taking action against you. But that land (beyond the rivulet) is neither yours nor Dule's. It belongs to the government. Those are true words. But what I must say is another matter (the matter with which we are really concerned). If the two of you have cleared some land and want to divide it among yourselves, on your own accord, and you want us to help you in this division, then you must tell us

how much both of you have cleared. All we have got to do then is to measure it all up.

Sukuram, village headman's accountant

113:1 You haven't got a map for this, have you?

Rupa, convenor

114:1 We agree that we have cleared the land up to the rivulet and not beyond it. Over there it belongs to Dule's father. It does not belong to old man Rupa (himself) and not even to old cock Rupa (himself). It belonged to Moso's father (Dule's father's father). We are talking about the land up to the rivulet. The land that we gave one goat to have cleared. I will only accept the point that the village headman gave me permission to do this. I have the right to say that he gave me permission. But Dule also says that he has got that right.

Sukuram, village headman's accountant, ridiculing the village headman drunkenly.

115:1 Hey, village headman, where are you? (He looks around pretending not to see the headman, who is sitting four feet away.) You have got the stump of the tree, buta, and the end of the string, mundi, (analogy firstly; to the base of a creeper from which the rest of the plant grows, reference; Hoffman, 1950 pp. 676, gives under buta:(6) figuratively, the beginning, origin, cause or reason, main point, prime mover, instigator. He then gives two pertinent examples of this figurative use. "Mukudimare butaete tundumundi sobenle ijarjana", in court we were examined from the first to the last. And, "eperangra buta niminangge taikena", this much was the reason for' the quarrel. Analogy secondly; mundi is the end of a long piece of string. Reference. Hoffman, 1950 pp. 2882, gives the following use of mundi, "ne kajira tundu ad mundi udubaingme", explain everything to me from end to end of the matter, its origin and probable consequences, the persons responsible or involved, their motives, and all circumstances, what decisions should be taken, etc., Interpretation; Village headman you are the entire and total cause of all our troubles. With you around it is not necessary to have a council of five elders. The village headman seems to think that he can give to some people and not to others.

Paramount Headman

116:1 Well, it is true, the headman can give permission. But he should make it clear which field he is talking about. In fact it is best if it is written down on paper. Nobody has any right in land unless he first gets permission. If a man does not get permission and does not have papers from the village headman, then he cannot clear wasteland.

Sukuram

117:1 I don't know how anyone is going to get their share of the field. The whole matter is getting too complicated. Whoever has rights in the field, please bring them and show them to us. All of you with permission papers please show us how long and how wide they are. (This is a sarcastic reference to the fact that no one has got the proper papers that they should have.)

Paramount Headman.

118:1 Even though we are not getting paid for doing this, nobody is telling us the full facts of the case. Go and get your papers. They should explain it all. They should give us an idea of how to split this land up. But what good will that be when you are all quarrelling?

Sukuram

119:1 They are all too greedy. They won't show us the facts. All they do is to say that this and that belongs to them and try to pretend that the other man has no rights when both of them seem to have rights. Somehow we have got to clear it up. It is all such a mess. When a man begins to clear land, ten more people become jealous and want to do the same. When that happens it is hopeless. They all go off and claim that the ancestors had cleared such and such a plot years ago. We all know that is an old story. What kind of people are you?

A Villager

120:1 Whoever is hungry and poor always gets trodden on. Now poor old Rupa has paid out money for some land and Dule is taking it away.

121:1 At this point they all turn to the village headman and ask him how he is going to resolve the matter. The village headman, who is sitting in Rupa's house, says rather weakly,

122:1 I would like to give the field to Rupa.

Rupa

123;1 I would love to take it but that would not solve the quarrel.

Sukuram

124:1 Therefore I say that you should divide it between them. But how will you do that?

Rupa

125:1 And I am not going to give away any land that I have cleared.

Sukuram

126:1 Yes, and that is where the trouble lies. It was your fault, not mine, village headman. You gave Dule the field.

Sahu

127:1 The field doesn't belong to anyone. It is the government's.

Sukuram

128:1 Neither of you need to fight. All you have to do is pay again for what you want.

129:1 Having in this way stated the factors that are creating an impasse, the paramount headman tries a new tack. He seems to be aware that they will not be able to reach a settlement at the level of the village meeting. So he suggests that Rupa now tries to get the land registered with the government. If he can do this he will be given a title deed over the land and Dule will have no rights in it. This, of course, is not a real solution as Dule will contest Rupa's rights to a title deed to the government land registration authorities. By this tactic at least the headman will have created agreement within the village. The dispute will then be taken out of the field of village organisation.

Paramount Headman

130:1 Let me tell you something, if you will listen. In the village we can give you permission to cultivate the field for three year. (The village headman is allowed to give any villager rights of korkar, that is, the right to cultivate new land

for three years free of rent. This is the permission to which they have been referring. However after this period a land holder should register new land with the government as he has to then pay rent. The obligation is on the government not the land holder to register the land, but any land holder can avail himself of this right if he wants.) But I think that tomorrow you should go and get a government land surveyor, He can give you a written permission. In this way we will try to get you not just a permission for three years, but a permanent settlement of the land. You will have to go tomorrow and pay five rupees as a fee to get a surveyor. And you will have to give him money so that he can come from the Circle Office, perhaps fifteen rupees. And also he will probably need two chickens to eat.

Sahu

131:1 This work is "urgent" (English loanword). You must get this done, because if you do not get these papers you will not get the land.

Paramount Headman

132:1 If you go on fighting between yourselves for this field, which really belongs to the government, you will only get the village and paramount headman put in prison. There is nothing that we can do if you go on fighting and even kill each other with bows and arrows.

Sahu

133:1 If you want to solve this matter then you will have to work together, and get the matter registered with the government.

Paramount Headman

134:1 But if you both work together, then I will sign the papers that will allow you both to register the land between you.

Sahu

135:1 Those are good words. Listen to what the paramount headman is saying. If you do that everything will be completed and there will be nothing more to discuss.

A Villager

136:1 We must listen to Rupa and Dule and help them, as they are in trouble. We must all work together and be friendly, Unfortunately we are foolish, stupid and hot tempered people.

Paramount Headman

137:1 If you put in an application to the surveyor and it is accepted, then you will get even the land that Dule has recently ploughed. The government will give an order to that effect. And you will be able to take the land. Then you can start work on it.If you get the surveyor you won't even have to measure the field as he will do that properly for you. If you get these government papers and then Dule comes and tries to cultivate the field then you will be able to send Dule to prison.

Sahu

138:1 Look it is like this. For this discussion you have given us food and drink. We need that food and drink to work properly. And the government surveyor will need food and drink to do his work. We will write down the draft directions of your field and sign it. Then the surveyor, after taking measurements, will draw up a proper settlement paper and deed. Then Dule will be powerless. Only you will be powerful. Even the great lord of this village will have no power over you concerning this field. It will be entirely yours.

139:1 All the villagers agree volubly with this.

140:1 The paramount headman then gave a long speech about how the surveyors came and marked out the boundary between the village area and the reserved forest area. The general purpose of this appears to have been to outline by example the government's role in land ownership and registration. He ends up by saying that the surveyors were ordered to do this.

Gura, the convenor's elder son

141:1 Wait a minute. We have been talking. Now we should do the writing and get the signature of witnesses.

Rupa, convenor

142:1 Don't worry the words have written it. We have written it in words.

143:1 Rupa then offers them some more rice beer and they discuss in detail what has to be done to get the government surveyors and the benefit that will be got from having a precise survey of the field written down, so that no one can argue over it.

Sahu, the panchayat accountant

144:1 Hold on, we have discussed this at great length. The village headman has said that he will give the field to Rupa. Perhaps we should let the matter rest for a week. Then we will write the permission papers, after taking the measurements of the field. When all that is ready we will call the surveyors in. We will not do the writing today. We have made the words (our decision). We must now wait until the measurements have been taken. How can we do the writing now, we do not know the measurements of the field? And it is raining too hard now to go measuring fields. But it will have stopped in a week's time. And you must get some drink in for the surveyors. When you have got some drink in we will go with the village and paramount headman and 15 three witnesses and take the measurements. Then you should collect some rupees and go to the Circle Office and get a surveyor. Today we have made the words (decision).[67]

Paramount Headman jokingly

145:1 And you never know, old Rupa, once we have given you permission for this field you might go ahead and clear all the forests round here. But you had better be careful if you do.

Sahu

146:1 That's true. But if you do clear the whole forest it would be against the law. You would have cleared it without permission. Then the same thing will happen again. It is not fair to go around taking land fm people without asking permission first. And all the land here belongs to the government. It is not fair to clear the land of the government without asking permission.

Sukuram

147:1 Wouldn't it be exactly the same if you grabbed a girl and took her away without getting permission from her brother?

Paramount Headman

148:1 When the new Kolhan Superintendent was appointed there was a meeting in Chota Nagra. (the market town four miles away). A

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67. The word kaji is most directly translated as to speak, a language or a word. However it is used in many allied senses to refer simply to a matter, or spoken business. Hoffman, 1950, p.2175-8, also gives news, version of a case, notion, idea, understanding proverb, what people say, plus a number of idiomatic uses.

speech was made in which the question was asked, "Why is there a headman in each village?" And again, "How much knowledge has the village headman got to ask questions?" Nobody gave an answer. Then the Kolhan Superintendent said, "When the villagers steal the government's land, or when they fight among themselves, it is the village headman's duty to sort the matter out. If the village headmen do not do this work, then there is no work for the headmen to do." Then if there is fighting in a village or for the government's land who is going to deal with it?

Sahu

149:1 Let me explain this. The village headman and the paramount headman live at different places (they have different positions). It is for the village headman to report to the paramount headman. He must pass messages on that matters are not going well and that people are not reforming. He asks the paramount headman if he needs help. Then the paramount headman comes and the work gets done. But if, even then, the work is riot done "direct" (English loanword) the matter goes to the Kolhan Superintendent. And then if not it goes to the police. They will say according to their power. In this way the villagers are made to understand.

Paramount Headman

150:1 You have put it well. Now even I can understand. It must be said that if a man does not understand this then he must offer people rice beer. Then he will be told to go ahead and clear the land. (Meaning; that Rupa has not understood this and so there has been a quarrel. But he has called a meeting and has now been given permission to clear the plot.) (Long pause.) Before clearing land you must first obtain permission so that you have the right to do it. In the early days (Before the creation of the Kolhan and indirect rule) such matters were settled by word of mouth. Nowadays it cannot be done like that. But nevertheless if you get permission from the village headman, the government will not stop you. And the inspector of police will not stop you. And if the village headman does it like the dikus (outsiders) everything will be even clearer.

A Villager

151:1 If you do it like the dikus even the inspector of police will be afraid of you. The inspector of police may be powerful, in other ways, but the village headman has the power in his village as long as he works properly. The village headman can keep his power as long as the work is done according to the rules.

Sahu

152:1 Unfortunately in these times nobody seems to bother about that. They seem to be prepared to let the village headmen be hanged or sent to prison (by not helping them to do the work well). Unfortunately in this village the way of doing this is that after drinking rice beer everybody agrees with each other.

All villagers agree saying,

153:1 We should not work like that. When a man does that he falls flat on his face.

Paramount Headman goes into a long allegory to exemplify the mistake that people are making. In effect he says that by not working properly, people are digging their own graves.

154:1 Once when I came back from attending a meeting at Lemre (a village seven miles away), I heard that I would be thrown to the ground by the people of Lemre. The day before yesterday I enquired as to who had said this would happen and who wanted it to happen. I was told that somebody else had said it (nobody would admit to it). I thought to myself that I was going to have to go back to Lemre again this very morning. I said to myself, "If anybody has dug a pit in the path for me to fall into, then let them dig it. How can I tell whether the pit is for me or not." Anyhow, I said, "If I had dug a pit for somebody else, the most likely person to fall into it is myself."

A Villager

155:1 If men who stick their backsides in the air come! (Analogy; when children are angry with their parents they walk away with their heads bowed and therefore their bottoms in the air, reference; when people disagree with you and are likely to quarrel they do not show their faces, interpretation; it

is no good bothering about people who disagree with you. On the whole it just means that they keep away from you.)

156:1 The meeting then collapsed into unorganised discussion that could not be understood. But all were discussing what happens when women get involved in quarrels and start scolding their men and goading them to stand up for their rights. Everybody agreed that women did not worry their husbands in the days of the ancestors. They then started talking about the case of a man who mortgaged out all his fields in a nearby village and is now poverty struck. They all laughed at his stupidity. Then Rupa said;

Rupa, convenor

157:1 The field must be registered.

158:1 They discuss how the registration should be done again by calling in the surveyors. And that it should be written down. They turn on the village headman and say that he has caused the trouble and that he is "buried by his own stupidity" and that is why he is now a poor man. They then start talking about an incident that has recently been amusing the whole village. An elderly widower has recently been trying to persuade an old widow to live with him. The paramount headman then begins to tell a story which he analogously relates to the case they have been discussing.

Paramount Headman

159:1 Let me tell you about this journey. What you have been saying is like this shirt. (The shirt, in fact, is the anthropologists woollen jersey, which three other members of his neighbourhood cluster have been asking him to give them when he leaves.) Ruidas has asked for it. And also Bhagun has asked for it. But I asked for it first, so it should be given to me. And surely if it is not given to me I will be very cross? All those who asked later cannot get into the shirt at the same time, can they? So it is with your field.

Sahu

160:1 If it is given to you, you will not be offended, and you will not make your mind short. (Alope huring jiuwa literally, don't be small spirited. Here meaning, don't be impatient, offended or small minded.)

Rupa

161:1 I am not small minded. That is not my meaning.

Paramount Headman

162:1 You may have whatever is yours.

Sahu

163:1 If now you don't go ahead and get that field, remember, it will then become waste land again and anybody can take it. Then they will become the king. Then you would have to go begging to the government to get the land. You would have to take rice and chickens to the government bungalow. It would be much better if now you just took your rice and chickens to the village and paramount headmen's house and get your field.

A Villager, taking up the analogy

164:1 Yes, let him bring a saucepan too, then we can all eat. The water is already boiling, all we need is the rice. (We are all sitting here just give us the food.) It would be foolish to give up this chance to get the field and then have to give the food to the government, because I. will bet that the government also has a pot of water on the boil waiting for your rice. Then you would have to go on bended knee, saying, "Here Lord, a chicken. Here, Lord, an egg. Please, oh people who come from far away, 10 we are offering them to you, please accept them." (He is here imitating the chants sung when chickens are offered to spirits for sacrifice.)

Rupa

165:1 You, the people of the village, are doing this work for me and are being paid nothing. It is better like that. I know that you did not come here just expecting to be fed. I invited you and you have come. So we have all drunk a little rice beer together.

A Villager

166:1 Yes, but perhaps you are expecting too much from us in return. That is worrying me. You must also look after your own affairs.

Rupa

167:1 Very well ... alright ... but we have not yet finally been able to say the words that are necessary (reach a conclusion).

Paramount Headman

168:1 Why can't we people ever reach conclusions?

All Villagers

169:1 Yes, why can't we?

Rupa

170:1 It is our field, but we are having to buy it again. We are going to have to give more salami for the field. But we will be able to eat from that field so there is no harm in paying.

Sukuram

171:1 If you pay money for some clothes, why shouldn't you put them on to keep you warm. Use them to cover yourself from head to foot.

Sahu

172:1 It is not possible to reach conclusions in such cases when one minute people say one thing and the next another.

Paramount Headman

173:1 Rupa, if you want us to take the measurements of your field in order to make out permission papers, you must tell us so and then help us to take the measurements by showing us the field. How else can we find out what has to be written down.

Sahu

174:1 Only the man who knows the size of the field can help us. We have offered to write a paper for Rupa, And the village headman can give the permission. Then Rupa could use the permission for whatever he wants. But Rupa does not know what he wants to do. If he goes on fighting over the field like this how can it ever be measured? He is not using his common

sense, and so we cannot do the writing. Maybe it would be better if we did not try to help them but rather told them what to do and made them do it the proper way.

A Villager

175:1 If we kill anything then we must give back its life (analogy interpreted; if we give somebody trouble then we must solve their problem. And by inference this also means that we must look after the problems that we have made for ourselves, and not let others do it, nor do we want others to do it).

Sahu

176:1 Indeed we must give back its life.

All villagers agreeing

177:1 Yes... absolutely... quite true.

A Villager

178:1 As the bonga (spirit) has been carrying the land of our village, if any crop is sown and springs above the ground, if it either lives or dies, it is only the work of that spirit. (Analogy; to the mythical beasts that live in the sarna, sacred grove, that is the abode of the village guardian spirits. The village guardian spirit has many consorts including the two snakes that supported the billhook of the original clearer and founder of the village and the tortoise upon whose back the myth of origin states that the earth was placed by a worm in order that there should be land for the animals and man to live on. Reference; to the tortoise carrying the land of the village of Dubil on its back. And that because it carries the land it is ultimately responsible for the welfare of all that grows upon the land. The interpretation of the analogy in this context was explained as the village having to stand by itself with its spirits. And that the village must solve its own problems, preferably without resorting to outside help. The villager here seems to be making an extension of what another villager has just said, that every man must look after his own affairs. He is therefore saying here that as every man must look after his own affairs, so must every village. It was mentioned that this also refers to the discussion earlier that the villagers

see it best if they live peaceably among themselves they will not incur interference from the <u>dikus</u>, foreigners.)

<u>Sahu</u>

179:1 We are not going to do the writing now as it has not been fully decided what are the measurements of the field and that is due to the confusion of Rupa and the village headman. So it is not possible to do the writing and that is not good.

<u>A Villager</u>

180:1 Yes, a mistake has been made. You can give the chant for a snake bite, but still the fang marks will remain. (<u>Analogy</u>; a shaman can cure the victim of a snake bit. The chant and the associated sweeping of the venom out of the body of the victim with the use of various symbolic brushes made of peacock feathers and various herbs is said to alleviate the pain and prevent death, but it cannot remove the two pin pricks that the snake's fangs have made. The <u>interpretation</u> in this context was said to be that it is possible to right a mistake, but the scar of that mistake will always remain and your reputation will be equivalently damaged.)

<u>Gura</u>, son of convenor

181;1 That may be true, but it also is true that when doing the chant you must drop a coin into a leaf cup to trap the spirit. (<u>Analogy</u>; to the fact that before commencing the chant it is necessary to catch or attract the attention of the relevant spirit for the subsequent chant to be effective. The <u>interpretation</u> is that the convenor's son is defending his father's indecision by saying that it is necessary to have certain preliminaries prepared before one can successfully reach a conclusion.) Also if a snake goes into a hole in the ground it is necessary to block that hole up. (<u>Analogy</u>; to the need to kill the snake that has bitten one by imprisoning it in its hole. <u>Reference</u>; the snakebite refers to the dispute; the curing of the snakebite refers to the meeting to resolve the dispute; the imprisoning of the snake in its hole refers to the equivalent need to finally settle the matter so that the dispute cannot recur. <u>Interpretation</u>; the meeting must now be concluded. Gura and his father must have the fields registered in their names.

By making this statement Gura is formally accepting the conclusion of the meeting.)

The discussants take this to be the final word on the matter and, after a pause, they start to discuss other matters and people begin to leave the meeting. Sahu, who came from a nearby village, had to leave immediately. The village headman and his accountant, Sukuram, and the paramount headman carried on drinking the dregs of the beer. One or two of the villagers lingered on, then the paramount headman and the village headman's accountant walked back to their houses together. On the way they passed through Dule's house and told him that until the field was finally registered in someone's name no one should do any work in it. In fact Dule went straight to the field and started work on it.

Overview and Hypothetical Model

To analyse this meeting it is necessary to understand the standpoints of the various parties and their different interests. Each party used different tactics in its attempts to satisfy these interests. There are, therefore, two main considerations; the interests of the parties and the tactics used to satisfy them.

Interests

As soon as a dispute is brought to the total community arena for settlement the simple dyadic interests of the two opposing parties are overridden by a more general one. In the minimal arena there are only two opposing parties with conflicting interests. But when an appeal is made to the community a new element is introduced - the overriding interest of the public to resolve the dispute. The convenor himself relies on this interest in so far as his reason for calling the meeting is to settle the dispute, but the issue is not always so clear cut. There are therefore three interested parties in a village meeting; the two conflicting parties and the public.

A party may also have conflicting interests. In the case between Rupa Murmu and Dule Hasda, Rupa wants to gain ownership of the land that he has cleared and also wants the dispute settled, so he must not seem stubborn and intransigent, thereby incurring a loss of support from the community which has the power to refuse to give him ownership of the land. He is caught between a conflict with Dule and dependence on the community; he wants both the land and the community's support. Rupa is therefore divided between doing what is good for himself in the short term and what is good for the community and himself in the long term. He is probably aware that some compromise is necessary. Rupa's opening tactic is to

present the case as if it were a simple one of registering land that he has recently cleared. This is an attempt to avoid bringing the short term conflict of interest with Dule into the discussion. However this conflict with Dule soon comes into the open. By calling the meeting and offering rice beer Rupa has demonstrated his subordination to the community. Dule, on the other hand, was not present at the convention of the meeting and, being a more wealthy man than Rupa, is less prepared to bow to village decisions. Throughout the meeting he is intransigent and even leaves the meeting after the discussion in the field. Although ultimately Dule is dependent on the community, he puts his immediate interests first.

The village as a whole is interested in effecting a lasting settlement between the parties. It was open to them to treat Rupa's application to register a plot at its face value and issue Rupa with a deed for the land. The meeting would then be closed. However they would not have resolved the dispute for the good of the community as Dule would continue to contest Rupa's right to that deed. The village attempts to move towards decisions that command the support of all parties so that the village may live in peace.

Tactics

Tactics are the progressive manoeuvring of the parties in support of their goal. The two disputants seek a resolution of their conflict but their immediate aim is to obtain some short-term advantages, whereas the goal of the community is to achieve a lasting settlement in the interests of village peace. This difference in goals is reflected in a difference between the tactics employed by the disputants and the community. If the discourse of the meeting is broken down into its tactical elements it is possible to understand the methods used to achieve the ultimate goal of the meeting, which is a settlement of conflicting interests in order to preserve the harmony of the village.

Analysis of the Transcript

The first sequence in the discussion runs from the paramount headman's initial statement to the end of speech sequence number 6, i.e. (1:1 to 6:7) by the village headman's accountant. Throughout it is clear that the speakers know the facts of the case, but no direct reference is made to them. There is a good deal of polite beating around the bush and preserving neutrality by feigning ignorance. At the same time the _manki_, _munda_, the convenor, Sahu and the _munda's_ accountant all make indirect references to the village's long-term interests concerning individuals' land rights and the government. Both the headmen state their authority as granted by the Kolhan Superintendent, and Rupa indicates his recognition of this by saying that he has brought them here in peace so that they can discuss how the rules of authority apply to his predicament (section

3). While openly supporting the norms of the community he also makes a veiled reference to his own claim by the use of an analogy (section 3:4-5).

The manki (section 4) immediately takes up this analogy to the case and says, 'there has been some quarrelling over a plot of land' (4:1-2). He adds that his interests are aligned with the long-term ones of the community and not with the short-term interests behind the dispute; 'I am paramount headman and I have no interest in this case' (4:2-3). By underlining his disinterest in any argument concerning short-term interests, he tactically manoeuvres Rupa into a position whereby he has to refer his interests indirectly. At the same time by stating his neutral position, the manki is also establishing his ability to refer directly to any of the interests in the case in an impartial manner; he thus gives himself a freedom to manoeuvre as he lives. This is a threat to Rupa because, as paramount headman, the manki can channel the discussion onto whatever subjects he wishes.

He derives his authority from his position as paramount headman: 'The Kolhan Superintendent has given his greetings (respects) to the village and paramount headman and said that now we are the rulers' (2:1-3). He also derives his authority from Rupa's act in convening the meeting: 'We headmen do not have the right or authority to do this job, but only because the people ask us to do it and offer us rice beer in return.' (4:6-8). The manki thus not only establishes his administrative authority based on extra-village power, but states that his real intention is to settle this matter in terms of the authority granted him by the villagers as their headman whom they respect (4:5-8). He then tactfully softens this statement with a long indirect reference to a similar event in the past, whereby the headman's father had even been able to use his traditional authority as the recognised headman of his village against the Kolhan Superintendent (4:13-26).

These utterances by the manki are a proclamation of the support that he can marshal in the subsequent discussion. He has external administrative authority and authority granted him by the convenor, who appointed him as mediator, and also the support of the village as a whole that is represented by the gathering of the adult membership of the village.

But he has not stated these facts in an authoritative manner, he has only made an indirect reference to his power. He does not directly refer to himself or to his standing in the case except in 4:1-4, where he actively states that he has no standing. Thereby he has enhanced his position.

The only non-villager at the meeting then makes two seemingly obscure references (5:1 and 9-10). To the listeners both of them clearly signify that he knows the background details of the case and that he has been called here because of his personal knowledge of the nuts and bolts of registering land with the government. But since he is not a villager his position is marginal.

Later he is the man who does most of the plain speaking, but before the villagers accept his role in the meeting his utterances are very indirect. In this way he avoids any confrontation. All know the meaning of his words but they are phrased in a manner that avoids conflict.

Finally Sukuram, the younger brother of the manki and the munda's accountant, states what will be needed to settle the case from a practical point of view. He establishes his role as accountant. It is not for him to arrange a settlement but to record the settlement, measure the land, etc. Here ends the first act, in which the actors establish their roles and their relative positions to each other. Buduram, the son of the convenor, then moves the discussion onto the next stage, in which Rupa's case is put to the meeting. Quite straightforwardly Buduram says, "Dule has sown the plot without anyone's permission" (7:1). They continue to discuss this statement, suggesting what should be done if this is so, but without actually entering into any direct discussion as to the truth of the statement.

Dule is not present and, as the suggestions continue on the assumption of Dule's transgression, his brother, Sukuwa, becomes angry and states Dule's case (21;1-4). He says that Dule and his brothers are aware that the land is unregistered, but they claim the right to registration in their name as their father was the original clearer of this land many years ago. The assembly does not welcome these counterclaims and the manki expresses the feeling of the meeting when he tells Sukuwa to "keep quiet" (24:1-2). The case on each side must be discussed in detail and separately. There should not be a fight between the two sides in public. To quarrel openly would not be discussing the case, but rather continuing the dispute in public. The manki then asserts his authority, saying that as this is a case of ownership of wasteland all are subject to the authority of government since all wasteland is by definition the government's property and that, as manki, he is the custodian of government land in the village. After this interruption they turn again to discuss Rupa's claim.

Rupa says that the land is his as he cleared it (25:1). He is appealing to the customary law that a man who clears land can claim ownership. But the manki reminds him that this is not entirely true. Before clearing land a man must get the permission of the munda (26:1-4). It is then pointed out that a man does not have full possession of a plot of land until it is registered with the government and he has the title deeds to it. The manki suggests that Rupa should go with the munda's accountant and show him which land he claims, so that it can be measured and agreed that he has a rightful claim to that plot (32:1-11). This, Sukuram says, will settle the matter. At this stage they are begging the question as to who is the rightful claimant. In the public arena all are trying to prevent the dispute itself being acted out. By taking it step by step this can be avoided and at this stage they want to establish what Rupa's case is.

Having heard Rupa's claim the manki sends the meeting to look at the disputed plot with orders to ascertain the land Rupa has cleared and is therefore entitled to claim. Having done this they should return to the manki with the information, who will decide whether to give his permission for registration. But the manki himself does not hear this part of the discussion. He finds it quite sufficient to send the villagers with the munda, his accountant and the panchayat accountant to bring the evidence back to him. During the two or three hours that the meeting was held at the site of the disputed plot the manki waited at Rupa's house. This meant that he was isolated from the details of the case. In this way he avoided becoming involved in emotional hostilities and was able to see the dispute from a distance and so be capable of finding the "stump of the creeper".

At the field the meeting continued with statements of Rupa's interests. There was little resort to analogy and the claims and counterclaims were presented straightforwardly. When, however, the discussion reached stages of impasse, analogies were used to engender agreement. Initially Rupa presented his claim to the land (36:7-29). Then Dule arrived and presented his counterclaim (37-42). The tactics at this stage consist of a direct and heated assertion of conflicting claims. In the subsequent section (43-62) it is discovered that an oversight on the munda's behalf validates both of the claims. He has unwittingly given both protagonists permission to clear the same plot. This creates an impasse between the two protagonists and the meeting collapses into a chaotic shouting match (63:1), which is halted by the munda's accountant's suggestion that if both the protagonists are equally in the right then they are equally in the wrong (64:1). Sahu takes this up, stressing his position as a mediator, "I have not eaten from anybody" (65:3). He resorts to a well-worn Ho aphorism, which commands universal agreement. The meeting returns to sensible discussion (65:4-7). Having said that both protagonists are equally at fault as they are blameless, the munda's accountant suggests that their claims cancel each other out and that neither of them has a superior claim. They should divide the land between them and pay another registration salami, or fee. As a typical mediator he again resorts to analogy to obtain agreement for his point (69:4-10). Without referring directly to the issue at stake he says that if a man has no right to something, but he wants it, he will have to give something for what he wants; he cannot just take it. This is intended to divert the issue from the facts in dispute and draws agreement from the bulk of the villagers, who display their lack of sympathy for the squabbling of the protagonists. But Buduram, Rupa's son, fails to respond. He still claims that they were the original clearers and should not lose their rights because another man got permission to clear the same land (71:1). Three times this return to the original claim is rejected by the villagers (73, 75 and 78), who put pressure on Rupa to accept that both have equal rights to the land which cancel each other out so that the land still belongs to the ultimate owner - the government.

With this position agreed, the case takes a new turn. The claim that Rupa attempted to establish has failed. The village has successfully eliminated the fundamental cause of the dispute. The two counterclaims have been discredited, but resolution is no closer. Although there is agreement that no one has superior rights to the land, both parties have invested resources that they are not prepared to abandon, and because the fault lies with the munda, neither party is willing to forego his claim. Two courses are open. Either both parties can be forbidden to cultivate the land, in which case it must lie fallow until the issue is forgotten in the mists of time, or the plot must be divided. The meeting attempts to find a viable division of the disputed land agreeable to both parties.

Dule, being the wealthiest man in the village, immediately resorts to the tactics of power politics. He offers to pay for the plot and also for more land round the plot in order to gain ascendance over Rupa (82 and 84). Rupa appeals to the conscience of the village, arguing that they should not allow a wealthy man to dispossess a poor man of his rightful land. Rupa's son, Buduram, points out that his father was the first to clear the land with the permission of the munda and that Dule cannot over-ride this prior claim (86;3). There seems, however, to be no precedent to establish that the person with the first rights is also the person with ultimate rights. All rights, if granted at the same level, are equal and no rights, if wrongly granted, are retractable. Buduram argues that when he and his father gained permission to clear the plot Dule should have objected, claiming that he had prior rights. By not doing this Dule has abrogated his rights (86, 88 and 90).

This is seen as a very powerful point. But despite the force of this argument Rupa's claim gains little or no ground and he is not granted ownership. The two parties remain intransigent and the discussion goes round and round fruitlessly. The disputants have failed to rise above an immediate conflict of interests and propose any course that might lead to compromise. Neither, in consequence, carries any weight with the meeting which is not prepared to settle for either party. Rupa did have the initiative in that he called the meeting and offered rice beer; all feel that his main interest in the long term is to effect resolution and reconciliation. But Rupa has failed to use the meeting to this end. The only notes of concord so far have been one or two classical aphorisms that contained an indirect and implicit reference to the behaviour of the protagonists.

At this stage the meeting is being held in the field and not in the presence of the manki as a mediator and is still concerned with the collection of facts and evidence. No one present enters into the discussion while the disputants contest their claims. If the argument reaches an impasse, the officers re-channel the discussion to enable it to continue without themselves becoming involved in the

dispute. So far the only achievement has been a thorough thrashing out of the facts of the case.

After a great deal of inconclusive talk it is decided that there is little chance of making progress either towards a settlement or towards finding new ground for discussion. It is decided that all that can be done is to measure the land cleared by each party and to give to each the land he has cleared. This of course is wholly unrealistic as both parties have cleared the same land. However all agreed in principle that the dispute can be settled in this way. They then avoid actually measuring the land. In effect there is a unanimous decision to do nothing. Dule then leaves the meeting and returns to his house. It is clear from his subsequent actions that he considers the entire meeting a hollow formality that has not changed the situation. After the meeting the manki visited Dule and told him that he should not do any further work in the disputed field until the case was settled and that if he did he would be sent to the government court. However next day Dule and his sons again worked at clearing the disputed plot, and later they tried to bribe a government official to grant them the title deed.

As the meeting returns to Rupa's house an elder approaches Rupa and tries to persuade him not to pursue his immediate interests to the long-term detriment of the community, pointing out that people have to live together even though they disagree over details. To do this he tells an allegorical story (91:16-25).

On arriving back at Rupa's house they all gather round the manki. After some preliminary chatter, Sahu, as the most independent observer and also as an accredited leader, gives the manki a concise summary of the case. (92 and 94). Using Hindi to express his displeasure and give it authority, the manki implies that the protagonists do not appear to have achieved anything and that they would have to be shown how to settle the dispute (95). This demonstrates the style of authority that the Ho value in a headman. He should not wield potent coercive sanctions to compel a settlement, rather he should be able to steer a dispute onto the 'straight way', muli hora.[68] And likewise every Ho should be capable of such steerage.

All the observers then agree with Sahu that if the protagonists continue to quarrel neither of them should get the land (97:1). In this way pressure is put on Rupa to find a 'straight way' and be prepared to come to an agreement with Dule so that they can divide the land between them. But then Sahu suggests that in fact Rupa has more right on his side (98:1-7). Rupa has fulfilled the government's legal requirements and as the government is lord of all these days, perhaps Rupa should have the field.

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68. Hoffman 1950: 1803, gives for hor or hora under Section I(7) a further argument, a way out of a discussion, an answer to an objection: kajira hora kae namkeda, he found no answer to their argument. But the literal meaning he gives as a road, way, path or passage.

The manki then comments that maybe Rupa does have the law on his side, but if "Rupa and Dule are not prepared to agree on anything then I have no responsibility in the matter at all" (99:8-10). This suggests that the headman is aware of a conflict between an externally applied system of legal authority and an internal system of community sanctions. Legal authority for establishing the rights and wrongs of a case operates according to impersonal rules and if a decision was made in this case on a purely legal basis Rupa might get the land. But this would not defuse the dispute as there would still be conflict between the parties. There is no doubt that the Ho recognise the government's authority and ultimate power to apply sanctions. But they do not see that they themselves should be forced to apply sanctions necessary to support an alien legal system. The manki is both the headman of his villagers and an officer of government and he understands the conflict that both these roles create in his position. But nevertheless his dual role can be maintained if he preserves a clear sense of priority. In this case he decides that a settlement must be reached consistent with the needs of village harmony. He has said that there appears to be a solution to the problem, but that he will only take responsibility for this solution if the disputants are prepared to make peace and observe the norms of behaviour proper to members of a community. This is little more than a statement that though the government may be all-powerful, the long term interests of the community are more important and must take precedence over legal rules. The Ho may well be aware of the legal rights in a given situation, but these are of secondary importance to the long-term need to create and preserve community harmony. The function of participants at a village meeting is to maintain that priority. Throughout the discussion they maintain a neutral position in respect of the rights and wrongs of the case and steadfastly refuse to take sides despite frequent tactical appeals by the disputants (such as 85:1). But whenever a course of action is suggested that would resolve the dispute in the interests of village harmony (as at 35, 65, 69, 75:7-8, 76 and 77) all the observers clearly state their approval.

The policy adopted by Rupa and Dule of pressing their claims is little more than the continuance of a private quarrel in the public arena. Throughout there have been many attempts to deflect them from a course of action that will only aggravate the conflict. This has been done with the use of universal maxims expressed as analogies. But in the absence of strong sanctions it is difficult to force protagonists to come to a compromise. Nevertheless the observers preserve a united front. Rupa's brother did not once stand by him and although Dule's brother attempted to speak in Dule's support (21:1-4) he soon accepted the feeling of the meeting that he should keep quiet. In these situations the united force of public opinion acts as the main pressure on the parties. The position of the village and paramount headman is difficult as they necessarily become involved in some of the details of the case and are often accused, behind their backs, of showing a partisan attitude. This tends to happen when an individual goes to the headman to discuss a dispute in the privacy of his house.

In order not to arouse hostility or become involved in argument the headman usually agrees with all that is said to him. Hence the necessity of resolving cases in front of a public forum of uninvolved observers.

To return to the case. The manki has said that he cannot take any responsibility for people who do not show a spirit of compromise (99:7-10) and continues to stress that it is human beings who control their lot, irrespective of what the government or the ultimate spiritual power - Singbonga, the great lord in the sky - lays down. If humans want to quarrel no laws or unseen power can stop them. 'Only through our actions can we avoid problems.' (99:19)

Rupa's son obstinately reiterates that his father was the first to clear the land (100:1-3) and the villagers ridicule his truculence. The munda's accountant again resorts to analogy to stress the absurdity of attempting to reach a settlement with these tactics (105:1-3). The manki then explains why he sees this case as being difficult to resolve (112:1-21). He states that his authority is based on Rupa's act of convening a meeting by the ritual offering of beer, that is, it derives from the village (112:5-8). To resolve the dispute he would have to force a division of the land (112:8-9), which might not be acceptable to the parties. If they later broke the terms of the settlement the fault would not be theirs, but the fault of the community for forcing a decision. Therefore he is only prepared to divide the land with the agreement of the parties. This is a clear indigenous statement of the structure of authority. Although the government may have granted the headman authority to settle disputes, the headman derives his authority from the villagers. Later we will see that this village-based perception of authority is one of the major contrasts between the tribal system and the central state system of government.

Sukuram, the munda's accountant, then ridicules the munda as the cause of the trouble, saying, 'With you around it is not necessary to have a council of five elders, a meeting' (115:1-24). This is a direct reference to the munda's practice of giving permission for cultivation without calling a meeting before witnesses. The munda is at fault for taking authority into his own hands.

The manki then suggests that as no solution can be reached within the village (130:1-19), Rupa should take the matter outside the village arena to the government and ask for a government surveyor to apportion the land and draw up the title deeds. His point is that an outside authority will be able to impose a decision, which is beyond his powers.[69] He adds the rider, 'But if you both want to work together, then I will sign the papers that will allow you both to register the land between you" (134:1-2).

The manki emphasises that Rupa can obtain ownership of the entire field if he is prepared to call in the government land surveyor (137:1-9). This again indicates

approval of the authority of the government which possesses the necessary sanctions to impose a workable settlement, even though in the eyes of the villagers it may not be an equitable one. Sahu, the panchayat accountant, supports this proposal and offers to help Rupa with the necessary paper-work (138:1-10). All the villagers agree, saying that this would be a good way to resolve the dispute (139:1). The decision, however, is a matter of expediency. From the villagers' point of view a settlement has not been effected to the satisfaction of all parties and the harmony of the village has not been re-established.

The final decision of the meeting has now been reached. Rupa's eldest son, a taciturn man, who has kept quiet throughout the meeting, says that they should now write down this agreement and get the signatures of the witnesses (141:1-2). Rupa replies, '<u>kajirege ol:</u>', which literally means 'in words are writing', signifying that a spoken agreement is sufficient. Rupa accepts the decision made in the traditional form. He then offers the remainder of the rice beer left from the convention of the meeting.

While drinking beer they begin again to discuss how the settlement should be carried out. Sahu, the panchayat accountant, offers his expert advice (144:1-17) and Rupa is warned that he must keep within the terms of the settlement (145:1-4, 146:1-6 and 147:1-2). The <u>manki</u> then states the authority given him by the government to oversee the settlement (148:1-13) and the panchayat accountant further elaborates on the chain of authority (149:1-12).

At this point unanimous agreement has been reached after some eight hours of discussion. Rupa originally set out with the intention of gaining ownership of the disputed plot, or at least gaining the consensus of the village to apply to the government authorities for the title deeds. To this end he invited Sahu, the panchayat accountant, to the meeting as he is the local expert on these procedures. Rupa either knew that his application could not be accepted at face value by the village, or else he became aware of this during the meeting. It is contrary to the norms of the community that one individual should ride roughshod over another. The village requires that all claims should be considered and all parties satisfied in order that unanimity should be achieved. Unanimity is of practical importance in the absence of sanctions to enforce decisions, but its.' chief value derives from the concept of the community as a united group of one mind. Decisions therefore require an intimate. knowledge of village affairs and are reached only after lengthy discussion between all parties. Government decisions, in contrast, are imposed on the basis of an impersonal set of rules backed by sanctions. Government authority is associated with distance - government is far away in some unknown and vaguely perceived country referred to as <u>Dilipatna</u> - and its decisions, although recognised as legally binding, fail

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69. See Kuper 1971:14. 'Such councils (community-in-councils) do not normally dispose of sanctions aside from their built-in reliance on public opinion'.

to satisfy the moral needs of the community. In the conduct of a meeting the villagers are not concerned with finding for one party but with effecting an agreement between the parties and a disputant who fails to modify his claim in the interests of a settlement based on public support.

Rupa wants to obtain ownership of the entire plot. In the presence of Dule's counterclaim he is unlikely to carry the meeting. Therefore he resorts to filibustering, by re-iterating his claims and quarrelling with Dule. By these tactics he alienates support but prevents an equable resolution being reached that Dule would be likely to agree to. Finally, after Dule has left, the meeting decides to let Rupa apply to have the land registered in his name through an outside authority, while at the same time abrogating any responsibility for the effect of this decision on Dule. In effect they agree that they cannot resolve the dispute and are therefore prepared to allow Rupa to take it to a higher court, where he may be able to get a settlement and offer to assist him in making the application. Rupa has therefore partially achieved his purpose.

The public are dissatisfied with this outcome. The village leaders continue the discussion, saying that this is not the way to settle a dispute, and emphasising that there has not been a reconciliation. Dule has not come back to drink rice beer. Dule has voted with his feet and allowed the meeting to reach unanimity by his withdrawal. He recognised that he would not carry his claim and withdrew to disassociate himself from the subsequent discussion. As a result. the meeting has come to an end but the dispute continues.

Sahu, the panchayat accountant, then justifies the action of the meeting in allowing the case to be handed up to a higher authority, He outlines the authority structure (149:1-12) and stresses that if people cannot resolve disputes at the local level, then the outside authority of the government will force the villagers to behave properly.

The discussion now digresses into an exegesis of the authority structure. The manki agrees with Sahu (150:1). He outlines the nature of the village political field (150:7-11), emphasising the difference between the traditional form of village government by word of mouth and the present day position by saying, "Nowadays it cannot be done like that". The villagers have a natural preference for the traditional system - an ideal system of independent authority, and he mentions that even today the government respects the independence and self-sufficiency of the village. He emphasises that they should try to preserve the viability of village government by resolving matters within the village and maintaining their independence. He infers that this is the way that the government would like the system to operate, that is, for the villages to manage their own affairs, so they will be acting as the outsiders wish (150:12-16).

He shows here an understanding of the system of indirect rule created in the Kolhan by the British, that is based on the separation of the local level from

centralised government processes in contradiction to the new and more integrated system introduced since independence.

Sahu then comments that today people do not seek resolution of disputes within the village. His inference is that disputants press their interests and will not bow to the pressure of public opinion for a normative resolution. This reflects the general feeling that there is a reluctance to accept the diffuse authority of the village in the presence of a new and more powerful system of government. He seems to be expressing some tacitly held feeling that the villagers are becoming self-interested and that if the village ceases to work properly the whole position of village headmen and paramount headmen and the viability of the village level government will be jeopardised.

The villagers all agree with this argument (153:1) which prompts the manki to tell a story (154:1-13). The manki explained afterwards that what he meant was that the people of his village, by not settling their disputes in front of himself and the village meeting, were undermining his authority (and their own system of government) and that they themselves would be the ones to lose in the end. But the way he puts it in relation to a recent event makes the point more cogently.

A villager then quotes a well-known Ho aphorism; When children sulk they have lost the battle (155•1). He is here trying to sow the seeds of agreement among the villagers by pointing out that if they continue like this, sulking will be all that is left to them.

At this point the meeting has come to a unanimous agreement that village government should not be undermined. This leaves the meeting with a feeling of dissatisfaction. The previous decision does undermine village government. Everyone then talks among themselves, making any translation impossible, that the village is consumed with conflicts and disputes. They blame it largely on the women. Women leave their natal village at marriage and are therefore seen to have mixed loyalties at variance with the unity of the community. They again blame the munda for being the cause of this dispute. This brings them back to the details of the case. Here again the manki resorts to an analogy to show that as Rupa had cleared the land first and got permission first he should be allowed to keep it (159;1-10). As this comes after the decision that Rupa should have the disputed field it can only be seen as a confirmation.

The final stage of the meeting has now been reached in which agreement over the decision is consolidated. There is a move to give weight and strength to the decision that they have made. This is done by reference to analogies which, with their ability to evoke unanimity, add weight to the consensus.

Sahu and a villager (163 and 164) persuade Rupa that the decision has been in his favour and urge him to utilise his opportunity and have the land registered

with the government. At the same time they reprove him for not settling the matter inside the village and point out that to go to the government will be expensive. Rupa agrees with this (165). When Rupa complains that he will have to pay twice for a field that he considers is already his, Sukuram refers to the old analogy that if you want warm clothes you will have to pay for them (171;1).

The manki and Sahu then make the point that Rupa has not helped them resolve this case. He has been stupid and fought with Dule. He has not told the village exactly what land he cleared, rather he has blamed Dule for removing his boundary markers and said they should ask Dule. Because of this obstructive arguing nobody knows the exact dimensions of Rupa's field, and they cannot give him the permission papers for a precisely defined piece of land. Sahu adds that if Rupa will not co-operate with the norms of a village meeting he cannot expect to be helped, instead he should have strong sanctions applied against him if he fails to do what he is told. A villager takes up this point with a well-worn Ho aphorism that commands universal agreement. It implies that if a man takes away life he is responsible for that life (175:1-5). The reference is to Rupa's actions over the meeting: having given life to the meeting, Rupa has now killed the meeting. Rupa created a dispute over the field and now he is being destructive in failing to resolve that dispute. Another villager expands on the theme (178:1-4). As explained in the transcription his aphorism acts as a reminder that the village is ultimately responsible for all the affairs of the village. Although they have decided that Rupa should be given permission to register the plot with government they are not going to write a permission paper for Rupa that outlines the boundaries of his plot. Their reason for this is that Rupa has not co-operated with them and given clear evidence as to the land he is claiming. This is an amendment of their first decision. While giving Rupa permission in principle, in fact they are not going to give Rupa the piece of paper that will enable him to register that land. The government surveyor will require from Rupa a note signed by the village headman, five witnesses and the owners of the plots to the north and south without which he will find it very difficult to have the land registered in his name. He will probably have to resort to bribery, but this he cannot afford. A villager seals the decision with another aphorism (180:1-2) to the effect that although Rupa has obtained a decision in his favour - or had the snake bite cured - he cannot be absolved from the consequences of his quarrelsome behaviour which prevented a reconciliation between himself and Dule.

Gura, the elder son of Rupa, resorts to another aphorism to contradict the last (181:1-3). He is defending his father by saying that their claim had to be settled before the matter could finally be resolved. At best this is only an apology for his father's tactics. He then takes the analogy one stage further, saying, 'If a snake goes into a hole in the ground, it is necessary to block up the hole' (181;10-11). Here the action of the snake bite

is analogous to the dispute. The saying of the snake chant, bing mantra, and the curing of the effect of snake bite is analogous to the village meeting. Before the effects of the snake bite, that is the dispute, can be finally settled it is necessary to kill the snake. In other words, the meeting must be concluded. By this statement the son of the claimant indicates that the village has come to a satisfactory decision. And the meeting finally ends.

Chapter Seven. Decision, Analogy and Consensus.

Introduction.

In this thesis I have discussed two main topics, the structure of Ho politics and the procedures in Ho village meetings. It can be shown that the two are functionally related, i.e. that the manner in which village meetings arrive at their decisions is, a function of the political structure of the community. The argument so far can be summarised as follows. Ho social structure is basically egalitarian and lacks vertical cleavages based on lineage segments or political factions. Conflicts of interest initially arise between two or more independent households. At this stage other households are careful not to become involved in the dispute. When one of the parties refers the matter to a village meeting by the ritual offering of beer, the other members of the village participate in the process of settlement but continue to maintain a non-partisan attitude. The meeting of the total community has the task of resolving the dispute. In some cases it is only necessary to point out to one of the parties that he has misused his own rights or appropriated the rights of another. But most disputes that reach the village meeting involve more complex issues, as in the case between Rupa Murmu' and Dule Hasda. Here the village headman had given both parties conflicting rights. The village meeting lacks sanctions to enforce its decisions, which, in consequence, can only be implemented if it succeeds in achieving a consensus. In what follows an attempt is made to relate decisions by consensus to the structure of the community and to analyse the procedures in the meeting by which consensus is achieved.

Council Structure.

In his paper 'Decisions by Consensus in Councils and Committees' Bailey is concerned as to 'why some councils or committees incline towards making their decisions by the method of consensus, while others use majority voting' (Bailey 1965:2). He begins by dispelling 'the mystique of consensus'.

> 'Certain ideas,' he says, 'about human nature and about man in society, derived probably from Rousseau, have reappeared in contemporary Indian politics, and are used explicitly to justify the official encouragement of decisions by the method of consensus. In this section I shall show that we do not have to decide the truth or falsity of these ideas before discussing the structural concomitants of consensus procedure.' (Ibid.: 2-3)

To illustrate this point Bailey gives a long quote from Jayaprakash Narayan that is an appeal for an organic society in which individuals are not atomised and in which decisions are reached by consensus. Bailey sums up Narayan's argument as saying:

> 'Communities are organisms, the parts of which are naturally adjusted to work in harmony with one another. Without the disruptive influence of parliaments and political parties and majority votes, and without the cult of the individual, communities work harmoniously. Everyone participates in decision-making and decisions are reached, inevitably by consensus. Conflict is not inevitable and a part of human nature: it is a product of wrong institutions.'

Bailey rejects this argument on two grounds: firstly, that there is no historical evidence that society has ever been able to operate in such a utopian fashion; and secondly, that Narayan's statement is motivated by a dislike of western democratic processes and a wish to make an ideological appeal for unity in a divided Congress party.

> 'The longing for consensus (by people like Narayan) is "a most understandable reaction to an awareness of how divided and heterogeneous a society modern India really is" (Morris-Jones 1960, p. 1031).' (Ibid.: 4)

Bailey continues as follows:

> 'To say that a council strives for consensus because its members value consensus is evidently a circular argument. But it may well happen that after a thorough exploration of the rights and duties which council members have outside the chamber, and of the interests which they are serving, covertly or openly, we may still be unable to account for their behaviour except by saying that they feel it right – they are under a moral imperative - to behave in this way. At this point we have reached the terminus of structural explanation.' (Ibid.: 5)

Although this analysis of council procedures among the Ho owes much to Bailey's structural approach, I am not prepared, like him, to 'file away' the value placed on consensus as a circular argument of last resort.

The Ho attach a strong positive value to village harmony: when a dispute occurs they say 'the air is being made foul which offends the village guardian spirit'. The complex ritual of offering rice beer to convene a village meeting can be shown as a symbolic statement designed to remind the participants of their dependence on the community and their obligation to co-operate with one another in order to maintain the peace of the village.

The mistake that Narayan has made is to overstate and oversimplify the relationship between the consensual nature of society and the consensual nature of the decision-making process. Consensus is more than simple agreement. It is rather an agreement to agree, the parties in a dispute consenting to a settlement of their conflicting interests in order to preserve the harmony of the village. Agreement, or consensus, must therefore be understood by the analyst as existing at two different levels. Firstly, consensus in the sense of sharing common values is the basis of the cultural unity of the community. Secondly, there is consensus that must be achieved over specific issues in the meeting. These two may be related, but one does not ensure the other.

How do three or four hours of exhaustive discussion lead to the resolution of diverse interests so that a decision is reached in which all are agreed? Bailey provides some interesting insights into procedural techniques in meetings which are relevant to the Ho. Firstly, he states:

> 'that a decision by consensus cannot be reached in a council where active members number more than fifteen'. (Ibid.:2)

This holds true for Ho councils where the active members seldom number more than six - the two disputants, the paramount and village headman, the village accountant and possibly an outside expert such as the panchayat accountant. Secondly, Bailey identifies certain symbolic actions for damping down disputes and cites as an example the custom in the House of Commons for members to refer to an opponent as 'honourable'. A similar etiquette occurs among the Ho: Dule refers to the village headman as _bau honyar_, his wife's elder brother (a term of great respect) (42:3), and various other people refer to their opponents in a similar vein as _mamu_, their mother's brother.

Bailey stresses that:

> 'avoidance of open dispute does not necessarily mean a readiness to compromise and to seek unanimity; nor does plain speaking, even abuse, automatically and always indicate intransigence.'

In spite of this, techniques designed to circumvent the more violent expressions of disagreement have an instrumental value in preventing the polarisation of the parties and facilitating unanimous decisions.

In relation to decisions by consensus, as opposed to majority voting, Bailey takes account of three variables: firstly, the council's task; secondly, the council's relationship to its public; and lastly, its relationship to the external environment. On this basis he proposes the following scheme:

A	B
Councils lean toward consensus when they have one of the following characteristics:	Councils proceed readily to majority voting when they are
1. an administrative function, especially when they lack sanctions, _or_	1. policy making, _or_
2. an elite position in opposition to their public, _or_	2. arena councils, _or_
3. concern with external relationships.	3. concerned with internal relationships.

In respect of Bailey's first point it is clear that Ho village meetings fulfil an administrative function and lack coercive sanctions. Although they are mainly concerned with internal relationships, to the degree that the munda-manki system is threatened by the statutory panchayats they feel themselves under pressure to settle their own affairs and close ranks against outside governmental interference: this also promotes consensus.

To this extent the Ho material supports Bailey's scheme. A difficulty arises with the second variable - the council's relationship to its public.

Bailey says that:

> 'Elite councils are those which are, or consider themselves to be (whether they admit it openly or not), a ruling oligarchy. The dominant cleavage in such a group is between the elite council (including, where appropriate, the minority from which it is recruited) and the public: that is to say, the dominant cleavage is horizontal. The opposite kind of council is the arena council. These exist in groups in which the dominant cleavages are vertical. The council is not so much a corporate body with interests against its public, but an arena in which the representatives of segments in the public come into conflict with one another.' (Ibid.: 10)

The Ho do not fit into either of the two categories. Analysis has shown that they lack both horizontal and vertical cleavages. The Ho village is rather a community of equally disposed units each independent of the other but all inter-connected as members of a total community. In my discussion of arenas for dispute settlement I described political action as taking place either in the minimal arena of two independent households or in the total community with the movement from one arena to another being achieved by the ritualised convention of a village meeting. Undoubtedly such a meeting is an arena council but one that is different from Bailey's conception. It is therefore necessary to add to Bailey's typology and divide his arena council into two sub-types - arena councils with and without vertical cleavages. Here I agree with Kuper who says,

> 'It is probably worthwhile to distinguish between two forms of the arena council. First there is the community-in-council, or assembly, described in several papers in this volume. As Bloch defines the paradigmatic case of the Merina fokon'olona: "The fokon'olona council is the fokon'olona (i.e. the community) doing something." (parenthesis added)' (Kuper 1971:14)

I would only add to this that the term of community-in-council is not altogether explicit. The significant point about such councils is that they contain no internal cleavages - the community itself is here a total arena with no subdivisions. I shall therefore refer to this type of council as a total arena council.

> 'Councils of this type are associated with strong community life. All full members of the political community have the right to attend and participate in meetings, although the actual turnout may fluctuate widely, depending on the issue under discussion. Such councils have a wide sphere of competence - the total field of public, or community

> activity. However, they do not normally dispose of sanctions aside from their built-in reliance on public opinion.' (Ibid.: 14)

Total Arena Councils and Consensus

Let us then consider the functional relationship between total arena councils and decisions reached by consensus.

The village meeting is the village, or as Bloch puts it, the council meeting is the community 'doing something' (Bloch 1971: 45). The community, and therefore the council, consists of individual household units each independent of the other. The village headman and the paramount headman do not possess powers of arbitration and their role is that of a mediator expected to give expression to the feeling of the meeting. In the absence of coercive sanctions decisions can only be implemented if reached by consensus. The point has been made by Bailey (Bailey 1965). The village meeting, however, represents something more than the individual units of which it is composed. It is ritually convened for a particular purpose, the settlement of disputes, and it comes together as a group intending to effect settlement in order to maintain village harmony. The village meeting is the collective aspect of the village and, as such, is animated by the will to agree. The relationship between individual households may often be back-to-back rather than face-to-face (c.f. Bailey 1965: 5-8), but as members of a total community these households consider themselves under a moral imperative to reach a unanimous decision in village meetings. Consensus is a function not only of the absence of coercive sanctions but of the positive value attached to the unity of the village. This is expressed at the meeting through the united force of public opinion which exerts pressure on the disputants to settle their differences and come to terms with one another.

Procedural Techniques

In the course of discussion the village meeting continually explores avenues to arrive at consensus and employs a number of procedural techniques to this end. Procedural techniques have been discussed by other anthropologists interested in decision-making, in particular by Bohannan in his book 'Justice and Judgement among the Tiv' (Bohannan 1957), but few have been interested in their role in reaching consensus. Bailey has noted the importance of symbolic actions for 'damping down' conflict (c.f. page 266 above), but he does not treat these in detail. Although consensus is typical of panchayat decisions throughout India, we know little of the methods by which it is achieved.

Village meetings among the Ho are characterised by a particular kind of discussion which I shall call the oratorical style. As Bloch says:

> 'If political language and procedure are of little importance politically, it would be surprising to see how strongly they are

> valued and insisted upon by the participants in many societies. The one thing which stands out at first sight from all the studies in this book is the stress and value put on language and political procedure by the various people studied themselves. If there were not something of importance there, this repeated and quite dramatic emphasis would be totally inexplicable.' (Bloch 1975: 4-5)

Bloch and also Parkin (Parkin 1975) discuss the cultural factors in the political process of persuasion, be it in political speeches or decision-making councils, and suggest that oratorical style and rhetoric are significant in the game of politics. Parkin takes the view that oratorical style and rhetoric are symbolic representations of politico-economic conditions and traces a movement from plan to ideology in public speaking. The distinction is similar to the one that I am making between the use of plainspeech and the use of analogy,[70] but Parkin looks at speech style as a symbolic and ritual act, whereas I am chiefly interested in it as a mode of political manipulation within a structural context.[71] Procedural techniques like rhetoric and polemical style are indirectly conditioned by social structure in that a total arena council is limited by the nature of the community in its choice of tactical procedures designed to achieve consensus.

Oratorical Style

To achieve consensus in village meetings it is necessary to bring the interests of the conflicting parties into alignment with each other. The parties to disputes usually press their case in everyday language, here called

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70. Parkin's scheme of a movement from plan to ideology is one that he develops from Bailey (Bailey 1969). 'There is Bailey's threefold distinction, though presumably ranged on a continuum, between ideology, programme, and plan. I find the two ends of this continuum, ideology and plan, useful and, though I shall be doing some reinterpretation and adding, will use it as a way of distinguishing the changing communication relationships between bureaucrats and people in a trading and farming area in coastal Kenya' (Parkin 1975: 115). This paper of Bailey's is again a seminal one in which Parkin rightly says that Bailey 'here falls more into the domain of the ethnolinguists and thought structuralists in confining his analysis to the rules of internal structures rather than the more general relationship between these and a range of external factors' (ibid.: 115), which he has done in his earlier publication, Decisions by Consensus in Councils and Committees (Bailey 1965).

71. Parkin 1975: 138. 'Modes of public speaking (indeed modes of "private" speaking also) clearly have this symbolic message-emitting dimension operating below the surface, so to speak, of the consciously intended statement, as I have tried to illustrate in my examples. My analysis of the movement from plan to ideology, or from what I have ethnocentrically called plainspeaking and rhetoric, represents a case of messages operating on two of three temporal levels. First the underlying message ... later, further along the continuum (from plan to ideology), the quasi-plan admitted the existence of internal politico-economic divisions ... the final move to ideology . made the important conceptual switch of talking about the problems of economic development, not in terms of "rational" economic criteria but in terms of the inhibiting "evil" effects of sorcery.'

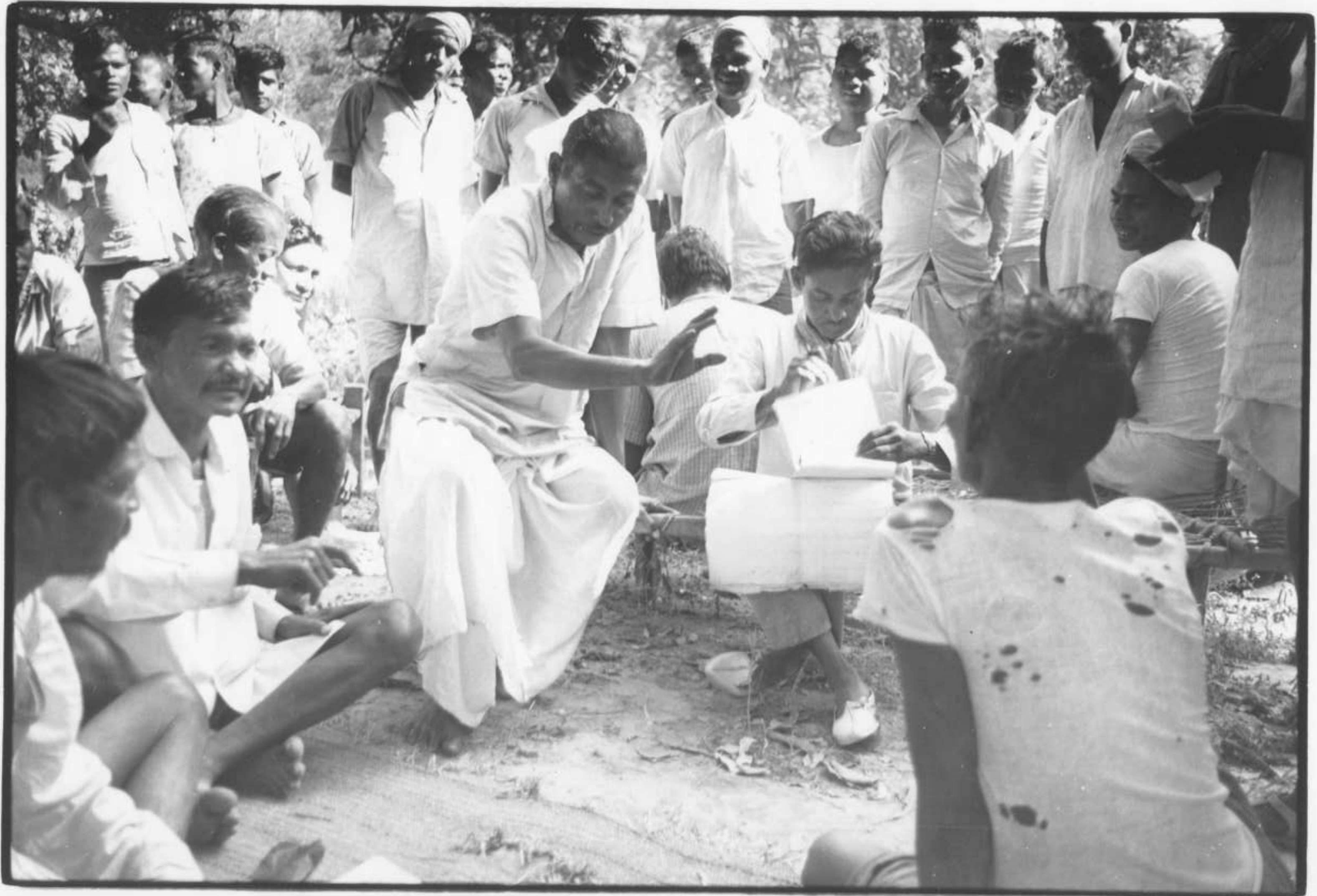
plainspeaking (following Bailey and Parkin). Utterances which voice the united sentiment of the meeting, pressing for conciliation and agreement, tend to be expressed indirectly through analogies. In the meeting analysed in chapter six there are five points at which the non-aligned observers expressed their open satisfaction with what had been said (36:1, 65:17, 78:1 and 177:1). Four of these five were in response to analogies. Only 78:1 is not a response to an analogy, but a reaction to an attempted mediation when the munda's accountant suggests that neither party should get the land. While only one instance of plainspeaking drew overt reactions of approval, four uses of analogy created favourable reactions. The other thirteen instances of analogy (3:1, 5:1, 5:9-10, 35:1-3,105:1-3,106:1-3, 115 1, 155:1, 163:1-8, 178:1-4, 108:1-2, 181:1-3.and 181:10-11) were also received with approval, although this is more difficult to prove on the transcribed evidence. Although some plainly spoken statements commanded the approval of the meeting, their number was less.

All analogies are indirect references to events and their very indirectness requires a generalised mode of delivery. Whereas in plainspeaking the majority of utterances are directed to a particular person, analogies are usually enunciated as universal truths and immediately recognised by the audience as outstanding utterances. They are appeals to commonsense and, as such, command agreement and respect. An apposite analogy made by an influential person is received with a chorus of assent which makes the disputants aware that the force of public opinion is opposed to their intransigent tactics. Analogy operates to create agreement among the observers in front of the disputants, thus making the disputants feel rejected.

The following details from the case study illustrate this point. Dule storms off the field of combat well aware that Rupa has made certain tactical errors. Rupa has called the meeting for the purpose of registering land, but he has refused to show co-operation in settling the disputed claim with Dule. Dule is probably aware that his presence has put Rupa in the difficult position of rejecting the advice of the meeting which he himself was responsible for convening. Rupa has been manoeuvred into an isolated position.

After Dule's departure and back at Rupa's house the meeting has the task of lessening the tension between Rupa and Dule. Rupa must be moved into a conciliatory position. He must be persuaded, if not bargained with, to look beyond his immediate interests and see that peace and reconciliation are essential. The manki says, 'We have got to show them both the straight way' (95:2-3). Sukuram immediately uses an analogy to throw ridicule on the mess that Rupa and Dule have created. He says that they have both buried the case in a jungle of claims and counter-claims (105:1-3).

PLATE 7:1. ANALOGY AT WORK; the paramount headman addresses an intransigent disputant.



The manki and the panchayat accountant then try to impress upon Rupa the mistakes he has made. The manki tells a story about himself which he feels is analogous to Rupa's situation. The point of the story (154:1-13) is that if someone has set a trap in the path, it is no use worrying about it, in the end it is likely to cause more trouble to the person who laid the trap than to the person who falls into it. The inference is that Rupa has caused them all a lot of trouble and that in doing so he is making trouble for himself: it would be better if Rupa agreed with the meeting and then his worries would be over. Here pressure is being put on Rupa to stop arguing and understand his position vis-à-vis the community. Another villager sees that Rupa resents this suggestion and likens him to a sulking child (155:1). He jokingly refers to what happens if men go round like children sulking: nobody takes any notice of that kind of behaviour.

The manki and the panchayat accountant then use another analogy (159:1-10 and 160:1-2) to impress on Rupa that he can have whatever is his, but that he must not be impatient. Sahu immediately uses another analogy (163:1-8) to suggest that if Rupa is not prepared to accept the decision of the village meeting, nobody will be allowed to cultivate the field and Rupa will be forced to go to a higher court (here referred to as the 'government bungalow', or the bungalow at which the Kolhan Superintendent holds his camp courts). He is told that to do this he will have to go begging to the government officers, offering them gratuities.[72] A villager takes up this point and parodies Rupa offering a chicken and some eggs to the government official as if he were offering them to the spirits (164:8-10). In other words, if Rupa refuses to accept the help of the community he will have to treat the diku outsider as if he were equal to his ancestors.

This analogy ridicules Rupa as an outsider rejecting the communal values of the village. It does not directly say that Rupa is an outsider, but this is the implication of the analogy. Rupa finally bows to the feeling of the meeting by making a reference to the symbol of village unity. 'You, the people of the village, are doing this work for me and are being paid nothing. It is better like that. I know that you did not come here just expecting to be fed. I invited you and you have come. So we have all drunk a little beer together' (165:1-5). The message behind this has already been made clear (c.f. p. 194-199 above).

A villager then responds to this point by a statement which made me aware of the distinction that the Ho make between the domestic domain or minimal arena and the public domain or total community arena. 'Yes, but perhaps you are expecting too much from us in return. That is worrying me. You must look after your own

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72. This is a popular fiction often used as a sanction against taking a dispute out of the village to the statutory court. The fiction being that any such case will require bribing officials and at least kowtowing to them as a lowly tribal to a diku.

affairs' (166:1-3). Here a distinction is made between the community's business and the business of the independent household head. The observers feel they should only be concerned with the demarcation and registration of the land and that Rupa's tactics of reducing the discussion to the level of claim and counterclaim is not the affair of the community. The meeting disassociates itself from Rupa's attempt to persuade the village to settle all the land on himself, not so that he can reach a peaceable settlement with Dule, but so that he can triumph over him.

Subsequent analogies (175:1, 178:1-4, 180:1-2, 181:1-3 and 181:10-11) all perform a similar function of conveying public opinion to the parties in a form that cannot be directly countered because no direct statement has been made.

Analogy and Consensus.

While listening to meetings it eventually becomes clear that the endless round of discussion is orchestrated. There is little obvious formality and the conventions emerge gradually. The seating arrangements do develop a fixed pattern (see diagram 7:1). The manki always takes the seat of honour on a string cot, the munda probably sits beside him, sometimes on the ground and sometimes on the cot. In front of the manki and at the centre of the group is the convenor and also the defendant, [73] if there is one. Grouped around this core are the rest of the villagers. The older men are usually seated while the younger men stand at the back. The seated men include the munda's accountant and, on the occasion of Rupa's meeting, Sahu, the panchayat accountant.

The discussion is directed towards the centre of the group. The central position of the manki places him in the role of mediator, while the munda's accountant and the panchayat accountant back him up from the wings. The three figures of the manki, the munda's accountant and the panchayat accountant were the leaders of the discussion at this particular meeting. These three people punctuated the discussion with analogies, which had the effect of halting the discussion and restarting it. Whereas plainspeaking flows from point to point, taking a clear polemic direction, analogy provides a potential check and redirection of the argument. The 'as if' quality of analogy destroys the linear flow of plain statements and opens up a number of lines that can be taken up. This ability of breaking the flow is very useful in the hands of a skilled orator, who can halt the development of the dispute when it has reached an impasse.

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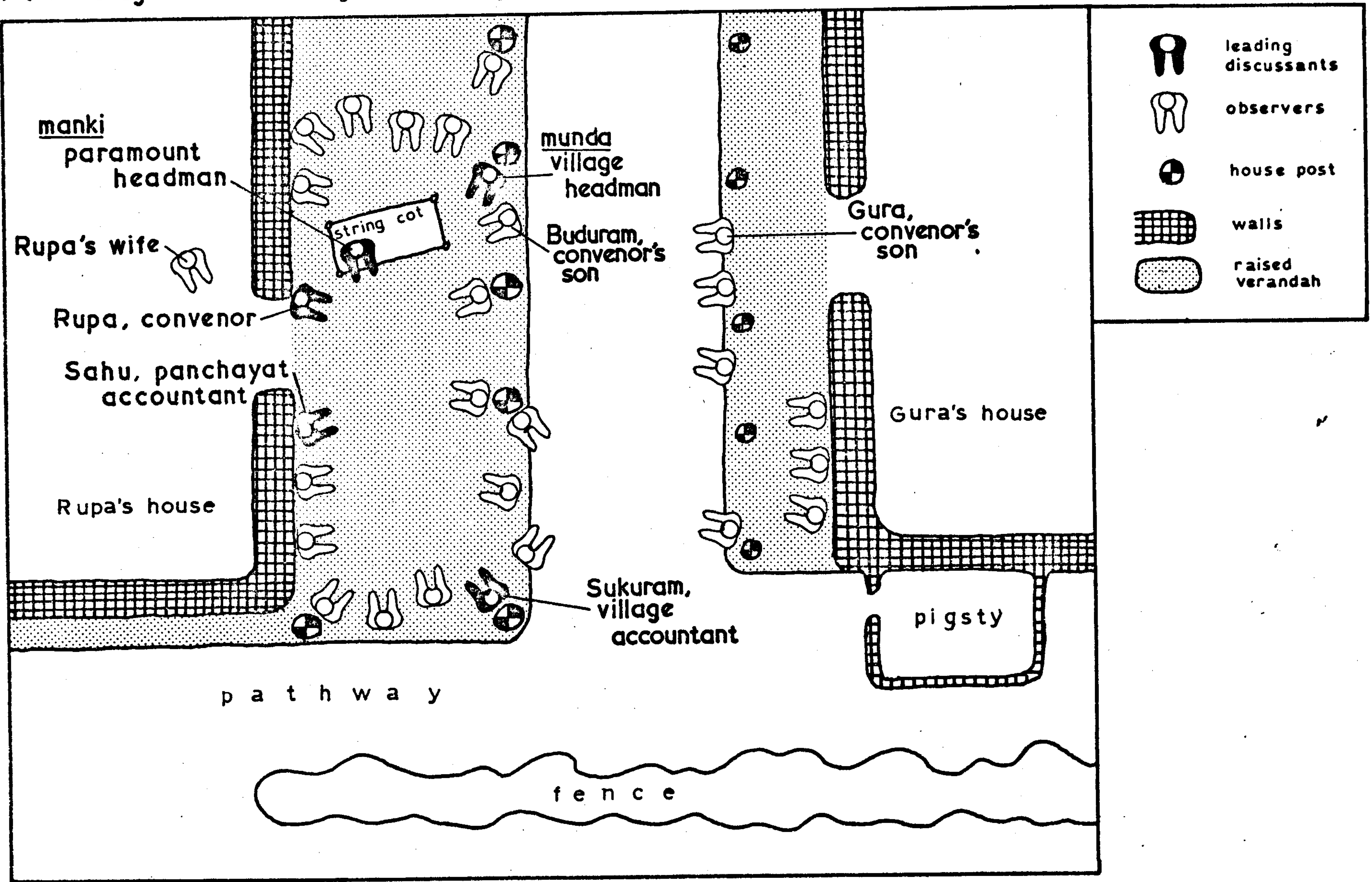
73. The defendant may sit in any tactically significant position in the meeting place, related to his willingness to accept his position as defendant. Many defendants sat right on the edge of the group, only grudgingly coming into the centre when the manki or munda demanded it.

7 : 1 Diagram of Seating at Meeting Between Rupa Murmu and Dule Hasda.



But what is the mechanism in analogy - that 'as if' quality - that enables it to perform this function?

Koestler gives us a useful definition of analogy:

> 'Analogy, in logic, means a process of "reasoning from parallel causes"; in common parlance it means that two situations or events are similar in some respects, but not in all respects. The rub is in the words "parallel" and "similar". The latter, in particular, has bedevilled psychology ever since the term "association by similarity" was invented (by Bain, I believe) as an explanation of how the mind works.' (Koestler 1970: 201)

Koestler is concerned with the 'bisociational' quality of analogy that enables the human mind to juxtapose seemingly diverse elements and thereby make creative discoveries. It may well be that the Ho make discoveries about their world by analogically relating elements in their experience but this is not the use to which analogy is put in council discussions. The Ho use of analogy seems to be based on what Lyons terms 'semantic slippage' (Lyons 1968: 122). Two sets of idioms are juxtaposed in a metaphorical relationship and seeming dissimilarities are brought together. This metaphorical relationship allows semantic slippage to occur. In the sense that analogy involves relationship by metaphor the analogue is a language about a language; what Barthes calls a 'meta-language' (Barthes 1972: 115). When the paramount headman resorts to the technique of analogy he is discussing the subject at issue but not in the terms of the disputants. His intention is to take a similar - or seemingly similar - set of idioms to refer to the arguments which have become tactically moribund and to transform the discussion to a new level. Thereby he opens up new lines of argument and enables the disputants to adopt a change of tactics without loss of face. In a sense the paramount headman is trying to change the 'key' of the discussion.

> 'In music we are familiar with the idea of a melody being transposed into a different key so that it can be played by a different instrument, but this is simply a special case of a very general process by which syntagmatic chains of signs linked by metonymy can be shifted by paradigmatic transposition (metaphor) into a different manifest form.' (Leach 1976: 15).

Using this terminology the Ho use of analogy in council meetings is a metaphoric transformation that breaks up the syntagmatic chain of plainspeaking into paradigmatic associations that allow the syntagmatic chain to be re-established in an altered state.[74]

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[74]. In his essay <u>Culture and Communication</u> (Leach 1976) Leach distinguishes between a sign an a 'symbol, 'both being aspects of a 'signum'. He says, '(1) a <u>signum</u> is a <u>sign</u> when there is an intrinsic prior relationship between A and B because they belong to the same cultural context' (ibid.: 14). And '(2) Correspondingly: a <u>signum</u> is a <u>symbol</u> when A stands for B and

The way that analogy is used by the Ho is not only interesting for its instrumental qualities but also for the expressive way that it transmits messages. Many analogies are straightforward attempts to 'change the key of the meeting', but a number of them perform the added rhetorical function of referring to some aphorismic convention. An example is provided by the statement, 'If men who stick their backsides in the air come' (155:1). All the villagers concurred with this observation which they recognised as a classical Ho aphorism meaning that when a man sulks he has lost the argument, just as when children are angry they walk away with their heads bowed and therefore their backsides in the air. This aphorism was particularly apposite at that moment and united the observers in disapproval of the sulking attitude of the disputant.

Aphorismic analogies can be used as a form of ridicule which manoeuvres the disputants into an isolated position and high-lights their self-interested stance in defiance of the moral imperatives of community life.

Social Perceptions of the External Environment

Analogical thinking is an integral part of the transformational grammar that contributes to the dynamic element in Ho local level politics. Semantic slippage allows for covert and unseen conflicts to be glossed over. One of these conflicts is between the village level political system and the government administration.

Throughout the transcript of the case of Rupa Murmu versus Dule Hasda we hear that the laws and regulations of the central government are understood and tolerated and that the villagers have adjusted to them. But the reverse is not true: the agents of government neither understand nor are adjusted to the

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there is no intrinsic prior relationship between A and B, that is to say A and B belong to different cultural contexts' (ibid.: 14). 'Sign relationships are contiguous and thus mainly metonymic while symbol relationships are arbitrary assertions of similarity and therefore mainly metaphoric'. This Leach says, 'needs further elaboration. Almost everyone who has made a careful study of the processes of human communication is agreed that a distinction of this sort is analytically important, but again there are wide differences of terminology. The usage metaphor/metonymy is due to Jakobson (1965). Levi-Strauss (1966), in the tradition of de Saussure, describes almost the same distinction by the terms paradigmatic/syntagmatic. We meet much the same contrast in music when harmony, in which different instruments make simultaneous noises which are heard in combination, is distinguished from melody in which one note follows another to form a tune. In music we are familiar with the idea of a melody being transposed into a different key so that it can be played by a different instrument, but this is simply a special case of a very general process by which syntagmatic chains of signs linked by metonymy can be shifted by paradigmatic transposition (metaphor) into a different manifest form.' (Ibid.: 15)

traditional village system. Block Development officers and those concerned with establishing panchayati raj in India are concerned with the lack of success of panchayati raj and development projects in the area. To them there is either a lack of mobilisation by the people or else an intransigent cultural division between the tribal and the administrator. The local District Development Officer in Singbhum has written in a report on the special Tribal Development Blocks set up in 1957: 'The personnel attached to the above (Tribal Development) blocks take little care to study their language, culture, habits, likes and dislikes.' The frustration arising from the cultural divide leads him to propose that 'Tribal should be approached with the mind of Tribal ... A little understanding, a genuine respect, and a lot of affection.' (Minz 1966:5)

The paramount headman of Dubil saw the cultural divide in a very different light. He gave the following description of the situation. When his father was still the paramount headman a villager died of a snakebite, but the father, being too old, sent his son to report the matter to the local police. The policeman asked the son by what authority he 'could pick up the pen of his father'. The son replied that the policeman was 'only a servant of government, sarkar', implying that he could be transferred to a new posting at any time, but that he, Bamiya, was the son of his father. He lived in this country and therefore had greater authority than even the policeman or the Kolhan Superintendent. He told the policeman that there had been paramount headmen before there had ever been a Kolhan Superintendent and that because paramount headmen are of the people and are not employed by the people, there will always be paramount headmen as long as there are people. The people, he said, will stay while many governments will come and go. He gave as examples the British, the rajas, the Congress and the Lal Ganda.[75] These governments of the dikus may appoint new panchayat officials but, he said, 'without the mankis and mundas, the mukhiyas (panchayat chairmen) could not peel the fruit. We have been here since the beginning'. He went on to say that the mundas and mankis are essential as they help the government officials and that indeed the government officials help the indigenous headmen.

But perhaps most interesting was that he realised that the Munda-Manki system was purely local. He said that in different districts people have different marriage customs or that they cannot combine or associate,[76] and the diku outsiders are in charge of all these areas. His view was that systems of government are ephemeral and may come and go, but as long as the people remain

[75]. Lal Ganda is the red flag of the Communist party. Bamiya's belief that the Communists took over from the Congress party is the result of an interesting political development in the area. I was never able to discover the actual truth behind the local rumours that surround the given chain of events. It appears that when the Naxalite movement was breaking up in 1972 many of them took refuge in the forested area in the valley of the Koina River in which Dubil lies. They appear to have lived there for some months declaring a new raj, before they were arrested and the police cleared them out of the area.

they will always govern themselves and be capable of living together. In this way he defined the Munda-Manki system as more than political in the narrow sense: it was traditional and therefore permanent. As long as people wanted it, it would remain powerful.

Despite the apparent contradictions in this perception of the political environment, it provides a remarkable modus operandi for the situation of encapsulation. There is a separation between permanent or traditional and temporary or modern. Both structures are seen as having authority, though that of the external government is considered more active. The external power must be reckoned with and co-operated with if village government is to survive.

Within this indigenous perception the paramount headman was capable of chiding his villagers:

> 'All the work (of government) is being done by the (statutory) panchayats. Power is not coming to the munda-manki line, because they are not giving reports to the - government. We do not work. We are not making reports and applications to the Kolhan Superintendent, therefore there is no power in our words. We must send at least three reports a year to the Kolhan Superintendent.'

And again in the Rupa Murmu versus Dule Hasda case the paramount headman says:

> 'This quarrel is over wasteland and wasteland belongs to the government. If you go round making a confusion of such matters then the government will put the village and paramount headmen in prison for not being able to sort out such problems' (24:5-9)

The paramount headman recognises that if the system of tribal headmen is to preserve even a dependent existence it must do so as an encapsulated and dominated structure co-operating with the external power. If the encapsulated structure is incapable of carrying out the work expected of it by the central government then it will lose the authority delegated to it as part of the Kolhan system and that authority will be given solely to the statutory panchayats. The paramount headman is conscious of pressure on the village councils to settle the affairs of the village. To this extent Bailey's third structural variable that councils concerned with external relationships will incline towards consensus is confirmed.

Although the villagers have found their own ways of accommodating to the government, the personnel of government has failed to understand the process of local level politics. The traditional village system is culturally specific. It operated well under the system of indirect rule when villages were expected to

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76. The word used here is juri which is most directly translated as friend or companion, though I have here translated it as combine or associate.

manage their own affairs with minimal interference. But the intentions of the new national government is to create a unified pan-Indian system to mobilise the population towards goals of national improvement and economic development. The ideology of the statutory panchayat system is that the village councils function as an institution of village government, like a parliament that enacts legislation to be implemented in the community. But the village meeting does not rule the village; it is only the village in action. Government is not institutionalised, it is diffused throughout the community, and there are no procedures for initiating legislation as envisaged by the central authorities. The village meeting is capable of carrying out certain minimal administrative functions such as the collection of rent under the initiative of an external authority, but it is not adapted to satisfy the aspirations of modern political systems.

Conclusion

The analysis of Ho political structure and the case study of one village meeting have shown that small scale tribal communities do not organise themselves in a manner that is consistent with the aims of modern government. The people are aware of these differences and attempt to overcome them. I have shown that, given the structure of the community, there is an absence of formal institutions of government. The analysis of procedures in the settlement of, disputes indicates a separation of political activity as between individual household units and the community as a whole. Each household is independent of other households but all are dependent on the total community. The two arenas of political activity, the private minimal arena and the public total arena, are respectively characterised by:

(a) norms of independence and lack of vertical or horizontal cleavages.

(b) norms of inter-dependence and involvement in a forum in which the central figure of the headman embodies the overall authority of the community and asserts a moral imperative for community harmony.

These two arenas are ritually linked through the ceremony of offering beer to convene a meeting of the total community which activates a change from one operational set of norms to the other. The nature of the total community arena is such that decisions are arrived at by consensus.

The argument is based on ideas suggested by Bailey and modified by Kuper to include the total arena council (community-in-council) as an additional type. Stated thus the case study of the village meeting reveals little that is new. But it is not sufficient to identify the structural determinants relating to decision by consensus. It is also necessary to show how consensus is reached on the ground and I have examined in detail the procedures used in the Ho council meetings to achieve this end. It is likely that the mechanisms found among the

Ho are capable of more general application outside the field of tribal communities.