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THE BIRHORS:

A LITTLE-KNOWN JUNGLE TRIBE OF CHOTA NAGPUR.

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THE BIRHORS:

A little-known Jungle Tribe of Chota Nagpur.

BY

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PREFACE.

The present work is the third volume of a series of monographs in which I have been endeavouring to record, as faithfully as possible, the 'primitive' culture,—the rapidly disappearing customs and institutions, ideas and beliefs,—of the different 'aboriginal' tribes of Chōṭā-Nāgpur. As for the Birhōṛs, it is not only their 'primitive' customs and institutions, ideas and beliefs, that are fast decaying, but the people themselves would appear to be gradually dying out. And no apology is therefore needed for the publication of the present account in spite of its many defects and imperfections.

Although it is now over fifteen years that I have been engaged in studying the life and culture of this interesting tribe, I cannot say that I have seen or learnt all that has to be seen and learnt about the Birhōṛs. They are scattered in very small migratory bands over such an extensive area of hills and jungles, not unoften difficult of access, that I have not had the opportunity of

tracing out and visiting all their different encampments and studying the variations in the customs and institutions among all the different clans of the tribe. If a second edition of the present work ever comes to be published, I hope to be able to add much further information,—for, the fascination of the study of such an interesting people will not permit my investigations amongst them to cease with the publication of this work.

My thanks are due mostly to the people themselves, but more particularly to an exceptionally intelligent Birhōṛ of the name of Budhu of the Aṇdi clan. As the *Uṭhlā* or migratory sections of the tribe are always on the move, except during the rainy months when they encamp generally in comparatively inaccessible jungles and hills away from villages and settlements of other castes and tribes, it is only during the rains that one can have an opportunity of studying them, if admitted into their encampments. It was this man who during the rainy months acted as my guide and chape-

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ron to different Uṭhlū encampments which he ferreted out for me and where I could not have expected a friendly reception but for his introduction and support. In these difficult journeys in some of which we had to walk several miles on foot over hills and through jungles and sometimes had to wade across swollen and rushing hill-streams, Budhu was my constant guide and companion ; and in some of these journeys my son Dinesh Chandra Roy accompanied me with his camera and several of the illustrations in this book are from photographs taken by him. I am also indebted for a few of the photographs to my esteemed friend Rev. Father M. Stas, S. J. who accompanied me to two Jaghi Birhor settlements in the Ranchi District.

Finally, my thanks are due to my friends Mr. Satis Chandra Ray, B. L., who kindly helped me in seeing the book through the press, and Mr. Manindra Bhusan Bhaduri, B. L., who kindly prepared the index.

DATED RANCHI, *The 1st March, 1925.*

S. C. R.

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ERRATA.

P. 11, l. 20, for 'brideroom' read 'bridegroom'.
P. 59, l. 18. after 'Melanesia', add 'to Polynesia'.
P. 70, l. 1. for 'discribed' read 'described'.
P. 84, l. 4, for 'infrigement' read 'infringment'.
P. 99, l. 16, for 'Khngar' read 'Khangar'.
P. 117, l. 21, for 'natnre' read 'nature'.
P. 123, l. 2, for 'would' read 'world'.
P. 151, last line, for 'o' read 'to'.
P. 153. l. 5, for 'figure' read 'diagram', & *vice versa*.
P. 154, last line for 'ths' read 'the'.
P. 213, l. 5, for 'aud' read 'and'.
P. 214, l. 9. for 'stage' read 'state'
P. 247, l. 15, for 'spinsters' read 'spinisters'.
P. 253, l. 16, for 'af' read 'of'.
P. 328, ll. 17, & 20, for '*Jeth*' read '*Jeg*'.
P. 361, l. 11, for 'stength' read 'strength'.
P. 364, l. 9, for 'harmonions' read 'harmonious'.
P. 399, ll. 18 & 19, for 'boga' read 'bonga'.
P. 400, l. 20, for 'aprang' read 'sprang'.
P. 461, i. 16, for 'him' read 'her'.
P. 532. l. 15, for 'tāndā' read 'clan'.
P. 561, l. 18, for 'he' read 'they'.
P. 566, l. 19, for 'probale' read 'probable'.
P. 566, last line, for '276-293' read '376-393'.

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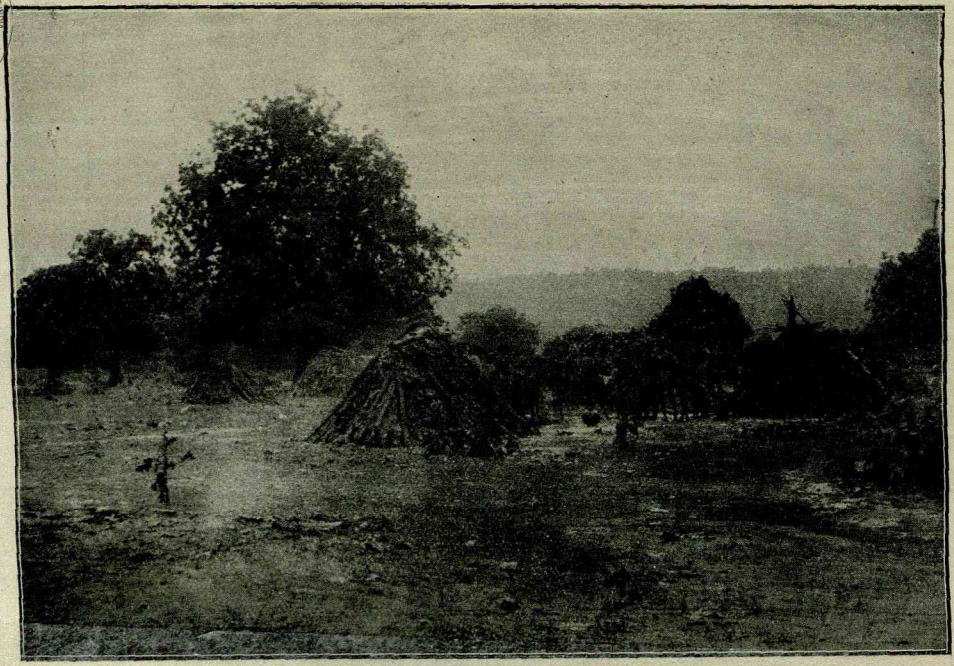
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THE BIRHORS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION:

Earlier Accounts Of The Birhors.

The people whose manners and customs, ideas and beliefs are described in this book are one of the rudest and least known of the jungle tribes of Chota-Nagpur. Only about fifty years ago when the attention of British administrators was first drawn to this people, they used to be accused by their neighbours of a revolting cannibalism—of hastening the end and devouring the flesh of their dying parents and other relations. At this day, though no longer accused of feasting on the flesh of living or dead human beings, they are credited even by their nearest neighbours with wonderful magic powers: they are believed to trap monkeys by simply be-

witching them so that they may not leave their trees when a party of Birhor monkey-catchers approach them with their nets.

The earliest definite reference to this people that we can find is in Colonel Dalton's *Notes of a Tour in the Tributary Mahals* published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* for the year 1864,[1] in which we have the following note about this interesting tribe: "With much trouble some Birhors were caught and brought to me. They were wretched-looking objects, but had more the appearance of the most abject of one of those degraded castes of the Hindus, the Domes or Pariahs, to whom most flesh is food, than of hill people. Assuring me that they had themselves given up the practice, they admitted that their fathers were in the habit of disposing of the dead in the manner indicated, *viz.*, by feasting on the bodies;

Dalton's Note.

[1] Vol. XXXIII (K), p. 1. Dalton, it may be mentioned, was Commissioner of the Chota Nagpur Division from 1857 to 1875.

but they declared they never shortened life to provide such feasts, and shrank with horror at the idea of any bodies but those of their own blood-relations being served up to them! The Raja of Jashpur said he had heard that when a Birhor thought his end was approaching, he himself invited his kindred to come and eat him. The Birhors brought to me did not acknowledge this."

Paddington's Memorandum.

An earlier but doubtful reference to this people is perhaps contained in the following 'Memorandum on an Unknown Forest Race (of Indian Veddas ?) inhabiting the jungles south of Palamow,' contributed to the same Journal[2] in the year 1855 by one Mr. Henry Paddington who, while extensively engaged in coffee-planting about the year 1824 or 1825, used to have large gangs of "Dhangar (Oraon) or Cole (Munda-speaking) coolies coming direct from their country to work on the plantations," and came across two

[2] *Vol. XXXIV, pp. 207-210.*

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persons whom the other people called the "monkey people" (*Bandar lok*) and who by their uncouth appearance and wild habits excited considerable curiosity in the country side. "Shortly after the arrival of a large gang of Dhangar coolies", wrote Mr. Paddington, "I noticed on my rides and walks that great numbers of the village people were constantly coming and going to and from the factory. They used always to come and go freely on their little affairs with the coolies or servants of the establishment, but the concourse now was almost like that to a *hat* or *mela*. Remarking this, I at length enquired of my principal assistant, a very respectable Portugese man, what the reason of it was. He told me in reply, that the people were flocking from all quarters to see what they called the 'monkey people'. Upon enquiring who these people were, he informed me that with the last gang of Dhangars there arrived two persons a man and a woman, 'who are exactly like great monkeys, Sir, and the natives call them the monkey

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people *(Bandar lok)*. They cannot even talk the Dhangar language properly, Sir, but have a language of their own.'

"I desired these persons to be sent for and certainly they in all respects, and especially the man, justified the epithet which the villagers had applied to them. He was short, flat-nosed, had pouch-like wrinkles in semi-circles round the corners of the mouth and cheeks, his arms were disproportionately long, and there was a portion of reddish hair to be seen on the rusty black skin. Altogether if crouched in a dark cover, or on a tree, he might well have been mistaken for a large Orang-Utang. The woman was equally ugly. They were evidently so different from the Dhangars (and so considered by them too) that it was impossible not to be, as it were, a different race.

"Of this the most unquestionable proof was their language. It was only with great difficulty and by the aid of signs that one of the Dhangars, evidently a very intelligent fellow, could make them under-

stand the questions put to them; the result of which was that they lived a long way off from the Dhangars in the jungles and mountains, that there were only a few villages of them and that in consequence of an accident or quarrel, the man had killed a man of another village for which his own people were about to deliver him up; in the fear of which he fled with his wife, and after passing a long time wandering in the jungles they had fallen in with my party of Dhangars who had given them food and had brought them down in their company".

The reference to this pair as the "monkey people" and the identification of their home with the jungles south of Palamow (Palamau) might appear, though doubtfully, to point to the Birhors whose descendants are still met with in the jungles of the southern thanas of Chandwa and Belumat in the Palamau district, and further south and south-west in the Hazaribagh and Ranchi districts and still further south in Singhbhum.

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In 1868, we find Captain Depree in his Report on the Topographical Survey of Chota Nagpur noticing the migration to the Assam tea-gardens of some Birhors, apparently more advanced than the bulk of their tribe-fellows.

Depree's Topographical Survey Report.

The first attempt at a clear account of the people is, however, to be found in the *Report on the Ryotwaree Settlement of the Government Farms in Palamow*[3], by L. R. Forbes, I. C. S., Extra Assistant Commissioner and Settlement Officer, Palamau Subdivision (of Chota Nagpur) published in 1872. As it was practically the first account of this interesting tribe, prepared by a Settlement Officer who had first-hand knowledge of the people, I make no apology for quoting it *in extenso*. It runs as follows :—

Forbes' Report.

'The Birhores are an aboriginal tribe of a very low type, and are doubtless

[3] pp. 44–45.

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Moondahs. Their language is composed of a mixture of Moondari and Santali words, with a few words which appear to belong to neither of those languages.

'The Birhores are probably one of the earliest settlers in the hills and forests of the Chota Nagpore country; they are not confined to Palamow, but are found scattered over the hills in Hazareebaugh and Chota Nagpore[4]. Though wild, they are a very harmless race. They are to be found living only on the tops and spurs of the hills, cultivating absolutely nothing and living exclusively on monkeys, birds, jungle roots, and herbs. They also tame monkeys and teach them to dance, and are sometimes found in the villages making a living in this way. They also make the *dhol* or drum used by the Kols at their festivals.

'In appearance they have a very squalid look, and resemble more a low type of Nuth or gipsy than any of the

[4] What is now the Ranchi District used to be particularly called 'Chota Nagpore'.

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Moondah tribes. They are small made, very black, and the generality have rather sharp features. Both men and women wear their hair long and hanging, matted over their faces; and those whom I have come across had an attenuated look, attributable doubtless to their mode of living.

'Being exceedingly timid, they fly at the approach of man, like frightened deer. They are not fond of moving about, and never leave a range of hills until the supply of their favorite roots is becoming exhausted. When this takes place, scouts are sent out to explore the country and find another range where there is a sufficient supply of roots to last the tribe for some years. The range chosen may be forty or fifty miles distant, yet as soon as the scouts return the whole tribe migrates in a body, keeping to the forest paths, and only crossing the open when they cannot otherwise avoid it.

'They do not appear to live in large companies, but spread themselves in a range of hills,—two or three families

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only living together. Their dwellings are composed of little rude hovels of bamboos and leaves, such as are sometimes seen erected on the fields in Bengal for the cultivator to sit in while watching his crops at night. Not more than one couple live in these hovels; but the very young children live with their parents, the others apart. The boys and girls live together, and are allowed all freedom before marriage but in their wedded life they are exceedingly chaste.

'Their marriage ceremony is interesting and peculiar: I will therefore describe it. As soon as a young couple have determined to marry, the elders of both families join in collecting all their available resources for a feast. Roast pig, stewed monkey, herbs cooked in fat, roots of all sorts, make up the bill of fare. Plenty of *handi* or rice beer, or, if this is not obtainable, then the intoxicating liquors made from the two plants *khooloo* and *ikhoossoona* as a substitute wherewith to drink the health of the young couple.

'As soon as all is prepared the guests assemble, and the members of the two families sit down in a line opposite one another. After certain inquiries as to whether the feast is prepared, and receiving satisfactory replies, the father of the boy thus addresses the father of the bride: "My son calls his bride; his looks are eager; his feet are swift", or some such words as these. The girl's father then turning to the maiden says:—"Fly my daughter, and show him who would be thy husband how nimble is thy foot". Upon this the girl gets up and suddenly darts at full speed into the forest; a minute later and off starts the boy to catch his bride. When the chase is going on a kind of chant is sung, one side replying to the other, and singing the praises of the bride and brideroom in some such words as these:—"Joomee (the girl) is like the deer, her foot is swift, she flies like the west wind", to which the boy's family will reply:—"Mahno is like the arrow that

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striketh the deer; he is swift and sure. Joomee has fear, Mahno has love".

'This song goes on till the shout of the boy, as he succeeds in catching the girl, is heard, when silence follows. The chase seldom lasts longer than a few minutes; and if they are not already out of sight of the spectators, the youthful couple at once retire into the forest, and the marriage is there consummated. They return presently to their friends, when the girl is taken charge of by the women, who proceed to adorn her in her bridal dress, generally a new "*sari*" of coarse country cloth,—a present from the bridegroom. Flowers are placed in her hair, and blushing she is led forth and presented to the company, after which the feast commences in earnest; all get uproariously drunk, and high jinks are carried on till morning; sometimes the feasting and drinking continue for two or three days, but not always.

'These people are very clever at monkey-catching. I have never seen it

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done, but they explained to me that they used nets made of some very strong fibre, spreading them from tree to tree for some distances, and that they then made a long detour, so as to bring the animals between the nets and themselves, and that as soon as they succeeded in doing this, which requires all their caution, as the animals by instinct seem to know a Birhore a long way off, they begin to drive them by beating the trees with their sticks, keeping up at the same time a song of chorus in praise of the monkeys. One little girl is stationed at the foot of one of the trees near the nets, why I could not understand, but I imagine it was that not being unlike a monkey herself, the animals might gain confidence, believing her to be one of themselves. She keeps up a song the whole time, resembling, as far as I could understand, the old nursery rhyme, "Dilly dilly ducklings come and be killed".

The beaters advance very gradually taking care to keep all the animals within

a certain space, so as to force them into the nets, and as soon as a sufficient number have become entangled, they rush forward and despatch them with their latties.

'The forms of worship of the Birhores differ in no way from those of the Moondah tribes. They call god "Bhongah Kaney", and the devil "Agove Bhoogeah Bhoo" and have the usual long list of evil spirits. I have not been able to ascertain whether they have any priests or fetish men among them; I rather think that they are subordinate to the village bygas.

'As they cultivate absolutely nothing—at least the Palamow portions of the tribe do not—there is very little hope of their ever taking to an agricultural life. Strange to say, I see them mentioned in Captain Depree's report on the operations of the topographical survey of Chota-Nagpur, 1868, as emigrants to the Cachar and Assam tea gardens; these must have been civilized indeed'.

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Dalton's Ethnology.

The meagre description of the tribe contained in Dalton's *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, published in the same year as Forbe's Report, adds little of any value to the information contained in the latter account, and indeed appears to be less accurate. Dalton's own account is contained in the following few lines: 'The Birhors call themselves Hindus, live in the jungles, and subsist on wild animals, honey, and what they can obtain by the exchange of jungle produce with people of the plains. They are great adepts at ensnaring monkeys and other small animals, and sell them alive or eat them, they have no cultivation whatever, but they are apparently Kolarian, as among themselves they converse in Kol. They sell chob, a strong fibre of which ropes and strings for various purposes are made, honey, wax, and sikas, the sticks like bows for carrying loads banghy fashion and banghy ropes; and with the proceeds and the spontaneous edible productions of the forest they manage to

exist and clothe themselves. There are people called Birhors in Chutia Nagpur proper and Jashpur, who live in the equally wild state, but communicate with each other in a dialect of Hindi. They are a small, dirty, miserable-looking race, who have the credit of devouring their parents, and when I taxed them with it, they did not deny that such a custom had once obtained among them'.[5]

To this he adds a short account supplied to him by one of his Indian subordinates who is said to have visited some Birhor settlements. That account runs as follows :—

"The Birhors were found living in the jungles on the sides of hills in huts constructed only of branches of trees and leaves, but so made as to be quite water-tight; their huts are as small as those of the Juangs, previously described. The entrance door faces the east, and is about two feet from the ground. A man and

Houses.

[5] p. 158.

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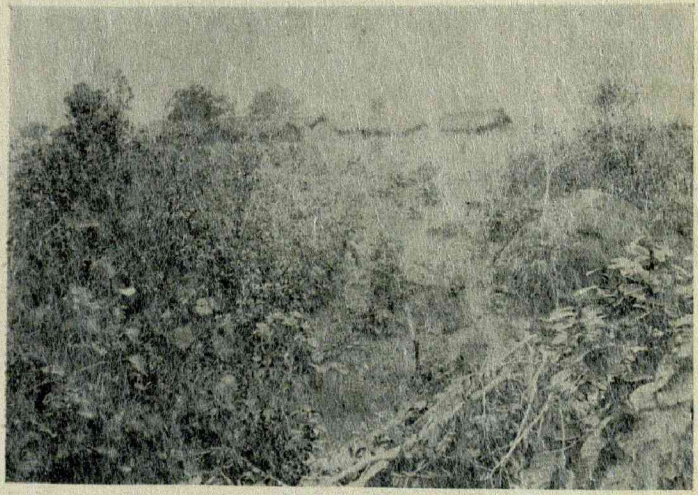


Plate I.—A Jāghi Birhōṛ Tāṇḍā (distant view).

his wife and young children sleep together in this small hut six feet square, but grown-up children are provided with separate huts ; they lie on date-tree leaf-mats spread on the ground. They have hardly any cultivation, and never touch a plough. A man and his family who not long ago left their community and took to cultivating in the plains are now considered outcasts. The men spend their time in snaring hares and monkeys, collecting edible roots and jungle fruits and the chob *(Bauhinia scandens)* bark, of which they make strings for various purposes. They are seldom seen in the villages, but the women frequent the markets to sell their ropes and jungle produce.

Legends.

"The Birhors affirm that they and the Kharwars are of the same race descended from the Sun. They came, seven brothers, to this country from Khairagarh (in the Kaimur hills) ; four went to the east, and three brothers remained in the Ramgarh district. One day when the three

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brothers were going out to fight against the chiefs of the country, the head-dress of one of them got entangled in a tree. He deemed it a bad omen, and remained behind in the jungle. His two brothers went without him and gained a victory over the chiefs, and returning found their brother employed in cutting the bark of the chob. They derided him, calling him the Birhor, (*'Birhor' is Munda for a woodman or forester)* or chob cutter; he replied that he would rather remain a Birhor and reign in the jungles than associate with such haughty brothers. Thus originated the Birhors, lords of the jungles. The other two brothers became Rajahs of the country called Ramgarh.

"The number of the Birhors is limited, estimated at not more than 700 for the whole Hazaribagh district. They are quite a nomadic race, wandering about from jungle to jungle, as the sources of their subsistence become exhausted. There are about ten families in the

Numerical Strength.

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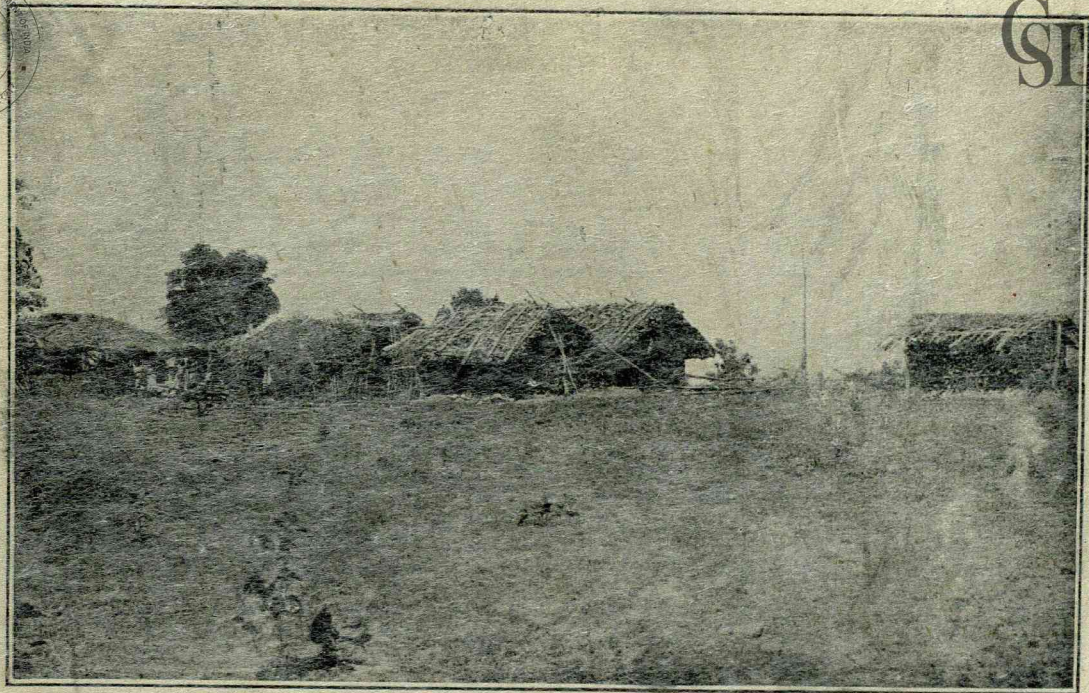


Plate II.—A Jāghi Birhōṛ Tāṇḍā (nearer view).

jungles near the village of Ramgarh, forty in the vicinity of Gola, ten in the jungles of Jagesar, and forty families about Chatra and Datar. Major Thompson, in his report on Palamau, speaks of them as the aborigines of that district. They are found in Chutia Nagpur proper, in Jashpur, and in Manbhum.

Women.

"The women dress decently; they have marks of tattooing on their chest, arms, and ankles; they have no such marks on the face.

After childbirth a woman remains in her hut for six days and has no food, except medicinal herbs. Then the infant is taken out, not by the ordinary door, but by an opening made in the opposite wall; this, it is believed, protects it from being devoured by a tiger or bitten by a snake.

Marriage.

"Parents arrange the marriage of their children. The father of the bridegroom pays three rupees to the father of the bride. They have no priests, and the

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only ceremony is drawing blood from the little fingers of the bridegroom and bride, and with this the tilak is given to each by marks made above the clavicle. This, as I have elsewhere noted, I believe to be the origin of the practice now so universal of marking with red-lead. The convivialities of feasting and dancing conclude the day.

"The ceremony takes place in the bride's house, and next morning she is taken to her husband's; but after remaining there two days she returns to her father's to complete her education and growth at home.

"Their ceremonial in regard to the dead is quite Hindu. They burn the body and convey the remainder of the bones afterwards to the Ganges, they say; but probably any stream answers. They do not shave for ten days as sign of mourning; at the end of that time all shave and they have a feast.

Disposal of the dead.

"The Birhors worship female deities and devils. They have assigned to Devi the

Deities.

chief place among the former and the others are supposed to be her daughters and grand-daughters; she is worshipped as the creator and destroyer. The devils are Biru Bhut, who is worshipped in the form of a raised semi-globe of earth—Biru is also the Kharria god—and Darha, represented by a piece of split bamboo three feet high, placed in the ground in an inclined position, called also the 'Sipahi', sentinel. This is the immediate guardian of the site, as a god or devil of a similar name is with the Mundas and Oraons. A small round piece of wood, nearly a foot in length, the top painted red, is called 'Banhi', goddess of the jungles. Another similar is Lugu, the protectress of the earth. Lugu is the largest hill in Ramgarh, so this is their Marang Buru.

"An oblong piece of wood, painted red, stands for 'Maha Maya', Devi's daughter. A small piece of white stone daubed with red for her grand-daughter, Buria Mai; an arrow-head stands for Dudha Mai, Buria's

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daughter. They have also a trident painted red for Hanuman, who executes all Devi's orders.

"Sets of these symbols are placed one on the east and one on the west of their huts, to protect them from evil spirits, snakes, tigers, and all kinds of misfortune.

"It is not easy to place the Birhors from what is above disclosed, but the fact that, though a wandering and exclusive people, they commune in the Munda language, is, I think, sufficient to establish that they belong to the Kol race ; and then they have the Mundari-Oraon deity Darha and adore the Biru of the Kharrias.

"The people with whom they exchange commodities are all Hindus or Hinduised, so it is not surprising that they should take up Hindu notions". [6]

In his *Statistical Account of the Hazaribagh District* [7], published in 1877, Hunter

[6] pp. 219-220.
[7] pp. 63-4.

merely quotes the above account from Dalton; and in his *Statistical Account of the Lohardaga* (Ranchi) *District*,[8] (1877), Hunter does nothing more than give a summary of the account quoted above from Forbe's Settlement Report of the Palámau Sub-division.

Hunter's Statistical Account

A comparatively fuller, though all too brief, account of the Birhors, covering not more than four pages, was contributed in 1888 in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*[9] by Mr. W. H. P. Driver, an Emigration Agent then working at Ranchi.

Driver's Account.

As this, like Mr. Forbes' Report, was collected first hand, and, together with Forbes' account, constituted the only reliable information available about the tribe when I began my investigations, Mr. Driver's account is reproduced below :—

[8] PP. 258-9.
[9] Vol. LVII, Pt. I., pp. 12-15.

"*Habitat.*— The Birhors, a small tribe speaking a dialect of the Kolarian language, chiefly lead a wild nomadic life among the hills and jungles of Chutiá Nágpur. They travel about in small communities, earning a precarious living by making string from the chóp *(Bauhinia scandens)* bark. A few of their number have, however, settled down in different parts of the district amongst their more civilised neighbours and taken to cultivation. Those living in the jungles are usually very poor, their huts being made of leaves and branches, and measuring 8 or 10 feet in length by 6 feet in breadth by 6 feet in height, the doors being only 2 feet in height by 1½ feet in breadth. These huts are placed in circular form, with the doors facing towards the inside of the circle, of which the open space in the centre is kept clean and used for dancing. In appearance the Birhors are amongst the most degraded looking of Kolarian tribes. They are usually very short, black, and dirty-looking, some of the men wearing the hair matted. They do

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Plate III.—An Uṭhlu Birhōṛ's leaf-hut.

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not use bows and arrows, and their only weapons are small axes.

"*Food.*— The jungle Birhors keep neither cattle, goats, nor pigs, but buy them when required for a feast or sacrifice. They eat cows, buffaloes, goats, pigs, fowls, rats, and monkeys, but not bears, tigers, jackals, dogs, snakes, lizards, &c. For vegetables they are dependent mostly on the jungles, and the following is a list of the commonest kinds, viz.—

"*Leaves.*— Koínár, Káná, Matha, Katai, Sárí, Sáruberá, Síl'wer, Pich'ki, Chátom, Muchuri, Hara, Síngh, Rong. *Roots.*— Háser, Durá, Lariyá, Kudá, Podho, Kaduwer, Bel, Dumar, Bar, Pipar, Sarai, Pithor, Dau, Tiril, Katkar'ji, Sir'ka.

"Their women help them to make the chop string, and also carry this and the monkey skins to the small village markets situated nearest the jungles, and there either sell or barter their articles for rice, salt, and oil. The skins of monkeys are used for making Kol drums.

"*Hunting.*—The following is the system

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in which they hunt. Strong nets about 4 ft. wide, which they make of chóp, are stretched up at upright posts or trees in a line along the ground, for a distance of several hundred yards. They then beat up towards their nets, and the forests being almost denuded of large trees, the monkeys (small, brown and long-tailed) take to the ground, and so get snared along with other game.

"*Tribes and Sub-tribes.*—The Birhors can tell you nothing of their origin or history beyond the fact that they have been 'Birhors,' or jungle men, from prehistoric times. They are commonly known amongst the people of these parts as *chopdárs* (chop string makers). They are divided into two sub-tribes, namely Bhuliya or wanderers, and Jaghi or settlers.

"*Religion and Superstitions.*—Their religion is a peculiar mixture of Hindu and Kolarian ideas. They worship *Debi-Máy*, a Hindu goddess ; *Mahá-Máy* (represented by a piece of wood painted red), *Darhá Bongá*, river bank god (reprenseted by a

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Plate IV.—An Uṭhlu Birhōr youth smoking his leaf-cigarette in front of his leaf-hut.

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piece of bamboo stuck in the ground); *Kudri-Bongá*, river god; *Banhi-Máy*, jungle goddess (represented by a small piece of wood with some *sindur* on it, stuck in the ground); *Lugu-máy*, earth goddess; *Dhuká-Bongá*, air god; *Bir'ku* or *Biru-Bongá* hill-god. *Buri-máy* (represented by a white stone painted red on the top); *Dadha-máy* (represented by an arrow-head); *Hanumán* (represnted by a trident painted red) Kap'si and Jilenga are not represented by any image. They see no anomaly in worshipping 'Hannuman' and eating monkeys. The various representations of their gods and goddesses are placed in a small cleared spot fenced in with thorns. The Sun is sacrificed to once in four or five years. The larger communities have their *Pahan* or priest, who attends to all the above-mentioned worthies, but the smaller camps have to content themselves with the services of the *Mundá Pahán* of some neighbouring village. The Birhors offer sacrifices to their parents every 3 years, taking care to avoid the month or months in which they died

and offering separate fowls to the father and mother.

"*Witch-craft.*—They also have *Ojháhs* or diviners, besides others who practise the "black art". Such persons are feared and disliked, and yet often employed by these superstitious people. If an aggrieved person wishes to have revenge, he or she (practising under the instructions of the *ojhá*) puts a devil on the enemy or on his or her household, and very soon some one falls ill. The head of the afflicted house refers to the *ojhá*, who lights a *Chirág*, goes though some mummery, and discovers the instigators of the obsession. Amongst the Mundás the result is usually a free fight, but the Birhors take things more calmly, and the matter is amicably arranged by the party causing the devilment giving the *ojhá* a fowl to sacrifice, with a request to withdraw the devil.

"*The healing art.*— The *ojhá* is referred to on all occasions of sickness, when he goes through the performance of feeling the wrist and looking wise, just like our own

quacks. His prescription is nothing so nasty as physic, but simply the sacrifice of a fowl, white, red or black, according to the occasion, and large or small according to the means of the patient. Light sicknesses, such as headache or stomach-ache, are cured by the *Ojhá* putting some *'arwa chaul'* into the right hand of the patient, and turning it five times round his (the patient's) head.

"*Festivals.*—Birhors keep the following Kolarian festivals, viz., Mágh-Parab in January; Phagun, the hunting festival, in February; Sarhul in March; Karam and Jittia in September; Dasai and Sohrái in October.

"*Dances.*—They dance the *Lujh'ri* at the Karam and the Jittiya, the Jargá at the Phaguá and Sarhul, and the Sauntárí at other times.

"*Friendships.*—The men make *Karam'dal* friendships by putting a *Karam* leaf in each other's hair, and giving each other a new piece of cloth; the women give pieces of cloth, but do not exchange *Karam* leaves. The women also form other friendships

among themselves by going to a river and plashing each other with water. They then call each other Gangájal.

"*Marriage Customs.*—The Birhors do not marry until full grown. They have only one wife, and widows are allowed to remarry. They are not allowed to marry out of their tribe, but they cannot marry into the same gotra, i. e. people of the same family name. They have such surnames as Sing'puria, Nag'puriya, Jag'sariya, Liluar, Beharwar, Siruwar, Hem'rom, Mahali, &c.

Parents arrrange matrimonial matters the price of a wife being from Rs 3 to Rs 5, and the bride-groom goes to the house of his future father-in-law to get married. After eating and drinking, the *Pahan* or priest (one of their own tribe) cuts the right hand little fingers of both bride and brideroom. They then mark each other on the breast-bone with their blood, or put their blood on small pieces of cloth which they exchange and for 3 days wear round their necks. After this ceremony they anoint each other's head with oil. Then the man

takes some *Sindur* in his right hand which, with an upward motion, he rubs on the centre of her forehead. She then returns the compliment by putting five spots of *Sindur* in a perpendicular line on the centre of his forehead. The *lokundi* or bridesmaid (generally a young relative of the bride) then comes forward and ties the end of the bride's *sari* to the bridegroom's *gamchha*. The ceremony is concluded with drinking and dancing which is kept up all night, and next morning the whole party adjourn to a river or tank and bathe. After allowing the newly married wife to remain with her husband for a few days, the parents or guardians take her away and keep her a week or so, during which time she is feasted and well-treated and she is then made over to her husband. They usually marry in February, and at the following Karma pay a visit to the wife's parents. Birhors do not appear to have any definite customs as to divorce, such occurences are very uncommon amongst them, but they say if married

people wished to separate, there was nothing to hinder their doing so.

"*Customs regarding Children.*—After the birth of a child, a door is cut at the back of the house for the use of the mother. When the child is six days' old, its head is shaved, its whole body is rubbed with oil and turmeric, and it is then named either after one of its grand-parents or after the day on which it was born. The parents then offer a sacrifice after consulting the *Ojhá*. The hair is shaved by one of their own people who acts as a barber for the whole community, and who is paid a *paila* (about 2 pounds) of rice for his services. All males, both young and old, have their heads shaved (with the exception of a top knot) at regular intervals. The boys, at the age of 10 or 12, have the backs of both forearms burnt, the operation being performed with lighted wicks made from oiled rags. The girls, at about the same age, are tattooed on the wrists, biceps and ankles. This operation is performed by Ghasi women who make a profession of it.

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The month of November is always chosen as the most fitting time for the operations of tattooing and burning. Children of both sexes remain with their parents until they marry.

"*Death Customs.*—The Birhors first burn and then bury their dead near a stream, placing a stone of any sort over the spot. At a parent's death, the youngest son has his head shaved clean. At the death of a child all male relations shave the fore-part of the head and dine with the bereaved parents, and the parents offer a sacrifice of a goat to Debi or Maha-máy".

Risley's Tribes and Castes.

The meagre account of the Birhors given in Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*[10] adds little to our knowledge of the tribe except that it gives the names of eight of the Birhor clans or septs. In other respects it is less

[10] Vol I, pp. 137-9 and Vol. II, *Ethnographic Glossary* p. 13.

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satisfactory than Driver's account which was published three years earlier than Risley's.

Census Reports.

The Census Reports give us practically no information about this interesting tribe except with regard to their numerical strength and the proportion of the Birhor population who speak their own dialect. This proportion, we are told, was one-half in 1911; and the *Report of the Bihar and Orissa Census* of 1921 informs us that the number of Birhors speaking their own 'Birhar' dialect has decreased from 1,013 in 1911 to only 258 in 1921, and further goes on to observe: "It is clear they hold their lease of life on slender terms; even when he produced volume IV of the *Linguistic Survey* nearly twenty years ago Sir George Grierson considered that the days of Birhar were numbered"[11]. The Census figures for Birhors speaking their own dia-

[11] *Bihar and Orissa Census Report* for 1921, Part I (1923.) p. 215.

lect would, however, appear to be inaccurate, for although most Birhors can talk the Gāwari Hindi of their Hindu neighbours and must have talked to the Census enumerators in that dialect, closer enquiry shows that the majority of Birhors still use their own dialect in talking amongst themselves. Nor does there appear to be any justification for calling their dialect 'Birhar' and thus distinguishing it from the tribal name.

It may be noted, that a short explanatory note in the abstract Caste Table appended to the *Bengal Census Report* for 1901, reads as follows: "Birhor (numerical strength : 943 males, 890 females),—chiefly found in Chota Nagpur—live by snaring hares and monkeys and collecting jungle products and speak their own language (Birhor)."[12] Subsequent Census Reports do not even contain a similar note.

The Chota Nagpur District Gazetteers of Palamau (1907), Singhbhum (1910), and

[12] p. XXXIII,

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Manbhum (1911) make no reference whatsoever to this people.

District Gazetteers.

A short paragraph in the *Gazetteer of the Ranchi District* (1917) only tells us : "The Birhors are a jungly tribe with no fixed habitation, who roam from forest to forest, living on game and monkeys and by the manufacture of drums and the sale of jungle products. They speak almost pure Mundāri, and the fact that their name Birhor (= jungle-men in Mundāri) includes the word *horo*, which the Mundās apply exclusively to themselves, points to their being an offshoot of that tribe that has preferred a wandering life in the jungles to the settled life of a cultivator. At the Census of 1911, 927 members of the tribe were found in the district, of whom 500 were classified as Animists and the rest as Hindus. In Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, their religion is said to be a mixture of Animism and Hinduism, and they are said to seek to harmonize the two systems by assigning to *Devi* the chief place in their Pantheon,



Plate V.—A Jāghi Birhōṛ leaf-hut. The girl standing in front of her hut is twisting rope, and the old woman in the middle is weaving a carrying-net.

and making out the animistic godlings to be her daughters and grand-daughters".[13] Finally, the *Gazetteer of the Hazaribagh District*, published in the same year as the *Ranchi Gazetteer*, contains a sympathetic one-paragraph notice of this tribe. It runs as follows: "In the Census of 1911 there were 1,024 Birhors in Hazaribagh, 927 in Ranchi, and a total for the province of 2,340 souls. The word means 'jungle man'; the language is very closely akin to Mundāri, and the race is Dravidian. Formerly without settled homes and winning a scanty subsistence from the products of the jungle, they have now fallen on evil times with the gradual extension of cultivation and the greater drain on the forests from the presence of a thicker population; and they are taking up settled work as landless labourers, living in permanent dwellings on the outskirts of villages, but still expert in discovering wild honey and making ropes of *chop*. The latest account of this unfor-

[13] pp. 81-82.

tunate race is contained in an article by Babu S. C. Roy in the number for September 1916 of the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.*"[14]

Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.

The article on the Birhors in the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* referred to in the *Hazaribagh Gazetteer*, was followed by a few more articles in the pages of the same Journal, and the enquiries of which those articles were the outcome have since been continued and the results are now embodied in the present monograph.

[14] pp. 89-90.

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CHAPTER II.

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A General View of Birhor Life.

1. Habitat.

The hills and jungles that fringe the Chota Nagpur plateau on its east and north-east, form the principal home of the Birhors. This line of hills runs from the Ramgarh thana (Police circle) in the Hazaribagh district on the north along the Ormanjhi, Angara, Ranchi, and Bundu thanas on the east of the Ranchi plateau up to and beyond the Tamar thana which marks the south-eastern limit of the Ranchi district. Here and there in these hills and jungles extending roughly over an area of over seventy miles in length and twenty miles in breadth, the Birhors move about either in small scattered communities snaring monkeys, tracking hare, deer or other game and collecting rope-fibres, honey and bees' wax, or camp in tiny leaf-huts making

rude wooden vessels and plaiting ropes and weaving them into hunting-nets and carrying-nets. Several groups of Birhors are also met with beyond the north-eastern margin of the plateau into the jungles and hills further north in the Hazaribagh district north of the Damodar, where they muster strong, and a few scattered groups have strayed into the Manbhum district on the east and into the Singhbhum district on the south. A few scattered groups of Birhors are also found in the jungles and hills of some of the northern and north-western thanas of the Ranchi district as well as in the Palamau District and in the tributary states further to the west. The nature of the country occupied by the tribe may be roughly described as a long succession of ranges of wooded hills separated by open valleys. These valleys alone are fit for cultivation and are dotted over with villages sparsely inhabited by agricultural tribes and castes on a higher level of culture than the Birhors.

The Birhors themselves generally select

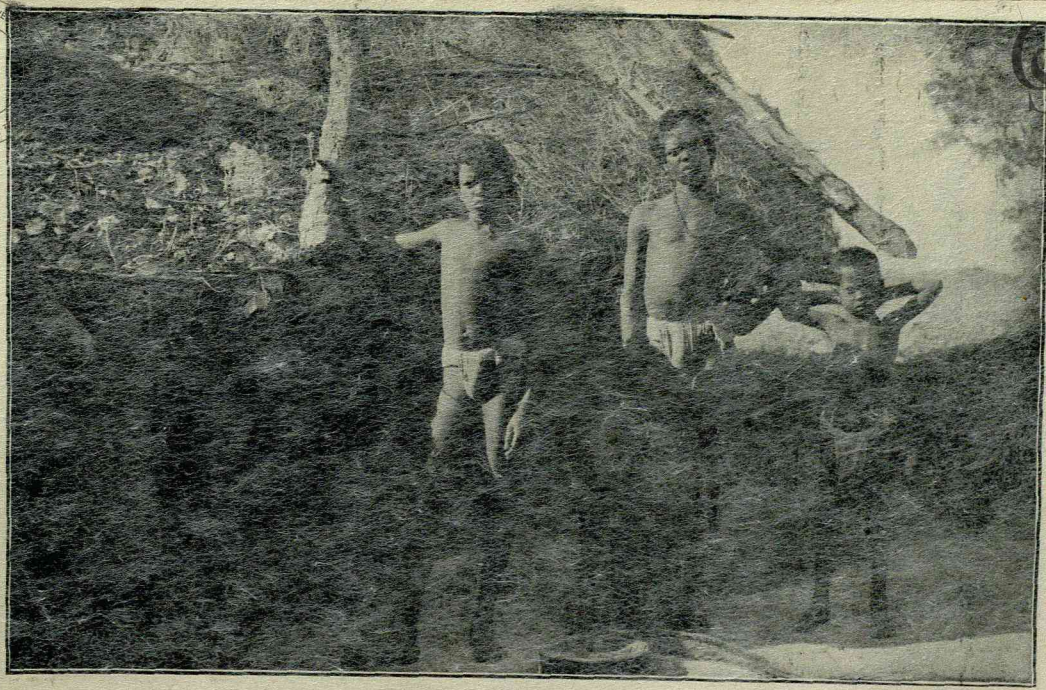


Plate VI.—A Jāghi Birhor hut roofed over with leaves and branches of trees. In front of the little boys is a strip of palm-leaf mat in course of preparation.

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Flora and Fauna.

comparatively open spaces on the wooded hill-tops and slopes or the edges of the jungles for their *tandas* or settlements. These jungles and hills support a tropical flora, among which are timber trees like the *sal (shorea robusta)* and the *gamhar (Gomelina arborea)*, wild fruit trees like the *jamun (Eugenia Jambolena)*, the *bair (Zizyphus Jujuba)*, the *mahua (Bassia Latifolia)*, myrobalans of different varieties and several kinds of wild yams and tubers besides bamboos and fibrous creepers like the *chop (Bauhinia Scandens)*. Shrubs bearing edible berries such as the *pial (Buchania Latifolia)*, are not numerous. And thus the natural vegetation of these hills and jungles affords but scanty food for the Birhors. Among the fauna of these woods the deer, the porcupine, the hare, the rat, and the monkey are the more important from the Birhor's point of view, as their flesh is highly prized by him for food. The tiger, the leopard, the hyena, the bear, the wolf, the blue cow

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or *nilgai (Boselaphous tragocamelous)* are also met with here and there in these jungles. Among birds, the peacock, the pigeon, the plover, the partridge, the snipe, the teal, and parrots are worth mentioning. As may be expected in these surroundings, the Birhor has developed into a keen hunter with strong powers of scent, sight and hearing and has acquired an intimate knowledge of the haunts and habits of different birds and animals, and the medicinal properties of various roots and herbs.

Climate.

The climate of these parts is characterized by oppressive heat in the summer months, fairly severe cold in the winter months, and a heavy rain-fall in the monsoon months. The maximum temperature in summer has been known to exceed 110° in the shade and the minimum in winter has gone down below 40°. The annual rain-fall varies from 50 to 65 inches, so that in the rainy months, the Birhor can no longer move about continually in pursuit of games but must necessarily stop

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in *Kumbas* or leaf-sheds, eking out his scanty store, if any, of dried corolla of the *mohua (Bassia latifolia)* flower with some edible leaves or roots or yams gathered in the jungle, or with grain exchanged for or purchased with the sale-proceeds of honey and bees' wax, ropes made of *chop* fibres, or rude vessels made of wood. Thus, as is but natural, the flora and fauna of his habitat have largely determined the nature and quantity of his food, the size of his food-groups or *tandas*, the character and material of his dwellings, and generally influenced his occupation, material culture, and even social organization.

II. Jaghis and Uthlus.

As their name of Birhor or the 'Jungle-folk' suggests, the tribe still lingers in an extremely low grade of culture well calculated to rejoice the heart of the anthropologist. They wander about or settle down for a time in small groups of from three or four to about ten families, earning a precarious subsistence by hunting deer

and other animals and fowls and snaring monkeys, by collecting *chop* creepers *(Bauhinia scandens)* and making them into ropes for barter or sale in the nearest villages or markets, and by gathering bees' wax and honey when available. Although the most cherished occupation of all the men of the tribe is hunting, the Birhors are, according to their mode of living, classed into two main divisions,—known respectively as the Uthlus or Bhuliyas (wanderers) and Jaghis or Thanias (settlers). Except in the rainy season, the Uthlu Birhors move about from jungle to jungle in small groups with their families, their scanty belongings, and their gods or *bhuts* represented by stones and wooden pegs and carried in baskets by one or two young bachelors who walk at the head of the party. Other boys carry fowls meant for occasional sacrifices to the gods ; the men follow with their nets and tools and weapons ; the women carry on their heads palm-leaf mats, and wooden mortars and pestles ; and both men and women carry bamboo-baskets

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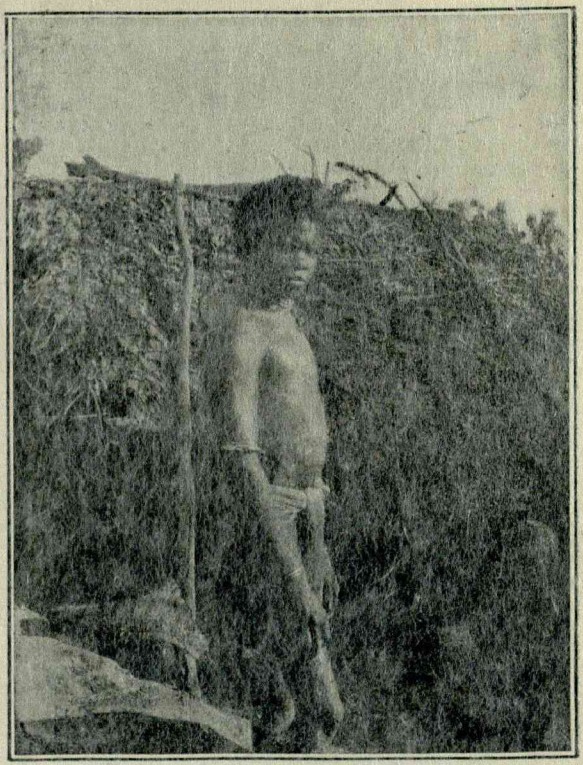


Plate VII.—A Jāghi Birhōṛ boy in front of his leaf-hut.

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containing their scanty store of dried mohua flowers and any grains they may have ; and the girls carry earthen pots for cooking and carrying water. Except during the rainy season (July–September) which they are obliged to spend at one place, they ordinarily stop and hunt at one jungle for about a week or two and then move on to another jungle and similarly camp and hunt there, and again move on to still another jungle, and thus wander about in search of food until they come back to their original starting point in about two years' time and start once more on a similar tour along the same or slightly different route.

The Jaghi Birhors, on the other hand, are those families that, tired of toilsome wanderings, have settled down for a comparatively long period generally on some hill-top or the outskirts of some jungle. A few Birhors of this latter class may squat on some land near the hill-side or clear some land in the jungle for purposes of more or less permanent cultivation but the

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majority are landless and live mainly by hunting and by making and selling ropes. Birhors, both Uthlu and Jaghi, however, sometimes rear a scanty crop of maize or beans by burning a patch of jungle, scratching the soil and sowing in ashes. Even the landed Jaghi Birhor rarely stops at one place for any considerable length of time. The slightest ill-treatment, real or supposed, from the landlord of the place or from people of the villages near about or the growing scarcity of *chop* creepers in the neighbouring jungles induces him to migrate to some more suitable place, or to fall back into his old *Uthlu* or nomad life. Indeed, there is no Jaghi settlement I have known that is more than ten or fifteen years old, although I have heard of a few that are older, and have known some that have changed their old *tanda* within the last six years and removed it to a distance of several miles or joined another *tanda*. Some Jaghis have been known to revert to their old nomad or *Uthlu* life out of sheer *ennui*, And even some landed Jaghi families are known to leave their

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tandas and rove about with all their scanty belongings leading an Uthlu life from after harvest in December until the rains set in by about the middle of June. Generally, a *Jaghi* Birhor after his marriage with an *Uthlu* wife, sooner or later, joins the group of his *Uthlu* father-in-law and takes to a nomadic life. And this is one reason why Jaghis now-a-days are averse to marrying their sons and daughters to Uthlus. As may be naturally expected, the Uthlus by reason of their greater exclusiveness have retained more of their primitive customs and usages than the Jaghis who come more frequently in contact with the Hindus and Hinduised tribes of the valleys. Still an analysis of the culture even of the Uthlus will reveal certain traits that do not appear to have evolved from within and cannot be attributed to race, but betray evident traces of social environmental influences or cultural contact.

III. The Tandas and its Houses.

The settlements of *Jaghi* groups as well

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as the temporary encampments of *Uthlu* groups are both known as *tandas*. A *tanda* usually consists of about half a dozen or more huts. In a *tanda* of the Uthlus the huts are mere improvised leaf-sheds in the form of low triangular *kumbas* or straw-shelters such as their neighbours the Mundas and the Oraons erect near their rice-fields to guard them when the crops are ripening. Smaller *kumbas* are called *chu'-kumbas*, and the comparatively larger ones *ora-kumbas* or *ghar-kumbas*. Each family erects its separate shed or sheds made of branches and leaves. Each of these sheds has one opening, sometimes provided with a door made of branches and leaves. The houses in a Jaghi *tanda* are a little more pretentious. Although the roofs of their huts are generally made of branches covered over with leaves, the *Jaghi* huts have better walls, some of which are made of branches plastered over with mud, and a few even wholly made of mud. Their huts usually possess slightly raised floors.

Dwellings.

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Although each family has generally one hut, it is partitioned off into at least two compartments, one serving as the lumber-room in which their possessions, consisting generally of one or more iron axes, hunting nets, rope-making tools, and a few earthen pots in which dried *mahua* fruit and perhaps grains are stored, and where the ancestor-spirits are also appeased, and another and a larger one forming a kitchen and sleeping room combined.

A corner of the larger room is generally staved off as a pen for fowls or for goats or cattle, if the owner happens to possess any. In some *tandas* there may be one or two comparatively well-to-do Birhor families who may have mud walls to their huts and even a separate shed or lean-to for cattle. Some clans, such as the Ludumba, erect close to their dwellings a miniature hut or *chu'kumba* to serve as a spirit-hut *(bonga-kumba)*. In this hut may sometimes be seen a small bamboo box called 'bonga-peti' or spirit-box in which a little

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arua rice in a small bamboo tube, a little vermilion, and other *puja* requisites are kept. Some clans have also their *thāns* or spirit-seats adjoining the settlement, where lumps of clay, pieces of stone, or wooden pegs represent the tutelary deities of the clan. These receive offerings of rice and sweets, and sacrifices of fowls and goats, as occasion arises. These will be described in a future chapter. By the side of most *Jaghi* settlements is a 'sacred grove' called the Jayar or Jilu-jayar, marked by one or more trees and in some settlements a few blocks of stone. This is the seat of the *Sendra-bongas* or spirits presiding over the hunt, such as the *Chāndi-bonga* and other *Sāngi-bongas* or spirits common to the community, and there, before every important hunting expedition, the nets of all the hunters are placed in a heap, and fowls are sacrificed before them, and, after the party return home, here they cut and dress and divide the game. Uthlus, too, sometimes select a suitable tree near their camps to mark their Jilu-jayar during their

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stay at any particular place. Although there are no fences round the Jaghi houses nor any compounds, there is generally a small open space in front of each house.

Bachelors' Dormitories.

In some of the *tandas*, both of the Jaghis as well as of the Uthlus, may be seen at one end of the settlement, a *giti-oṛa* or sleeping hut exclusively used by the young bachelors of the settlement. The young maidens sleep with some old widow in a similar hut usually at some distance from the boys' *giti-oṛa*. Although outwardly a strict moral discipline appears to be maintained in these dormitories, closer investigation reveals the existence of a general laxity of morals among the inmates.

Except the annual Spring Hunt or a wedding in some comparatively well-off family, or a Panchayat convened to punish some serious social offence, when the men of a number of *tandas* living within an easy distance of one another are invited to take part, there is hardly any occasion

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when a number of these scattered groups or *tandas* come together. The different clans of the tribe hang together loosely as so many intermarrying groups, each with a tradition of common descent, talking the same language, following the same pursuits, and agreeing in substance but often differing in details in their social and domestic customs and usages and in their religious and magico-religious rites and observances.

IV. The Daily Life of the Birhors.

The men rise from their bed at cock-crow and begin to wind (*kami*) *chop* (*bayar*) fibres made out of barks of the *Bahunia scandens* creepers collected the previous day and soaked in water and split (*chira*) into fibres the previous evening. Then they unite the strands by twisting (*uiu*) them round each other, and tighten (*paina*) them with the help of the *chuteili* stick. The women generally rise a little later but before sunrise, and assist the men in making ropes. When day-light appears, the women go to attend to household

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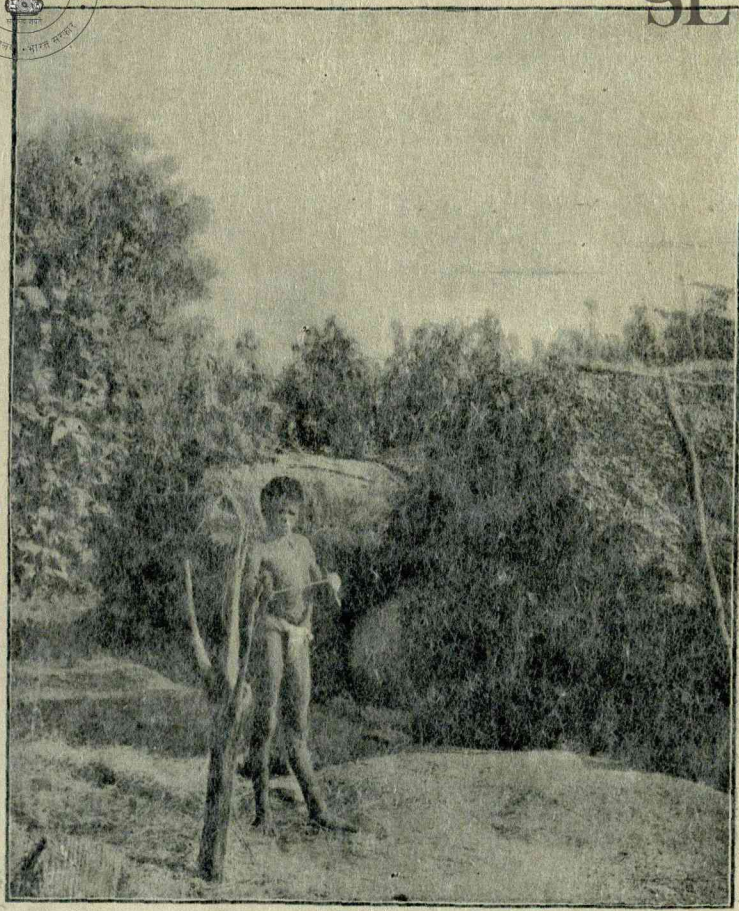


Plate VIII.—A Jāghi Birhor twisting rope in front of his leaf huts. The forked wood planted in the ground is the *honod* and the short stick in his hand is *chuteli*.

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work and the men smooth (*hōt*) the ropes with the *hōnōd* which is a short bifurcated piece of wood. With the ropes thus made the men go on preparing *tethers* for cattle and *sikas* or carrying nets. The men work at these until about 8 a.m. when they cleanse their teeth with a small twig for a tooth-pick and wash their faces, and have their morning meal either of rice and pot-herb (*sag*) or of boiled corollas of the *mahua* flowers. Neither men nor women take a daily bath, but all generally bathe only once or twice a week. It is only at these baths and at the end of a ceremonial pollution that they wash their scanty clothes. The men ordinarily wear a *bhagoa* or short narrow strip of cloth, one end of which is wrapped round the waist, the other end being passed between the thighs and attached to the part which serves as the waist-band; and the women wear a broader waist-cloth known as a *lahanga*.

After breakfast the men go to the woods either to hunt or to collect *chop*. The women sweep the huts in the morning and

brush the utensils, if any, and fetch water from some spring or stream, and cook the morning meal and then take their meals. Then they either go to the jungles to collect *mahua* flowers or edible leaves, yams, and tubers or go to the neighbouring markets or villages if they have ropes and *sikas* to sell. If there are more than one woman in a house, those that remain at home twist ropes or weave *sikas*. Children, from about the tenth or eleventh year of their life, generally help their parents in making ropes.

The majority of the Birhors live from hand to mouth. When after a day's unsuccessful hunt or a fruitless search for *chop* creepers a Birhor sees no prospect of having other food for the following day, his wife or daughter gathers *piska* yams, boils them in water, peels them and then leaves them for the night in some stream of flowing water so as to remove their acridity. In the morning these are brought home, boiled again in water, smashed and eaten. These yams are available in January and February and

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also in July and August. On my arrival on a hot April day at a settlement consisting of only four Jaghi families, I learnt that two of the families had had little or nothing to eat for a day and a half, as all the *chop* the men of the four families had collected a day or two earlier together with their axes had been forcibly snatched away from them by an over-zealous servant of the proprietor of the jungle where they had been to collect *chop*, and thus they had no ropes, strings or nets to sell.

When the men return home, generally late in the after-noon, with *chop* creepers, each family leave their *chop* immersed in the water of some adjacent pool or stream for about an hour and then take them home. After their evening meal the men split the *chop* stems (*bayar*) into strands, and then they all go to sleep. In winter months they kindle a fire in the middle of the hut-floor, and the family sleep around it. Fire, it may be mentioned, is almost always made by friction with two pieces of wood or bamboo.

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From October to the beginning of June, the men go out on hunting excursions or collect *chop* and gather honey, when available; and the women gather *mohua* fruit and flowers and collect yams and tubers in their respective seasons. This is indeed the brightest part of the year for the Birhor; and it is now that the dull daily routine of life is, from time to time, broken by weddings and other festivities for which large quantities of *ili* or rice-beer are requisitioned.

In June, July and August, the few Jaghi Birhors who have cultivable fields attend to their cultivation, and the Uthlus, who at this season, camp at some selected spot, as well as landless Jaghis make wooden cups and bowls which they exchange for grains or sell for cash in the neighbouring villages and buy rice or other grains with the sale-proceeds of these things or with any money they may have saved out of the sale-proceeds of game in the winter and summer months. Their women sometimes work on wages at transplanting paddy seed-

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Plate IX.—Jāghi Birhors in front of their leaf-hut going out to hunt. The young man on the left is carrying a hunting-net slung on a stick across his shoulder.

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lings on the fields of people in the neighbouring villages. In September, men again begin to gather *chop* and make strings and *sikas* or carrying-nets and their women take them to the neighbouring villages for sale or exchange. Hunting-nets are also made at this time for use in the coming season and occasionally for sale to Oraons, Mundas and others who care to have them. From September to November, Uthlu as well as Jaghi women occasionally gather leaves of a kind of wild date-palm, which they call *kita* (Fœnix sylvestris) and plait bed-mats with them when they have no *chop* fibres to twist.

Thus the few elementary arts and crafts that the Birhors have acquired or invented, though not wholly determined by their physical environment, have been greatly favoured by it. Again, in order to sell their humble manufactures of wood and rope-fibres, and to buy their scanty clothing and tinsel ornaments, their iron tools and weapons, their earthen pots and such humble condiments as salt and pepper, all

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Birhors—Jaghi as well as Uthlu—necessarily come in contact with other tribes and castes in the open valleys near their native hills and jungles. And in the rainy months their women often work in the neighbouring villages as field-labourers in company with labourers of other castes and tribes. Among the Jaghis, again, some of their comparatively more intelligent and well-to-do members enter into ceremonial friendship with men of other castes and tribes inhabiting the neighbouring villages. Some instances of racial miscegenation will be referred to later on. The inevitable influence of such contact with comparatively superior but mostly analogous culture may be traced in the manners, customs, beliefs, and practices, and even in the vocabulary, folk-lore, and songs of the Birhors. But however much their physical and social environment may have influenced Birhor life, the vital elements of their culture—their totemistic social structure and animistic religious system—would appear to be in their essentials a genuine product of the race.

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Plate X.—Type of a Birhōṛ adult (Profile) [Sāmdhoar clan].

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संस्कृति मंत्रालय · भारत सरकार
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Plate XI.—Front view of the man in Plate X.

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V. Race and Language.

Ethnically the Birhors belong to the same darkskinned, (melanous), short-statured, long-headed (dolicocephalic) wavy-haired (cymotrichous), and broad-nosed (platyrrhine) race to which the Mundas, the Santhals, the Bhumij, the Hos and other allied tribes belong. Some anthropometrical measurements that I have taken, as well as statistics that I have collected as to the size, sex, longevity and fecundity of a few Birhor families, are given in the Appendix.

Race and Physical Features.

Like other allied tribes, the Birhors speak a language now classed among the Austro-Asiatic sub-family of the Austric linguistic family which extends through Indonesia and Melanesia

Sir George Grierson and the authors of the Census Reports name the Birhor dialect as 'Birhar' but the people themselves do not appear to make this nice phonetic

Language.

distinction between the name of the tribe and that of the district. According to Sir George Grierson, the Birhor dialect is more closely connected with Mundari than with Santali. Indeed, I have heard some Mundas of Ranchi naming the 'Birhors' as 'Bir Mundas' or 'Jungle-Mundas'. But, on the other hand, some Birhors maintain that they are nearer kinsmen to the Santals than to the Mundas though they could give no reasons for this assertion. And in the dialect spoken even by the Ranchi Birhors, although it is more closely connected with Mundari than with Santali, one cannot help noticing a few peculiarties that occur only in Santali and not in Mundari. Curiously enough some of these peculiarities occur in the corrupt dialect used by the Mundari-speaking Oraons of the Ranchi thana. Thus, the very name 'hor' (man) in the compound 'Bir-hor' is also the Santali form of Mundari 'horo'. Again the insertion of an 'h' sound after the 'a' sound in certain words is Santali rather than the Mundari. Thus, for instance, Mundari

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taikenaing' (I remained) becomes 'taheka-naing' in Santali and 'tahikanaing' in Birhor as also in the corrupt Mundari dialect used by some Oraons of the Ranchi thana ; so again, 'tising' which is the Mundari word for 'today' appears as 'tihing' in Bir-hor, and as 'teheng' in Santali.

In the Census of 1921 the total Birhor population in Chota-Nagpur was found to be 1,510, namely 749 males and 761 females as against 2340 (1104 males and 1,236 females) in the Census of 1911.

Numerical Strength.

Detailed census figures for Birhor population and for speakers of the Birhor dialect in 1911 and in 1921, as also a short vocabulary are given in the Appendix. The rapid deforestation of Chota Nagpur and the consequent diminution of the supply of game and forest produce, would appear to be responsible to some extent for this decrease in population.

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CHAPTER III.

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Social System: Tanda Organization and Inter-tanda Relations.

Such social organization as the Birhors possess is very simple though not indeed absolutely primitive. They have, at the present day, a two-fold organization,—namely, an organization for purposes of food-quest and another for purposes of marriage and kinship. The present chapter deals with the former.

The tribe, as we have seen, is divided up into scattered communities each consisting of from three or four to about nine or ten families who move about as one band from jungle to jungle in search of food or live together in or near some jungle as a comparatively settled local group or *tanda*.

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I. THE TANDA OFFICIALS.

Each *tandā* has a headman supposed to be supernaturally elected. This headman is called the *Naya*—a name probably derived from Sanskrit 'Nayak' or leader. Although the Naya is primarily the priest of the group, he is regarded also as its secular headman. He is chosen of the spirits, and he alone can propitiate them and keep them in order and thereby avert mischief and misfortune and secure good luck to the community. Although he is regarded as the 'malik' or lord of the settlement, his position is only that of a chief among equals. On the death of a Naya, the will of the spirits as to his successor is known through the medium of a ghost-doctor or *mati* of which there are one or two in almost every group. The *mati* frantically swings his head from side to side and works himself up into a state of ecstasy, and in that state of obsession reveals the will of the spirits. The

The Naya (or Priest.

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spirits, however, appear invariably to prefer a son of the late Naya, so that the post of the Naya in every Birhor *tanda* is practically hereditary. The Mati asks the spirits. "Whom will you have for your Naya ?" In answer the spirits, through the mouth of the Mati, give a description of the desired successor which generally points unmistakeably to a son of the Naya. Thus the spirits declare,—"We want the man who is of such and such an appearance, and has so many children ; we shall obey him."

When a new Naya is selected in this way, his first act is to take a bath in some spring or stream. On his return he is conducted to the Jilu-Jayar where the hunting-nets of the settlement have been placed in a heap. There the new Naya offers rice to the spirits, and the men of the *tanda* go out for a hunt to test the correctness of the selection. If the hunt proves successful, there is rejoicing in the *tanda*. If, however, it has been a failure, the Naya is called upon for an explanation. And the Mati again works himself up to

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a state of ecstasy and finds out what spirit has been standing in the way of success. On his declaring the name of the spirit and the sacrifices he requires, the new Naya proceeds to conciliate the unfriendly spirit and thus puts himself right with man and spirit. As it is through sacrifices offered by the Naya that success attends a hunting party, the Naya receives the neck *(khandi)* and half the flesh of the back (called *bisi*) of every animal killed at a hunt by the men of his *ṭāṇḍā*, whether the Naya attended the hunt or not. If he attends the hunt, he gets in addition to his special share, the usual share allotted to each hunter. When any such game has been sold by the hunters, the Naya is given two annas as price of the *bisi*" and '*khāṇḍi*'.

The Naya appoints a man of his local group as the Kotwar or Diguar whose duties are to call people to the hunt, to attend at the sacrifices and make all necessary arrangements

The Kotwar or Diguar.

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for them. Even if he fails to attend a hunt he is given a share of the game equal to what each of the hunters receives.

The Mati.

The position of a Mati is different from that of the Naya or the Kotwar. The Mati is neither elected nor appointed. And in fact there may be, and often are, more than one mati in a *ṭāṇḍā*. Again, there may be a *ṭāṇḍā* without a Mati, in which case (which is however rare) recourse has to be had to the Mati of some neighbouring *ṭāṇḍā* whenever required. It is only a person, generally a nervous person, who feels a call to the vocation of a Mati, and after undergoing some preliminary training under another Mati and observing certain strict rules as to diet and worship attains or is believed to have attained the requisite occult power, who is recognised as a Mati. Such a person is believed to have the power of second sight. The function of a Mati is to discover which particular *bhut* or *bhuts* are causing any sickness or other misfortune to the com-

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munity and what are the sacrifices required to propitiate them; and it is the duty of the Naya to offer up the requisite sacrifices. When there has been a new birth in a *ṭāṇḍā*, certain hills which may not stand pollution *(chhut)* have to be avoided by a hunting party of that *ṭāṇḍā* until the *narta* ceremony of the child has been celebrated on the seventh day from the birth. It is the business of the Mati to discover and declare which hills would resent such contact.

II. Monkey-hunt or Gari-Sendra.

The association of each *ṭāṇḍā* group is, as we have seen, based on the need for association in the food-quest. The principal occupation of the Birhor is to secure food by hunting. And, as is but natural, his social organization as well as his religion and his system of taboos are essentially concerned with success or 'luck' in hunting. Any case of ill-luck that befalls the community either in respect of food, health or

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other elemental concern of life is attributed to the infringement of some taboo by some member of the community and the consequent wrath of some ancestral or other spirit.

Rope-making and monkey-catching are the two favourite occupations which distinguish the Birhor *ṭāṇḍās* or food-groups from other aboriginal communities in Chota Nagpur. The choice of these special occupations either as means or as modes of food-quest cannot be said to have been determined solely by the geographical conditions of the flora and fauna of the Birhor's habitat. The selective intelligence of man can here be seen dealing with the environment in its own way even in such a rude community as that of the Birhors. The various factors in its past history or racial constitution that guided the tribal mind in its selection of special modes of food-quest or determined its aptitude for and pursuit of special arts and occupations are generally difficult, if not impossible, to trace. But it appears reasonable

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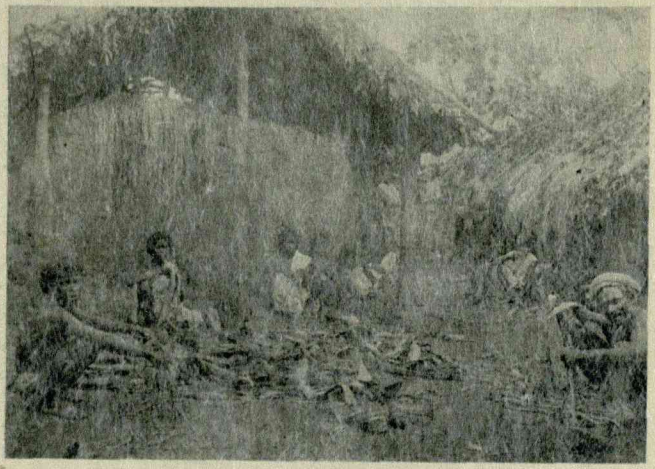


Plate XII.—A group of Jāghi Birhōṛs working in *chop* fibres at a central place in their ṭāṇḍā.

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to suppose that the racial factor has had its share along with geographical and perhaps historical factors in producing the net result.

The collection of *chop* and its manufacture, like the gathering of edible herbs, tubers, honey and bees' wax, are no longer pursued collectively by the entire *ṭāṇḍā*, but each Birhor family gathers its own herbs and tubers, honey and bees' wax, and collects its own *chop* and manufactures its own ropes, strings and nets for its own use or for sale or barter for its own benefit, although in these occupations members of one family may not unoften associate with those of one or more others, and members of a *tanda* may often be seen sitting together on some open space inside the *tanda* engaged in friendly chatting while splitting *chop* fibres, uniting the strands and making them into strings, ropes or nets. The monkey-hunt or *Gari-sendra* is, however, still conducted jointly by the adult members of an entire *ṭāṇḍā* and the game is shared by them in the manner

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discribed below. As monkey-catching is the characteristic mode of food-quest adopted by the Birhors, a somewhat detailed account of the procedure followed is given below. On the morning of the appointed day, the *Nāyā* goes to a neighbouring stream or spring, and there bathes, fills a jug with water, and brings it home. Then after changing his loin-cloth, the *Nāyā*, in company with one or two elders of the *ṭāṇḍā*, proceeds with a handful of *āruā* rice and the jug of water to the *Jāyār* which his wife has already cleaned with mud or, if available, with cowdung diluted in water. The *Diguār* has already carried to the *Jāyār* and placed in a heap all the nets of the intending hunters of the *ṭāṇḍā*. Before this heap of nets the *Nāyā* stands on his left leg with his right heel resting on his left knee, and with his face to the east, and, with arms extended forward, pours a little water three times on the ground and invokes all the spirits by name for success in hunting, as follows :—"Here I am making a libation in your names.

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Plate XIII.—Chāṇḍi Pūjā at the Jilu-jāyār (sacred grove). The priest (Nāyā) is seated with rice-grains in a leaf-cup in his hand. The hunting nets and sticks are placed in a heap before him.

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May blood of game flow like this." Thus is magic blended with primitive religion. The *Nāyā* then sits down before the nets and puts three vermilion marks on the ground before them, and on these vermilion marks sprinkles a little *āruā* rice, and addresses the spirits as follows :—"To-day I am offering this rice to you all. May we have speedy success. May game be caught in our nets as soon as we enter the jungles." Then they return home leaving the nets at the *Jāyār*. After breakfast each intending hunter takes up from the *jayar* his own hunting-net *(jhāl)* and clubs *(thenga)* and *ṭainis* or bamboo poles for fixing nets and proceeds to the selected jungle.

Precautions are taken beforehand so that while leaving the *ṭāṇḍā* none of the party may chance to see an empty vessel being carried along or a person easing himself. Such sights are regarded as bad auguries. Nor may anyone of the party utter the name of any person not

Omens.

belonging to the *ṭaṇḍā*. For the very mention of such names will, it is believed, through what is considered a natural connection, attract to the party the malice and 'evil eye' (literally, 'evil mouth and evil teeth') of the stranger so named. With such traditional precautions enjoined by Birhor society, the party proceed to the selected jungle. Arrived there, all sit down together on the ground for a short while in what is called an *āwās* or rendezvous.

Awas.

The Kotwar now touches each net with a *tiril* or ebony *(Dyospyros tomentosa or melanoxylon)* twig and hands it over to the Naya. With this twig, the Naya performs what is known as 'bānā sānā' inorder to neutralise the harmful effects of the evil eye of any of their own women in the *ṭaṇḍā* which may have been directed, even though involuntarily, against the party. With a low murmering voice he says.—

Bana Sana.

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"Ne tihing do lelkuletaku orāre menāko a unkura nutumte bānāo sānāo kānāing. Sendrā sāngār sinukanale hoikoka. Okoe lelkuletai onira metre birure soso sunum dulo kāi." "Today, I am making *bānā sānā* in the names of those [women] who cast their eyes at us while sending us away[15]. May we have success in the hunt as soon as we go (enter the jungle). May oil of the *bhelwa* or marking-nut *(semicarpis anacardium)* drop into the eyes and anus of those who cast evil eyes on us."

Now some of the party are told off and go in twoes in different directions to *(china)* look for monkeys. This part of the operations is known as *chichua.* When these men return with the desired information, the most suitable position in the jungle is selected for *ghaṭi* where the hunters set up their nets in a line from tree to tree. Two or three men remain squatting in concealment with sticks or *clubs* in their hands at a distance of about twenty yards straight in front of the line

15. Lit., who looked *(lel)* at us and sent *(kul)* us away.

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of nets. These men are known as *aṭāwahas.* Two other men are selected as *ātomdās* and are stationed further off, one about twenty yards to the right and another about the same distance to the left of the *aṭawahas.* At about the same distance further off in front of each ātomdā stands a *bājhur,* and still further ahead of each of them at some distance stands a *babsor.*

Two other men styled *beberas,* one from each side, drive the game towards the *bājhurs.* Then the *beberas* and the *bājhurs* together drive the monkeys towards the *atomdas.* The *aṭāwāhās* also come up, and all together drive the monkeys towards the nets and strike them dead with their clubs and sticks. The game bagged, the nets are taken down and the party leave the forest.

When they arrive at a suitable spot near some stream or other water, they light a fire, generally by friction and scorch the monkeys in it, wash them clean, and cut them up, and take out the brains *(hatang),* the heart *(karji),* the lungs

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(boro), the liver (*ihim*), the entrails (*kundi poṭṭa*), and the flesh of the fore leg-joint *(hēṛē jilu)*, place them in a *chātkam* or bag improvised with *gungu* leaves (*lama sakom*) sewn up with reed-needles (*chārio*).

These are roasted by placing burning logs of wood above and below the *chatkam*. When roasted, the meat is taken out and distributed among the members of the party. But they must not help themselves to it until the Naya who was given a bit of the *ihim* has by himself roasted it by the same method and standing a little apart from the rest and with this roasted meat in hand, and his back towards them, has offered a little to all the spirits jointly (*hāprom duprom guch gūr*), and promised them similar offerings in future if they always brought them such game. Then the Naya first eats up this *ihim*, and joins his companions, and takes his share of the other roasted meat; and then every one eats his own share, with the exception of his share

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of the entrails (*poṭṭa*), *chānrbōl* (tail) and feet (*banka*), which he carries home for his family; and this is known as *bānāpā*. Each one who took his net to the hunt gets a hind leg (*bulu*), and each *bebera* receives a fore leg (*phāri*) for his additional share of the game. The rest of the meat is divided into as many shares as there are men in the party besides one additional share for the Naya. With their respective shares the hunters now go home.

Inter-tanda Association: Hunting.

It is not only the *ṭāṇḍā* organization that is based on the necessity for association for purposes of securing food by hunting; once a year may be seen a larger association in which almost all the able-bodied men belonging to a number of *ṭāṇḍās* situated within a day's journey from one another, come together for purposes of hunting. In this annual hunting expedition known as the *Disum sendra* (or regional hunt), we meet with a rudimentary form of association in larger

wholes than the *ṭāṇḍās.* The *Nāyās* and other elders of the different groups act as umpires in any dispute regarding game between the hunters of the different *ṭāṇḍās*, and consult one another in other matters connected with the expedition. This expedition starts on the Sunday before the full moon in the month of *Baíshākh.* The *Diguārs* of the different *ṭāṇḍās* communicate the information at the markets that the *Disüm sendra* will be held at such and such a hill or jungle, and at the same time notify the date to all the *ṭāṇḍās* concerned. In each *ṭāṇḍā*, on the night preceding the date so fixed, the *Nāyā* and his wife have to observe strict sexual continence.

In the morning, the intending hunters take an early meal, and proceed to the Jayar and each takes up his own net. Every hunter also takes with him a club and two *tainis* or bamboo poles for fixing the net. Axes are also carried. Bows and arrows are not ordinarily used, but if the party intend going to a great distance, they sometimes take bows and arrows. There is no pro-

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hibition against meeting women while starting on the expedition nor against carrying copper coin or other metal. But no man or woman carrying an empty vessel must be seen by any of the party while leaving the village. During the absence of the hunters from the village, the females of the settlement are required to maintain strict sexual chastity, as otherwise the party is sure to be unsuccessful in the hunt. On the way, parties of hunters from the other *ṭāṇḍās* come and join the expedition. When all the parties have arrived at some distance from the particular hill or jungle where they intend hunting, a ceremony known as *baïbera* is performed by one of the Nayas present for the success of the whole party in the hunt. The ceremony is as follows :–The hunters all sit down on the ground and their nets are arranged in a row before them. The Diguar selected for the purpose touches each of the nets with a *kend* or *tiril (Diospyros tomentosa)* or *keond* twig which he then hands over to the Naya. This is known as *thapabera*. The

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Naya holding the *tiril* twig in his hand sits down with his face towards the direction from which the party came and makes *baibera* by addressing the Deity or *Singbonga* as follows :—"*Sirmāre Singbonga Raja, okoe lelkulkena inia med dātāmocha lāgāo jānā ina tihindo bānāo-berāe kānāing. Jaise sendra benokānāte gārādā lekāge hoikoka. Tihing do arhādātā sarpala tiril-dahura bānāo berāi kānāing*". "Thou in the sky, O Singbonga, king, should anybody [of our *ṭāṇḍā*] have cast an evil look, and [his or her] evil eye, evil tooth or evil mouth, has fallen [on our [party], may that be withdrawn. I am setting at rest *(banao-bera* or *bai-bera)* all [evil influences]. May [blood of] game flow even as the water of a river flows. I [do now] neutralise the effects of the evil eye, etc., with this *tiril* twig." As the Naya goes on with his invocation, he passes the *tiril* twig under each of his hips alternately three times. Then he places the twig on the path by which they came so that all evil influences in the shape of the evil

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eye, etc., may be set at naught. While reciting the invocation, the Naya mentally names by turns every individual man and woman left behind in the *tāṇḍā*—for who knows but some one amongst them may be the unconscious possessor of the evil eye and thus unintentionally hinder success in the hunt !

Arrived at their destination, two men are told off as '*bebera*' or leaders of the beaters who may number twelve or more. They drive each from a different side all the animals on towards the nets spread out in a line. The hunters then kill the animals by striking them with their clubs or hacking them with their axes.

Whenever a deer is killed by one of the groups of hunters, the Naya of that group smears some *sal* leaves with a little of the blood of the slain animal, and holding these leaves in his hand sits down with his face to the east and offers by way of a solatium the blood-stained leaves—or rather the blood in the leaves—one after another to the different spirits of "the hills and

streams" (*Pahar-parbat-garha dhorha*) by name, saying—"Today we are taking away your 'goat', and so we offer you this sacrifice." Deer, it may be mentioned, is euphemestically termed the 'goat' of the spirits.

If success is delayed, the *Māti* either lightly strikes the ground with a stick or divining rod, or takes up a handful of myrobalan (*āonra* or *āmlaki*) leaves and intently cons them to see what particular spirit or spirits have been hindering success in the hunt. When he has discovered this, he hands over the leaves to the *Nāyā* who now makes *'baibera'* (as described above) with these leaves instead of with *arua* rice, and offers the myrobalan leaves at the spot to the spirits named by the *Māti*. The *Nāyā* also offers a pinch of powdered tobacco to the *hāpṛom* or ancestor spirits of the community and particularly to the spirits of such of the members of the community as died on hunting expeditions,—

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for such spirits are believed to be particularly active in hindering success in hunting. If this fails to secure success in hunting the party has no doubt but that some sexual taboo has been infringed by the people of the *ṭāṇḍā.*

When the hunting party return home, the wife of each hunter first washes the feet of her husband, and then all the women proceed with oil and water to the house of the *Nāyā* and there each woman washes his feet and anoints them with oil.

A very interesting ceremony is now reverently performed by the wife of each hunter in whose net an animal has been caught. This is called the *chumān* or kissing ceremony and is a copy of the *chumān* ceremony of the bridegroom and bride at a wedding. The woman cleanses a space in front of her hut with mud or cowdung and water, and on this spot the slain animal is laid down. She then takes up a plate on which are placed an earthen lamp, a few blades of tender grass-shoots, and a little unhusked rice. The plate containing

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these things is waved three times round the head of the deer, then a few grains of paddy and a few blades of grass are thrown on its head, and finally the woman warms her hands over the flame of the lamp, touches the cheeks of the deer with hands thus warmed, and kisses the hands herself. On the second or third day a fowl is sacrificed to the "*Gorkhia bhut* of the deer" (or the spirit that tends deer as a cowherd tends cattle) and another fowl to the *Chowrāsi Hāpṛōm* or eighty-four (i. e. innumerable) ancestor-spirits, and a little milk to the Mother-goddesses—Devi and others.

All the animals killed at the hunt are finally taken to the Jilu-jayar and there skinned, dressed, and chopped into pieces. The heads of the animals are roasted and eaten by the men alone, but not men whose wives are pregnant. Should such a man eat any portion of the head of the game he has to pay the price of, or supply, three fowls that will be required to propitiate the spirits known as *Sikāri bhut* (spirits of

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hunting) and *Chowrāsi Hāpṛōm* (the eighty-four spirits of the dead ancestors). Unless these sacrifices are offered in expiation of the infrigement of the taboo, the men of the *ṭaṇḍā* will have no success in future hunting expeditions. The remainder of the flesh is divided in the following manner: The neck and the flesh of one side (*bisi*) of the back will be the *Nāyā's* perquisites over and above his usual share as a member of the community. The man in whose net any game was caught will receive in addition to his usual share, one knee-joint and flesh of the other side (*bisi*) of the back. Of the two beaters, each gets one of the front legs, and the Diguar gets one knee-joint, in addition to their usual shares. The rest of the meat is divided in equal shares amongst all the families in the *ṭāṇḍā*, even if owing to illness or to the absence of any male member of any family such a family was unrepresented in the hunting expedition. In ordinary hunts, as distinguished from the great annual *Bisu Sikar*, except the *Nāyā* and the Diguar no one

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who was not a member of the hunting party receives a share of the game. This exception is made in the case of the *Nāyā* because it is through his services in offering proper sacrifices that game is obtained ; and the same exemption is made in favour of the Diguar because he attends to the requirements of the *Nāyā* at the periodical sacrifices. Even when any game is sold by the hunters, the *Nāyā*, as we have seen, must be paid a sum of two annas as price of his special share besides his usual share of any money or grain obtained as the price of the game. So also the Diguar will receive half an anna as price of a knee-joint.

In the ordinary daily hunts of each separate *ṭāṇḍā*, generally the same procedure is adopted as in the Disum Sendra with the following differences : The *Nāyā* is not required to observe continence as in the night preceding the 'Disum Sedra'. Two men are selected as *bebera* or beaters. These men drive, each from a different side, all the animals towards the nets spread out in a line. There is no prohibition

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against the sale of game caught in these informal hunts as there is in the case of the game killed at the *Disum Sendra*. When any game has been sold and not brought home, a little hair or, if possible, a bit of its skin with the hairs on, is brought home and the *chumān* or kissing ceremony is performed over it by three women as is done over the game itself after the *Disum Sendra*.

Whereas women may not join the *Disum Sendra*, they may accompany (except during their monthly course) the hunters at these informal hunts in which they follow the *beberas* as *jhorekdās* (without nets). They beat bushes with their *lāṭhis*.

When a hunting party return home unsuccesful, the *Nāyā* asks the *Diguar* to bring him the hunting nets of each family in the *ṭāṇḍā*. When they are brought, he takes out a bit of thread from each of the nets, makes up all the bits into a small bundle, buries the bundle in the ground and sits down by its side with his face to the east, and taking up some

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grains of rice in his hand goes on muttering incantations, all the while fixing his gaze intently on the rice in his hand. After a time he declares that he has found out which spirit or spirits are preventing success in the chase, takes out the bundle of thread which he had buried beside him and exclaims :—"Here is the bundle which these spirits have secreted. That is why no game could be had. Now that I have taken out this impediment to the chase, it will henceforth be all right." Then addressing the spirits, he says,—"I shall sacrifice fowls to you. Don't offer obstructions any more. From to-day may game be caught in plenty in our nets." Saying this, he sacrifices a fowl by cutting its neck with a knife.

Besides the inter-*ṭāṇḍā* association for purposes of hunting at the *Disum Sendra* already described, the only other occasions on which representative men from a number of *ṭāṇḍās* gather together is at weddings and *panchāyats* in which breaches of tribal rules, particularly with regard to sexual taboos, are discussed and punished.

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The Birhors have no tribal organization in the sense of an association of the different clans of the entire tribe of which every member or family is regarded as an unit. Even each separate clan making up the tribe can hardly be said to have attained any consolidation or to maintain a feeling of solidarity. All the various scattered groups or families of any particular clan never come together as units in one clan organization. The rude beginning of such an amalgamation may perhaps be seen in the practice of members of the same clan of a particular *ṭāṇḍā* inviting members of the same clan who live within an easy distance from them to attend the periodical clan ceremonies in which sacrifices are offered to the clan deities known as *Buru Bongas* or *Oṛa Bongas.*

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CHAPTER IV.

Social System : Totemism and Kinship Organization.

The second form of social grouping among the Birhors is concerned with kinship and marriage. The fundamental features in the marriage and kinship organization of the Birhors, as of their kinsmen and neighbours the Mundas and the Santals, is the division of the tribe into a number of exogamous clans called *gotras*, mostly named after some animal, plant, fruit, flower or other material object. The Birhors appear to have preserved or developed a few interesting features in their totemism which I have not yet met with among any other totemic tribe in Chota Nagpur, and which, so far as I know, have not been recorded of any other tribe in India.

It is interesting to note that the few families that compose a Birhor *ṭāṇḍā* or

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food-group do not all belong to the same clan or kinship-group. Chance or, more often, marital connections would appear to have originally brought together in a *ṭāṇḍā* families belonging to different clans. And through long association in the food-quest, families of different clans composing any particular *ṭāṇḍā* appear to have attained a comparatively greater cohesion than different families of one and the same clan belonging to differet *ṭāṇḍās*. But even this cohesion is seldom so strong as to prevent any family from leaving its old *ṭāṇḍā* and joining a new one, when it feels inclined to do so.

Birhor Clans.

The names of Birhor clans or *gōtras* that I have hitherto been able to ascertain are the following :—

1. Andi (wild cat).
2. Bonga Sauri (a kind of wild grass).
3. Bhat (name of a Hindu caste).
4. Bhont or Bhuntil (a kite).
5. Bhuiya (name of a tribe).
6. Chauli Hembrom (*chauli* = rice ; *Hembrōm* = betel-palm).

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Plate XIV.—Type of a Birhōṛ youth. (*Sāmdhoar* clan).

7. Ganda Garua (a large species of vulture).
8. Geroa (a small bird).
9. Gidhi (vulture).
10. *Goār* (milkman caste).
11. Guleria or Galaoria (pellet-bow).
12. Gundri (a kind of bird).
13. Hembrom (betel-palm).
14. *Hēṛē* Hembrom (*hēṛē* = rice-husk).
15. Induar (eel).
16. Jegseria *Laṭha* (*laṭha* = a cake made of *mohua* flowers).
17. Kauch or Horo (tortoise).
18. Kawan Hembrom.
19. Keonduar (a kind of fruit).
20. Khangar (name of a sub-tribe of the Mundas).
21. Kharea (name of a tribe [Kharia] ?)
22. Khudi Hembrom (*khudi* = broken grains of rice).
23. Ludamba (a kind of flower).
24. *Lundi jāl* (= *Lakur chata*).
25. Lupung (myrobalan) [called *Beherwar* in Hindi].
26. Maghaia Hembrom (*Maghaiā* = belon-

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ging to Magha or Bihar).

27. Mahali (name of a tribe).
28. Modi (name of a caste or section of a tribe).
29. Murum (nilgai or *Portax pictu*).
30. Nag (Cobra) or Nagpuria (belonging to [Chota] Nagpur).
31. Sada (white).
32. Samduar (*sadom* = horse).
33. Saunria (a kind of wild grass).
34. Sham-jhakoa (a composition used in whetting weapons).
35. Singpuria (*singhara* fruit or *Trapa bispinosa*).
36. Suia (a kind of bird).
37. Toriar (belonging to Pargana Tori in the Palamau district).

A few of these names, such as Nagpuria and Toriar, are derived from names of localities, whereas a few others, such as Bhat, Goar, Bhuiya, Khangar and Mahali would appear to be derived from names of other tribes, with some of whom at any

rate there are reasons to believe there have been miscegenation in the past.[16]

Individual Totems, etc.

Sex totems and associated totems are unknown. A Birhor's totem is hereditary and not acquired. Although The Birhors have no individual or personal totems, properly so called, they have a peculiar belief of a somewhat analogous nature. When a Birhor dreams of some bird, beast, worm, reptile, or other thing in the night, and the following morning receives a visit from some friend or relative, he at once concludes that the object of his dream, whether it be a snake or an ant or even a rope or some other thing, must be the *rāis* (the 'dæmon' or 'genius') of his guest.

But I have not come across any tradition of the ancestor of a Birhor clan acquiring

[16] This list is not exhaustive. Risley gives only eight clan-names, namely, Hembrom, Jegseria, Mahali, Nagpuria, Singpuria, Liluai, Nag and Siruar. I have not yet met with *Liluai* and *Siruar* which are probably derived from place-names. Liluai is obviously the same as *Liluar* mentioned by Driver (see p. 30 *ante*.)

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his totem as his guardian-spirit in a vision or a dream.

Totem Badges.

The members of a clan do not wear any badge or distinguishing emblem or peculiar dress, nor make up their hair in any distinctive fashion, nor get representations of their totem cut or tattooed on their persons or carved or painted on their houses or on any personal belongings. But, as we shall see later on, during sacrifices to the spirits known variously as '*Oṛā-bōngās*' (Home-gods'), *Buru bōngās* (Hill-gods) or 'Khunt-bhuts' (Clan spirits) some emblem of the family totem is placed by the side of the sacrificer and this emblem is always carried about with it wherever the family migrates.

Traditional Origin of Particular Totems.

The few legends that the Birhors tell about the origin of some of their clans do not point to any belief in the descent of men from their totems. All that they indi-

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Plate XV.—Type of a Birhōṛ young man. *(Lupung clan).*

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cate is that the totem plant or animal had had some accidental connection with the birth of the reputed ancestor of the clan. Thus, the ancestor of the Gidhi (vulture) clan, it is said, was born under a wide-spreading tree, and, as soon as he was born, the egg of a vulture which had its nest on the overhanging branches of the tree dropped down on the babe's head from the nest. Hence the baby and his descendants came to form the Gidhi clan. Similarly, the ancestor of the Geroa clan is said to have been born under the wings of a Geroa bird, and the ancestor of the Lupung clan under the shade of a *lūpūng* tree. The first ancestor of the *Shām-jhākoa* clan, it is said, was born at a place where people were getting their weapons sharpened. The ancestor of the Khangar clan was born when his mother was pressing oil, and that of the Mahali clan when his mother was plaiting a winnowing basket. The occupation of the Mahali tribe, it may be noted, is basket-making, and the Khangar Mundas are reputed as good oil-pressers. The

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Mahali clan of the Birhors would appear to have originated from a cross between a Birhor and a Mahali as the Khangar clan would appear to have originated in a cross between a Khangar Munda and a Birhor. The ancestor of the Bhuiya clan is, however, said to have purchased a brass bell from a man of the Bhuiya tribe, and thus obtained the clan name. The Chauli Hembrom clan is said to have been the original clan of the Birhors, and the ancestor of this clan, it is said, rose up from under the ground with rice *(chāuli)* on his head. Families of the Chauli Hembrom clan carry with them, in all their wanderings, one or more natural stones called Mahdeo stones believed to have risen from under ground even as their own first ancestor did, and should they happen to settle down for a time at any place, they put up these stones to the west of their settlement and there offer sacrifices to them. Men of the Hembrōm clan are belived to have uniform success in the chase and always better luck in hunting than the members of other clans. Of the Mūrūm

clan it is said that when their first ancestor was born, a Mūrūm (nilgāi or *Portax Pictu*) came and stood by its side, and forthwith the baby jumped up and mounted the animal which rode away with it through the woods until the babe's head-dress was caught in a *chōp (Bauhinia scandens)* creeper and the babe dismounted to cut down the creepers. Since then, it is said, *chōp*-gathering and rope-making have become the principal occupation of the Birhors.

Legends like these are obviously *expost facto* or secondary explanations.

Resemblance of Men to their Totems.

But although the Birhors of our days do not believe in the actual descent of a clan from its totem, they appear to find some resemblance in the temperament or the physical appearance of the members of a clan to that of their totem animal or plant. Thus, it is said, people of the Gidhi (vulture) clan have usually little hair on the crown of the head; the Andi gotra men have

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bald forehead; members of the Lupung clan are generally short but plump like the *lūpūng* fruit; the Ludamba gotra as well as the Mahali gotra people are short and lean; members of the Hērē Hembrom clan are thin and short; the Chauli Hembrom men often have matted hair; people of the Geroa clan, it is said, have generally no nails on their toes and their teeth decay prematurely; the people of the (Jegseria) Lāthā clan are said to be generally tall and the hair on the sides of their head are said to fall off at an early age; people of the Murum clan, who are said to be generally of medium height, and those of the Bhuiya clan, who are said to be generally tall in stature, are both irascible in their temperament; people of the Sham-jhakoa clan are said to be generally tall and thin, and people of the Khangar clan are said to walk with an inward bend in their legs. It need hardly be said that these fancied resemblances to their totem are more often than not discredited by facts.

As with other totemic peoples, a *Birhōṛ*

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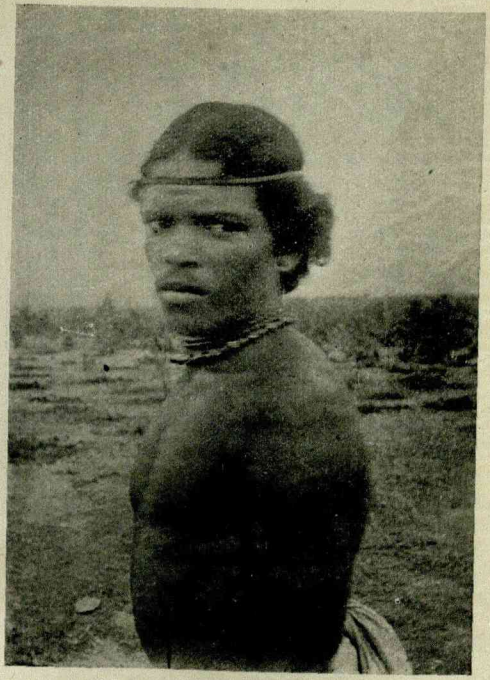


Plate XVI.—Type of a Birhōṛ young man. (Bhuiya clan).

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Totem Taboos.

must abstain from killing, destroying, maiming, hunting, injuring, eating or otherwise using the animal, plant or other object that forms his clan totem, or any thing made out of or obtained from it; and, if posible, he will also prevent others from doing so in his presence. Some of the clans carry the principle to curious extremes. Thus, the men of the *Mūrūm* clan cover their eyes when they chance to come across a *Mūrūm* stag. *Birhōṛs* of the *Khāngār* clan abstain from cleansing the hair of their head with oil-cakes, because oil-pressing was the occupation of their *Kh ngār* ancestor.

It is worthy of note, however, that all totem taboos have to be strictly observed only by married men, for it is not until he is married that a *Birhōṛ* is considered to become a full member of his clan. Eating, killing, or destroying one's clan totem is regarded by the *Birhōṛ* as equivalent to killing a human member of his own clan, and the reason usually assigned by the

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Birhõr for abstaining from, or preventing others from killing or destroying his totem is that if the totem animal, plant, or other object diminishes, the clan too will suffer a corresponding decrease in number. Although it is believed that a particular clan will multiply in proportion as the totem species or class multiplies, no *Birhõr* clan resorts to any magical process, like the Australian *Intichiuma* ceremonies, for the multiplication of its totem species or class. Individuals of the tribe not belonging to a certain totem do not hold those who do responsible for the ensuring of a supply of the totemic animal or plant for their benefit, nor are the former required to obtain the permission of the latter to eat their totemic animal or plant. Marriage between persons of the same clan is considered incestuous.

Descent is reckoned in the male line and a man has the same totem as his father. The mother's, or rather the mother's father's totem is not respected; for, in fact, a female is not supposed to have

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any clan ; she is not a recognized member either of her father's or of her husband's clan, and has not, therefore, to observe the taboos relating to their totems. She must not, however, kill the totem animal or destroy the totem plant of her husband's clan, as that would, in the *Birhōṛ's* estimation, be equivalent to killing the husband himself. When a *Birhōṛ* unwarily happens to eat, kill or destroy his totem animal or plant, his clan-fellows impose on him, according to his means, a fine of either five four-anna bits, or five two-anna bits, or five annas. He is also required to provide a feast, if not to all the members, at least to one member of each clan in his settlement or encampment. The spirits of the dead are not supposed to enter their totem animals nor are the spirits of a dead totem supposed to enter the wombs of the wives of men of that totem. A meeting of the totem animal is not considered, save among the *Mūrūms* to affect one's luck ; nor does a *Birhōṛ* make obeisance *(salāām)* to his totem animal when

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he meets it. But should he ever happen to come across the carcase of his totem beast or bird, he must anoint its forehead with oil and vermilion, although he has not actually to mourn for the dead animal or bury it.

Association of Totemism with Birhor Religion.

There is another practice connected with *Birhōṛ* totemism which, even if it may not have an essentially religious or magico-religious significance, is at any rate intimately associated with *Birhōṛ* religion. Every *Birhōṛ* clan has a tradition of its ancient settlement having been located in some hill or other within Chota Nagpur. And once a year at every *Birhōṛ* encampment or settlement the men of each clan assemble on some open space outside their group of leaf-huts to offer sacrifices to the presiding spirit of their ancestral hill. This spirit is called '*Oṛā-bōngā*' or 'home-god' by the migratory *(Uthlū) Birhōṛs* and '*Buru-bōngā*' or 'mountain-god' by the comparatively settled *(Jāghi) Birhōṛs*. At these sacrifices, in which members of other clans

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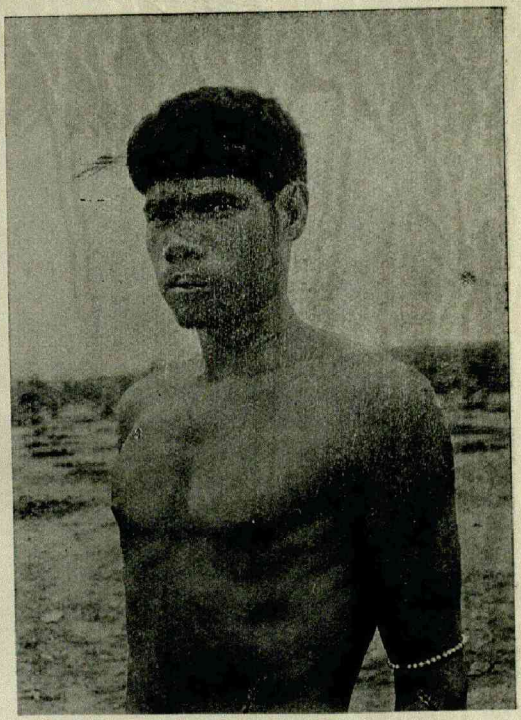


Plate XVII.—Type of a Birhōṛ young man. (Murum clan).

may not take part, the eldest member present of the clan officiates as sacrificer. A mystic diagram with four compartments is drawn on the ground with rice-flour, and in one of these compartments the sacrificer sits down with his face turned in the direction of the ancestral hill of his clan and with some emblem of his totem species placed in another compartment of the diagram. Thus men of the *Lūdūmbū* clan place a *Lūdūmbā* flower before the sacrificer ; those of the *Mūrūm* clan place a bit of a horn, or skin of the *mūrūm (nīlgāi)* ; those of the *Kenduā* clan place a twig of the Keond *(Diospyros melanoxylon)* tree ; those of the *Gerōā* clan place a wing of the *gerōā* bird ; those of the *Aṇḍi* clan place bit of the skin of the *Aṇḍi* (wild cat) ; those of the *Chāuli Hembrōm* clan place a handful of *āruā* rice and also a hive of the *terom* fly ; those of the *Hēṛē Hembrōm* clan place a little rice-husk ; those of the *Khūdi Hembrōm* clan place some broken grains *(khūd)* of rice ; those of the *Shām-jhākōā* place

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a *sinṛi* made of lac and sand which is used in whetting weapons; those of the *Saunṛia* clan place a handful of *sāunṛi* or wild grass; those of the *(Jegseriā) Lāṭhā* clan place a *lāṭhā* or round cake made of the corolla of the *mohuā* flower and rice; those of the *Singpūriā* clan place either a leaf or a stem of the *Singhāṛā (Trapa bispinosa)*; those of the Gidhi clan place a claw or wing or feather of the *gidhi* or vulture; those of the *Mūrūm* clan place a bit of the horn or skin of the stag; those of the *Jeṭhseriā* clan place some flower which blooms in the month of *Jeṭh* (May-June) and the sacrificer also sticks some of this flower in his ears; those of the *Guleriā* clan place a *guler* (or bow used in shooting clay balls at birds); those of the Tirio clan place a *tirio* or flute; those of the *Khāngār* clan place an oil-cake; those of the *Māhāli* clan place a small new *supli*, or winnowing basket; those of the *Bhūiya* clan place a brass bell; those of the *Bhāt* clan place a new winnowing basket with a new earthen

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Plate XVIII.—Type of a middle-aged Birhōṛ (*Andi* clan).

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vessel on it and light a fire in a small bundle of *birni* (or kind of wild grass). Men of the *Sādā* or white clan sacrifice to their *Būrū-bongā* with white clothes on; they do not use red lead in their *pūjās* nor do they ever use turmeric in any shape in their food, nor dye their clothes with turmeric as other clans do at weddings, nor allow anyone wearing coloured clothes to enter their *āding* or inner room where the ancestor-spirits are supposed to reside.

In the case of bird or beast totems, the skin, horn, claw or wing used as an emblem to represent the clan at the *pūjās* is obtained by members of the clan not by killing or destroying the bird or beast with their own hands but through men of some other clan to whom they are not taboo. And the horn or claw or skin or wing, once secured, is carefully preserved in the 'spirit basket' for use at the *pūjās* as often as may be required. So intimate and vital is the connection between the clan and its totem, that the totem emblem thus used at the *pūjās* is regarded as representing the clan

as a whole. And the invocation at such *pūjās* begins thus :—'Behold such-and-such (names) a clan has come to offer sacrifices to thee, O spirit of such-and-such Hill (names)'.

Fear of Hill Spirits.

Although the men of every *Birhōṛ* clan annually offer sacrifices to the presiding spirit of their ancestral hill, so great is their fear of the spirit that no member of a *Birhōṛ* clan will, on any account, enter or even go within a distance of a mile or two of the hill or jungle reputed to be its former home, unless some family of the clan is still residing there and regularly propitiating the local spirits. Even when, in the course of their wanderings, a group of *Uṭhlu Birhōṛs* happen to come near such hill or jungle, they must turn aside and take a different route. The reason now assigned for such avoidance is that the spirits of such a hill or jungle who have not had any sacrifices offered to them since the men had left the place might cause them harm for such neglect. As for *Jaghi*

Birhōṛs, they no longer observe this taboo as to entry in their ancestral jungle or hill *(buru)*, but still they will on no account spend more than one night at a time in such a place.

Among these traditional homes of different clans the following may be mentioned. The Lupung clan had their old home at *Gōsō-Chaingāṛā*, the Chauli Hembrōm clan at *Tilāiya*, the Bhuiya clan at *Dumardihā*, the *Hēṛē Hembrōm* near *Rāmgarh*; the *Maghāiā Hembrōm* at *Chulāhi* near the source of the *Dāmōdar*; the Gidhi clan near *Gōla*, the *Jegseriā Lāṭhā* clan at *Jegeswar*; the *Singpuriā* clan at *Belsāgrā*; the *Māhāli* clan at *Bisā*; the *Tiriō* clan at *Narsing Nemrā*,—all in the *Hāzāribāgh* district. The *Anḍi* clan had their old home near *Duāru*; the *Lūdāmbā* clan near *Pāiki Lāli*; the *Nāgpuriā Hembrōm* at *Charnābeṛā*; the *Sāuṛiā* clan at *Sirām*; the *Mūrūm* clan near *Tāimārā*; the *Gerōā* clan at *Toābā Dūlmi*; the *Khāngār* clan near *Hūānghātu* and *Tākra*; the *Sadā* clan near

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Sōsō; the *Bhāṭ* clan near *Piṭhoriā*; the *Kenduā* clan near *Omeḍāṇḍā*,—all in the *Rānchi* district. The *Shām-jhākoā* clan had their former home at *Heslā Dūrgūr*. It is obvious, however that these old homes of the different clans were not their absolutely first homes.

Supposed Magical Powers of Certain Clans.

The situation of these traditional homes of a few of the clans is believed to have endowed them with specific magical powers. Thus, the *Hēṛē Hembrōm* and the *Khūdi Hembrōm* clans are said to have powers over the weather. It is said that when high wind is approaching, if a man of either of these clans pours a jug of water on the *thhān* (spirit-seat) or in front of the tribal encampment and bids the storm turn aside, the storm will immediately take a different direction, and even though it may blow hard on the country all around, the hill or jungle in which these clans may be encamping will remain quite calm and undisturbed. The reason why the men of these clans are said to be the '*māliks*' or

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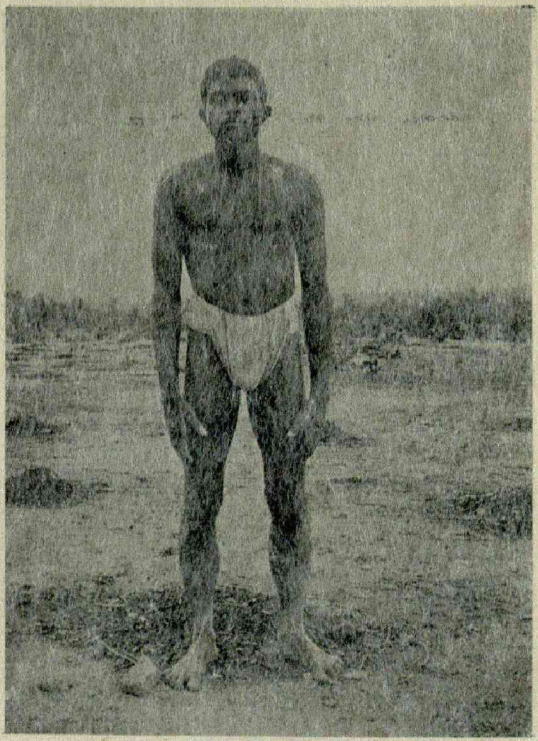


Plate XIX.—Type of a middle-aged Birhōṛ (Aṇḍi clan).

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masters of the storm is explained by saying that their '*Būrū-bōngās*' (mountain-gods) or *Oṛā-bōngās*' (home-gods) are situate to the north, which is the home of storms. Members of the *Jegseriā Lāṭhā* clan, whose ancestral home and 'home-god' *(Oṛā-bōngā)* are further north than those of the *Hēṛē Hembrōm* and *Khūdi Hembrōm* clans, are credited with the power of controlling monsoon rains and high winds in the same way. But with regard to this clan, it is also said the their special power over monsoon winds and rains is derived from the spirit known as '*Bhīr Dhīr Pāncho Pāṇṛōā*,[17] who is the guardian of the monsoon rains and who is specially propitiated by the men of this clan at their *thhāns* or spirit-seats. It is said that monsoon winds and rains will always abate their force when they aproach a settlement of this clan. Of the *Kāwān* clan—one of the wildest of *Birhōṛ*

[17] "Pancho Panroa" appears to be a corruption of the "Pancha Pandavas" (the five sons of Pandu) of Mahabharata fame, but is vaguely spoken of by the Birhors as a single spirit.

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clans—it is said that tigers on certain occasions serve them as friends and servants. When a *Kāwān* woman is about to be confined, her husband makes for her a separate shed with leaves and branches in which she is left alone. As soon as a baby is born to her, a tiger, it is said, invariably enters the shed, cleanses the limbs of the baby by licking them, and opens a back-door to the shed for the woman to go out and come in during her days of ceremonial taboo.

Differences in Customs between the Clans.

In such matters as food-taboos, festivals, sacrifices and the like, there are differences in the differnt clans. Thus, the men of the *Nāgpuriā* clan offer an ox; those of the *Khāngār*, *Aṇḍi*, and *Shāmjhākōā* clans offer a goat; those of the *Lūdāmbā* clan offer two goats; those of the *Mūrūm* clan offer one chicken and one goat; the *Hēṛē Hembrōm*, *Chāuli Hembrōm*, *Khūdi Hembrōm*, *Maghāiā Hembrōm*, the *Bhūiyā*, the *Māhāli* and the *Sādā* clans each offer two chickens to their respective *Oṛā-*

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bōngā or *Būrū-bōngā* or *Khūnt-bhūt*. The headman of the *Lūdāmbā* clan while offering sacrifices to his Būrū-bōngā wears the *Brāhmanical* sacred thread, as the *Sūkūn-būrū* hill which is their reputed ancestral hill is supposed to be a '*Brāhman bhūt*' or *Brāhman* spirit.

As regards festivals, the *Sarhūl* appears to have been adopted from their non-*Birhōṛ* neighbours by the *Mūrūm*, *Shām-jhākōā*, *Gerōā*, *Bōnga-sauṛi*, *Khāngār*, *Aṇḍi*, *Lūdāmbā* and *Sādā* clans; the Karam festival by the *Shām-jhākōa*, *Mūrūm*, *Lāṭhā*, *Chāuli Hembrōm*, *Nāgpuria*, *Māhāli* and *Gidhi* clans; the *Sōhorai* festival by the *Bhūiya*, *Aṇḍi*, *Mūrūm*, *Shām-jhākōa*, *Khāngār* and *Gerōa* clans; and the *Mahādeo (chaṛak) pūja* festival in Chait (March-April) by the different subdivisions of the *Hembrōm* clan, and by the *Bhūiya*, *Lūpūng*, *Laṭha*, *Singpūria*, *Jegseria*, *Nāgpuria*, *Maghāia*, *Gidhi*, *Kāwān*, *Guleria*, *Jeṭhseria* and *Toṛiar* clans. The *Jitia* festival is observed by the *Aṇḍi* clan and the *Dasai* festival by the *Hembrōm* clan. The *Sōsō-bōnga*, the

Kharihan pūja (En pūna), the sowing festival *(Her pūna)* and the *Nawa-jōm* (eating the new rice) festival are in vogue only among the landed *(Jāghi) Birhors* who appear to have adopted them from the *Muṇḍās.*

Although the *Nawa-jōm* (eating the first rice) ceremony is not observed by all the clans, they all agree in abstaining from eating the corolla of the *mohua (Bassia latifolia)* until the first-fruits are offered to the ancestor-spirits *(hāprōm).* Those clans that observe the *Sarhūl* festival do not eat food from plates or cups made of new Sāl leaves until the *Sarhūl* ceremony is over. The *Bhūiya* and *Lūpūng* clans as well as most of the *Uṭhlū* (migratory) clans abstain from eating mangoes or eating from plates or cups made of leaves of the *bar (Ficus Indica)* tree until the *Pūja* of *Mahadeo* has been celebrated on the last day of Chait.

Although all the *Birhōṛ* clans agree in excluding females (with the exception of little girls who have not yet attained puberty) from their spirit-huts *(bōnga-*

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Plate XIX.—Type of an old Birhōṛ woman.

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oṛas) and in excluding married daughters and other women not belonging to the family from their spirit-seats *(thhāns)*, and in prohibiting women from eating the heads of animals caught in the chase or sacrificed to the spirits, different clans observe different rules about the ceremonial pollution attaching to females during menstruation or in child-birth. Thus, among the *Maghāia Hembrōm* clan, as soon as a woman menstruates a small new door is opened in the wall of the hut for her use during the next eight days, and she is not allowed to use the main door of the hut or to touch any food or other thing in the house or do any work, whereas in most other clans although she is not allowed to touch anything in the house, a new door is not opened for her. In addition to these restrictions, a menstruous woman of the *Kāwān* clan must go out of, and enter, the hut through the newly-opened door-way in a sitting posture—that is to say, on her buttocks and not on her legs.

In addition to the general rule that a married woman may not enter the spirit-huts and spirit-seats of her father's settlement some clans have special restrictions. Among the *Kāwān* and *Maghāia Hembrōm* clans, a married daughter is not allowed to enter her father's house at all; when she comes to her father's settlement on a visit, she sleeps in the maidens' dormitory and eats in the *āngan* or open space in front of her father's hut. The daughter of a man of the *Bhūiya* clan, after she has worn shell bracelets known as '*shankha*', may not enter the '*āḍing*' or inner room of her father's hut where the ancestor-spirits are supposed to reside. A parturient *Birhoṛ* woman except in the *Aṇḍi* and a few other clans has a new doorway made to her confinement room[18] and for a certain number of days after delivery, during which her touch is taboo to others, she must use this new door only; but the number of days varies

[18] This practice of opening a new door to the lying-in room for the use of the parturient woman is also found amongst the Kharias of the Ranchi district.

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in different clans. Thus in the *Ludāmbā* clan the woman is allowed to use the old door after seven days from the day of delivery, in most other clans after twenty-one days, and in the *Maghāia Hembrōm* clan after five weeks if the new-born baby is a female and after six weeks if it is a male. In most clans again, but not in all, long wooden fences are put up on both sides of the pathway leading to this new door, so that the woman's dangerous shadow may not fall on other people.

In the presence of so many points of difference in custom between the different clans, it is no wonder that a *Birhōṛ* should identify 'clan' with *'jat'* or caste, and that there is as yet hardly any real tribal sentiment or any cohesion between the members of the different clans. But inasmuchas members of two or three clans generally form one food-group camping together in the same *ṭāṇḍā* or settlement or wandering about and hunting in the same jungle, there has sprung up a well-recognized connection of some particular clan with certain other

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clan or clans. Thus, for instance, the *Gērōā* and *Mūrūm* clans are generally found associated together; the *Saūṇṛiā* clan is usually found associated with the *Lūdāmbā* clan; the *Hēṛē Hembrōm* with either the *Gidhi* or the *Bhūiyā* clan; the *Chaūli Hembrōm* with either the *Nāgpuriā* or the *Māhāli* or the *Maghāiā Hembrōm* clan; the *Singpuriā* with the *Nāgpuriā* clan; and the *Lāṭhā Jeṭhseriā* with the *Lūpūng* clan. Although the *Birhōṛs* assert that these associations of particular clans have existed from the beginning of time, there are reasons for supposing that such association originated from sons-in-law or other near relations by marriage joining the groups of their fathers-in-law or other relations on the wife's side. An examination of the genealogy of the different families of a *ṭāṇḍā* shows that the two or more clans composing it have intermarried either in the present or in some past generation.

There is, as I have said, hardly any social integration between the different clans forming the tribe. Even the different familes

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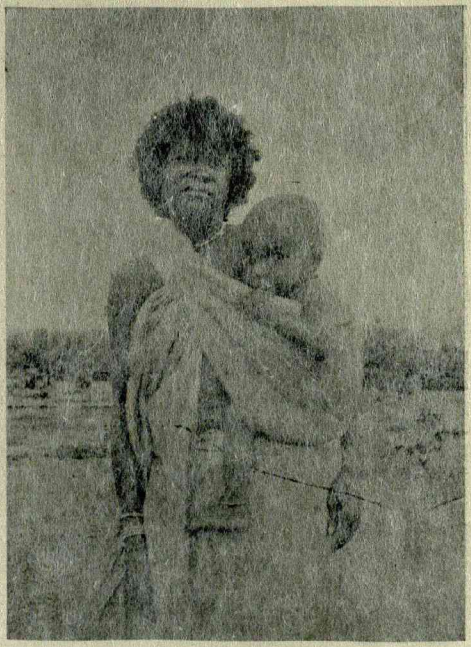


Plate XX.—Type of a Birhōṛ woman carrying her child.

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of the same clan living at a distance from one another do not recognize the idea of collective responsibility as illustrated, *e. g.*, by the law of the blood-feud, but only, and that dimly, the existence of an ultimate relationship. It is only in the families composing one settlement or encampment, although generally belonging to more than one clan, that we meet with a certain amount of social solidarity. Even the birth-pollution and death-pollution of any family in the local settlement is shared by all the other families of the settlement to whatever clan they may belong. Although their ancestral-spirits *(hāpṛōm)* and home-spirits *(būrū-bōngās* or *ōṛā bōngās* or *khūnt-bhūts)* are different, they join in sacrifices to the same local spirits and the same spirits of the hunt.

Although a few clans, as we have seen, are supposed to have a magical control over certain departments of natnre, such power is now said to belong to them not directly on accunt of their totem. but on account of the situation of their traditional homes. There is no specialization of function among

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the different clans which are all considered as equal in rank. Members of one clan do not, however, take cooked rice from those of another clan belonging to a different *ṭāṇḍā*, unless some relationship, direct or indirect, can be traced between the two clans, or between one of the clans and some third clan with whom the other clan is directly or indirectly related. This is particularly noteworthy, inasmuch as a *Birhōṛ* has no objection to eating cooked rice and drinking water at the hands of *Muṇḍās*, *Santāls*, *Bhūiyās*, *Orāons* and almost all other tribes and castes with the exception only of some particular communities, such as *Chāmārs*, *Ghāsis*, *Dōms*, *Lōhārs*, *Oṛeās*, *Māhālis*, *Pānṛs* and *Tāntis*, whom they consider as 'low castes.' Their objection to taking cooked food from Muhammadans is apparently due to Hindu influence. It may be further noted that children born of an union of a *Birhōṛ* woman with a man of another tribe or caste at whose hands a *Birhōṛ* has no objection to eat cooked rice or drink water, may be admitted to the

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full tribal rights of a *Birhōṛ*, provided they live as *Birhōṛs* in a *Birhōṛ tāṇḍā*, follow their traditional occupation of rope-making and hunting and marry *Birhōṛ* women. It is from such unions that a few of the clans, such as the *Māhāli*, the *Bhūiyā*, the *Aṇḍi*, the *Khāngār*, the *Gerōā* and the *Shāmjhākōā* are said to have originated.

Such are the main features of *Birhōṛ* totemism so far as I have hitherto been able to ascertain them. As with most other Dravidian tribes in *Chōtā Nāgpur*, the *Birhōṛ* totemic clan is exogamous and the system of relationship is classificatory. The respect which a man owes to his totem prevents him from killing and eating it. But the respect for the totem does not appear to have developed into an actual worship of the totem animal or plant. The *Birhōṛ* has not come to regard his totem as a god but looks upon it more in the light of a fellow-clansman. Although the *Birhōṛ* identifies himself and his fellow-clansmen with his totem, he does not, like certain Central Australian Blacks, occa-

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sionally kill and eat his totem for a more complete physical identification with it. Nor does a *Birhōṛ* clan breed or tame its totemic animal.

One peculiar feature of *Birhōṛ* totemism that I have noticed is the belief in the magical power of certain clans over wind and rain. But the tribe is not at the present day, at any rate, organized, like the Arunta, as a "co-operative supply association, composed of groups of magicians, each group charged with the management of particular departments of nature".

The totemism of the *Birhōṛs* would appear, however, to have not been without its influence on the growth of their religion. The most noteworthy feature in *Birhōṛ* totemism appears to me to be the belief in the vital connection between the human clan, their totem, the hill which is reputed to have been their original home or rather the spirit of such hill.

Although the *Birhōṛ* cannot actually define the nature of his relation to his totem, and has indeed no definite conception

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of it, some of his beliefs and practices in connection with his totem would seem to indicate that it is to him something more than a mere name to designate his clan. But what that something may be it is extremely difficult to determine. The paramount importance which the *Birhōr* attaches to his clan-spirit known as the *Būrū-bōngā* or Hill-god (the spirit of his ancestral hill) which is regarded somewhat in the light of a guardian-spirit of the clan, and the prominent place assigned in clan-sacrifices to the emblem of the clan-totem (such as a bit of the skin or hair or horn of the totem animal or wing or feather of the totem bird) which each family carefully treasures up in its spirit-box *(bōngā-peṭi)* and carries about with it in its wanderings and sets down over a mystic diagram at clan sacrifices to the *Būrū-bōngā*, may at first sight suggest that the totem might in its origin have been the guardian-spirit of the ancestor of the clans acquired by him perhaps in a vision (just as a *Birhōr* spirit-doctor or magician sometimes acquires his fami-

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liar spirit or individual guardian spirit) or in a dream (as the *rais* or 'dæmon' of a guest may appear in a dream to his host, and as even the *Būrū-bōngā* of his own clan at times appears to a *Birhōṛ* in a dream), but the fact that the individual guardian spirit or familiar of a *Birhōṛ* spirit-doctor is at least in these days, always a personal (almost anthrompoorphic) spirit and is never known to take the form of an animal or reptile or bird or plant or fruit or any other form which the *Birhōṛ* totems generally take, and the further fact that it is only a very insignificant proportion of the *Birhōṛ* population who are known to acquire tutelary or familiar spirits through a dream or a vision, would appear to mililate against such a supposition. From the *Birhōṛ's* behaviour towards his totem - and his customary mode of speaking about it, one is inclined rather to suppose that there may lurk at the back of the *Birhōṛ's* mind a vague and indefinite notion as to different totemic principles or forces—corresponding to

analogous or related 'forces' in different parts of the cosmic would—being immanent in different hills and in the human clans who are traditionally believed to have originated there as well as in the fauna and flora of such hills. The emblem of his own clan totem which the *Birhōṛ* places reverently in a mystic diagram while sacrificing to his *Būrū-bōngā* or clan-spirit may not unreasonably be supposed to symbolise this totemic principle conceived of as a mystic force or 'mana' which is immanent in his clan and in the hill or jungle which formed the original home of his clan as well as in the species of animal or plant which constitutes his totem and which might have formed a prominent feature of his ancestral hill. Such a conception would be in cosonance with the power-cult which appears to be of the essence of the *Birhōṛ's* religion. But I need hardly repeat that the *Birhōṛ* himself does not or cannot formulate to himself any such clear conception, but that his words and actions might not unreasonably be taken to point to the existence of such a sentiment and such a conception in the inner consciousness of the tribe.

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CHAPTER V.

Kinship System.

Whatever may have been the *Birhōṛ's* original conception of the totemic principle and of his own relation to his totem,—whether it has any relationship with the *Birhōṛ's* religion or stands wholly outside,—the totemic clan is undoubtedly the central fact in the kinship organization of the tribe. Between the tribe and the totemic clan, the *Birhōṛs* know no intermediate dual or other grouping of the clans into exogamous phratries or classes. Totemism, exogamy and father-right are at present the three main factors of *Birhōṛ* kinship organization. Descent is reckoned in the male line, and marriage or sexual intercourse between persons of the same totemic clan is forbidden.

Although clan-exogamy and the recognition of kinship through the father's side

alone, still primarily govern the kinship and matrimonial organization of the tribe, regard for certain consanguinous relationships with members of other clans together with the 'classificatory' system of reckoning relationship, has gradually introduced certain additional restrictions to their simple rules of marriage and kinship. And a *Birhōr* of one clan may no longer marry any and every person of the opposite sex belonging to a different clan. But how slight these other restrictions based or consanguinity are may be gathered from the fact that it is even considered permissible, though not quite proper, for a son and a daughter of the same mother, but not of the same father, to marry after their mother is dead ;[19] and the only restriction to cross-cousin marriage—marriage between the children of a brother and a sister—is that the community does not look with favour upon such marriages during the life-time of either the

[19] I have not, however, come across or even heard of any instance of such a union.

brother or the sister. But even on this point the tribal conscience is satisfied if the contracting parties each pay to the Panch the paltry consideration of one rupee and four annas to make them regard the brother and sister as legally dead. There is a common *Birhōṛ* saying :—"With one rupee and a quarter the father's sister is made to die." The same procedure is adopted to validate the marriage of the children of two sisters when either or both of the sisters are alive. Whether cross-cousin marriage be a modification of the system of marriage with the widow of the mother's-brother or not, a *Birhōṛ* now looks upon his mother's brother's wife in the same light as a mother and may not take any liberties with her either in speech or otherwise.

Clan-exogamy may indeed be said to be practically the sole principle of matrimonial eligibility amongst the *Birhōṛs*, with only one exception,—namely, the prohibition against marriages between persons whom society regards as standing to one another

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in the position of parent and child in the 'classificatory' sense. And as society regards an elder brother and his younger brother's wife as standing to each other in the relation of father and daughter, this rule includes the prohibition against the marriage of an elder brother with the widow of his deceased younger brother. A younger brother, however, has the first claim to the hand of his deceased elder brother's widow; and even where he does not want to marry her, he is entitled to the bride-price payable by the man who takes her as his wife.

The classificatory system and kinship nomenclature.

The kinship system of the *Birhōr*, is, broadly speaking, of the kind known as classificatory. The fundamental feature of this system is the application of the same relationship term in addressing most, though not all, persons of the same generation and sex. Thus, every one whom the father of a *Birhōr* calls '*dādā*' or elder brother (or cousin) is his own '*gūngū*' and his mother's '*bhaisūr*,' and every one

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whom his father calls *'bhāi'* or younger brother (or cousin) is his own *'kāka'* (fathers's younger brother) and his mother's *'iriul'* (husband's younger brother) and every one whom his mother calls *'dādā'* or *'bhāi'* is his own *'māmu'*. It may be noticed, however, that the terminology of *Birhōṛ* kinship is no longer purely classificatory; for certain distictions, as will be presently seen, are now made in the terms used for near and distant relatives of the same category. The following table of *Birhōṛ* terms of relationship and mutual address was obtained by means of genealogies. The terms 'brother' and 'sister' are used in the table in a classificatory sense and includes cousins, however remote.

RELATIONSHIP TERMS.

Father	*is spoken of as*	Apu	*and addressed as*	O Aba !
Mother	,,	Enga, Mae	,,	Eh Mae !
Father's younger brother	,,	Kaka	,,	Eh Kaka !

Father's younger brother's wife.	„	Kaki	„	Eh Kaki !
Husband	„	Herel	„	(Father of so-and-so)
Wife	„	Era	„	(Mother of so-and-so)
A man's elder brother's wife.	„	Hili	„	Eh hili !
Father's elder brother	„	Gungu	„	Eh Gungu !
Mother's elder sister's husband.	„	„	„	„
(A Woman's) younger sister's son.	„	„	„	„
Wife's younger sister's son.	„	„	„	„
Wife's younger sister's daughter.	„	„	„	„
(A woman's) younger sister's son or daughter.	„	„	„	„
(A man's) younger brother's son or daughter.	„	„	„	„
(A woman's) husband's younger brother's son or daughter.	„	„	„	„

Younger brother's (A woman's) son or daughter	,,	,,	,, ,,
Father's elder brother's wife	,,	Gungu mai	,, Eh Gungu mai !
Mother's elder sister	,,	Gungu mai	,, ,,
Wife's father	,,	Honjhar	,, Honjharing!
Husband's father	,,	Honjhar	,, ,,
Husband's elder brother.	,,	Bau-honjhar	,, (not addressed).
Husband's mother's brother.	,,	Mamu-honjhar	,, Mamu honjharing !
Wife's mother's brother.	,,	Mamu-honjhar	Mamuhonjharing !
Wife's elder brother	,,	Bauhonjhar	,, Eh Bauhonjharing !
Wife's mother.	,,	Hanhar	,, Eh go Hanharing !
Wife's elder sister	,,	Aji hanar	,, ,,
(Woman's) elder sister's husband.	,,	,,	,, ,,
Husband's mother	,,	Hanar	,, ,,
Husband's elder sister	,,	Aji-hanar	,, Eh go Aji hanaring !

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A co-wife	„	Hirum	„	(an elder co-wife is addressed as 'Didi' or 'Dai' and a younger co-wife is called by the name of her tanda).
Great-grandfather ; Great-grand-uncle.	„	Dada	„	Eh Dada !
Elder brother	„	„	„	„
Elder sister	„	Didi	„	Eh Didi !
Husband's elder brother's wife	„	Gotni	„	„
Great-grandmother ; Great-grandaunt ;	„	Dai	„	Eh Dai !
Wife's younger sister's husband.	„	Sarhu Bhai	„	Eh Sarhu !
Elder sister's husband	„	Teyang	„	Teyang-ho !
Father's father ; Father's uncle.	„	Aja	„	Eh Aja !
Father's mother	„	Aji	„	Eh Aji !
Mother's brother	„	Mamu	„	Eh Mamu !
Father's sister's husband	„	„	„	„
Father's sister	„	Hatom	„	Eh Hatom !
Mother's brother's wife	„	„	„	„
Mother's younger sister	„	Mosi	„	Eh Mosi,

Mother's younger sister's husband.	„	Mosa	„ Eh Mosa !
Wife's elder sister's son	„	Mosa	„ Eh Mosa !
Husband's younger brother's wife.		Gotni	(Mother of so-and-so).
Mother's father (or uncle)	„	Nana	„ Eh Nana !
Mother's mother (or aunt)	„	Nani	„ Eh Nani !
Son's wife's father; Daughter's husband's father.	„	Samdhi	„ Samdhi ho !
Son's wife's mother; Daughter's husband's mother.	„	Samdhin	„ Samdhin ho !
Younger brother	„	Bhai, or Huding.	„ Bhai (or addressed by names).
Younger brother's wife	„	Kimin, Bhaikimin	„ (not addressed).
Wife's younger brother	„	Sara	(addressed by name)
Elder sister's husband	„	Teyang	„ Teyang ho !
Elder brother's daughter	„	Dadareni-Beti	„ Eh Beti !
Daughter	„	Beti, or, Kurihon	„ ,

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Son	„	Hopon	„	Eh Beta !
Elder brother's son	„	Dada reni hopon	„	„
Husband's elder brother's son	„	Bauhonjoreni hopon	„	„
(Woman's) elder sister's son	„	Didingreni hopon	„	„
Husband's younger brother	„	Iriul	„	Eh Babu !
Daughter's husband	„	Jawai	„	Jawai go ; Eh babu !
Sister's daughter's son	„	Bhagni-Jawai.	„	Eh Bhagni-Jawai (also, Eh Babu !)
A woman's brother's son	„	Bhagna	„	Eh Bhagna !
Younger brother's daughter		Bhegni	„	Eh Bhegni !
Wife's brother's daughter		Bhegni	„	Eh Bhegni !
Husband's sister's daughter	„	Bhegni	„	„
Sister's son's wife	„	Bhegna-kimin	„	Eh go Bhegna-kimin !
Child's or nephew's or niece's son	„	Nati	„	Eh Nati !
Child's, nephew's or niece's daughter.	„	Natin	„	Eh Natin !

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It may be noted that in addressing female relatives the particle *'gō'* is sometimes tacked on to the term of address, and, similarly in addressing male relatives the expletive *'Jā'* is sometimes suffixed to the term of address. Some of these terms of address are also used in addressing another, even unrelated, person of the same sex and and generation as the relative or relatives to whom the term of address is appropriate. From the above list it will be seen that the *Birhōṛ* applies the same kinship term (e. g. *'beṭā'*) in addressing a number of relations of the same generation and sex. Generally speaking, as I have already pointed out, every one whom one's father calls *'dādā'* or elder brother is *'gūngū'* to himself and *'bāu honjār'* to his mother and every one whom one's father calls *'bhāi'* or younger brother stands related as *'kākā'* to himself and *'iriūl'* to his mother, and every one whom his mother calls *'bhāi'* is *'māmu'* to himself. Again, it will be noticed that a *Birhoṛ* uses the same term in addressing some relatives who stand one degree

higher as well as certain other relatives who stand one degree lower than himself in the pedigree. Thus, for instance, one's father's elder brother and mother's elder sister's husband, are both called *'gũngũ'* and so also are his younger brother's child and his wife's younger sister's child both called *'gũngũ'*.

Relations between Grand-parent and Grand-child.

The *Birhoṛ*, it may be noticed, uses the same kinship term *(māmū)* for his mother's brother and his sister's husband, and similarly the same term *(hātom)* is used for the father's sister and the mother's brother's wife, and to this day cross-cousin marriage in which these two relationships are combined in one and the same person is not unknown in this tribe. No jests and jokes are permitted with one's father's sister or mother's brother's wife, who are both regarded in the same light as one's mother. On the other hand, jests and jokes and certain modes of speech suggestive of conjugal familiarity are freely used between persons related to each other as

grand-parent and grand-child (in the classificatory sense) among the *Birhors*, as they are also freely used among the *Oraons* and the *Muṇḍās* of *Chōtā Nāgpur*; and improper relations between such relatives are thought lightly of by society. It may be further noticed that similar jokes and jests are freely allowed between a man and his elder brother's wife, and great liberties are permitted between these relatives. And we have seen that amongst the *Birhōrs*, a widow's deceased husband's younger brother has the first choice of her hand in marriage. From these circumstances it may not be unreasonable to infer that familiar modes of speech still in use between grand-parent and grand-child are survivals of the same social regulation which Dr. Rivers met with in the island of Pentecost and Mr. Howitt amongst the Dierri of Australia and which might at one time have been in vogue amongst the *Birhōrs* of *Chōtā Nāgpur*.

As amongst most other tribes and castes of *Chōtā Nāgpur*, the names of a man's younger brother's wife and of

Kinship Taboos. his wife's elder sister are taboo to the *Birhōṛ* and the names of the husband's elder brother and of a younger sister's husband and a younger brother's wife are taboo to a *Birhōṛ* woman. Even words resembling in sound names of such relatives may not be uttered. Thus, if the name of a woman's husband's elder brother is '*Būdhū*' she will not call a Wednesday by its proper name of '*Būdh*,' but in referring to a Wednesday she will use some such expression as 'the day after Tuesday'. It is believed that the uttering of such a tabooed name is sure to cause sickness or other misfortune to the person uttering the name or to some one of his or her family. When a *Birhōṛ* wants to say something to his younger brother's wife or his wife's elder sister he may not ordinarily communicate directly with such relative, but should communicate through somebody else such as his own wife; and similarly when a woman wants to say something to her husband's elder brother or sister or her younger sister's husband, she should, if

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possible, communicate through some third person. If any direct communication becomes absolutely necessary between such relatives, they may talk without going close to each other and without looking straight at each other's face. They may not sit on the same mat nor even tread on each other's shadow. Besides these, there appear to be no other restrictions against conversation between a man or a woman and relatives of one's wife or husband. For the first three or four days after marriage a newly-married bride does not talk much, and in the presence of her parents-in-law speaks in a low voice. A wife or a husband may not address each other by name, but when questioned by others, it is permissible to mention the name of one's husband or wife.

The Functions of certain Kin.

At the ear-boring ceremony of a *Birhōr* baby, the *sākhi* relative after whom the baby has been named has to take up the baby in his or her arms and perforate its ears.

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At marriage, the sister's husband of the bridegroom (or bride) is required to perform certain functions which will be described in the chapter on "*Birhōṛ* Marriage Customs".

At the cremation of a deceased *Birhōṛ* it is his youngest son who is required to put fire to the mouth of the corpse, and then only may other sons and relatives do so.

Kinship Salutations

Three forms of salutations are in vogue amongst the tribe. These are known respectively as *Jōhār*, *bhet-ghāt*, and *salām-majurā*. The *jōhār* form of salutation is only extended to relatives, both male and female, who are regarded as superiors, such as parents, uncles and aunts, parents-in-law, grand-parents, wife's elder sisters, and husband's elder brothers or elder sisters. This form of salutation consists in bowing down before the relative, resting the forehead on the two fists placed side by side on the ground. It is interesting, however, to note that this form of salutation is employed by a man to his *samdhin*

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(mother-in-law of his son or daughter) and not to his *samdhi* (father-in-law of his son or daughter). So also a woman will salute her *samdhin* in the *jōhār* form.

The second form of salutation known as *bhet-ghat* consists in clasping each other in the arms and pressing each other by the chest. This salutation is in use between *samdhis* to whom *salam-majura* is also made in addition to *bhet-ghat*.

The third form known as *salām majura* is a general salutation made to all friends, relatives and tribe-fellows. It consists of holding forward the right hand which touches the forehead with a crook while the left hand is placed under the right elbow.

The Rights and Privileges of certain Relatives.

The *Birhōr* father has absolute right over his sons. In case the mother of his children deserts him, the father is entitled to the custody of his sons, and the mother is entitled to the custody of her daughters. At the marriage of a girl, her mother receives two rupees from

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the bridegroom's people. This is supposed to represent the price of the mother's milk. Formerly the amount paid was one rupee, but for the last twenty-five years or so the amount has been raised to two rupees, because 'the mother has two breasts from which the girl was suckled !'

Succession and Inheritance.—Partition.

During the lifetime of a *Birhōr* father, his sons may demand a partition of the family property, only after all the sons have been married. In the event of a partition, the father will keep a share (usually less than that of of a son) for himself and divide the rest among his sons. The eldest son gets the largest share and each of the younger sons gets a share slightly larger than that of his next brother. Where a man has two wives, the sons of the elder wife receive a larger share than those of the younger wife. There is, however, as yet no fixed proportion according to which the property is divided.

On the death of the father, the sons

divide the property according to the same principles. Daughters are not entitled to share the father's property with their brothers. But if a man has no sons, his *ghārjāwāē*, or son-in-law living with his wife's parents as a member of the family, or, in the absence of a *ghārjāwāē*, his daughters are entitled to his property, provided they bear the funeral expenses. In the absence of children or a *ghārjāwāē*, the nearest agnates of the deceased inherit, taking *per stirpes* and not *per capita*. Failing a near agnate, men of the same sept living in the *ṭāṇḍā* will take the property *per stirpes* on their bearing the funeral expenses.

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CHAPTER VI.

Marriage Customs.

As marriage is regulated on the basis of relationship, an account of *Birhōr* marriage customs appropriately follows the account of their kinship system.

Marriage is considered indispensable for every *Birhōr*. Even most of their spirits or deities are believed to have each a husband or a wife, as the case may be. It is only after a person enters the married state, that he or she is regarded as a full-fledged member of the tribe.

Although instances occur in a few *Jāghi* (settled) families of a girl being married as early as in her eleventh or twelfth year and a boy in his sixteenth or seventeenth year, adult marriage is the rule among all *Birhōrs*. A boy is generally married when he is about twenty or twenty-one years old and a girl when she is about sixteen or

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seventeen. In a regular marriage *(Sadar Bāplā)*, it is the parents of the bride and bridegroom who select a partner for their boy or girl and conduct all negotiations for the marriage. But there are other forms of marriage in which one or both of the parties choose for themselves.

(1)—Different kinds of Marriage.

The *Birhōrs* recognize at least ten different forms of union as constituting valid marriage. When a young man and a maiden are discovered to have been carrying on an intrigue, if they have proceed too far to be dissuaded, the elders of the *ṭāṇḍā* formally make over the girl to the keeping of her lover, and, when the latter or her parents are able to collect the necessary expenses, the customary bride-price is paid to the bride's parents; relatives and fellow-*ṭāṇḍā*-people are invited; *vermilion* is applied as in a regular marriage, and the usual marriage-feast is

Nam-napam Bapla.

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Plate XXI.—A Birhōṛ young couple. The man is carrying *tupā* (oil-extractors) made of *chop*-fibres.

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provided. This is known as the *Nām-nā-pām bāplā*. This is more prevalent among the *Uṭhlūs* than among the *Jāghis*.

Udra-udri Bapla.

The *Uḍrā-uḍri bāplā* is a purely elopement marriage. A young man and a girl form an attachment for each other, and, apprehending opposition to their union, secretly leave the village together and remain in hiding as husband and wife for some time. Subsequently, when they are found out, they are brought home, the customary bride-price is paid, *sindur* is applied, and a feast is provided to relatives and the *ṭāṇḍā* people to validate the marriage.

Bolo Bapla.

In the *Bōlō bāplā* or 'Intrusion marriage, a maiden or a widow enters (forcibly, if necessary) the house of a man she loves, carrying on her head either a basket of the corolla of the *mohua* flower or a bundle of firewood, and stays in the house for a day or two in spite of all remonstrance or even persecution. She is

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then recognized as a *Bōlō* wife or a *Dhūkni*. In some cases it is believed that such a girl is attracted to her lover's house by some charm or medicinal root or powder administered to her through an intermediary. Generally, however, the lover's people do not object to this sort of intrusion, but treat the girl kindly. Even if she be a spinster, the girl's parents have no right to the usual bride-price, although, in practice, bride-price is generally paid to conciliate them, and sometimes even a sum of one rupee and four annas is paid in excess of the ordinary bride-price of nine rupees. This money is spent by the bride's people in a feast to their friends and relatives. The bride's people are also invited to a feast at the bridegroom's house where vermilion is applied to the bride's forehead.

Sipundur Bapla.

The *Sipūndūr bāplā* is the converse of the *Bōlō-bāplā*. In this form of marriage, a young man who wishes to marry a particular girl but is not allowed to do so lies in wait for the girl with a little vermilion

diluted in oil, and when he meets her alone applies it on her forehead. This is sometimes done at a market-place or at a fair; and, in such a case, the young man takes care to have with him a few friends to help him in resisting by force any opposition from the girl's people who may happen to be present.

The application of the vermilion to the forehead of the girl is considered to be tantamount to marriage; and even if the girl's people refuse to make her over to the man, but gives her in marriage to another, such a later marriage will be considered a *sānghā* (or second) marriage and will not be attended with all the ceremonies required to be observed in the regular marriage of a spinster. Generally, however, the parents consent to the *sipūndūr* husband taking away the girl after having paid the usual bride-price and a fine of one rupee and four annas to the elders of the girl's *ṭāṇḍā*. The usual wedding-feast is provided to complete and validate the marriage.

When a man having a wife living,

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marries another woman, the form of union is known as *Hirūm bāplā*.

Sangha Bapla and Hirum Bapla.

If the second wife is a spinster, the bridegoom has to pay one or two rupees in addition to the usual bride-price of nine rupees. If this second wife is a widow, this form of union is known as *Sānghā bāplā*. The same name is also applied to the marriage of a widower to a widow or to a divorced woman. Is such marriages the amount of the bride-price is only two rupees and eight annas besides a *sāṛi*-cloth. The bridegroom, attended by three or five friends, takes the money and the *sāṛi* to the bride's house, where the marriage usually takes place. The bride has her head well oiled and combed for the occasion. The bridegroom places on the ground an earthenware pot of oil and a little vermilion in a *sāl*-leaf. The bride puts on the new *sāṛi* and a female relative of hers takes up a little vermilion from the leaf, mixes it in oil, and with a thin reed applies it on the parting of her hair. The

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Plate XXII.—Type of a Birhōr woman carrying her child.

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bride now salutes *johārs* all present by bowing down and touching her head with the joined palms of her hand. The bridegroom, too, *salāms* all present by raising his hands to his forehead. The bride's parents give a feast to the guests, after which the bridegroom and his party return home with the bride.

In the *Kiring-jāwāe bāplā* (Bought son-in-law marriage) the expenses required for the marriage are advenced by the father-in-law and repaid in convenient instalments by the son-in-law. Although the bride is taken to the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā* after the marriage, both bride and bridegroom return after a fortnight or a month to the bride's father's *ṭāṇḍā* and both remain there until the bride-price is repaid.

Kiring-jawae Bapla.

The *Gōlhāṭ bāplā* or *Guā-badlā* (marriage by exchange of betel-nuts) is an exchange marriage for which no cash payment has to be made, one family exchanging a son or nephew and a daughter or

Golhat Bapla.

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niece respectively for a bride and bridegroom from the other family. In other words, a man gives his daughter or niece in marriage to the son or nephew of another *Birhōṛ* and takes in exchange the latter's daughter or niece as a bride for his own son or nephew. With the exception of the payment of bride-price, the same ceremonies are observed as in the case of a regular marriage *(sadar bāplā)*.

Beng-karhi Bapla.

In the *Beng-kāṛhi bāplā*, the bride, owing to her parents' poverty, is taken to the bridegroom's house to be married. In other respects the ceremonies are the same as in a regular marriage.

Sadar Bapla.

I shall now proceed to describe the procedure followed and the ceremonies obseved at a regular *Birhōṛ* marriage known as *Sadar Bāplā* which is more in fashion among the *Jāghis* than among the *Uṭhlūs*.

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(II)—MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS.

When the guardian of a marriageable boy hears of a suitable girl, he sends a party of friends to the girl's parents. The party usually consists of three men. They generally start at such an hour that they may reach their destination a little before sunset. Arrived at the house, they leave their sticks outside the doorway. This is a notice to the inmates of the house that the party have come to negotiate for a bride. If the family feel inclined to entertain the proposal, they indicate it by taking charge of the sticks and carrying them inside the house. A few female members of the family now come out with jugs *(lōṭās)* of water and wash the feet of the guests. Hunting-nets are spread for them to sit upon, and they are regaled with powdered tobacco mixed with lime. After a little friendly conversation, the guests lie down o sleep.

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(III)—TAK-CHANRHI.

Next morning, the father of the girl informs the *Nāyā* of the arrival of the party proposing marriage. The *Nāyā* on being satisfied that it is a desirable match, orders the *Diguār* to assemble the people of the *ṭaṇḍā* on the open space *(āngan)* before the girl's father's hut. The *Nāyā* himself goes there and thus addresses the party: "Well, friends, what brings you here ? You have placed your sticks at the door of this hut. What may be your object ? The people of the *ṭāṇḍā* are afraid (apprehensive of some mischief)." The spokesman of the strangers replies, "We have not come to beat any one. We have come to the hut where we saw the thing we liked. We are waiting to see whether the thing will become ours." The *Nāyā* then tells them: "When you have come here after something you like, why should we disappoint you ? We shall fulfil your wishes." Now the *Diguār* tells them, "Well then, come out with the customary dues *(neg dastūr)*."

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Plate XXIII.—Type of a middle-aged Birhōṛ woman carrying her child.

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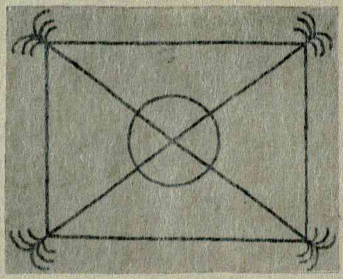


FIGURE 1.

Tāk Chāurhi ceremony.)

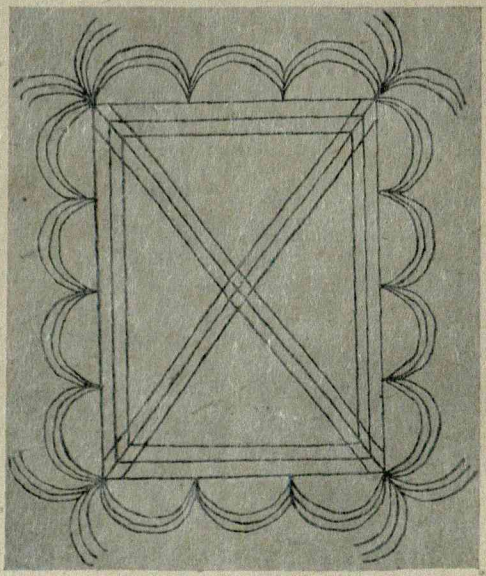


FIGURE 2. (*Bana-sank* ceremony.)

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They thereupon place before the assembled men of the *ṭāṇḍā* one rupee and four annas as *nātā-tarouni*, and eight annas as *gōṛdhowāi* (money for feet-washing).

A figure, as in diagram I, is now drawn by a woman on the ground with rice-flour. A brass-plate is placed at the centre of the diagram, and on this plate a sum of rupees four is placed (Rs. 3 being the bride-price, and one rupee the price of the *engā-bāgē* or cloth for the bride's mother). Four pice are also placed by the side of the rupees as *Pāṇṛki-aṇḍā* or 'eggs' of the four rupees. For decorating *(choupurauni)* the four corners four pice is paid to the artist. The girl is carried on the arms of some relative and seated on the east of the figure with her face turned to the east. The father of the girl takes his seat on the west of the figure with his face turned eastwards. Now the people of the *ṭāṇḍā* address the strangers : "Examine her well to see if she is lazy or lame or blind, or has any other defects. Look well, friends ! So

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long she was with us, she played about and danced about. It mattered little whether she worked or not." The boy's father or other relative says, "We shall take up whatever has fallen to our lot (*lit.*, fallen on the leaf-plate from which we are eating) whether it be an idler or a decrepit one." The bride now gets up and bows down at the feet of each one. Then she is carried inside the house on the arms of a relative. The *Diguār* then takes up the brass-plate with the bride-price on it and presents it before each of the men of the *ṭāṇḍā* present there, saying—"Look, so-and-so has been paid for to-day". Every one of them touches the money with his fingers and kisses those fingers. This seems to indicate that the bride-price was originally paid to the *ṭāṇḍā* community as a whole. The brass-plate with the bride-price is next taken to the *thhāns* or spirit-seats of the *ṭāṇḍā* and each spirit is addressed, saying, "Look! this is the bride-price paid for so-and-so. May she fare well". Finally, ths plate with the bride-price on it

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is taken to the *āḍing* of the girl's father's hut and the ancestor-spirits supposed to reside there are similarly invoked, and the plate with the money is left there.

Now all drink liquor purchased with the one rupee and four annas paid for the purpose by the boy's people. In the evening boiled rice and pulse-soup are served to all the guests including the men of the *ṭaṇḍā*. While they all sit down for their meals, the *Nāyā* of the *ṭaṇḍā* or (if he be not of the same clan as the bride's father) some kinsman of the bride's and a representative of the boy's people, are seated in the middle of the row, and a leaf-plate-ful of boiled rice and pulse-soup is placed before each of them. Before the others begin eating, each of these two men takes up a handful of boiled rice from his plate and lets fall on the ground one grain after another, saying, *"Nē tihing emāpekānāing, jōtrā gōjgūr hujāl nē tihing dō emāpekānāing Tākchāṇṛhirā nūtūmtē nē māṇḍi emāpekānāing bōngāekānāing"*. "This (rice) I am giving to-day, O so-and-so, so and-so

(names all deceased ancestors), and all (ancestors) dead, lost or strayed, this to-day I am giving in the name of *Tāk-chāṇṛhi*. This rice I am giving,—I am offering."

While making this offering, the bride-groom's father addresses by name all his deceased ancestors. The boy and girl are also named and the blessings of their respective ancestor-spirits are invoked for their future welfare.

Then the *Nāyā* calls out—"Now, old and young, eat boiled rice in the name of *Tāk-chāṇṛhi*". All the men now eagerly attack the rice and pulse placed before them in leaf-plates. The *Nāyā* and the *Diguār* besides eating their share *(bātoāri bhāt)* of the meals as members of the *ṭāṇḍā*, receive each from the hands of the girl herself one *khālā* (large leaf-plate) of boiled rice and pulse-soup as the perquisites of their office (called *'Nāyā-māṇḍi'* and *'Diguāri-māṇḍi'* respectively), and these they take home. After the men have eaten, the women take their meals. Then all retire to bed.

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Next morning, the girl weaves three wreathes of flowers, and the *Diguār* makes three garlands of *Ereṇḍi* (castor oil) seeds. When the three guests sit down to breakfast, the girl stands behind them with a cup filled with pounded turmeric diluted in water; and as the men go on eating, she besmears with it the back ends of their waist-cloths. The *Diguār* also takes his meal that day at the hut of the girl's father. When they have finished eating, the *Diguār* calls together the men of the *ṭāṇḍā*. When all are seated on hunting-nets laid out for the purpose, the *Diguār* places on the neck of each man of the boy's side an *Ereṇḍi* garland and one of the wreathes of flowers woven by the girl. Now the people of the *ṭāṇḍā* ask the guests to fix a date when they may visit the boy's *ṭāṇḍā* for the *jōm-māṇḍi* ceremony. Generally, the seventh or ninth day after the *Tāk-chāṇṛhi* ceremony is fixed for this purpose. Then the guests make obeisance *(sālām)* to their hosts (the men of the *ṭāṇḍā)* which the latter return, and they then take leave of one another.

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(IV)—JOM-MANDI.

On the day preceding that fixed for the *Jōm-māṇḍi* ceremony, the men who are to go to the bridegroom's house for the purpose take out their walking-sticks *(lāṭhis)* and place them at the door of the bride's father's hut. The bride takes up each stick and hands it over to its respective owner. The men—half a dozen or more in number—ask her, "Which way shall we go ?" The girl points to the direction in which the men who had come for the *Tāk-chāṇṛhi* ceremony went home to their *ṭāṇḍā*.

As soon as the party arrive near the bridegroom's house, the *Diguār* of the bride-groom's *ṭāṇḍā* comes out, takes charge of the walking-sticks of the guests and ties them up in a bundle which is kept inside the hut. Then he brings out a jar or two of water from which the bridegroom pours water on the legs and feet of the guests which the *Diguār* cleanses by rubbing them with his hands. Hunting-nets are spread out for the guests to sit

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upon. When they are seated, the bride-groom's people ask them, "What did you see on your way here ?" The guests reply "On the way, we met with a girl and asked her, 'Oh, dear, where is your father gone ?' The girl answered, 'My father is gone to catch the rains of heaven' (meaning, to gather thatching-grass). Then we asked her, 'Where is your mother gone ?' The girl answered, 'She is gone to take a dead person inside the house' (meaning, to transplant paddy-seedlings as a labourer)."

The bride's people now say, "O friends ! A mango tree bore fruit ; an old woman told her husband, 'Get me the mango by throwing a stick at it' (meaning, get me rice-beer to drink). The old man threw a stick at it and the mango fell and the stick came down on the other side of the tree striking down a deer as it fell" (suggesting, let a goat be slain for our entertainment). Men of each party now *salām* those of the other party and enquire about their health and well-being. Then riddles of a certain type known as *gānāmreā bhanitā*

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are asked and solved. For this occasion, five jars of rice-beer were already set abrewing on the return of the three men who had gone to the bride's house for the *Tāhchanrhi* ceremony. One of these pots of rice-beer is now brought out to the *āngan*, strained, and distributed to the guests. This is called 'the fatigue-removing jar'. After some friendly conversation, the guests are treated to a meal of boiled rice, boiled pot-herbs, and pulse-soup. Then all retire to bed.

Next morning the bride's father, the bride and the bridegroom and the guests bathe themselves. Then, a figure like that in diagram I, is drawn on the ground with rice-flour; a copper pice is placed on each of the four corners of the figure, and two *sāl*-leaf-plates are placed over the figure, one to the east of the other. The bridegroom is seated on the leaf-plate to the east and the bride's father on that to the west. The men of the bridegroom's party now say to those of the bride's side, "Look well, friends, examine the bridegroom

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and see if he is idle or lame or blind or has any other defects". The bridegroom's father replies, "I am satisfied with what has fallen on my plate". The bridegroom then bows down to the bride's father, and rises from his seat on the figure and proceeds to *salām* every one else present there. In the meanwhile, the father of the bride and the father of the bridegroom embrace each other, and the men on both sides *salām* one another.

Two more jars of rice-beer are now brought out. Men of the bridegroom's side tell the guests, "People lay out rice to dry, mushrooms to dry, bamboo shoots to dry. We are drying up men (by keeping you so long without food)". The guests reply, "No, friends; don't say so. Our people at home are saying of us, 'they are gone for *jōm-māṇḍi*, they are drinking rice-beer ; in a short while there will be slaying of goats or deer ; in the evening they will eat rice, pulse-soup, and meat'". Now the men on both sides get up and embrace one another

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and resume their seats. When all are seated again, the *Nāyās* of the two parties sit down in the middle, each with a mug of rice-beer placed before him ; and from this mug he offers libations to the spirits of the ancestors of bride and bridegroom respectively invoking their blessings for the success of the *jōm-māṇḍi* ceremony. The *Nāyās* now call upon the guests to do justice to the rice-beer and they all fall to with avidity.

Then follows a ceremony of great social importance to the tribe. The bridegroom stretches forward his hands on which is placed a plate made of *sāl*-leaves and over it a brass bowl *(lōtā)* filled with water. His father calls upon the men of his *ṭāṇḍā* to say if there is in their opinion any social taint or social offence on his part to be expiated by a fine or feast. If the bridegroom's family has been remiss in the past in their social duties (for instance, if they have not given a feast on the occasion of a marriage in the family) or have been guilty of any social offence (e. g., if an unmarried

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daughter has been guilty of an intrigue with a youth of the same clan or of a different tribe or caste which remains unexpiated), no man of the *ṭāṇḍā* will touch the *lōṭā* unless the bridegroom's people promise to provide the customary feast or pay the customary fine. And in such a case, the bridegroom's father will at once give an undertaking to do what is required of him, and then, and not till then, will the *lōtā* be touched by a man of each clan of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā* and also of the bride's *taṇḍā*. If in the opinion of the people of the *tāṇḍā*, the bridegroom's family has not been guilty of any social offence or neglect of social duty a representative of each clan in his *ṭāṇḍā* as also a representative of each clan in the bride's *ṭāṇḍā*, touches the *lōtā*, thereby signifying that they have no objection to drinking water and taking food at the hands of the members of the family. Then the bridegroom's father says, "Now, you have touched the *lōtā*. Would you eat dry ricegrains or would you have them soaked

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in water ?" This is an euphemistic way of asking, "Would you have only unboiled rice to eat or wait for it to be boiled ?" The guests reply, "We should have rice soaked in water. How could we swallow dry rice ?" Then the bridegroom's father says : "All right, you will have rice soaked in water. Shall we look out for pot-herbs (meaning, meat) or not ? Shall we pluck edible leaves or not (meaning, shall we slay a goat or other animal) ?" Some one of the bride's people replies, "Yes, how should we eat boiled rice without any 'relish' ? Look out for whatever pot-herbs (meaning, meat) you can get." A goat or other animal is now brought out by the bridegroom's father or some other relative. Two men of the bride's father's party step forward ; one holds the goat by the legs so as to make it face to the east, the other man slays the goat by severing its neck with an axe. . The head of the animal is then cut into pieces and roasted. Each piece of the roasted meat is put in a *sāl*-leaf cover and handed over one

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to each male guest. Rice-beer is then distributed in leaf-cups. This is called 'the liquor for the head (of the goat)'. One of the haunches of the animal is set apart for the bride's people to take back to their *ṭāṇḍā*.

In the evening, dinner is announced, and all take their seats in the *āngan*; the *Nāyā* of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā* and the *Nāyā* or, in his absence, some other respectable elder of the bride's *ṭāṇḍā* sit in the middle. Dinner is served first on the *sāl*-leaf-plates laid out one before each of these two men and then on the plates placed before the other guests. Each of these two men first drops on the ground some grains of boiled rice from their plates in the names of their dead ancestors, saying, as they do so,—"To-day we have come for the *jōm-māṇḍi* ceremony of so-and-so (the *Nāyā* of the bridegroom's side names the bridegroom, and the *Nāyā* or other elder of the bride's side names the bride); come ye all, O Spirits of our departed ancestors! you and we shall all

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eat together to-day. May the bride (or bridegroom) remain in health, and may the marriage be prosperous". After this the two men first eat two mouthfuls of food, and then ask the other guests to begin eating. When dinner is finished, the guests wash their hands and mouths, and chew powdered tobacco-leaves mixed with lime. Then all retire for the night.

Next morning, when breakfast is ready, the men of the bride's *ṭāṇḍā* are conducted to some neighbouring spring or stream to bathe. Then, after they have finished their breakfast and taken powdered tobacco mixed with lime, the men of the *ṭāṇḍā* are assembled. The *Diguār* of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā* now anoints the men of the bride's *ṭāṇḍā* with oil and pounded turmeric, and places a garland of *Ereṇḍi* (castor oil) fruit on the neck and a wreath of flowers round the head of each of those men.

Now the men of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā*, in consultation with the men from the bride's *ṭāṇḍā*, fix a date for bringing *'lōgōn'*

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from the bride's place. Then the *Diguār* brings out the sticks of the guests, and after an exchange of salutations with the bridegroom's people, they return to their home. The bride's father pays two pice to the *Diguār* of the bridegoom's *ṭāṇḍā* for *ṭhengā-dharouni* (the care he took of the sticks) and two pice more for *gōṛ-dhoāuni* (washing their feet).

(v)—FIXING THE LOGON (LOGON-TOL.)

On the date fixed for the *'lōgōn'*, three men of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā* go to the bride's *ṭāṇḍā* to bring *'lōgōn'*. As on previous occasions the *Diguār* takes charge of the sticks of the guests, and the feet of the guests are washed. After taking their evening meal of boiled rice, pot-herbs, etc., and chewing powdered tobacco mixed with lime, the guests retire for the night. Next morning, the *Diguār* of the *ṭāṇḍā* conducts the guests to some spring or stream where they wash their faces and bathe their bodies. Then they go back to the bride's house where they are treated to a hearty breakfast,—for the *lōgōn* ceremony

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must never be performed with an empty stomach. When the guests have taken their breakfast, the men of the *ṭāṇḍā* are all assembled by the *Diguār.* The open space *(āngan)* in front of the bride's house is cleaned with earth and water and a female draws on the ground thus cleaned a figure like that previously drawn, and a copper pice is placed on each of its four corners and two *sāl*-leaf-plates are placed over it, one to the east of the other. The bride is brought out of the hut on the arms of a female relative and seated on the leaf-plate to the west with her face to the east and the palms of her hands joined together and stretched out before her. The father or other relative of the bride-groom who has come to settle the *lōgōn* takes his seat on the leaf-plate to the east with his face turned west towards the bride. A female relative of the bride sits down behind her and covers with her hands the eyes of the bride so that she may not see anybody or anything. The man sitting on the leaf-plate to her east now puts upon

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her out-stretched palms a little *āruā* rice and two small strips of unbleached cotton-thread dyed yellow with turmeric and formed into five knots each. While the rice and threads are put into the hands of the girl, she holds the joined palms of her hand in such a manner that the rice and the threads may at once drop down through the opening between the palms on a leaf-cup placed on the ground underneath. The five knots in the thread indicate that the *lōgōn* or wedding-day is fixed at the fifth day from that date. The bridegroom's people return to their *ṭaṇḍā* with one of the knotted threads, leaving in the leaf-cup the other thread for the bride's people.

(VI)—The Chuman or Kissing of the Logon-thread.

The mother of the bride, accompanied by a few other women, now proceeds to make *chumān* (kissing) of the *lōgōn* in the following manner. She carries in a flat

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basket a handful of *dhān* or unhusked rice, one or two blades of tender grass, and an earthen lamp with a lighted wick in it, and waves the basket three times in front of the leaf-cup containing the *lōgōn* thread and then places the basket on the ground in front of the leaf-cup. She next takes up some paddy from the basket and scatters it three times on the *lāgōn*-thread, and then having warmed the palms of her hands in the flame of the lamp places them over the *lōgōn*-thread. This process of *chumān* or 'kissing' of the *lōgōn*-thread with the heated palms of the hand is repeated three times by the mother of the bride. And each of her companions too successively makes *chumān* of the *lōgōn*-thread by scattering on it *dhān* from the basket three times, and by thrice placing on the *lōgōn*-thread her hands warmed in the flame of the lamp. Then they return to the hut with the basket.

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(VII)—ASCERTAINING THE OMENS FROM THE LOGON-THREAD.

A *māti* or magician of the tribe is now asked to read the 'fortune' of the bride from the *lōgōn*-thread. The *māti* washes his hands and feet, takes his seat in the *āngan* and begins his operations with a handful of rice and two copper pice placed before him in a new *sūp* or winnowing-basket. The *māti* mutters invocation after invocation to the spirits, rubs his hand on the rice in the *sūp*, scatters rice several times across his own head which he soon begins to shake violently. In this way he works himself up into a state of ecstasy which the onlookers believe to be a sign of spirit-possession. Now the bride's father interrogates the spirit supposed to have possessed the *māti*. "What *bhūt* art thou ?" he asks. The reply, given through the mouth of the *māti*, is "I am such-and-such a *bhūt* (names)". The father of the bride then places a few grains of rice from the *sūp* on the palm of the *māti's* hand and

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tells the supposed spirit,—"Examine the rice and reveal the future luck of so-and-so (naming the bride)". The *māti* now appears to con the rice in his hand intently, turning his hand this way and that way, and then exclaims—"Go, now. It is all right. The girl will prosper in life". He then returns the rice to the bride's father who in his turn places the *lōgōn*-thread on the hand of the *māti*, saying, —"O ! such-and-such a *bhūt* (names), thou art here ! Do thou examine this *lōgōn*-thread, too." The *māti* examines the *lōgōn*-thread in the same manner and gives it back to the bride's father, saying,—"It is all right, take it to the spirit-seats *(thhāns)*, to all spirits and godlings *(bhūt-dēōs)* in uplands and rocky places *(tānr-tikūr)* and then take it into your hut". Either the bride's father or some other member of the family or the *Diguār* of the *ṭaṇḍā* now takes up the leaf-cup with the *lōgōn*-thread in it and carries it to each spirit-seat *(thhān)* and exclaims,—"Look, the *lōgōn* of so-and-so (names the bride) has been knotted

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to-day. May she have good luck". Then he returns to the hut with the *lōgōn* in the leaf-cup, and distributes some of the rice in it to his *ṭāṇḍā*-fellows by way of invitation to the wedding. Invitation to friends and relatives belonging to other *ṭāṇḍas* is issued by sending a little turmeric-dyed rice to them, sometimes with slices of betel-nuts. The leaf-cup with the *lōgōn*-thread in it is finally deposited in the sacred *āding* of the hut where the ancestor-spirits are believed to have their seats.

(VIII)—Ascertaining the omens from and making Chuman of the Logon at the Bridegroom's tanda.

Arrived at their *ṭāṇḍā*, the bridegroom's people place the *lōgōn*-thread on a leaf-cup on the court-yard of the bridegroom's hut. The court-yard, it may be mentioned, is cleaned beforehand with a coating of mud or, in some places, of cowdung. As was done at the bride's place, a *māti* tells the fortune of the bridegroom from the *lōgōn*-

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thread ; the 'kissing' of the *lõgõn* is done by women ; the leaf containing the *lõgõn*-thread is taken to each spirit-seat in the *ṭaṇḍā* and the blessings of the spirits are invoked ; and finally the *lõgõn*-thread is deposited in the *āding* of the bridegroom's hut.

The *māti* again works himself up into a state of supposed possession by another spirit. A little oil mixed with pounded turmeric is placed in a *donā* (leaf-cup) before him, and a stone *lõṛhā* (stone used in pounding turmeric and other condiments) is placed in his hands. He then brings one end of the *lõṛhā* in contact with the oil and pounded turmeric in the *dõna* and with this end of the *lõrhā* anoints the bridegroom's feet, knee-joints, elbows and forehead with oil and turmeric. Thenceforth every evening until the day fixed for the marriage, his female relatives anoint his body with oil mixed with pounded turmeric.

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(IX)—ADHIBAS OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

On the morning of the day when the bridegroom's party is to start for the bride's place (which is usually the day fixed for the marriage), a party of women go in a procession to a neighbouring stream or spring to fetch ceremonial water. The party includes two spinsters, each of whom carries a new earthen pitcher (*ghaṛā*), another woman who carries a sword and another a bow and arrows. When the two spinsters have filled their pitchers with water and placed them on their heads, some woman takes a long thread dyed yellow with turmeric, twists it three times round the necks of the two pitchers, and covers their mouths with a new piece of cloth similarly dyed.

On their return to the bridegroom's place the two spinsters stand before the door of the hut each with her pitcher poised on her head. The mother of the bridegroom comes out with a potsherd containing some live charcoal and sprinkles a handful of mustard-seeds on the fire. When the

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mustard-seeds burn in the fire, the potsherd with its contents is left upside down on the courtyard. As the object of the drawn sword and the bow and arrows appears to be to scare away evil spirits, so the object of the burning of the mustard seeds would appear to be to prevent the evil eye of others from doing harm to the bridegroom. Each of the two water-carriers receives from the bridegroom's mother a reward of two pice.

The two pitchers of water are now deposited in the courtyard on some stand, preferably a string-bed. The sister's husband of the bridegroom digs a miniature tank about a foot deep and two feet square and on its eastern edge plants a plantain sapling. On its western edge a stone-slab is placed over three bundles of thatching grass. The bridegroom and his mother sit down on this stone-slab with their faces to the east. With mango-twigs brought by the bridegroom's elder sister's husband, the two girls sprinkle water from their pitchers on the bridegroom, who is then

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bathed in the water of one of the two pitchers, and his mother is bathed in that of the other. The bridegroom then takes a meal of boiled rice, pot-herbs, etc. His mother then takes up on her head a new winnowing-basket (*sūp*) containing one arrow, one lighted earthen lamp, some rice, and four pice and sits down at the door of her hut just inside the door-step. The bridegroom sits down facing her on the other (outer) side of the door-step. The husband of the bridegroom's sister now soaks a small rag with a little blood drawn from the left-hand little finger of the bridegroom. This rag, known as *sināi*, is wrapped up in another rag, and put into the waist cloth of the bridegroom. The husband of the bridegroom's elder sister now twists into the shape of cigarettes each of the mango leaves with which water was sprinkled on the bridegroom; and from these he makes six garlands, three leaves being strung together for each. These garlands are worn, one on the arm and

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one on the leg of the bridegroom, and similarly one on the arm and one on the leg of the bridegroom's father and one on an arm and one on a leg of the bridegroom's mother. The bridegroom's elder sister's husband also threads a betel-nut on a string which he slings across the bridegroom's right shoulder like the sacred thread of a Brāhman.

(x)—Bridegroom's *Uli-Sakhi*

The bridegroom now puts on his bridal dress, consisting of a *dhōti* or loin cloth dyed yellow with turmeric, and, if possible, a chādar or wrapper for the body, and a piece of cloth to serve as a *pāgri* or turban. He now proceeds on the arms of his elder sister's husband to a mango-tree on the way to the bride's village, accompanied by his mother and other women of the *ṭaṇḍā*. The women carry a *lōṭā* or water-jug, two leaf-plates, besides a few leaf-cups containing respectively molasses, rice flour, vermilion, and some unbleached thread.

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Arrived at the foot of the tree, the bridegroom with the little finger of his right hand puts a mark of vermilion on the trunk of the tree; and while his finger is still on the tree, a woman twists a thread five times round the trunk just below the vermilion mark. Someone now brings down with a stick some leaves or twigs of the tree, and the stalks of a few of these mango leaves are handed over to the bridegroom who after chewing them a little gives them to his mother who swallows them mixed with molasses. This is repeated five times. This would appear to be a fertility rite.

The bridegroom and his party, consisting of both men and women, including the husband of one of his younger sisters or cousins who acts as the *Lūkūṇḍi* or best man, now start for the bride's *ṭāṇḍā* while his mother and a few other women return home. The mother remains fasting until the time for the wedding which generally takes place early next morning. She may, however, take any spirituous drink she pleases.

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(XI)—CIRCUMAMBULATION OF THE BRIDE'S TANDA.

When they arrive at the boundary of the bride's *ṭaṇḍā*, the bridegroom and his party walk round it three times and finally enter an enclosure *(jhāmṛā)* of twigs and branches of trees made for their accommodation by the bride's people.

(XII)—*Adhibas* OF THE BRIDE.

Now the *Adhhibās* ceremony of the bride is performed in exactly the same manner as the bridegroom's *adhhibās* [vide (ix) *ante*], the only difference being that blood is drawn from the little finger of the bride's right hand (and not left hand as in the case of the bridegroom), and a thread with a betel-nut strung on it is slung across the bride's left shoulder (and not right shoulder as in the case of the bridegroom). The bride's sister's husband discharges the same functions (such as digging the miniature tank) that we

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have seen the bridegroom's sister's husband performing on the occasion of the bridegroom's *adhibās*. A few women of the bridegroom's party go to the bride's place and anoint her with oil and turmeric. She then bathes and puts on the bridal cloth presented by the bridegroom's parents. A few women of the bride's party go to the bridegroom's quarters *(jhāmṛā)* with oil and turmeric and similarly anoint him therewith and then he bathes and puts on his bridal clothes.

(XIII)—*Archha Parchha* OR WELCOMING THE BRIDEGROOM.

When the bridegroom arrives in procession before the bride's father's hut, three or five females come out to welcome him They carry a new basket containing pounded turmeric and three or five torches made of rags soaked in oil and wound round stalks of mango leaves. Standing in front of the bridegroom, each of the women in turn holds one of these lighted torches

in her left hand, and with her right hand besmears the temples of the bridegroom with pounded turmeric. The bridegroom in his turn besmears with his right hand pounded turmeric on the temples of these women. Then the women throw away their torches.

(XIV)—Sprinkling the Bridegroom with Ceremonial Water.

Two pitchers of water have already been brought from some neighbouring stream, tank, or spring, by two girls with the following ceremonies. The girls, while going to draw water, are accompanied by some married women, one of whom carries an axe *(pharsā)* or, if available, a sword, and another, a bow and an arrow. Arrived at the stream, tank, or spring, one of the married women puts three marks of vermilion on the bank, and gives three strokes with the axe or sword on the water. The pitchers are then filled with water and brought home by the girls.

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When the bridegroom and the female relatives of his bride have been ceremonially introduced to one another by the *ārchhā-parchhā* ceremony, two girls come out with these pitchers of water. and with a few small mango twigs sprinkle the water all over the bridegroom's body. The bridegroom, in his turn, dips one or two mango-twigs into a bowl of water held up before him by some one of his party. The bridegroom's father gives two pice to each of the two girls. This appears to be a ceremonial sanctification or, at any rate, purification of the bridegroom.

(XV)—Introduction of the Bridegroom to his Mother-in-law.

Some married women of the bride's *ṭāṇḍā* now come out with a new basket containing some unhusked rice, tender grass-shoots, two baked rice-flour cakes and a number of small round pellets of boiled rice-flour and a quantity of pellets made of cowdung. Three or five of the

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women (including the mother and paternal aunts of the bride) now take up from the basket the rice-flour pellets and one after another wave them round the bridegroom's head and then throw them away in the direction of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā*. Then they similarly wave the pellets of cowdung and throw them towards the bride's hut. The bride's mother next takes up the two rice-flour cakes and touches the bridegroom's cheeks with them and then kisses the cakes and puts them back into the basket. She then anoints the cheeks of the bridegroom thrice with molasses, and wipes away the marks with water from the *lōtā*. Finally, she takes up a *sāmāṭ* or wooden pestle, flourishes it before the bridegroom and then strikes it on the ground telling the bridegroom, as she does so, "Mind, if you do not bring home game we shall beat you in this manner." After this the bridegroom is taken back to the *jhāmṛā* or enclosure where his people have been accommodated.

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Plate XXIV.—An Uṭhlu Birhōr woman husking rice with a wooden pestle *(sāmāt)* in a wooden mortar. In front of her is a winnowing fan.

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(XVI)—BRIDE'S *Uli-Sākhi.*

Now the bride's mother with a few other women proceed towards a mango-tree. One of the women carries the bride in her arms. This mango-tree must not be in the direction of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā.* Should there be no mango-tree in the village in any direction other than that in which the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā* is situate, a mango branch is planted in the ground, in a suitable direction and, under that tree or branch, the same ceremonies are performed by the bridegroom and his mother and others as we have seen at the bridegroom's *uli-sākhi* ceremony.

(XVII)—LOOTING THE *Sārā-dhoti.*

The bridegroom now returns from his *'jhāmṛā'* to the bride's place and stands in the courtyard. This time he has a new *dhōti* wound round his neck. The *Diguār* of the bride's *ṭāṇḍā* approaches him, carrying on his shoulders a younger brother of the bride, and stands face to face with

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the bridegroom. Both the bride's younger brother and the bridegroom now put a handful of raw rice each into his own mouth, and each blows on the other the rice in his mouth. Then finally the bride's brother snatches away from the neck of the bridegroom the new cloth known as the *'Sārādhōti'* or the 'cloth for the wife's younger brother.'

(XVII)—Exchange of Blood.

The bride is now brought out on a bamboo basket carried by three or four men. Two *sāl*-leaf-plates are placed side by side on the ground in the courtyard (and in certain clans on a mud platform known as *'māṛōā'* erected in the courtyard for the purpose). The bridegroom stands on one of these plates with his face to the east, and the bride stands on the other with her face to the west. Two women hold up a cloth as a screen between them. The bride and bridegroom pelt each other with unboiled

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rice three times across this screen. Then they change places. The *'sināi'* or blood-stained rag of the bridegroom is now put into his hand and the bride's *sināi* is put into her hand. They first bring their respective *sināis* in contact with the earth, then in contact with their own necks, and finally the bridegroom touches the neck of the bride with his *sināi* and the bride touches his neck with hers. This process is repeated three times. Then they again change places, and exchange their garlands of mango leaves.

(XIX)—*Sinduri-rakab* OR ANOINTING WITH VERMILION.

Now comes the essential and binding part of the marriage ceremonial—the mutual application of vermilion which makes the pair man and wife. The bride at first has her face fully veiled. On the bridegroom's father or some other relative putting on a brass bracelet on her left arm, the bride unveils her forehead, thus permitting it to

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be marked with vermilion. The bridegroom first puts three marks of oil on the ground and over each of these marks puts a mark of vermi' n. Then the bridegroom and the bride ch..ge places. The bridegroom now with the fingers of his right hand besmears the bride's forehead with vermilion. Then the bride similarly puts three marks of oil and, over them, of vermilion, on the ground, changes places with the bridegroom, and with her right-hand fingers besmears the bridegroom's forehead with vermilion. In some *ṭāṇḍās*, where the people have come in contact with Hindu or Hinduized aborigines, the spectators give lusty shouts of *"Haribōl-Hari"* (Halleluiah) while bride and bridegroom are putting vermilion marks on each other's forehead. Until this anointing with vermilion, the mother of the bride, like the mother of the bridegroom at her *ṭāṇḍā*, observes a fast although she may drink liquor.

After this *sindūri-rākāb* ceremony, the bride, the bridegroom and his *Lūkiṇḍi* are

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taken round to the *thāāns* or spirit-seats of the *ṭaṇḍā*, and at each of these *thāāns*, they bow down before the wooden and clay symbols of the spirits at these shrines.

(XX)—Barring the Door against the Bridegroom. *(Duār-Chhekōuni.)*

The bride and bridegroom are now conducted from the courtyard towards the bride's hut. A few girl-friends of the bride take their stand at the door and prevent their entrance into the hut. To make them desist from barring their way, the bridegroom's father pays them a *solatium* of an *anna* or so. Then the pair enter the hut and are seated on a palm-leaf mat. The bride's younger sister now places before the bridegroom a high-brimmed plate filled with water. The bridegroom places his feet in the water and a young sister-in-law washes them and then firmly clasps his legs with her hands, and will not let go until the bridegroom's father makes her a present of an *anna* or so.

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The bride's mother now places a dish of rice, either boiled or parched, together with molasses, before the bridegroom. But the bridegroom will not eat this food unless some present—either a brass vessel or a goat or other animal—is given to him. When he is thus satisfied he eats the food. The girl is at the same time treated to the same delicacies in another part of the house.

(XXI)—The Marriage Feast and Touching the *Loṭa* of Water. *(Aghia.)*

The people of the bridegroom's party now go and bathe in a stream or spring. On their return to the bride's parents' place, one or two of the bride's relatives wash their feet. Two pots of rice-beer are then brought out; one man on each side offers a libation to his ancestor-spirits as we have seen done on the occasion of the *'jōm-māṇḍi'*, after which the liquor is passed round. The *Agiā* or representative of the bride's people now comes forward

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with a brass goblet *(lōṭā)* placed on a *sāl*-leaf-plate in his hands. The bridegroom's father or other relative asks, "What is this *lōṭā* for?" The *Agiā* replies, "Our tribe-fellows are assembled to-day. Will they take broken [20] rice-grains *(khūdi-mārkhu)* wet (boiled) or dry (unboiled)? I am awaiting your orders". If there is any social offence on the part of the bride's father's family remaining to be expiated by a fine or feast or both, no one will touch tha *lōṭā* until the fine or feast demanded is paid or promised. If there is no such offence to be expiated or when the required fine is paid or feast promised, the bridegroom's father touches the *lōṭā*, and says, "I have lost my *lōṭā*, how can I eat dry rice?" Then there is an exchange of salutations between to parties. The *Agiā* again holds up the *lōṭā* with extended hands and asks, "Shall we arrange for broken grains of

[20] This is said in humility. In reality 'whole' and not 'broken' grains of rice are meant. This is of a piece with the euphemistic use of 'pot-herbs' for 'meat' and 'wet grains' for 'boiled rice'.

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rice alone, or should we look out for some pot-herb (meaning, an animal) too ?" Then the bridegroom's father again touches the *lōṭā* and says, "Gather pot-herbs as well". A goat or other animal is thereupon brought out and slain. Its head is roasted and eaten by the male guests as a relish for the liquor. One of the haunches of the animal is set apart as a present for the bridegroom's party to take to their *ṭāṇḍā* with them. In the evening, dinner is served in the same manner as in the *jōm-māṇḍi* feast (vide p. 165 *ante*); and the same ceremonies are observed as in the *jōm-māṇḍi*—of offering some rice to the ancestor-spirits of bridegroom, and the two headmen of the two parties eating two morsels of rice before the other guests begin. After this marriage-feast, the guests wash theis hands and mouths, chew powdered tobocco mixd with lime, and retire to bed for the night.

The bridegroom and his best man or *Lukūṇḍi* sleep together that night in one *kūmbā* or leaf-hut, while the bride with

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her *Lūkūṇḍi* (or bridesmaid) who is a younger female cousin (but not an uterine sister) of hers, sleeps in another *kūmba*.

(XXII)—THE *Chuman* OR SYMBOLICAL 'KISSING' CEREMONY.

Next morning, bridegroom and bride are conducted to the *āngan* or open space before the main hut of the family, and are seated on a palm-leaf mat. To the right of the bridegroom is seated his *Lūkūṇḍi*. Similarly, to the left of the bride sits her *lūkūṇḍi*. The women of the *ṭaṇḍā*, one after another, come forward to make *chumān*, first of the bridegroom and then of the bride in the following manner: Each takes up by turns a bamboo-basket containing some unhusked rice, tender grass-shoots, and a lighted earthen oil-lamp, waves it three times before the face of the bridegroom or bride, as the case may be, sprinkles a few grains of unhusked rice and a few tender shoots of grass on the head

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of the bridegroom or bride and then after warming her hands by holding them one on each side of the lighted lamp, touches the temples of the bridegroom or the bride with the warm hands which she then kisses herself.

(XXIII)—Beginning of the Taboo between a Birhor and the Elder Sisters and Cousins of his Wife.

As each woman finishes the *chumān*, she puts down a cash present known as *chumān paisā* (the amount varying from an anna upwards according to the circumstances of the woman) on a plate placed before the pair for the purpose. The elder sisters and cousins of the bride are the last to perform the ceremonial *chumān* of their brother-in-law. And in their case an additional interesting ceremony attends the *chumān*. After the elder sisters and cousins of the bride have performed the *chumān* ceremony as described above, each of them by turns asks the bride-

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groom what his name is. The bridegroom tells his name, and in his turn asks her, "What is your name, please ?" She tells her own name, and then, dipping a leafy mango-stalk in a bowl, sprinkles water on the bridegroom. The latter, in his turn, sprinkles water on her with a mango-stalk dipped in water in a brass-plate placed before him. As each woman finishes this ceremonial sprinkling of water *(dā-hipirchi* or *jhamka-jhimki)*, she pulls the bridegroom by the ears, deals three blows with her fist on his back, and tells him, "From to-day regard me as your *Jeṭh-sās*; listen well with your ears, do not utter my name again with your lips". After saying this she puts her present on the plate before the bride-groom and goes away. Thenceforth the *'banhōi'* and his *'Jeṭh-sās'* may not utter each other's name nor sit together on the same mat, nor come close to each other, nor talk to each other except on urgent and unavoidable business, and even then from a respectful distance.

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(XXIV)—THE FAREWELL CEREMONY.

Now the bridegroom prepares to return to his *ṭaṇḍā* with his bride. The bride stands just outside the threshold of her hut with the palms of her hand joined together by the inner sides and extended forward. The bridegroom stands behind her on the door-step, clasping with his two hands the two wrists of the bride.

The bride's mother stands just behind the bridegroom and on the inner side of the door-step. Some other woman standing behind the bride's mother holds a cloth stretched out at full length. Another woman with a winnowing-basket, containing some rice, stands by the side of the bride. This woman places a handful of rice on the extended palms of the bride's hands and asks her, "Whose house are you filling with plenty, dear ?" The bride replies, "I am filling my brother's hut with plenty", and at the same time throws away the rice over her own head into the cloth stretched out behind her mother. This is

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repeated twice more. The object of this ceremony is that the girl may not take away plenty and prosperity from her parents' or brother's family. Now the bridegroom, carried on the arms of women and followed by a number of other women and girls, proceed in the direction of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā*. Arrived at the outskirts of the bride's father's *ṭāṇḍā* the women come to a halt and ask for *gāti-bāge* or *sang-chhaṛāuni paisā*, that is to say, a *solatium* for giving up their companion (the bride). The bridegroom's father gives them an anna or so, and they return to their *ṭāṇḍā* leaving the bride. Then the bridegroom and his party proceed towards their own *ṭāṇḍā* with the bride and her *Lūkūṇḍi*.

(XXV)—ARCHHA-PARCHHA OR WELCOMING THE BRIDE.

When bride and bridegroom reach the bridegroom's place the bride is welcomed at the *āngan* or open space in front

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of the house with lighted torches and pounded turmeric in the same manner and with the same ceremonies as we saw at the bridegroom's *ārchhā-parchhā* or welcoming ceremony at the bride's father's place. (See section xiii, page 181 *ante.*) On this occasion the mother of the bridegroom puts an iron wristlet *(khāṛu)* on the left arm of the bride and besmears vermilion on her forehead, and a number of other women of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā* sing indecent songs abusive of the bride. In certain clans, such as the Lupung and the Bhuiya *gotras*, when a bridegroom returns home with his bride after marriage, mango leaves on stalks are strewn all along the path in the open space *(āngan)* in front of his hut and up to the door of the hut and inside it. As the bridegroom treads over each leafy stalk the bride who follows him carrying a jug of water in one hand and dropping its water all along the path takes up each stalk in her other hand and finally places them all inside the hut beside the door.

(XXVI)—FIRST DAY'S CEREMONIES AT THE BRIDEGROOM'S HOUSE.

Then a number of girls take their stand at the door of the bridegroom's hut and bar the entrance of the wedded pair until they are given a present *(Duār-chhekōuni paisā).* The bride's *Lūkūṇḍi* pays them an anna or so, whereupon they leave the door.

When the pair enter the hut, a younger sister of the bridegroom washes the feet of the bride and receives from the bride's *Lūkūṇḍi* four pice for her trouble. Then bridegroom and bride are treated to a meal of rice and molasses. They are next conducted to the miniature tank previously excavated in the courtyard at the time of the *Adhibās* (*vide* page 176 *ante*). And there a few married women, whose husbands are alive and living with them, bathe the bridegroom and bride.

One of the women now closes with her hands the eyes of the bridegroom who then takes out three twisted-up mango

leaves which were fastened on his arm at the *Adhhibās* ceremony (see page 177, *ante*), and buries them with his hands in the water of the miniature tank. Another woman then closes with her hands the eyes of the bride who has now to search for the mango leaves with her hands and bring them out one after another from the tank.

The bridegroom and bride are now conducted to the *māṛoā*, or mud-platform in the *āngan*, and the *chuman* (kissing) ceremony of the bride is performed first by the bridegroom's mother and then by other female relatives. Now the elder brothers and elder male cousins of the bridegroom each asks the bride, "What is your name, please?" She gives her name, and then the questioner sprinkles water on her with a small mango leaf-stalk. As each man finishes this ceremonial *dahirchi* or sprinkling of water, he tells the bride, "From to-day regard me as your *Bāu-honjhār* (husband's elder brother—whose touch is taboo). Her husband's elder sisters and elder female cousins then pull

her by the ears and say, "Mind, from this day regard us as your *Aji-hānār*".

In some Jāghi clans such as the Murum, Andi. Ludamba, Geroa, and Tāiyo, a second *sindūri rākāb* ceremony is now performed in the following manner: The bride and bridegroom stand on the *maṛōā*; and the bridegroom three times anoints oil on the bride's forehead and puts vermilion marks on it as in the *sindūri-rākāb* ceremony described above (page 188 *ante*); and the bride similarly puts oil and *sindūr* marks three times on the bridegroom's forehead. Among the *Kawān* clan of *Birhōṛs*, before bride and bridegroom enter the hut, a fowl is sacrificed in the courtyard and its blood is sprinkled on the young couple. The bridegroom's mother draws with rice-flour moistened with water a chain of circular figures from the *āngan* up to the door of the hut. On each circular figure is placed a mango leaf on each of which the bridegroom and after him the bride tread in walking to the door of the hut. In certain clans, such as the Lupung or Beherwar and

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the Bhuiya, mango leaves attached to their stalks are spread from one end of the *āngan* (open space in front of the hut) up to some distance inside the hut. As the bridegroom walks over each of these leaf-stalks, the bride takes it up in one hand and goes on dropping water along her path from a jug carried in the other hand.

In the evening, the bridegroom's father treats his relatives and fellow-*ṭāṇḍā*-people to a feast and drinking at which two of the elders in the manner already described offer libations of rice-beer and offerings of boiled rice to the ancestor-spirits before the assembled guests begin to eat and drink. Before they begin to eat, the bride stands before them with a large leaf-cup *(khālā)* filled with boiled rice, and the elders of the *ṭāṇḍā* ask her, "Henceforth will you always supply us with food in this way? If you promise to do so, we shall eat this food at your hands; if not, we won't take it". The bride promises to find food for them; and they all fall

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to eating. After washing their hands and mouths, the guests take tobacco powder mixed with lime and go to their respective huts. Bridegroom and bride sleep in separate huts that night.

(XXVII)—THE *Nir-nipir* OR *Chouṭhā-Chouṭhi* CEREMONY.

Next morning both the bridegroom and the bride change their turmeric-dyed clothes which are then boiled in water mixed with ashes, cleaned, and put out to dry. After change of clothes, the bride carrying on her head a basket containing about a score of clay marbles and in her hands a *lōṭā* filled with water and covered over with a leaf-cup containing some molasses, proceeds on the way to her father's *ṭāṇḍā*. Her husband carrying in his hands a bow and arrow and a leafy mango-twig follows her at some distance. As soon as the bride reaches the limits of her husband's *ṭāṇḍā*, she puts down on the ground the basket and the *lōṭā* and

begins to run in the direction of her father's *ṭāṇḍā*. At this her husband leaves his bow and arrow near the basket left by his wife, and gives chase to her until he overtakes her. Seizing hold of her hand, he strikes her on her buttocks with the mango-twig in his hand, and leads her back by the hand to the spot where she laid down her basket and where the women of the *ṭāṇḍā* have in the meanwhile assembled. Arrived at the spot, the husband takes up his bow and arrow, the wife takes up the *lōṭā* of water covered over with the cup of molasses, and the wife's *Lūkāṇḍi* takes up the basket containing clay marbles. The husband first shoots his arrow in the direction of his *ṭāṇḍā*. All follow the direction of the arrow. When the husband and the wife reach the spot where the arrow has fallen, the wife besmears the cheek of her husband with a little molasses, then washes away the marks with a little water from her *lōṭā*. She then picks up the arrow and hands it over to her husband. This process of shooting the

arrow and picking it up and anointing the cheeks with molasses and washing off the molasses with water, is repeated five times, so that the fifth arrow takes them near the bridegroom's house.

Now the *Lūkūṇḍi* stands beside the bride with the basket of clay marbles in her hands, and the bridegroom's *Lūkūṇḍi* stands beside him with a basket of similar clay marbles. The husband first throws five clay marbles, one after another, at the bride; but her *Lūkūṇḍi*, by standing in front of her, protects her from being hit. Now it is the wife's turn to throw five clay marbles, one after another, at her husband; and she betrays no reluctance to do so. The bridegroom's *Lūkūṇḍi*, however, by placing himself before the bridegroom shields him from being hit. Then the wife returns to her husband's hut carrying the basket on her head and the husband follows her with his bow and arrow. Then they have a bath of cold water; after which the bride washes the feet of her husband. Finally the couple together visit all the

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thhāns or spirit-seats in the village and make *jōhār* (obeisance) at each *thhān.*

In this *Chouṭhā-Chouṭhi* ceremony we appear to find a reminiscence of a former practice of testing the husband's valour and skill, and a dramatic representation of the respective duties of husband and wife to each other.

(XXVIII)—THE *Pichhā-seṭer* CEREMONY.

Three or four days later, three persons from the bride's father's *ṭāṇḍā*,—including the *teyāng* or husband of the elder sister, if any, of the bride,—come to the bridegroom's place. On their arrival, the bridegroom takes charge of their sticks, and the bride washes their feet. Then they sit down and are given powdered tobacco mixed with lime to refresh themselves with. While chewing tobacco, they are asked by some elder of the bridegroom's *ṭāṇḍā*,—"Where do you come from ? Where are you going ?" They reply,—"We are come to these parts to look for

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strayed cattle (meaning, the bride). A herd of cattle (meaning, the bridegroom's party) had gone to our parts from this side. We had a she-calf. She joined the herd and came away in this direction, as we have found out by prognostication." The first speaker replies,—"Look out for your calf then; find her out, see whither she may have gone." "Ah! here she is", cries one of the bride's relatives. "Well, then", is the reply, "If she is your calf, you may take her home".

After this pleasant bantering, the guests are treated to dinner. Next morning, after breakfast, they take the girl and her husband on a temporary visit to her parents, promising to send them back after a stated number of days. The boy's father pays a sum of eight annas to the bride's people as *Kunutām-paisā* towards the expenses of the *Kunutām* sacrifice.

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(XXIX)—THE *Kūnūtum* SACRIFICE.

Two, three or four days later, the bride's father sacrifices either a pig or a goat, according to the ancient usage of the family, in honour of the whole body of his ancestor-spirits. The *āngan* is cleaned by the bride with cowdung diluted in water, and here the pig or goat, as the case may be, is brought out, given some *arua* rice to eat and, while it is eating, its head is broken by the bride's father or other senior male member of the family by striking *(kutām)* the blunt side of an axe against its head. While thus sacrificing the animal, the sacrificer prays, "O ! all ye ancestors who are dead, lost or strayed *(gōj-gur hāpṛām ḍūpṛum)*, today I am making this *Kūnūtam* in your name for this girl who has been just married. For her I am making this sacrifice purchased with money paid [by her husband's people]. Accept it [and bless her]." The bridegroom with the help of one or two young men now strips off the skin of

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the sacrificed animal, and chops up the meat. The bride cooks rice and meat-curry. When the guests all sit down to dinner, the bride's father or some other senior relative says, "Look, my daughter's husband's people paid money for the *Kūnūtam* sacrifice, and with that money the animal was purchased. So, fall to, my brethren and children, (referring to relatives of different generations), and eat in celebration of the *Kūnūtam* sacrifice". It may be noted that the bridegroom but not the bride, is permitted to eat the meat of the head of the sacrificed animal as it is a sacrifice to her own ancestor-spirits; and it is believed that if she eats the meat, some ancestor-spirit of her father will follow her to her husband's place, in which case she will have to offer periodical sacrifices to the spirit, or else she will suffer from illness and other troubles.

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(XXX)—MAROA-PUJA.

On the day following, the bride and bridegroom are taken back by the bridegroom's father to his house. There the latter has to offer sacrifices to his ancestor-spirits. In some clans, such as the *Lūpūng*, *Bhūinyā* and *Hembrōm*, two goats are sacrificed on the *māṛoa* or mud-pulpit in the *āngan*, a *balua* or axe being used to decapitate the animals. In other clans, such as the *Aṇḍi*, only a fowl is sacrificed and that by the *kutam* process, that is to say, by breaking the head of the fowl with the blunt side of an axe. The sacrificer prays to his ancestor-spirits for the well-being of the newly-wedded pair. A feast follows. It may be noted that although the newly wedded young man may partake of the meat of the head of the goat or fowl thus sacrificed to his ancestor-spirits, his wife may not. A *Birhōṛ* female may only partake of the meat of the head of a fowl or animal sacrificed in honour of a spirit to which her mother sacrifices and to

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which she may, and invariably does, sacrifice, but not the meat of the head of animals or fowls sacrificed to the spirits either of her father's side or of her husband's side. Her husband, however, and her daughters, but not her sons, may eat the meat of the head of an animal or fowl sacrificed to a spirit to which her mother sacrifices and which has been handed down, so to say, to her by her mother and has become her *mānitā bhūt*.

(XXX)—BANA-SANA.

As the *Kunutam* and *Māṛoā Pūjā* sacrifices are meant to secure for the newly-married young persons the good wishes and help of the ancestor-spirits, so the *Bānā Sānā* ceremony performed in the house of the bridegroom after a marriage among the *Jāghi Birhoṛs* is meant to protect the couple against evil spirits and super-physical evil influences. This protection is sought with the aid of the beneficent spirits—the *Buru-bōngā* the

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Nāgē-Erā, and the *Bāghout* spirit. A mystic diagram as in *Fig. 2*, (in the Plate opposite page 153) is drawn on the ground in the *āngan* which has been cleaned with water, and, if available, cow-dung diluted with water. Black coal dust, red earth and white rice-flour are the materials used in drawing the lines and curves which compose this diagram, the black standing for the *Bāghout* spirit, red for *Nāgē-Era-Bindi-Era* and the white for *Buru-bonga*. The spirits thus represented in the diagram are offered sacrifices of fowls of appropriate colours and the sacrificer prays :—"Here we have brought a new person (meaning, the bride) for you [to protect]. From to-day may there be no fear *(boro chiri)* in the streams and the woods for this new person. From to-day may there be no illness in the stomach *(lāhij hāsu)* or in the head *(bō-hāsu)*. May the new person *(nawā hōṛ)* come out safe and sound from the [evil attentions of] evil spirits and powers of the streams and woods".

Thus, just as the *Kūnūtam* and the *Māṛōā*

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pūjā ceremonies complete the amalgamation of the new bride with her husband's family and *ṭaṇḍā* by introducing her to the family-spirits and *ṭaṇḍā* spirits and thereby ensuring their good wishes aud friendly services, so the *Bānā-Sānā* rites are meant to introduce her to the friendly spirits of the hills and streams and jungles of her husband's country and secure for her their protection against the evil spirits and evil influences residing in those hills and streams and jungles.

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CHAPTER VII.

Birth, Childhood and Puberty Customs.

When we pass from *Birhōṛ* customs relating to marriage to those attendant on birth and death, we approach more closely the religious ideas of the tribe.

The *Birhōṛ's* idea of life is one of continuous progress from stage to stage. At each successive stage—from birth and infancy through adolescence, youth and married stage, to old age,—the *Birhōṛ* regards himself as gradually gaining in strength through increasing association with friendly spirits to combat supernatural evil influences and evil powers that surround him on all sides till at length Death lands him on to the highest stage of existence when man is transformed into spirit—no longer in dread of adverse supernatural spiritual influences but himself powerful to influence man for good and evil alike.

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One main object of the customary rites and ceremonies observed by the *Birhōṛ* at the passage from one state of life to another would appear to be to relieve him from some of the harmful spiritual influences peculiar to the outgoing stage and apt to cling to him in the new stage and infect human beings who are in intimate touch with him,—to purify him and his surroundings including his relatives,—to break all ties with the old state and to assimilate his nature to the new state of life he is entering.

At no stage of life is a human being more exposed to supernatural evil influences than while still in the mother's womb, at birth, and during infancy. Many, therefore, are the precautions and rites that a pregnant and parturient *Birhōṛ* woman, her family and community are required to observe.

1.—Observances during Pregnancy.

The observances that have to be attended to during the pregnancy of a *Birhōṛ* wo-

man, appear to fall into three classes,—those meant to protect the mother and the child in the womb from dangers arising from the spirit-world, those designed to avert the evil eye and other deleterious influences proceeding from human beings, and lastly those intended to avert dangers due to physical causes. The first class of precautions have to be taken sometimes by the pregnant woman alone and sometimes by both herself and her husband, and the other two by the woman alone. The neighbours of the parturient woman have also to observe certain precautions to avoid the infectious taints likely to proceed from her.

To avoid danger from the spirit-world, the inmates of the house must abstain from invoking any spirits and offering any sacrifices in the house during the pregnancy of a woman of the family. The head of an animal or fowl sacrificed to the spirits (other than her own *mānitās*) is always taboo to a *Birhōṛ* woman. But during his wife's pregnancy her husband

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too must abstain from eating the head of an animal or fowl sacrificed to any spirit or the head of any animal or fowl obtained by hunting. A breach of this taboo is believed to endanger the whole community. Should either the husband or the wife eat such meat, the men of the *ṭaṇḍā* are sure to have ill success in hunting. And to propitiate the spirits in such a case, the husband must supply the *Nāyā* with one pig, two goats, and five fowls to be sacrificed a little away from the huts. Apart from this taboo against such flesh diet, the *Birhōṛ* husband is not required to observe any other rules of diet or behaviour during his wife's pregnancy. The practice of couvade is unknown. The woman must take care not to lie down in the courtyard or other open space lest spirits and a particular species of bird called the *Puni* bird might fly across her body. It is believed that should such spirits as a *Muā* or a *Mālech* flit across the woman, the child in the womb will be either still-born or deformed. And the flight of a

Puni bird over her body is believed to injure some limb of the child in the womb or cause *Puni-dukh* to it which will make it pine away. Nor must the woman go near rivers and streams where *churils* or spirits of women who died during pregnancy or in childbirth are supposed to dwell. To avoid the evil eye, she must cover her womb with a cloth while going out of her house. To prevent the entrance of dangerous influences, she must neither touch nor see a human corpse, nor even see the smoke rising from a funeral pyre. She must therefore keep indoors when a cremation is going on within sight of her *tāṇḍā*. She must also keep indoors when lightning flashes are seen and a peal of thunder is heard. The prohibitions against eating stale rice and against crossing a river during pregnancy may be meant merely to avoid physical dangers; but it is not unlikely that they are intended to avert certain super-physical dangerous influences as well.

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II.—Difficult Labour.

The *Birhōṛ* ascribes difficult labour either to the evil eye or to some sexual transgression on the part of the woman or to the ill-will of some evil spirit. And for each of these classes of impediments a different set of remedies is adopted. To counteract the evil eye as well as to neutralize the effect of 'sins' which are believed to hamper delivery, certain magical rites are performed; and to propitiate the obstructive spirits, sacrifices are offered. In difficult labour, magical rites are first tried, and, if these fail, the ghost-finder or *Māti* is consulted and sacrifices are offered to the spirit who is supposed to impede delivery. Among magical rites performed to facilitate delivery the following may be mentioned:—If the woman during her pregnancy happened to close the cover of any earthen vessel or vessels with mud or other similar substance, such covers are taken out. Or, if she happened to have filled up with earth any holes or cracks in the floor of her hut, these holes and

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cracks are opened up again. If these fail to bring about delivery, a handful of rice is waved over the head of the pregnant woman in the name successively of each supposed witch and then fried in an earthen pan. If this too fails to remove the impediment, the midwife mentally names, one after another, each man who might possibly have been in intrigue with the woman and be the possible father of the child in the womb, and at each name throws a grain of rice on her. It is believed that as soon as the adulterer is named (mentally), delivery takes place. It is said that the ancestor-spirits of the family cause difficult labour to an adulteress in order that her guilt may be detected in this way. If all these expedients fail to bring about a speedy delivery, the ghost-finder or *māti* is sent for to find out by the examination of a handful of rice the particular spirit which is hampering delivery. If it be a spirit of an established position to whom sacrifices are ordinarily offered who is found to obstruct delivery, a vow is taken of

making the proper sacrifices in case of speedy delivery, and if it be only a stray spirit the *māti* takes up a handful of rice, waves it round the head of the woman and while naming the spirit in question throws it away as if towards the spirit.

III.—Sex and number of Unborn Babes.

If a woman grows thin during pregnancy, it is said she will bear a male child; if otherwise, a female. Blackish knots in the umbilical cord are supposed to indicate the total number of male children the woman will bear and reddish white knots the number of female children.

IV.—The Birth.

When labour-pains come on, the men leave the hut as their presence is believed to hinder delivery, and only a few women remain. The woman who acts as midwife sometimes rubs oil over the womb to facilitate delivery. One end of the hut

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is partitioned off to serve as the lying-in room and here the delivery takes place. Soon after birth a new door is opened at that end for the use of the parturient woman for a period varying amongst different clans from one to six weeks. It is believed that if she used the old door during the period of impurity, two members of the family would certainly die. The pathway from this new door up to a little distance is, by most clans, fenced off on both sides with hedges made of branches of trees so that the shadow of the parturient woman and the midwife may not fall on and pollute or endanger their neighbours or their houses. These branches are burnt by the midwife *(kusrāin)* after the first seven days of impurity. In a few clans, such as the *Mūrūm*, *Aṇḍi* and the *Shāmjhākoā* (the last two of which are in origin of mixed blood) no new door is opened ; on the other hand, in at least one of the wildest of *Uṭhlū* clans, an altogether separate hut is erected for the mother and her baby, and the baby is born without the help of any

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midwife or other person, and nobody visits them there nor are they allowed to come near others during the period of impurity. If the placenta is delayed in coming out, the root of a certain plant is suspended from the woman's neck on a string. A copper coin is held below the navel and on this the navel string is cut with an arrow-head or a razor. The navel string and the placenta are now taken up in a leaf-cup and buried just outside the threshold of the hut in a hole about a cubit deep. The *Birhōṛs* assert that the reason why the after-birth is thus buried and secreted is that should a dog or other animal eat it up the mother will sicken and die. If this hole is deep, the difference between the age of the present baby and its next brother or sister will be long, and if the hole be shallow, the difference will be short. The stump of the umbilical cord, when it dries up and falls off, is also buried just outside the threshold, but not so deep; it is asserted that should it be eaten up by any animal, the child will sicken and die.

If the stump of the navel string is buried deep, the teeth of the baby, it is said, will be late in appearing; but if the stump is buried just below the surface, the baby will teeth early.

As soon as a baby is born, the midwife rubs a mixture of oil, pounded turmeric and powdered rice-husk over its limbs and bathes the babe in tepid water. The following day at about noon the mother drinks water in which *kurthi* pulse *(Dolichos biflorus)* has been boiled. This is meant to hasten the flow of milk at her breasts. If this does not serve its purpose, recourse will be had to the following rite: The following morning the husband of the woman will bathe in some spring or stream and come home with a jug of water which he will place in front of his hut. A piece of burning charcoal is also sometimes placed by its side, and over it a little gum of the sal *(shorea robusta)* tree will be sprinkled. The husband will then take up the jug of water in his hands and slowly pour the water, standing with his face towards

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the sun and saying,—"O *Sing Bōngā*, I am making this libation of water to Thee. May milk flow from her breast like this [water I am pouring]. I vow to offer thee 'milk flower' [21] when my desire is fufilled." After the *Thaṭhi* ceremony, which will be described later on, the husband will, with the same rites, offer a libation of cow's milk on the same spot, saying, "I offer this milk in fulfilment of the vow I took while I poured water in the name of (i. e., in place of) milk."

From the second day after delivery she will be given a meal of hot rice and a soup of *rahar (Cajanus Indicus)* pulse every evening.

On the day of birth,—or on the following morning if the birth has taken place at night,—the men of the *ṭāṇḍā* go out with their nets for a hunt with a view to testing the future luck of the new-born babe.

[21] This is an euphemism for 'cow's milk'.

V.—The Days of Ceremonial Impurity.

Generally for twenty-one days after birth, mother and child are considered impure or, to put it more correctly, remain in the taboo state. In some clans the taboo state continues longer. During this period, the new-born babe and its mother are secluded in a corner of the family hut which is partitioned off from the rest of the hut unless, as among the *Kāwān* clan, a separate leaf hut is erected for the purpose. In most clans, as we have already seen, a new doorway is made for this portion of the hut for the use of the parturient woman and the midwife, and long fencings of twigs are put up on both sides of the pathway leading to it. The meals of the parturient woman are brought to her up to this new doorway and she takes them in, and, after having eaten her meals, washes the plate and puts it out to be taken away. The female attendants at birth go out by this new door after the delivery, take a purificatory bath and, in

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some (particularly, *Jāghi*) *ṭāṇḍās*, have their persons sprinkled over with water in which copper and leaves of the *Tulasi* (the sacred basil) plant have been dipped. During the first seven days after a birth, the whole *ṭāṇḍā* is in the taboo state, and during this period no *Pujā* or sacrificial feast can be celebrated in the *ṭāṇḍā* at all ; but, as for the family of the new-born babe, this taboo against *Pujās* has to be observed by them for three weeks longer. By way of a threat to evil spirits that may otherwise harm the baby or its mother, the iron instrument, if any, with which the navel-string may have been cut, or a sickle or a knife, is placed under the cloth or other thing which serves as their pillow. This instrument is taken away by the midwife on the occasion of the *ṭhaṭhi* ceremony on the seventh day after birth, and is replaced by a new knife or sickle. After the days of impurity are over, this instrument is laid out in the open during a lunar

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eclipse and finally made into an anklet or armlet which is to serve as an amulet to protect the child from the evil eye or evil spirits.

VI.—The *Ṭhaṭhi* or First Purification.

The *ṭhaṭhi* ceremony, celebrated on the seventh day from the date of the birth, is meant for the final purification of the other members of the *ṭāṇḍā* and the preliminary purification of the newborn child and its mother and of the other members of the particular family. Until then, as we have seen, there can be no *pūjā* in the *ṭāṇḍā*. On the *ṭhāṭhi* day, men of the child's clan living in the *ṭāṇḍā* have their nails pared, and their beards and the edges of the hair round the head shaved. The women of the clan also will have their nails pared, the nails of the mother of the baby being pared last of all. Finally the baby will have its head shaved. This shaved-off hair of the baby is considered unclean *(chhūt)* and is taken in a leaf-cup to the

side of some tank or stream and left there. Then the men, and, after them, the women go out for a purificatory bath. The mother with the midwife, who has in the meanwhile covered the floor of the lying-in room with a coating of mud diluted in water and, on the new pathway between the fences, a coating of cowdung diluted in water, brings up the rear. The clothes used in the lying-in room are boiled that morning in water mixed with ashes. The palm-leaf mat and the bedstead, if any, used in the lying-in room are taken to a stream, immersed in water for a whole day, anointed with a little oil and pounded turmeric and taken back to the lying-in room for use until the final purification on the twenty-first day after the birth or later.

The mother of the baby returns home with water dripping from the hair of her head and squeezes out a little of this water into the mouth of her baby, accompanying her action with a blessing on the child. If it is a male child, she says,—"May you never feel thirsty when you go out for a hunt or

are engaged in making ropes"; and, if it is a female child, she says,—"May you never feel thirsty when you may be gathering leaves and tubers in the jungles". When all return home after bathing, the babe's mother washes the legs and feet of her husband, anoints them with oil and turmeric-paste, again washes the legs from below the knees, and then clasping one of his legs with her hands asks him,—"What will you give me"? The husband either presents her with a new cloth or promises to give her one. She now bows down to her husband by touching his feet, and from a distance makes obeisance to the elders of the *ṭāṇḍā* assembled before her hut.

Then the *Nāyā*, with his face to the east, offers a red fowl to *Chowrāsi Pāhāṛ Parbat* (the eighty-four hills and mountains) who are invoked by name and believed to assemble at the invocation, and one black fowl to *Māhāli Chāti* (who is said to be the mistress of the spirit of *Lugu Pāhāṛ*). The fowls are held with their faces to the east. While sacrificing each fowl the

Nāyā says, "I offer this fowl in the name of the new human being that has come to us. May health attend the baby and good luck in chase attend the people of the *ṭaṇḍā*." At each of the two spots where the two fowls are sacrificed, the *Nāyā*, still facing east, drops a litle rice-beer from a leaf-cup. It is believed that unless these sacrifices are offered, the birth-taboo will continue and the men of the *ṭaṇḍā* will have bad luck in the chase. The *Nāyā* gets the two sacrificed fowls as his remuneration and he roasts them then and there. After the sacrifices have been offered, a pot of oil is passed round amongst the guests. Each guest dips the tips of his fingers in the oil which he rubs over his face, and also into his ears. The assembled guests are then treated to two jars of rice-beer. Before they begin drinking, the eldest member of the clan takes up in his hands a leaf-cup filled with rice-beer and makes a figurative speech as follows:—"A wind arose in the east; clouds gathered in the west; rain

came down on the ground; the tank *(bāndh)* got filled to the brim. When the tank was full, we wondered whether the tank contained a crocodile, or a fish, or a snake. Then the embankment burst, and we discovered it contained a human child. Now then we shall take it into our *Jāt* (tribe). May the child live up to a hoary (*lit.*, white) old age *(rel pānṛu rutā pānṛu)*". After having done justice to the two jars of rice-beer, the guests return to their respective houses.

VII.—The Chhota Thhathhi.

Generally on the twenty-first day after birth, but in some clans later, the final purification ceremony is performed. The mother of the baby boils in water and ashes the clothes hitherto used by the mother and babe in the lying-in room, and another woman of the family similarly cleanses the clothes of the other members of the family; and in every family in the *ṭāṇḍā* some woman similarly cleanses the clothes of the

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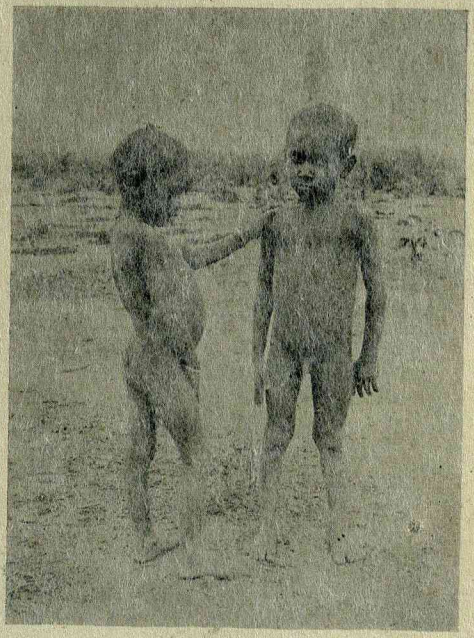


Plate XXV.—Types of Birhõṛ children (male)

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members of her family. The baby's head is shaved, and the mat used by the baby and its mother is cast aside. The new door of the lying-in room is then closed up, the whole house is cleansed with mud or cowdung diluted in water, and all the members of the family take a ceremonial bath. The head of the family offers the sacrifice of a red fowl and a libation of rice-beer to the spirits of his ancestors and prays for the health and longevity of the baby. The mother with the baby in her arms goes to the *thhāns* or spirit-seats of her husband's family and then to the *thhāns* of the other families of the *ṭāṇḍā* and bows down to all the ghosts of all the *thhāns*.

VIII.—The 'Saki' or Name-giving Ceremony.

On the morning following the *Chhōṭā Ṭhhāṭhhi* day, a name is selected for the child in the following manner. A bowl of water is placed on the open space in front

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of the hut which has been besmeared with mud diluted in water, and where the men of the *ṭaṇḍā* have assembled. A handful of rice and a blade of tender grass *(dūb)* are placed on the ground as *sāki* or witnesses to the ceremony. A grain of *til (sesamum)* seed to represent the baby is first dropped into the water of the bowl, and then a grain of *dhān* or unhusked rice representing the paternal grand-father (whether dead or alive) of the baby is similarly dropped into the same bowl. If the *til* seed and the grain of *dhān* float on till they meet, the baby is named after his paternal grand-father. If they sink down without meeting, the process is repeated with a *til*-seed representing the baby and grains of *dhān* to represent other relatives one after another until the grains meet. The name of the relative in whose name the grains meet, is selected for the child. If the relative whose name is selected is alive and present, he anoints the child with oil and presents it with one or two copper coins and a

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necklet of black beads. This man is called the *Sāki* (sponsor) of the child. If the *sāki* is a person who does not belong to the family, he is treated to a hearty dinner that day with plenty of liquor from a jar of rice-beer called the *sāki-hāṇḍi*, which has been specially brewed for the purpose.

On this day, a *māti* utters some incantations over a few grains of mustard which are then tied up in a rag and fastened with unbleached thread round the neck of the baby. This serves as an amulet to protect the baby from the evil eye and evil spirits and is worn until the ear-piercing ceremony. The *Birhōṛ* believes that a man always takes after his *sāki*. Thus, if one's *sāki* is a *māti*, he too will turn out to be a *māti*; if one's *sāki* has married only one wife, he too will have no more than one wife, but if the *sāki* has married two or three wives he too will do the same. If the name selected is that of a relative (such as the babe's father's elder brother) whose name is taboo to the baby's mother, a second name—sometimes derived from the day of the week on

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which the child was born—is also selected. As a matter of fact, however, I found almost every *Birhōṛ* having two, and, in a few cases, more than two names. Out of eighteen *Birhōṛ* whose *sāki* names I particularly noted, twelve were named after their paternal grandfathers, one after his paternal great-grandfather, four after their maternal grandfathers and one after his father's elder brother. One of these only had no second name, that is to say, no name other than his *sāki* name. Their names are given below :—

Sāki-name.	Other name.
Thepō	*Būdhū*
Narsing	*Lengā, Mangal.*
Akal	*Būṛkā.*
Dibrū	*Gūlibaha.*
Sukhlāl	*Lijō.*
Chāhālā	*Rābdā.*
Bhāṇḍāri	*Rāgāi.*
Balarām	*Gādi.*
Bhīm	*Arjun.*

Sāki-name.	Other name.
Rābōd	*Chāhalā.*
Kālā	*Samcharwā.*
Puran	(no other name).
Sukhrām	*Lāngṛā.*
Birsāi	*Mālı.*
Sunuā	*Akal.*
Budhu	*Sāona.*
Riṛū	*Mighū.*
Mahādeo	*Jeredpeter.*

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Plate XXVI.—Types of Birhōṛ children (female).

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Where a man has another name besides his *sāki* name, he is ordinarily called by that other name. In the case of twin children, if both are male, they are generally named 'Rām' and 'Lachman' respectively; if both are female they are named 'Gāngi' and 'Jauni'; and if one of the twins is a male and the other a female, the male child is named either 'Rām' or 'Lachman' according as it happens to be the elder or the younger of the twins, and similarly the female child is named either 'Gāngi' or 'Jauni' according as it is the elder or the younger of the twins. But the *sāki* ceremony will be duly gone through and *sāki* names selected as usual.

IX.—The Tukui-lutur or Ear-piercing Ceremony.

The ears of the child are ceremonially perforated generally in the month of *Aghān* (November) following the birth. A quantity of rice-flour is prepared andmade into twenty-eight small round cakes. These are each covered over

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with one *sāl* leaf above it and one below it, and are placed one above the other in a vessel of boiling water on the night before the ceremony. The following morning, the child is anointed with oil and pounded turmeric and bathed in cold water. The *sāki* or, in his absence, some other relative is seated on a wooden plank *(gāṇḍu* or *piṛhā)* which has been placed over a quantity (usually two *pailās* or about four pounds) of unhusked rice. The child is seated on the lap of this relative. Two other men sit down each on one side of the child with a copper *kānausi* (ear-piercing needle) in hand and pierce a hole each in the lobe of one ear of the child. Then each of the two ear-piercers take up a black fowl and strikes it twice against the wooden seat *(gāṇḍu)*, so as to kill it. The fowl thus killed is taken inside the kitchen and roasted. A bamboo umbrella is then stuck up over the wooden seat. One of the ear-piercers throws seven of the cakes on to the roof of the hut, the other

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ear-piercer throws on the same roof the rag containing mustard seeds which was so long tied round the neck of the child; as he does so, he says :—"From to-day the child is taken into the *jāt* (tribe). O ! Spirits and ghosts, do ye henceforth leave him." Two or three boys who have already perched themselves on the roof eat up the seven cakes which are said to be 'meant for the first seven days of impurity'. The boys then come down. Now the *sāki* or somebody on his behalf takes up one cup of oil, and some relative of the child holds in his hand another cup of oil, and each in his turn anoints every one present with the oil. Each guest has also brought with him one small earthen pot of oil besides two or three *pailās* of unhusked rice. This rice is placed on the wooden seat *(gāṇḍu)* and the oil is dropped on the head of each guest, till at length oil begins to drip down the limbs of all present. This is known as '*sāki*-oil'. Two jars of rice-beer along with the remaining twenty-one cakes of rice-flour are now distributed

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amongst the guests. After eating the cakes and drinking the rice-beer, the guests disperse.

By the boring of the ears, the child, as we have seen, is suposed to enter the *jāt* or tribe. Some *Birhōṛs* expressed their idea about the matter to me with this quaint simile :—

"Just as castration admits a bull into the *jāt* of oxen, so by the ear-boring ceremony, a *Birhōṛ* child, until then merely a human child, is admitted into the *jāt* or tribe."

So essential is this ceremony considered by the *Birhōṛ* that a child dying before the ceremony is performed, must have its ears pierced after death and before being carried to its grave.

XI.—Some Childhood Customs.

When a child has one or more teeth behind the front row, some one tells the child :—"We married you to the dog of so-and-so (names some neighbour who keeps a dog)." It is believed that this will serve

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to make the extra teeth fall off at the same time as the milk teeth.

When a child is observed to be gradually wasting away, it is said to suffer from *pūni-dūkh*, and is laid down by its mother early one morning before the house has been swept clean, on the open space *(āngan)* in front of the hut, and some other woman takes it up in her arms saying, "Alas ! Alas ! why has such a fine child been cast away ?" It is believed that this serves in most cases to restore the child to health. If this expedient fails, the child is expected to be cured by being weighed in a balance. It is again weighed after a month or two to see how much it has gained in weight.

So long as a baby is carried in the mother's arms or slung on her back, its mother, while going to some other *ṭāṇḍā* or to some village or market-place, either puts a mark of soot between its eyebrows to protect it from the evil eye or evil spirits, or, while crossing a stream, she generally takes up a little sand, and ties it up at one

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end of her cloth. On her return journey, when her house is in sight, she takes the sand between the tips of her two fingers and throws it away behind her back.

XI.—Cicatrization and Tattooing.

Birhōṛ boys of about twelve or thirteen years of age burn scalds on each other's hands with lighted wicks. No bad effects of any sort are said to result from the omission of this practice which is now looked upon only as a test of the power of manly endurance. It is however different in the case of the tattooing of girls.

Birhōṛ girls of from ten to twelve years of age must have tattoo marks made on their arms, chest, chin, nose and the upper side of feet, with an iron needle. No tattoo marks are made either on the forehead or the temples as amongst the *Orāons*. Where possible, a *Māhāli* or *Ghāsi* woman is called in to make the tattoo marks. Floral designs are commonly used. It is believed that

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if a girl is not tattooed, her spirit will on her death remain in the other world *(lūkū)* under a *semar* tree clasping its trunk with both the arms.

XII.—Life in the Dormitories.

(a) The building.

In a *Birhōṛ ṭāṇḍā* there are two small huts made of leaves and branches of trees, which are used, one as the domitory or *Gitij-ōṛā* for bachelors, and the other for spinsters. The two huts are situated generally at one end of the settlement and at a little distance from each other. The maidens of the *ṭāṇḍā* gather twigs and branches for making their dormitory and their parents and other relatives construct it. The bachelors gather the materials for the construction of their dormitory and they and their relatives construct it. These huts are fairly commodious and vary with the size of the settlement. The boy's domitory has only one door to it, but the maiden's dormitory

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is generally provided with a second door at the back.

(b) Constitution and Management.

Boys are admitted into their dormitory when they are about ten years old and sleep there at night until their marriage. When a boy is married, he has a separate hut made for himself and his wife. Similarly, girls are admitted into their *gitij-ōṛā* at the age of about ten and sleep there at night until marriage. In the boys' dormitory there is no recognized headman, although the most intelligent and tactful amongst the inmates is recognized as their leader. In the maidens' dormitory, an old widow of the settlement acts as the guardian of the inmates at night. She sleeps close to the main door as if to prevent the intrusion of outsiders into the dormitory and to keep watch over the movements of the girls.

(c) Morality in the Dormitories.

Although *post*-nuptial immorality is practically unknown among the *Birhōṛs*, *liaisons* between bachelors and spinsters are the rule

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rather than the exception. The back-door to the maidens' dormitory is supposed to enable the girls to go out to satisfy calls of nature without disturbing the old *duenna.* In practice, however, this door affords means of escape to boys who may have entered the hut during the absence of the old woman and also enables girls to stealthily go out to meet their lovers who notify their approach by some preconcerted sound generally made with the hands striking the leaves and branches forming the wall of the hut. The old woman, even if awake, pretends to be asleep and thus connives at these practices. Every bachelor has his sweetheart amongst the maidens. And I am informed by some *Birhōr* elders that to attract a maiden he loves, a young man sometimes approaches her without any clothes on his body.

There is, however, no trace of sexual communism. On the other hand, there appears to exist a well-recognized rule of fidelity amongst *Birhōr* spinsters and bachelors. It is considered wrong for

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any boy to go with a maiden who is known to be the sweetheart of another boy; and although such a breach of etiquette is not punished with a fine, the aggrieved boy has the support ot his fellows when he seeks to retaliate by himself sleeping with the recognized sweetheart of the offending boy. In theory, *liaisons* between unmarried boys and girls are believed to offend the spirits and bring ill-luck in hunting. But the only result of this theory is to bring perquisites to the *Māti* and the *Nāyā* or priest. For in order to avoid detection and disclosure by the *Māti* (diviner) the young men give him some money presents while they give the *Nāyā* some money to buy a piece of cloth, liquor and fowls so that he may appease the offended spirits who would otherwise prevent success in hunting. Occasionally, supposed spirit-possession is made a pretence by a young man to go with his sweetheart. Thus it sometimes happens that when a young man meets his sweetheart at a market, he begins to

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shake his head violently and in this condition of supposed spirit-possession carries off the young woman in his arms in the direction of some jungle. The by-standers merely remark that some spirit is on him and no harm is meant.

The premarital *liaisons* of a *Birhōṛ* woman are so lightly thought of that no *Birhōṛ* has the slightest objection to marry a girl whom he knows to have been the sweetheart of another young man. Thus, in a certain *Birhōṛ* settlement, I know three men, B, R, and S, who during their bachelorhood were inmates of the same dormitory. F, K, and M were the inmates of the spinsters dormitory in the same settlement. During this period, B had F, R had K, and S had M for their respective sweethearts. Later, R was married to F, and K and M were married to men of other *ṭaṇḍās*. R, who in his bachelor days used to regard F as the recognized sweetheart of B, is on the best of terms with her now as his own married wife although B lives next door to him. Neither R nor B nor F appears to think anything of their former relations.

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When any inconvenient consequences follow a premarital intrigue, recourse is had to certain medicinal roots to cause abortion *(ōchō)*. But occasions for this are few and far between.

Thus the Men's House and Spinsters' House, which at one time must have been effective organizations for purposes of sexual segregation no longer effectively serve that end among the *Birhōrs*. Nor do any initiation or other ceremonies appear to be connected with the institution among the *tāṇḍās* that I have come across.

XIII.—Menstruation Customs.

The menstrual condition of a female is believed to be attended with danger to herself as well as to her settlement. This is true both of the first menses of a girl as also of her subsequent menstrual periods. A menstruant female is taboo to the whole community. She may not touch her husband or any other person for one whole week from the commencement of every menstrual flow. During this period, she

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may not cook food or draw water, nor even touch any food or drink meant for others; she must not touch the walls or the roof of her own or any one else's hut; she must not come in contact with the spring or well where her tribe-fellows bathe or from which they draw water; she must not sit on the same mat with any other person nor enter any house except her own; she may not touch a bed, but must lie down by herself on the bare ground; she must not touch fire, although she may look at it; and she must not walk across a hunting-net. It is apparently the supposed dangers of blood that give rise to these restrictions. Blood is the pabulum which gives nutriment to the spirits, and the sight of blood naturally makes the spirits restive. That is the avowed reason why a menstruant woman is not permitted to enter the spirit-huts of the village or even the *āding* or inner tabernacle of her own hut where the ancestor-spirits are believed to reside. During this period not only may there be no sacrifice or *pujā* offered

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to the *oṛā-bongāko* (house-spirits) in the menstruant woman's hut but in fact there will be no *pujā* or sacrifice in any family in the settlement. The reason which the *Birhōṛs* now assign for this prohibition is the fact that in the event of any sacrifice being offered in the settlement, the members of the menstruant female's family would have to go without their share of the sacrificial meat. Indeed, if in ignorance of the fact that a female in the *ṭāṇḍā* is in her menses, any *Birhōṛ* in the *ṭāṇḍā* offers a sacrifice to his own home-spirits *(oṛā bongāko)*, the menstruant female and, in case she is married, her husband must not partake of any portion of the sacrificial meat or any food cooked in the new earthen pot used in preparing the sacrificial food. Should they do so they are liable to be afflicted with some serious illness. Should a menstruant woman touch a man even by accident, the latter is, it is believed, sure to fall ill. In the case of the *Hembrōm* and *Bhuyā* clans of *Birhōṛs* it is believed that if a menstruant female of either of

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those clans touches a man even by chance, the husband of the woman is sure to die either of illness or by a fall from a tree or by being devoured by a tiger set on by some spirit, and if she infringes any of the other taboos mentioned above, two individuals of her clan will be carried away by death.

These taboos are removed on the eighth day when the woman has become ceremonially clean by taking a bath and having her clothes boiled in water mixed with ashes and then washing them in cold water.

She is once more restored to her normal condition and is free to pursue her normal avocations until the same supernatural dangers connected with blood reappear with the nextly monthly course.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Death and Funeral Customs.

I. Ideas of Death and Soul.

Origin of Death.

The supernatural evil influences and evil beings against whom the *Birhōṛ* has to contend through life at length put an end to that life. For Death, unless caused by violence, is believed by the *Birhōṛ* to be caused by some evil spirit either at its own instance or at the instigation of some person who knows the art of egging the spirits on. In olden days, it is said, Death meant only a temporary separation of the soul or rather souls from the body. It was only by a trick of a *liṇḍum* (a species of centipede) that Death came to mean a permanent severance of the soul from the body. The traditional *Birhōṛ* story of the origin of Death is as follows :—A *Birhōṛ*, who was dead, revived as usual, and, after having bathed in a

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stream, was returning home, when on his way he met a *linḍum*. The crafty *linḍum* barred his way and told him, "Count my 'legs' first, and then you will go home". The man agreed and began to count the legs of the *linḍūm* when it moved a few steps forward and the man had to begin counting the legs over again. And again before he had finished counting, the *linḍum* moved a few steps backwards, and the man had to begin counting once more. This trick the *linḍūm* went on repeating so that the man could never finish his task and walk back home. Since then the dead do not return to life. The *ūmbūl* or shade af the deceased is, however, ceremonially taken to its old home where it is enshrined as an ancestor spirit, and receives for its nutriment daily offerings of food and drink and periodical sacrifices.

Doctrine of souls.

Besides this shade, which joins the invisible spirit world that interpenetrates this visible world of ours, a man has two souls—a

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male one and a female one. These remain united in death as in life, and, when they finally lose their present body by death, are reincarnated together in a new body.

Dreams.

When a person dreams dreams, the male soul goes out of the body and visits different persons and places, while the female soul, it is said, remains in charge of the body, "just as his wife is left in charge of the hut or encampment when a *Birhōr* goes out to hunt". So long as the male soul does not come back, the body is said to be sleeping, but when it is unusually long in returning, the female soul too goes out in search of her mate leaving the body dead. Some *mātis* or spirit-doctors are credited with the power of calling back the truant souls and thus restoring life through the aid of their familiar spirits.

Temporary Death.

Sometimes the spirit or spirits who take away the souls do so with no evil motive, but only with a view to taking *begāri* or forced labour from them as land-

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lords in Chota Nagpur take *begāri* from their raiyats or tenants. And consequently when a *Birhōr* dies in the jungles during a storm the chances are that the death may be only temporary. High wind, lightning and rain are said to be the indications of the progress of a marriage procession of the spirits accompanied by illumination and the explosion of rockets and other fire-works such as is customary in the wedding processions of wealthy Hindus. And when the spirits going in such a procession see a human being out in the jungles they may make his souls join the procession and act as torch-bearers or the like. In such a case, the spirits on their return journey send back the souls to the body and the man revives. That is why some *Birhōrs* postpone for three or four days after death the cremation or burial of a man dying through exposure in a storm. One of my *Birhōr* friends gave me a vivid description of a marriage procession of the spirits which he fancied he saw while overtaken

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in a jungle during a storm. He described how the shadowy palanquin-bearers, torch-bearers, and musicians passed over his head in bright array till the illumination dazzled his eyes and the phantoms vanished. This *Birhōr* summed up his ideas about Death in the following words:—

"The man is the soul of his dwelling-place *(kumbā* or leaf-hut*)*. The body of the man is the dwelling of his souls. When the souls are in trouble, people say the body is sick. As a hut goes to ruins when the owner deserts it, so the body is said to die when the souls leave it."

After the two souls—male and female—leave the body, they are born again in a new body. The souls of a deceased *Birhōr* need not always be re-born in his own tribe. Thus, on the very day that the *Nāyā* of a certain *Birhōr* settlement died, a son was born to a man of the Kurmi caste in a neighbouring village. And the son of the deceased *Birhōr* and all his *ṭāṇḍā* people seriously assured me that the Kurmi's son is the reincarnation of their old *Nāyā*.

Re-birth

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II. In Serious Illness.

The Accommodation of the Sick.

Hastening the death of the aged and the sick as well as the abandonment or premature burial or cremation of the dying are unknown. When an *Uṭhlū Birhōṛ* becomes very old or seriously ill, his family in order to spare him the trouble of knocking about, settles down for a time at some suitable place and is said to become *Jāghi* for the time being. A *Birhōṛ*, whether *Jāghi* or *Uṭhlū*, suffering from some serious illness is generally taken to the spirit-hut, if there is one in his *ṭāṇḍā*, and kept there until recovery or death. The idea seems to be that the influential spirits of the settlement may overpower or scare away the spirit that has caused the sickness.

The Spirit doctor.

A *māti* or spirit-doctor is called to find out the particular spirit which has caused the sickness and the offerings required to rid the patient of its evil

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attentions. The *māti* squats on the floor and begins to mutter his invocations and shake his head violently till at length he proclaims the name of the spirit that has caused the sickness and the means to be employed to appease or expel it.

Spirit of the house.

If it is some *ōṛā-bōngā*, or spirit of the house or family of the sick person, that is responsible for the sickness, the number and colour of the fowls required to propitiate it are declared by the *māti*, and offerings are accordingly made by some member of the family.

Spirit of another house.

If the *māti* names some *bhūt* or spirit of some other family, the sacrifices required to appease it are brought to the *māti* who takes them up in his hands, waves them one by one over the head of the sick person, feeds the votive fowls with *āruā* rice, and puts them by for the moment and, at dead of night, takes them stealthily near the hut of the family whose *bhūt* is responsible for the sickness, sacrifices them,

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and, leaving them there, comes away.

If it is a foreign *(upāriā)* spirit not belonging to the *ṭaṇḍā*, the *māti* declares the direction from which it has come and the number (generally one) and colour of fowls required by it. The required fowl being brought to him he smears vermilion on its forehead, waves it three times round the body of the patient and feeds it on a little rice placed over the hands of the patient. As the fowl eats the grains of rice, the *māti* exhorts the spirit to leave the patient, saying, "So long thou hast troubled this person. To-day we are offering thee sacrifices; do thou leave him and give him no further trouble." This ceremony is called *neochhānā*. The *māti* then takes up the fowl, and with one or two companions goes with it in the direction from which the spirit is supposed to have come. As the *māti* leaves the hut, the patient throws out the rice left in his hands in the direction in which the *māti* goes. Arrived at the boundary line

Foreign spirits.

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between the *Birhōṛ ṭāṇḍā* and the adjoining village, the *māti* sits down with his face to the east and makes three marks with vermilion on the ground where the fowl is placed. He next drops a little rice over the head of the fowl which eats it up. He then kills the fowl by twisting its head and severing it from the body. The severed head is placed over the vermilion marks, and blood from the body is dropped there by the *māti* while he says,—"We now offer this (blood) to thee. Do not come to so-and-so's (naming the sick person) house again. *Tālāk* be on thy mother if thou shouldst come again."

The *māti* then gets up and stands with his legs apart. Now bending low he throws the body of the fowl backwards through his legs in the direction from which the spirit is believed to have come. Then the *māti* micturates into a leaf-cup and pours the urine over the head of the fowl saying, "Here is liquor for thee. Do not come again to the sick person". The body of the fowl is taken

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away by the *māti* and his companion and is cooked and eaten by them.

Thus, whereas spirits of the *ṭāṇḍā* are propitiated by sacrifices, these outside spirits are conducted out of the settlement by promises of sacrifices and are then scared out of the *ṭāṇḍā* by threats and adjurations. In fact, these spirits are considered to be so amenable to fear that the *māti* sometimes sleeps in the patient's hut with a cane or a stick by his side ; and when in a dream he fancies he has met the spirit, he at once jumps up, cane in hand, and chases the spirit out of the *ṭāṇḍā*.

III. The Last Ceremonies.

When a *Birhōṛ* is at his last gasp, his son or wife puts a little water into his mouth. Then all present stand aside or walk out of the hut leaving the door open, so that the departing souls may not meet with any obstruction in their way. Sometimes her necklaces, arm-

Facilitating the release of the Soul.

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lets, anklets and similar ornaments are taken off the limbs of a dying woman to facilitate the escape of her souls.

Calling back the Departing Soul.

Sometimes, however, immediately after death, a powerful *māti* is called in who mutters invocations to persuade his own familiar spirit *(sakti-bhūt)* to call back the departing souls and restore the dead to life. The *māti* lays down the dead or dying person in a shed erected near the *thhān* or seat of his *sakti-bhūt*, burns incense, offers sacrifice and goes on muttering appropriate invocations.

Wailing.

As soon as the people stand aside to make way for the departure of the souls of the dying man, his relatives, particularly his wife and children, rend the air with loud cries of lamentation which continue until the corpse is taken out of the hut. It is believed that if this is not done the departed souls will grumble at the thought that nobody felt sorry for their departure from the world, whereas

if there is much wailing, the souls on joining the denizens of the underworld will tell them with great self-satisfaction that it was with extreme difficulty that they escaped the importunities of their surviving relatives who wanted them to stay. The wailing is repeated on the occasion of the *Hōyōn* ceremony, though with less demonstration and only by women.

Death-pollution.

The hut in which death takes place is deemed to be infected with death-pollution *(gehi-lōṭōm)*. When the corpse is taken out of the hut, all water, cooked food, ashes in the hearth, burning charcoal or other fuel, are thrown away. Even the spirit-hut is considered infected with death-pollution when death occurs in it. But whether a person dies in the spirit-hut or in his own hut, all the clay and wooden representations of spirits in and just outside the spirit-hut as also the spirit-box *(bongā-peṭi)* or tube in which ingredients for sacrifices are kept, are thrown away and replaced by new ones, and sacrifices are

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offered to these newly-made spirit-figures in order to free the spirit-hut from pollution.

Wherever a *Birhōṛ* may happen to die, two earthen vessels, one in which rice used to be cooked and the other in which vegetables used to be cooked, are taken out of the deceased's hut and laid, bottom upwards, in front of it until the *Hōyōn* or shaving ceremony. This is intended to notify the occurence of a death in the family. When the pall-bearers return home after burial or cremation, all old fires in the *ṭāṇḍā* are extinguished and the cinders and ashes in the hearths of all the houses in the *ṭāṇḍā* are thrown away, and every *Birhōṛ* in the settlement takes a bath. Then a new fire is kindled in some hut by the friction of two pieces of wood, and all the other families in the *ṭāṇḍā* light their fires from it. If a death has taken place at or before meal-time, no *Birhōṛ* in the settlement, except little children, may take any food until the cremation or burial has been finished, all old fires have been extinguished, cooked

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food has been thrown away, and until all people have had a purificatory bath, and new fires have been lighted. Until the *Hōyōn* or shaving ceremony which takes place on the seventh day from death, no *Birhōr* of the settlement will shave. Amongst the Uthlūs no one in the *ṭāṇḍā* will hunt until the *Hōyōn* is over. Although *Jāghi Birhōrs* may hunt during the period, they must not eat the flesh of any game but may only sell it. The members of the deceased's family, besides observing the general restriction against eating fish or flesh until the *Hōyōn*, may not even bathe. Singing and dancing are not allowed in the *ṭāṇḍā* until the *Hōyōn* ceremony is over. No serious evil consequences are, however, believed to result from the disregard of this last prohibition.

IV. The Funeral.

Object of the Ceremonies.

So long as he lives, the *Birhōr* stands in continuous fear of the spirit-world; but as soon as he is dead and until the *Umbūl-ādēr* ceremony

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is performed, it is he, or rather his disembodied spirit, that becomes the prime object of fears and concern to his relatives and other people of his settlement. And the observances and ceremonies customary during this period appear to have for their main object the prevention of harm to the *ṭaṇḍā* through his spirit, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of harm *to* his spirit through stray, malignant spirits. Even the offering of food laid out for the spirit of the deceased appears to be prompted less by a feeling of affection for him than from a fear of his spirit and a desire to keep it agreeably engaged at a safe distance.

The Unhallowed Dead.

Until the *ūmbūl-ādēr* ceremony, which follows the *Hōyōn*, the spirit of the deceased hovers about in an unsettled state between the land of the living on the one side and the spirit-world on the other, and is considered peculiarly dangerous to the community as well as to itself. A woman dying within twenty-one days of childbirth

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or a child dying within twenty-one days of birth may never be admitted into the community of ancestor-spirits, as their spirits are always dangerous. In their case, therefore, a new door-way to the hut is opened to take their corpses to the grave. These corpses are buried in a place apart from that where other corpses are buried. Women and not men bury such corpses ; the men only dig their graves and go away. Thorns are pricked into their feet to prevent them from leaving their graves. The corpse in the grave is formally made over by the *māti* to the charge of some spirit of a hill or jungle of the neighbourhood. In doing so the *māti* works himself up to a state of supposed 'possession', and says—"O, Spirit of such-and-such hill or forest (names) ! We make over so-and-so (names the deceased) to you. Guard her well and let her remain here." The *māti* (or rather, as it is believed, the spirit through the mouth of the *māti*) says, " I do take charge". If the first spirit asked to take charge does not make such a reply,

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another spirit is similarly addressed, and so on, until some spirit agrees to take charge of the dangerous corpse. Should a boy or a girl die before his or her ear-boring ceremony, the ears of the corpse are perforated before it is carried to the grave, so that the spirit may get admittance into the community of *Birhōr* spirits.

Modes of disposal of the dead.

The corpses of children and women dying in childbirth are buried. In other cases cremation is preferred, but burial is optional and is the normal mode of disposal during the rains and, if the family is poor, at all seasons.

Toilet of the corpse and the funeral procession.

On death, the corpse is washed and anointed with oil mixed with pounded turmeric. If the deceased was married, vermilion marks are made on the forehead. The corpse is then stretched out and bound on an improvised wooden bier and carried head forward towards the grave or cremation-ground as the case may be. Except in the cases of

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a woman dying within twenty-one days of childbirth and a child dying within twenty-one days of birth, who are carried out by women through a newly-opened doorway, the corpses of other *Birhōṛs* are taken out of the hut by men through the ordinary doorway. An earthen jug filled with water, a cup of oil, and a torch are taken by a member of the funeral procession which generally comprises all adult members of the *ṭāṇḍā*. When the party reach the boundary-line *(kūlhi-mūṛhi)* of their settlement, the bier with the corpse on it is put down on the ground for a few minutes, and then carried to the place of burial or cremation.

Burial

At the burial-ground, a grave about three feet wide and six feet long is dug by the men. The corpse is carried three times round the grave and then laid down flat in the grave with its head pointing south. The trunk of the corpse is covered over with a piece of cloth. The deceased's son or grandson takes up a lighted torch in his right hand and someone stands beside

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him pressing his left eye with one hand. With his left eye thus closed, he walks round the grave three times and then puts down the torch over the corpse's mouth. Those who can afford to do so put a few copper-coins into the corpse's mouth. A miniature hunting-net, an axe, two *ṭāinis* or small sticks used in supporting a net while stretched, a little tobacco and lime in a leaf or in a lime-box, and, if possible, a brass plate are placed in the grave beside the head of a male corpse. Some *Jāghi Birhōṛs* also put a piece of new cloth there. While these are placed in the grave, some elder of the *ṭaṇḍā* addresses the corpse, saying, "Go thou and hunt that way. Do not come this way again". In the case of a female corpse, a bundle of *chōp* fibres is placed in the grave and the corpse is told: "Do thou work with these. Do not come back to us". A clod of earth is then thrown into the grave in the name of each absent relative; and finally all present throw earth into the grave and close it up. Small blocks of stone are

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placed over the grave. This practice of covering up the grave with stones is now explained as a precaution to prevent jackals or other animals from exhuming the corpse.

Cremation.

When a corpse is to be cremated, a funeral pyre is arranged by the men. The corpse is carried three times round this pyre and then laid flat on it with its head pointing south. The son or grandson circumambulates the corpse three times, and then with his left eye closed, as described above, puts the lighted torch into the corpse's mouth and straightway leaves the ground without looking backwards, goes to some stream or spring, where he bathes and returns home. After fire is first set to the corpse in this way by the son or grandson wood is placed on the corpse in the name of each absent relative and then by every one present. When the corpse is wholly burnt, the women of the *tanḍā* bring jars of water from some stream or spring close by and pour the water over the embers with a winnowing basket Then the women with their left hands pick up

first a tooth, next a finger-bone, then a thigh-bone and finally the remaining bones. These they carefully wash in water and put into a new earthen jug. This jug with the bones in it is carried home and hung up on some tree near the deceased's hut to remain there until the *Hōyōn* ceremony. Then all go and purify themselves by bathing in some stream or spring, and return towards their *ṭāṇḍā*.

Purification by Fumigation and Fire.

When the funeral party return after the purificatory bath to the limits of their *ṭāṇḍā*, they have to undergo a further purification by fire and fumigation. Before their return some burning charcoal has already been placed there by the women, and on the approach of the party a quantity of the aromatic resin of the *sal* tree *(Shorea robusta)* is sprinkled on the fire to produce a strong-smelling smoke. Arriving there each one of the party touches the fire with his left great toe and waves his left hand over the fire. Then they proceed to the open space

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(āngan) in front of the deceased's hut, and there water in which a bit of copper and some leaves of the sacred basil have been dipped is sprinkled on their persons. Then the men in a body enter the hut of the deceased.

Discovering the agent of death.

As soon as the corpse had been taken out of the hut, the part of the floor where the deceased had breathed his last was cleaned with mud or cowdung diluted in water, and ashes spread over it in the belief that the footprints of the spirit which caused the death might be detected in the ashes. The men now scrutinize the supposed footprints in the ashes to discover whether the spirit was a family spirit or an interloper. If the footprints look like those of a person entering the hut, it is concluded that death was caused by a spirit of the house, otherwise it is concluded that it is some outside spirit—perhaps one of a different *tāṇḍā*—which is responsible for the death. The *māti* again works himself up into a state of

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supposed spirit-possession and declares what sacrifices are necessary to propitiate the spirit, if it is a spirit of the *ṭaṇḍā*. If it is an outside spirit, the *māti* performs the *ningchhā* ceremony, so that the spirit may not come again to the house.

Food-offering for the dead.

On the evening of the day after the death, a son or parent or widow or other member of the deceased's family goes with a leaf-plate of boiled rice and pot-herb or pulse, a leaf-cup of water, a little tobacco and lime (if the deceased used to take it), and a glowing faggot, to the outskirts *(kulhi-muṛi)* of the settlement, where the corpse was temporarily put down by the pall-bearers on their way to the burial or cremation ground. As the person puts these down on the ground, he or she addresses the shade of the deceased saying,—"Here now, we have brought food for thee, we have brought tobacco and lime for thee. Take these and be quiet". If the deceased was a babe

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at the breast, mother's milk is taken to the spot instead of rice and other articles.

V. The Hōyōn or Shaving Ceremony.

On the seventh or ninth day after death the bones of the cremated corpse are buried in a small hole just outside the *ṭāṇḍā* under some tree, and covered up with a stone slab. It is believed that the ancestor-spirits of the deceased carry the bones to the original home of the clan. So while burying the bones, the chief mourner exclaims :— "Ancestor-spirits, carry these bones to the original home [of the clan]." Then all the *Birhōṛs* of the settlement go outside the limits of the *ṭāṇḍā*. Women have their nails pared. Then they bathe themselves in some stream and return to the *ṭāṇḍā*. The widow of the deceased, when she goes to the stream for bathing, throws away the iron bracelet hitherto worn by her as a sign of the married state. After bathing, she puts on a new *sāṛi*-cloth, called

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the widow's cloth *(rāṇḍi sāṛi)*, presented to her by her father or brother who come on a visit to the *ṭaṇḍā* for the occasion.

VI. Umbul-Ader or Calling back the Shade.

Bringing back the Shade.

In the evening a few men go to the spot on the outskirts of the *ṭaṇḍā* where the corpse rested on its way to the burial place or cremation ground. There they put up a miniature leaf-shed running north to south in length and facing east, and then go back to their *ṭaṇḍā*. The whole *ṭaṇḍā* now maintains absolute silence. Three or five other men go to the new shed carrying with them two sickles, a new basket and a chicken. A few other men wait in breathless silence at the deceased's house, where a lamp is kept burning. Arrived at the miniature leaf-shed, the men who go there with the chicken sacrifice it, saying,—"All ye stray spirits, spirits of persons who are long lost or who died an

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evil death, leave ye the shade of the newly-deceased. Here we offer this fowl to you; do ye give up his shade." Saying this, the men strike one sickle against the other and call out the name of their recently-deceased relative and exclaim,—"Come so-and-so (names)! Look! thy house is burning." With repeated exclamations like this the party return home, followed, as they believe, by the shade of their dead relative. In the meanwhile, the door of the deceased's old hut is closed against their approach. Arrived at the door, they call out,—"Which of you are sleeping and which of you are awake?" Those within the hut ask,—"Are you our own people or strangers?" "We are your people and not strangers", is the reply. Thereupon they ask, "What then do you want?" The men reply, "We have taken out sorrow, and now we bring you happiness". The door is then opened and they are admitted into the hut.

On entering the hut, they ask with bated breath, "Has the shade come in?" The reply is always in the affirmative.

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Discovering the agent of death. A *māti*, however, must be called in. On his arrival, the *māti* takes up a handful of rice, sprinkles it round his head and swings his head from side to side with increasing rapidity until he gets into a state of spirit-possession in order to see if the spirit has really entered the hut. One of the men present asks the name of the spirit which has entered his body, and in a nasal voice, supposed to be characteristic of spirits, the *māti* gives out the name. If the name is not that of the deceased but of some other spirit, the ceremony of burning the miniature hut and calling back the spirit is repeated. And the *māti* again gets into a state of spirit-possession. When the spirit of the deceased at length enters the *māti's* body and reveals itself, people present joyfully exclaim: "Ah! He has come now! This is his own house; where else can he go to?" It is now no longer the *māti* who speaks, but the spirit of the deceased who uses the *māti's* mouth in speaking. The spirit is now questioned,—

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"Who took you away from this world? Was it an extraneous *bhut* or a *bhut* of the house?" On naming the *bhut* that is responsible for the death, the spirit asks leave to get out of the body of the *māti*. If some spirit of the family of the deceased, either an ancestor spirit or the *Buru-Bongā*, or some spirit of the *ṭāṇḍā* has been named as responsible for the death, proper sacrifices are offered to appease it; if it is some foreign spirit that has caused the death, the *ningchhā* ceremony is performed by the *māti*. In the case of a *Birhōr* killed by a tiger, his spirit is called back by the *ūmbūl-āder* ceremony and a seat is provided for the spirit of the deceased by planting an erect stone under some tree, and there sacrifices are offered periodically.

Discharging the Shoulder-pole.

After the *māti* has declared that the shade has entered the hut, the men who carried the corpse to its grave or cremation-ground are each given a leaf-plate with some boiled rice on it. Each of them

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takes up the leaf-plate and places it on his shoulder and then puts it down again on the ground. This is repeated three times. Each time he does so the man is asked by the others present,—"Whose shoulder-pole *(kāndh-kaṭhi)* [22] is this you put down?" He replies: "Now at length I am putting down the shoulder-pole of so-and-so (names the deceased)." When this ceremony is finished, the three leaf-plates of rice are taken to the spot where the corpse rested on its way to the grave or cremation-ground, and are left there. This ceremony, known as "discharging the shoulder-pole," must be performed that night, whether the funeral feast is given at once or delayed.

Generally the feast to all the people of the settlement is also provided that night; but sometimes, owing to want of means,

[22] *Pole used in carrying a burden.* This refers to the poles of the bier in which the corpse was carried to its grave or cremation-ground

Ceremonial Wailing.

it is delayed for a few months or even for a year. A family postponing the feast may perform the *hōyōn* ceremony on the fifth day from the death. Two interesting ceremonies prelude the feast. When their meals are served to the guests, but before they begin eating, a wailing is heard and the widow or a son or a brother of the deceased plaintively exclaims, "Other people live in [pools] full [of] water *(bharal pāni)*. I am living in dried up [pool of] water *(sukhal pāni)*." The guests in reply say by way of consolation: "Why, friend, *we* are still alive. Why should we allow you to be swept away?" By this ritual wailing and consolation is the social tie that binds the surviving members of the deceased's family to the other families of the *ṭaṇḍā* renewed or cemented and strengthened.

The next interesting ceremony that precedes the feast serves to incorporate the spirit of the deceased in the community of his ancestor-spirits *(hāprom)*.

Incorporation with the Ancestor-Spirits.

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Before the guests have yet begun to eat the dinner placed before them, the *Nāyā* of the settlement and another elder of the tribe, who are both seated side by side in a central position, take up in their hands a little rice from their plates and drop it on the ground by way of offering to the ancestor-spirits, saying:— "Here we make rice offering to ye all in the name of so-and-so (names the deceased). Do ye incorporate him in your herd *(gōṭh)*. From to-day we shall offer rice and liquor to ye all". Then each of them drops a little water on the ground and says,—"To-day we have performed '*Haribōl*' of so-and-so (names).[23] *Haribōl ! Haribōl ! Haribōl*". The two men now sprinkle water with mango leaves on all present and bid them eat; and all fall to eating.

[23] *Haribol*, means "utter the name of *Hari* or God". This is the customary exclamation of Bengali-speaking Hindus when a death occurs in a family and a corpse is carried to the cremation-ground. The Birhors, like the Mundas, appear to have borrowed this usage from the Hindus.

Thus is the normal state of things in the settlement restored, the spirit of the deceased is incorporated in the community of ancestor-spirits, the death-taboos on the survivors are removed; and the people of the *ṭaṇḍā* resume their usual avocations.

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CHAPTER IX.

Religious Beliefs and Practices.

I. Man's Relation to the Spirit-world.

Of the *Birhōṛs*, as of other tribes on a similar level of culture, Religion may very well be said to constitute almost their whole way of life. All the ills of life—and life to them is brimful of ills—are believed to be caused by supernatural agencies—either by spirits hovering about in earth, air, and water, hill and forest, river and spring, or by lesser powers and energies immanent in various animate beings as well as in certain inanimate objects and even in such immaterial things as a spoken word, an expressed wish, a passing thought or emotion, a passing glance, a magic formula or diagram, and certain names and numbers. And the problem of life which has ever presented itself to the

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tribal mind is how to protect the community and its members and their scanty earthly possessions from the evil attentions of spirits and the harmful influences of other mysterious powers and energies so as to make life worth living. The solution of the problem that the tribal mind appears to have arrived at is to seek to establish permanent friendly relations, through appropriate rites and sacrifices, with the more important spirits, powerful alike for good or evil, and to drive off, control, scare away, neutralize or avoid the lesser powers and energies by various rites and actions, spells and taboos, threats and tricks and thus to secure good luck and avoid bad luck to health, life, progeny, and food-supply.

The *Birhōr's* whole life—economic, domestic, social and socio-political—is pervaded by his religion (including that aspect of it which anthropologists generally term Magic); and his religion consists in a haunting sense of 'sacred' presences—a haunting fear of spirits and spiritual

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energies leading him to continuous endeavours, through appropriate rites and sacrifices, charms and spells, to conciliate them, when necessary, and control, avoid or repel them, when possible.

To the *Birhōṛ*, every thing above, below or around him is animated either by a spirit or by a spiritual energy or power, as every living being is animated by a soul or souls. Although the spirits or spiritual energies residing in a large number of things are almost dormant or, at any rate, impotent or innocuous, the residue that still remain as active spirits and energies with varying degrees of power are not inconsiderable in number. The most important among these are the spirits of their original native hills or forests whom they call *Būrū-Bōngās* or *Oṛā Bōngās*. Besides the spirits of their numerous native hills, forests and streams, there are the ever-increasing spirits of dead human beings, all seeking food and nourishment. The *Birhōṛ* in his absorbing quest for food and his unremitting efforts to

preserve life and health is not unoften, so he believes, waylaid and baffled by some spirit or other hungering on his part for sustenance. Some of the more powerful spirits are said to regard tigers and bears as their 'lambs', and men as their 'peacocks'. The deer is called by the *Birhōṛ* 'the goat of the gods', and, as we have seen, when the *Birhōṛ* slays a deer, he offers a bit of its hair or skin to the 'gods' of the forest to avert their displeasure. Thus, the *Birhōṛ* ever walks through life with a sense of mysterious 'sacredness', almost approaching awe in the presence of the higher spirits, whom he seeks to propitiate with periodical sacrifices and offerings, and in a spirit of cautious and vigilant fear of the lesser spirits and impersonal powers or forces which he seeks to avert, repel, or control. When the lesser spirits, however, are not amenable to control but cause repeated failure in the chase or sickness to man, they have to be appeased by sacrifices or promises of sacrifices; and even the higher spirits, either when there is a delay in the

supply of their periodical sacrifices or when they are tempted by some mischievous spirit or spirit-dealer to taste blood before the appointed time of sacrifice, seek to satisfy their premature craving for food and drink by causing sickness and death to man. Thus, for the *Birhāṛ*, the world is a vast 'sacred' arena where man and spirit are continually engaged in a silent struggle each for his own hand. And, over it all, sits apart the great God *Singbōngā*, symbolised by the Sun, generally an unconcerned Spectator—the '*Sākhi*' or Witness, as the *Birhōṛ* aptly characterizes Him—of the doings of men and spirits, their struggles and strivings to secure food and sustain and strengthen life.

It is only a few favoured persons, more sensitive than others, who in a state of self-induced trance can enter into direct communion with the spirit-world, know the wishes and demands of particular gods or spirits and assist in bringing about a mutual understanding between man and the gods and spirits and in putting their

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fellow-men on friendly or rather working relations with them. The average man can hope to enter into some sort of direct relations with the spirit-world only when his physical body is asleep, but with the return of the soul to the body almost all recollection of the soul's dream experiences of the spirit-world is lost and no direct consciousness of that world is retained. All *Birhōr* worshippers are, however, privileged to become, for the time being, 'one with the god' by eating the sacrificial meat.

II. Deities and Spirits.

The *Birhōr* recognizes a distinction between gods or spirits who may have to be propitiated with prayers and sacrifices and impersonal powers, forces or energies which may be controlled, averted or repelled by spells, threats and other methods of 'magic'. Of 'personal' spirits some receive regular sacrifices, and others

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are not ordinarily heeded unless they cause repeated obstruction to the chase or to the gathering of honey or other food, or cause repeated misfortune in health or progeny, and refuse to be bribed away or placated by a casual sacrifice so that they have finally to be conciliated by being included among the *Mānitā-bhūts* to whom sacrifices at regular intervals must be made. This is how the *Birhōrs*, and particularly the migratory section among them who move about in strange jungles and hills infested by strange spirits, continually make additions to their clan-*bhūts* and family-*bhūts*.

Rudimentary anthropomorphic ideas.

Anthropomorphic ideas, though not yet fully developed, are in the making. The *Oṛā-bōngās* are believed to have each a particular species of animal for his vehicle. Men of the clan sometimes have dreams of their *Oṛā-bōngās* coming from the direction of their native hills riding their favourite animals. One class of spirits are represented as armed men and another as men wearing beards.

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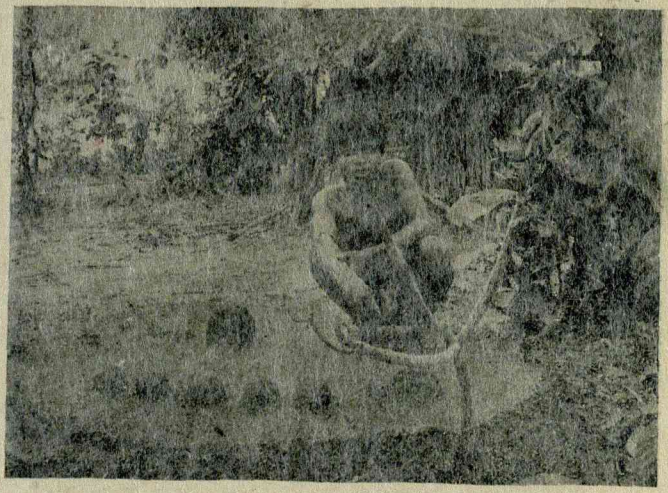


Plate XXVII.—A Birhōr sacrificing to his family *manita* spirits represented by lumps of clay. The small hut at the back is the spirit-hut *(Bongā-orā)*.

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The spirits are generally divided into males and females. Besides the ancestor-spirits, some other spirits are apparently deified men, as such names of spirits as *Bān Singh*, *Dulāl Singh*, and a few others indicate.

The myth of Lugu Pahar.

The personification of a hill-spirit is illustrated by the following myth with regard to one of the *Birhōṛ* spirits. The natural features of the hills apparently suggested this anthropomorphic interpretation. The spirit named *Lūgū Pāhaṛ* (spirit of the *Lūgū* hill) gave his daughter in marriage to the spirit now known as *Rāngā Būrū* (the spirit of the *Rāngā* Hill). One day the son-in-law seeing a tiger domesticated by his father-in-law told *Lūgū Pāhaṛ*, "Kindly lend me your dog (tiger) for a time. There are many peafowls (men) in our part of the country. I shall send back your dog after it has killed the pea-fowls." The father-in-law acceded to the request and he took the tiger home. When he

set the tiger on to attack half a dozen men who were cutting wood in a jungle to make ploughs with, the wood-cutters struck the tiger to death with their axes. As the tiger was long in returning to him, *Lūgū-Pāhāṛ* himself went to his son-in-law's place to bring his 'dog' back. His son in-law with his old father had, in the meanwhile, left home for purposes of trade—the father to sell 'sheep' (that is, bears which are the 'sheep' of the spirits) and the son to trade in clothes. They stopped by the side of another hill where they laid out there clothes one above another. When *Lūgū Pāhāṛ* came to his son-in-law's place on a hill and learnt that his son-in-law and the latter's father were both away from home, he questioned his own daughter about the whereabouts of his 'dog'. The daughter related what had happened to the animal and added that her husband and father-in-law meant to buy a new 'dog' for him with the profits of trade. At this *Lūgū Pāhāṛ* was so furiously angry that

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he set fire to the hill which turned red and it has been since known as *Rāngā-būrū* (the Red Hill). Seeing the hill on fire, the son-in-law and his father ran to the spot leaving their stock of clothes in piles and these turned into a jugged hill with rock piled upon rock in tiers, now known as '*Kāpaṛ-gādi* (Clothes-heap) Hill', and the bears which had been left on another rock *(ṭōngri)* still haunt the *ṭōngri* now known as *Bhāl-ṭōngri* (Rock of Bears). *Buṛhi Lūgū*, the wife of *Lūgū Pāhāṛ*, is by some identified with *Buṛhi Māi*, the mother-goddess. Two gods named *Anand Singh* and *Sunnat Singh*, said to be the sons of *Lūgū Pāhāṛ*, periodically receive the sacrifice of a red goat from the men of the *Ludāmbā* clan who also offer one red goat to *Lūgū Pāhāṛ* himself. Although men may never be actually married to spirits, yet when a man dreams of having sexual intercourse with his wife or other woman or has nocturnal pollution, it is believed that he was having sexual intercourse in sleep with one of the *Sāt-*

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Bahini spirits (the 'seven sisters')—a class of 'Nature-spirits' or elemental spirits of streams and pools.

Birhor Deities and Spirits.

The main deities of the *Birhōṛs* besides *Singbōnga*, the Creator, and *Devi Māi* or the Earth goddess, are certain hill-spirits and ancestor-spirits. A few beast-gods such as *Bāgh-bīr* (tiger god), *Hūṇḍār-bīr* (Wolf-god), *Bīr-Bānhey* (Orang-outang-god), *Bāndar-bīr* (Monkey-god) and *Hanumān-bīr* (Baboon-god) are also propitiated. Although certain trees are believed to be the abode of spirits, tree-worship, as a cult, is unknown. The festival of the *Karam (Nauclea parvifolia)* tree and the *Jitia-pipar* tree appear to have been adopted by some of the settled groups from their neighbours the Mundas and certain semi-Hinduised tribes.

The *Birhōṛ* regards the spirits almost as his equals who possess or have acquired a certain sanctity or rather 'sacredness' and superior power, but are inclined to be friendly if kept in good humour and

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supplied with food and shelter in due time. Spirits are anxious to have an *'āsthān'* or seat where food and drink may be regularly provided to them by men. Before a migratory *(Uṭhlu)* group of *Birhōṛs* leave their encampment in one jungle and start for another jungle, the bamboo-tube containing rice *(chāuli-jāng)* used at the sacrifices is placed in a tiny bamboo box called *bōngā-peṭi* which is generally carried in a basket called *bōngā-khānchi* but by the men of the *Kāvān* clan carried in a small net called *tuṛ-jhāli*. The *Oṛā-Bongās* are believed to remain in the spirit-box with this rice. The other deities of the community are supposed to be accommodated during the journey in the spirit-basket. The wooden pegs, stones or lumps of clay, that represented the different spirits at the now-abandoned spirit-seats are upturned, and the arrow-heads or iron tridents or iron chains or other symbols representing different spirits are taken up and placed inside the spirit-baskets, and the spirits are all told,—"Come along! We are going

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to such-and-such jungle," and the spirits, it is said, readily troop into the spirit-basket or spirit-net, as the case may be, with which a man called "*Bōngā-gōgōni*" (spirit-carrier) walks a little ahead of the party.

Mahādeo (generally worshipped only by certain families or individuals), *Singbōnga*, and the Mother-goddesses *Devi-Māi*, *Buṛhi Māi*, and *Kāli Māi* are, however, deities who are superior to man, and stand as a class apart. These mother-godesses really belong to a comparatively higher level of culture, and appear to have been borrowed by the *Birhōṛs* from their Hinduised neighbours who are in the agricultural stage. They are the gods proper, and the rest are spirits and *bhūts*. Among spirits, the *Būrū-Bōngās* or ancestral hill-spirits and the *Hāprom* or ancestor-spirits rank highest. The rest are *bhūts* among whom *Chāṇḍi* is a general spirit, sacrificed to by the whole tribe.

The different deities and spirits recog-

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nized by the *Birhōṛs* may be classified as follows :—

I. GENERAL OR TRIBAL GODS AND SPIRITS.

(1) *The Supreme God* or *Singbōngā*.—At the head of the *Birhōṛ* spirits and deities stand this great Over-God who ordinarily takes no active interest in human affairs. He does not ordinarily cause any harm to man, and may occasionally protect him from evil. He is recognized as the Creator of the world. While going out to hunt or to collect honey the *Birhōṛ* sometimes invokes His aid to procure him game or honey, as the case may be. A *Birhōṛ* naïvely explained to me the *raison dautre* for such invocation by saying, "It is for the stomach (hunger) that we tell *Sinbōngā*, 'To-day we are going to hunt: do give us game.' Since *Singbōngā* created us He *must* provide us with food." Some *Birhōṛs* in explaining to me the characteristics of *Singbōngā* described Him as the *Sākhi* or Witness of what men and spirits

do. He is spoken of as identical with the Sun, but not the material part of the great luminary. The Hindu name, *Bhagawan*, is also applied to Him. There is just the glimmering of an idea that He is a moral God who punishes wrong-doing. To avert particular dangers, a white goat or a white fowl is offered to Him by the head of a family with his face to the east. White primarily symbolises the white rays of the Sun ; the secondary signification of 'pure' and the idea of moral purity can hardly be said to attach yet to the colour in the *Birhōṛ's* mind.

(2) The Mother-Goddesses *Devi Māi* and *Buṛhi Māi* are, unlike *Singbōngā*, intensely interseted in man, and, if properly served, brings him luck in health, progeny and food. *Devi Māi* is generally represented by a piece of wood daubed red with vermilion

(3) *Chāṇḍi and other Spirits of the Chase.*—Near every *Birhoṛ ṭāṇḍā* a piece of rock or stone under some tree is fixed upon as the seat of the hunting God *Chāṇḍi* and

and his associates. Before undertaking a hunting expedition, the nets, sticks, and axes which the hunters carry with them are arranged under the tree and the *Nāyā* offers sacrifices to *Chāṇḍi* to ensure success in the hunt. *Bāndar Bīr* and *Hulmān Bīr* are believed to bring success in catching monkeys.

(4) *Māhāli Chāaṭi.*—This is a female spirit who is also said to be a wife of the spirit *Lūgū Pāhāṛ* (named after a hill of that name in the Hazaribagh district). She is also said to be the *'mālik'* or presiding deity of smaller game like the *tōgō* (a kind of wild cat) and *torhot* (a species of large lizard), and vows of sacrifices are made to this spirit to ensure success in hunting these animals which are generally caught in the rainy months; and these vows are duly fulfilled. On the occasion of the *ṭhhaṭhi* ceremony of a new-born babe in a *Birhōṛ* family the sacrifice of a black fowl is made to this deity by the *Nāyā* on the open space in front of the *kūmbā* or hut of the family, and a similar

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offering is made on the occasion of a marriage in a *Birhōṛ* family. Originally, it would seem, this was a hill-deity, since anthropomorphized, and was probably the *Oṛā-bōngā* of some formerly predominant clan. Now she is regarded as merely a powerful spirit to whom sacrifices have to be offered at the *thāāns* or spirit-seats to prevent harm to the community.

II. Clan Spirits.

(1) *Būrūbōngās* or *Oṛā-bōngās.*—These are the spirits of the different hills reputed to have formed the original homes of the different *Birhōṛ* clans. They are generally identified with the hills themselves. In fact, it is only the *Jāghi* or settled *Birhōṛs* who sometimes call them *Būrū* (hill) *bōngās*, whereas the *Uṭhlu* (migratory) *Birhōṛs* invariably call these spirits the *ōṛā-* (house) *bōngās*. They are believed to be the *māliks* or 'masters' (dispensers) of sickness. Some of the *Būrū Bōngās* are credited with certain powers over Nature,

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such as that of causing and stopping rain and storm. Each *Oṛā-bōngā* or *Būrū bōngā* has its peculiar sacrifices which the head of the clan in every *ṭāṇḍā* offers annually in *Aghān, Pūs, Māgh,* or *Asāṛh.* When a man of any *gotra* dreams of his *Būrū bōngā* coming riding the animal which is its reputed vehicle, some misfortune to the village is apprehended, and a special *pujā* or sacrifice is offered.

(2) *Laṛānkiā Bhūts.*—Almost every *Birhōṛ* clan has a particular *Laṛānkiā Bhūt* (fighting spirit) with whose help in ancient times the forefathers of the clan are reputed to have fought against other clans. They used to be invoked and sacrifices offered to them before members of the clans started on fighting expeditions. As such expeditions are unknown in modern times, it is only when the *Laṛānkia bhūt* of a clan appears in a dream to members of the clan that sacrifices are offered to it, as it is believed that the spirit is hungry and will cause mischief if no food is provided. The shape in which the *Laṛānkiā bhūt* appears in

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dreams is that of a man armed for battle. Among such *bhūts* are *Chatrāmā* of the *Bhuiyā* clan, *Māhdi* of the *Mūrūm* clan, and *Murkāṭṭi* of the *Aṇḍi* clan.

(3) *Mānitā* (acquired) *spirits of the clans.*—Some of the clans have a few *Mānitā* or acquired spirits which are provided with seats either in a small leaf-hut called *bōngā-ōṛā* (spirit-hut) or in a special *thāān* or spirit-seat of the family as distinguished from the common *(jamā) thāān* of the *ṭāṇḍā.* The way in which such spirits appear to have been 'acquired' is this: When a clan-group in the past repeatedly met with some misfortune or other, such as obstruction in their hunting or honey-gathering expeditions or sickness and death, a *māti* was consulted and some particular spirit was declared to be responsible for the trouble. If in spite of offerings of fowl, pig or other sacrifice, there was a recurrence of the trouble and the spirit refused to abstain from its mischievous tricks unless provided with a seat and regular periodical sacrifices, such a seat was provided and regular sacri-

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fices promised. As now-a-days the food-groups are not solely clan-groups but mixed groups consisting of persons of different clans, such *mānitā* spirits are acquired by the food-group or *ṭāṇḍā* as a whole and are known as *Sāngi-bhūts* or group-gods. Such clan-gods of the *mānitā* type as members of any clan might have inherited from their forefathers were carried by them to the food-group or *ṭāṇḍā* of which they now form part, and given seats at a *thāān* or spirit-seat selected by the family by the side of the encampment or settlement. A lump of clay or a stone or a small wooden peg or other symbol is placed there to represent the spirit. The *ṭāṇḍā*, as a whole, feels as much interested in keeping these spirits in good humour and avert any mischief from them as the clan or family to which they particularly belong. Consequently, as clan-gods, they each receive from the head of the particular clan in the *ṭāṇḍā*, the stipulated sacrifices at the appointed season ; and, as *Sāngi-bhūts* or group-spirits, they jointly receive with other group-spirits some

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common sacrifices to share amongst themselves. Among such *Mānitā* clan-spirits may be mentioned *Bīr-Bānhey, Sipāhi, Anand Singh, Chhunnut Singh, Bān Singh, Dulāl Singh, Lūgū Pāhāṛ, Māi* or *Mahāmāya* or *Mahā Māi, Dinḍā-beṭi, Bāgh-bīr, Huṇḍār-bīr, Mahādeo* and several others. In the spirit-basket of a family of the Ludūmbā clan I saw a pair of small iron-chains which were said to represent Mahādeo which was the *Mānitā* clan-god of the family. Beside the door of the leaf-hut belonging to a family of that clan in the same *ṭāṇḍā* I saw suspended on the outer wall a winnowing basket which, I was told, represented a Mānitā clan-spirit named *Guru Gōsāin*. In cases of an epidemic of cholera or small-pox in the *ṭāṇḍā*, the mother-goddess Devī is generally offered one red goat and the goddess *Kāli Māi* is offered one black goat. A vow or *mānita* is made when the epidemic spreads and the promised sacrifices are offered by the Nāyā when it abates.

III. Family Spirits.

(1) *Hāpṛom or Ancestor-spirits.*—These are the spirits of such deceased persons of a *Birhōr* family as have been conducted to the *āding*[24] or inner tabernacle of the hut by the *Umbūl-āder* ceremony. Until the *ūmbūl-āder* ceremony is performed in respect of any deceased member of the family the spirit remains as a *mūa* and is not included among the *Hāpṛōm*, as ancestor-spirits are called. Similarly, the spirits of the following classes of persons are not conducted to the *āding* and consequently are not included within the *Hāpṛōm*, viz., spirits of women dying in pregnancy or childbirth or during their menses; spirits of persons dying of snake-bite, cholera or small-pox, persons killed by tiger, or drowned to death; the spirit of a man dying

[24] The *Uthlus* or migratory Birhōrs have no *āding* or inner tabernacle for the *Hāpṛoms* but sacrifice to them in a small leaf-hut which serves as their *Bōngā-orā* or spirit-hut.

during the menstrual period of his wife and the spirit of a bachelor who kept a maiden without marrying her. Unless their regular sacrifices and offerings are negleced, these ancestor-spirits cause no harm, but, on the other hand, care for the well-being of the family and assist them in securing game or honey. Promises of a decent share in the spoil of the chase induce the Chowrāsi-Hāprōm ancestor-spirits to redouble their energies in baffling impediments to the chase sought to be offered by certain spirits. If, however, these *Hāpṛōm*s are not regularly supplied with food and drink, they themselves prevent success in securing game or honey, or incite outside *bhūts* to cause sickness in the family. It is said that out of a touch of natural affection they generally do not themselves cause sickness to their human relatives but incite other spirits to do so in such cases. When a girl of the family goes wrong with a man of the same clan, it is the *Buṛhā-Buṛhi* ancestor-spirits who in their solicitude for the good of the family reveal the sin to the *māti*.

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The *Hāpṛōms* or ancestor-spirits, as we have indicated, are divided into two classes—the *Buṛhā-Būṛhī* or near ancestors of the family whose names are still remembered and the *Chowrāsi Hapṛōm* who are the ancient dead of the family whose names are no longer remembered. Sacrifices to the former are offered by the head of the family who sacrifices one red hen after the *ṭhaṭhi* ceremony of a new-born babe, and one after a marriage in the family, and also one on the occasion of the *Sarhūl* feast in such families as observe that feast. To the *Chowrāsi Hāpṛōm* the *Nāyā* or priest of the *ṭāṇḍā* similarly sacrifices a fowl on the occasion of the *ṭhaṭhi* ceremony of a new-born child in the family and at a wedding in the family. Before taking his rice-meal, every adult *Birhōṛ* puts down on the ground a few grains of rice from his plate in the names of his ancestor-spirits; and, similarly, before drinking liquor he must drop a few drops of it on the ground in their names.

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Although they generally exercise a guardian care over their descendants, ancestor-spirits are not consulted in times of danger or distress nor credited with the power of giving oracles to them. *Birhōṛ* customs do not appear to indicate any relation between ancestor-worship and totemism although, as we have seen, there appears to exist a special relation between the spirit of the ancestral hill of a clan and the totem of the clan.

The cult of 'heroes' or the distinguished dead would appear to be unknown, unless such spirits as *Bān Singh*, *Dulār Singh*, etc., be those of heroes whose achievements have been forgotten.

(2) *Mānita Bāghouts.*—When a member of a family is killed by a tiger, his spirit, as I have said, is not included within the *Hāpṛōms* or ancestor-gods nor accommodated either in the *āding* of the family-hut or in the family *thāān* or spirit-seat. Such a *Bāghout* spirit, as it is called, is represented by a stone or a lump of clay placed in the spirit-hut, if the family has

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one, or under a tree near the *thāān* or seat of the *ṭaṇḍā* spirits. Some *Jāghi Birhōṛs* plant an upright stone to mark the seat of the *Bāghout*. A speckled (spotted red and white) fowl is offered to the spirit periodically by the head of the family to avert any mischief which this spirit may cause.

(3) *Family Mānitā Bhūts or the acquired spirits of a family.*—Although the *Bāghouts* described in the last paragraph are called *Mānitā Bāghouts* to distinguish them from stray *ṭāṇṛ Bāghouts* who are spirits of persons killed by tigers and not conducted back to their people, they are virtually ancestor-gods. The *Mānitā* gods proper of a family [25] comprise such spirits as owing to repeated mishaps having been caused by them to the family have been promised seats and periodical offerings by a member of the family in order to

[25] The *'manita* spirits of claus' described above may also be, some of them, really Mānitā spirits of particular families who originally acquired them for themselves.

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prevent future mischief from them. The *māti* is appealed to for the purpose of finding out the name of the *bhūt* causing mishaps and the offering required to appease the *bhūt*. An instance of such a *family bhūt* is the spirit of a murdered person to whom periodical sacrifices are offered by the descendants of the murderer. An interesting class of such spirits are what are called the *Nāsan Bhūts* of the family of the murderer. As instances of such *bhūts* may be mentioned the following:— In one *Birhōṛ ṭāṇḍā* I found a family of the *Bhūiyā* clan sacrificing to a *bhūt* which was named *Lāhi Nāsan*, and the head of the family gave me the following account of its origin: His grandfather had once grown lac on a few trees, but some unknown thief stealthily removed the lac from the trees. The owner of the lac took up a little of the earth on which the foot-print of the thief could be seen. With the help of this earth known as *jāngā-dhūrā* (foot-dust), a *māral bhūt* was set up to kill the thief. Not long afterwards, misfortune

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after misfortune troubled my informant's grandfather. *A māti* was called in, and by the *Dūb-hōrā* process of spirit-finding it was known that the thief had been killed by the *māral-bhūt* and that it was the spirit of the murdered thief. Sacrifices by the *ningchhā* method were made three times, but the spirit would not be appeased until it was made a *mānitā* of by being provided with a seat and regular sacrifices at fixed intervals. This was accordingly done. Just in the same way a family of the *Lūpūng* clan of *Birhōṛs* in another *ṭāṇḍā*, as I was informed, had acquired a *mānitā Bhūt* named *Gōṛā Nāsan* which was the spirit of a cowherd whose cattle damaged the field of an ancestor of the *Lūpūng* man and who was consequently dealt with in the same way as the lac-thief. In another *ṭāṇḍā* I found an instance of a similar family-*bhūt* styled *Marich-nāsan* whose origin was thus accounted for. An ancestor of a *Birhōṛ* family belonging to the *Hembrōm gotra* saw a chilli *(marich)* plant full of chillies on a plot of *jārā* (land cleared by burning

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down trees on it). The man could not resist the temptation of helping himself with all the chillies on the plant. The owner, with the help of the *jāngā-dhurā* of the thief, dealt with him in the manner described above and the thief deid within a short time, and his spirit was duly conducted to the *āding* of his own hut. The relatives of the latter, however, with the help of one of those very stolen chillies, set on a *māral bhūt* who soon killed the owner of the chilli plant. The spirit of the latter began to afflict the family of his enemy in several ways till at length, other means of appeasing the spirit having failed, it was given a seat by the family who accepted it as a family *Nāsan spirit.*

Some families have what are known as *Kūdrā bhūts* and some have *Andher bhūts.* These are believed to manifest themselves (lit., *rise*) when they feel hungry and cause sickness until they are appeased by sacrifices. *Kūdrā bhūts* are said to have with them their consorts known as *Kūdri bōngās.* In some families the *Kūdrā bhūt*

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is represented by an earthen vessel which is turned upside down after a sacrifice.

The *Dārhā* spirit which has its seat usually on a field (*ṭāṇṛ*) and in some places by the side of a stream is sometimes called *Dārhā Kūdrā*. Some say that *Dārhā* or *Dārhā-kūdrā* is the husband of *Kūdri* and both share in the same sacrifices—which are offered when they cause sickness to a family. *Marāng Buru* which is a general god amongst the *Mūṇḍās* appears as a family god amongst ssme *Birhōṛ* families who trace their descent from a *Birhōṛ* ancestor who married a *Mūṇḍā* wife.

IV. Group-Spirits or *Sāngi Bhūts*.

These are spirits sacrificed to by an entire *ṭāṇḍā* or food-group, whether it be a group of *Jāghis* or *Uṭhlus*. The way in which these come to receive sacrifices is as follows: When shortly after taking up their residence temporarily (as *Uṭhlūs*) or permanently (as *Jāghis*) in

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any locality, a *Birhōr* group repeatedly meets with failure in the chase or suffers from sickness in their group, the *māti* tries his methods of finding out the *bhūt* or spirit that is responsible for the trouble. These methods generally are either what is known as *Dūb-hōrā* or what is known as *Khāri-hōrā*. In the Khāri-hōrā process which is employed first, the *māti* sits down holding with one hand an axe placed upright on the ground with its butt-end downwards. He begins by sprinkling around him rice-grains placed before him on a leaf and goes on muttering invocations to different spirits. The *māti* goes on interrogating in a sing-song tone, "Say, who thou art. Art thou such and such (names) a *bhūt* or such other (names) *bhūt* ?" Thus he goes on naming every *bhūt* he can think of until the axe and the hand placed on it begin to shake and move. The name at which this movement begins is taken to be that of the spirit who has caused harm and has now possessed the *māti*. The spirit is now asked what sacrifices he would have, and

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different sacrifices are similarly named. The name at which the axe gives a jerk and begins to move sharper and quicker is taken to be the sacrifice demanded. If in spite of such sacrifices being offered, the troubles do not cease, or revive after a short interval, the *khāri-hōrā* process is repeated once or twice to find out if any additional or more acceptable sacrifices are wanted. If in spite of such sacrifices having been offered, the troubles do not cease, the *Dūb-hōrā* process of spirit-finding is tried once or twice. This process consists in the *māti* taking some rice on a winnowing basket and briskly rubbing them with his hands on the basket while muttering his invocations until he is possessed by the *bhūt* responsible for the troubles. The *bhūt* on being asked his name by some one present reveals his name through the mouth of the *māti*. Then the spirit is asked what he wants. The spirit usually says, "Make me a *mānitā*." He is then asked "How would you remain ?" The *bhūt* replies what he would have for his seat whether

a stone or a wooden peg or a lump of clay. Sometimes the *bhūt* names an unusual object such as a pair of iron-chains (by which I found the god Mahādeo represented by the Ludumbā clan men of a certain *ṭāṇḍā*). The *bhūt* is then asked, "What would you have to eat ?' Thereupon he names the sacrifice he desires to have and the colour of the fowl or pig or goat he covets. The required seat (clay lump, stone, or wooden peg, as the case may be) is accordingly provided and the spirit is included among the *Sāngi Bhūts* of the group. Naturally the *Uṭhlū* or migtatory groups of *Birhōrs* who are constantly moving from one hill or jungle to another, have many more of such *bhūts* than the Jāghi or settled groups possess. These *mānitā bhūts* jointly aquired by a group, as also the *mānitā bhūts* of the different families of the group, altogether constitute the *Sāngi bhūts* of the group ; and once a year in the month of *Māgh* (January-February) the *māti* of the *ṭāṇḍā* offers sacrifices to them to keep the *ṭāṇḍā*

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free from sickness and amply provided with game and honey. Besides this fixed annual sacrifice, they are also offered especial sacrifices when an epidemic visits the *ṭāṇḍā* or its surrounding country. *Jāher Būṛi, Māi, Kāli Māi, Devi, Dārhā, Mahādeo,* and several other deities, including those named above as *mānitā* clan-gods, are included among the Sāngi gods. In fact most of these Mānitā Bhūts of families are the Sāngi Bhūts of their clan which they carried with them to the new *ṭāṇḍā* group they subsequently joined. And consequently it is the business of such families to offer the particular sacrifices required by such deities, whereas the *ṭāṇḍā* as a whole generally offer, in Māgh once every year joint sacrifices to all such *Sāngi Bhūts.* The required sacrifices are collected by subscription from all the families of the *ṭāṇḍā.* Generally they contribute two goats in the first year, and four fowls in the next year for each hunting net in the *ṭāṇḍā* and so on in alternate years.

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V. Individual Tutelary or *Sakti Bhūts.*

It is only the *māti* who takes to himself some particular deity such as Mahādeo as his *Sakti bhūt.* Sometimes it is in a dream that this deity appears to the man and he attaches himself to such deity. Generally it is only after some training under an old *māti* that the novice who has learnt the proper methods of invoking the spirits and passing into the trance state by swinging his head from side to side while muttering appropriate invocations, that he has a vision of the deity that will help him, and fixes upon him as his guardian deity. By unremitting devotion to such deity and scrupulous habits of continence and abstemiousness in diet, a *māti* seeks to come into direct relations with the spirit-world. He sometimes sits up whole nights concentrating his mind on his guardian deity, muttering invocations to him, burning the gum of *sāl*-trees as incense before the visible symbol of the deity, and at times passes into trance when his soul

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is believed to temporarily pass from the physical world and function in the spirit-world. The devotion of some of these *mātis* to their favourite deity is indeed remarkable. Generally the object of the particular devotion of the *Birhōr māti* is either *Mahādeo* or *Māi*. It is through communion with such powerful deities that the *māti* is believed to acquire power to control other spirits. The sacrifices required by the deity is duly offered at fixed intervals by the votary. Besides the principal deity to whose service the *māti* devotes himself, he also serves such deities as are believed to be companions of or somehow associated with that deity. Thus I found at one *ṭāṇḍā* a *māti* who was a votary of Mahādeo, also offering sacrifices to Māi, Devī and Durgā. In an enclosure in his courtyard *(āngan)* there is one longish stone representing Mahādeo furthest to the north, and a little to the south of it is a lump of clay representing *Māi* (the mother-goddess), next to it are two other lumps of clay representing *Devī* and *Durgā* who

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are said to be daughters of *Māi*. Twice in the year, once in the month of *Aswin* and again in *Chait*, the votary sacrifices one black goat to Mahādeo and one red goat to Māi, Devī and Durgā jointly.

The *Sāngi Bhūts* are characterized as *Arhāiā-bhūts* at whose orders stray spirits and minor *bhūts* will kill people or do them other harm. Some *Birhōṛs*, it is said, occasionally seek the help of the *Sāngi-bhūts* to convert spirits of dead men or animals into *Nāsan bhūts* to wreak vengeance on an enemy. The following instances of this are interesting:—

A *Birhōṛ* owned a sow which was pregnant. The sow having strayed into the jungle, a cowherd shot her dead with an arrow which remained sticking into its flesh. The *Birhōṛ* inquired of all the people of the neighbouring settlements as to who had killed his sow and declared that he must realize from the culprit a a sum of four rupees for the sow and twelve rupees for the pigs in her womb. As every one denied having shot the sow,

the *Birhōr* took the arrow to the *thāān* of his clan and made *dāhārāng* of it by placing it beside the symbols of the *bhūts* at the *thāān* and sprinkling *āruā* rice on it, and addressed the deities at the *thāān* saying, "Here I offer to you twelve unborn pigs. Do ye deal with the man who has dealt thus with these *parts* [26] (*angs*) of yours." Shortly after this, not only members of the family of the slayer of the pig but his cattle too died one after another, fleas began to infest his house and cause sickness to his cattle. In the end, one little boy remained the sole surviving member of the family. This harm was attributed to the souls of the pigs which become *Nāsan-bhūts* by order of the *Sāngi-bhūts*. These *Nāsan bhūts*, however, are like double-edged swords, as after having done away with their

[26] This looks like an identification of the sacrifices or victims with the gods or spirits to whom they are offered.

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employer's enemy they turn back upon their employer himself unless they are adopted as *Mānitā-bhūts*—a position which all spirits covet. As an instance of the conduct of these *Nāsan-bhūts*, the following incident may be cited. A *Birhōṛ* of the *Bhūiya* clan had reared lac on some trees; and close to those trees he had planted some vegetables called *gōngra*. A *Birhōṛ* of a neighbouring *ṭāṇḍa* happened to be passing that way and eased nature under the tree and finally made away with some of the lac and vegetables. Shortly afterwards the owner of the lac and vegetables came to inspect them and unwillingly trod upon the excrement and his feet slipped and he fell down. He thereupon took up a little of the earth covered over with hoar-frost on which foot-prints of the thief could be discerned and carried this *jāngā-dhūrā* (dust of the feet) to the *thāān* of his *ṭāṇḍā* and sprinkled *āṛuā* rice on it, appealed to the *Sāngī-bhūts*, saying—"Go and punish the man who has harmed me in this way". Two members

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of the thief's family were killed by tigers within a very short time. The same *Nāsan bhūt*, however, before long, caused death to four members of his employer's family.

VI. Minor Spirits or *Ningchhā* Bhuts.

Under this head may be classed the remaining spirits who, whether 'personal' spirits or elemental beings or impersonal powers, do not receive regular sacrifices, but depend for their nutriment on the off-chance of sometimes extorting the sacrifice of a fowl or animal from men by way-laying, obstructing, or afflicting them. Some of these spirits, as we have seen, at length, succeed by a dogged persistence to get admission into the rank of *mānitā* spirits, but the majority are satisfied with *ningchhā* sacrifices once in a way. In this class are 'human' spirits who are excluded from the category of *Hāpṛōms*, such as the *Bhūtās* or spirits of men whose wives died during their menstrual period, *Kichins* or spirits of women dying during menses, *Baram-*

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bhūts or spirits of bachelors who kept maidens in concubinage, *Muās* or spirits of persons dying of snake-bite, *Churins* or spirits of women dying during pregnancy, and elemental spirits like the *Sātbahini* and *Bindi-Eṛā*. Such of them as have no fixed habitation are known as Bhūlās or wandering spirits.

Unless accepted as *mānitās*, all spirits—and their name is legion—that reside in upland and river, forest and mountain *(ṭaṇr-tikur, garha-dhōrhā, ban-jungle, pā-hār-parbat)* are *ningchhā bhūts*. Some spirits that are *mānitās* to some people may be *ningchhā-bhūts* to others when egged on by some evil-minded person to do harm to such others. Thus the *Dārhā-bhūt* is a spirit that dwells in stones by the side of some lowland or *dōn*, and is a *mānitā-bhūt* to the owner of the land who has to offer periodical sacrifices to the *Dārhā* who is often represented by a piece of bamboo planted by the side of the stone. For others, *Dārhā* is a *ningchhā bhūt*, so that when any outsider cuts wood of trees

by the side of the *Dārhā* stone or eases nature by its side, he is afflicted with some sickness for the removal of which the *ningchhā* or expulsion ceremony has to be performed with the aid of a *māti*.

On exorcising a *ningchhā bhūt*, the *māti* gives chase to it usually up to some tree to which it is transfixed (*thāpua*) with a nail. Before nailing down the *bhūt*, a fowl or goat is sacrificed to it; and the *māti* micturates there by way of a liquor-offering, and draws a little blood from his thigh, trunk, hand and testacles by pricking them with a thorn, stains a few grains of rice with this blood and offers the same to the *bhūt*.

VII. *Mānitā Bhūts* OF WOMEN.

Ordinarily, men alone are entitled to offer sacrifices to the spitits and have personal relations, so to say, with them. I have referred (pp. 209-211 *ante*) to a certain class of cases in which women among the *Bihōṛs* may have to offer

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sacrifices to certain spirits. This happens when she eats the meat of the head of an animal or fowl sacrificed to a spirit so that the spirit is thereby drawn on to her and begins to cause trouble to herself and her family until she adopts the spirit as a *mānitā* to be periodically propitiated with appropriate sacrifices.

And, in this connection, it may be noted that even in cases where a married *Birhōr* woman is entitled or required to offer sacrifices to a spirit, it is her husband who actually offers the sacrifices, the wife merely sitting by his side while this is being done. She will, however, eat the meat of the head of the sacrificed fowl or animal which no man except her husband may share with her. Her daughters too may eat the meat, but by doing so they attract the spirit to themselves and render themselves liable to be afflicted with illness or other calamity unless they too take the spirit as their own *manita.*

Two other methods by which a female

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may acquire a *mānitā bhūt* are by accident or "luck" and by 'inheritance', so to say, from her mother. I shall explain and illustrate by concrete instances how these methods actually work in practice.

Thus, a *Birhōṛ* woman picked up from the road a brass bell which had dropped down unnoticed from the neck of a bullock employed in dragging a country cart, and soon afterwards her daughter fell ill, and a *māti* or spirit-doctor was called in to find out the cause of the illness. The *māti* discovered by divination that the mother of the girl had picked up something made of metal which carried with it a spirit called *Banjāri-bhūt*, and that the child could be cured only if she made a *mānita* of that spirit and periodically sacrificed a goat. She did so, and the child was cured. And to this day she along with her husband (a *Birhōṛ* of the *Bhūiyā* clan) periodically offers sacrifices to the *Banjāri-Bhūt* with a brass bell placed before them as the emblem

of the spirit. The meat of the head of the sacrificed goat can be eaten only by the woman, her husband and her daughters, but not by her sons who may only partake of the meat of the goat's trunk and legs.

When the mother dies, the spirit, thus acquired by her by 'accident', will pass to one or more of her daughters 'by inheritance' so to say, and they in their turn will thenceforth cherish the spirit as their *mānitā* unless they or any of them may have already commenced doing so owing to some illness in her family brought on by the spirit.

A similar instance occurred in a family of the *Jeṭh Seriā Laṭhā* clan. A *Muṇḍā* woman who fell in love with a young *Birhōṛ* of the name of Sobran (now an old man) of the *Jeṭh Seriā lāṭhā* clan entered his house carrying a pot of rice-beer on her head and they were thus married in the *bōlō bāplā* form. This pot of liquor had been brewed at the woman's father's house on the occasion

of the sacrifice to a female spirit called *Sutām tōnōl bōngā* which was the *mānitā* of her mother; and it was found that the spirit had come along with the rice-beer to the daughter's house. And so the husband along with the wife have since been periodically offering secrifices to the spirit. A leaf-cup filled with rice-beer is placed before them and a sheep is sacrificed and then the liquor is dropped from the leaf-cup on the spot where the sheep has been offered. The meat of the head of the sheep is eaten by the woman and her husband and also by their daughters, if present. As for the trunk, that half which touches the earth while it is severed from the head is eaten by the members of the sacrificer's family alone while only the other half (that which is turned upwards towards the sky) may be partaken of by members not belonging to the family. Three daughters were born to them; the first was married to a *Jāghi Birhōr* of the *Mūrūm* clan, the second

to a *Jāghi Birhōṛ* of the *Hembrōm* clan and the third to an *Uṭhlū Birhōṛ* of the *Bhūiyā* clan; and all of them have 'acquired' their *mānitā bhūt* from their mother, and offer (along with their husbands) periodical sacrifices to this *Sutām tōnōl bhūt*. Thus the *mānitā* spirit of a *Birhōṛ* female always 'descends', so to say, in the female line. But the *mānitā* spirit of the father's family may also under certain circumstances become the *mānitā* of the daughter, as it also happened in the case of the daughters of old Sobran. Thus, when his eldest daughter fell ill at her father's place, the *māti* declared that her father's family *mānitā* named *Guru Gosāin* possessed her and required appropriate secrifices from her. Then she made a vow of making a *mānitā* of this spirit, and on her recovery offered sacrifices to it. As her younger sisters, then still young, also partook of the sacrificial meat, they too have since acquired *Guru Gosāin* as their second *mānitā bhūt*.

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Thus, as we have seen, whereas a man can offer sacrifices both to the spirits of his own family or clan, and locality, as also to the *mānitā* spirit of his wife, a woman may not ordinarily offer sacrifices to any spirit either of her father's side or of her husband's side; the only spirit or spirits to which she can offer sacrifices are those which she may have acquired as *mānitā* by way of either 'inheritance' from her mother or by accident or luck. And the right of eating the head of the sacrificial animal or fowl depends upon the right of offering the sacrifice. The fact that by partaking of the sacrificial meat and particularly the meat of the *head* of an animal or fowl sacrificed to a spirit, the spirit itself is believed to pass on to the eater, would appear to indicate that the *Birhōr's* conception of sacrifice is that the sacrificed animal or fowl becomes identified with the god or spirit, and by eating the sacrificial meat or drink the worshipper too becomes one with the god or spirit. This conception of sacri-

fice is clearly brought out by the fact that the act of *sacrificing* fowls or goats to the gods or spirits is generally described as *worshipping* the fowls or goats themselves. This mode of expression is customary not only among the *Birhōrs* but among their neighbours the *Mūṇḍās*, *Orāons* and other tribes. Eating the sacrificial meat and drinking the sacrificial liquor are also sometimes spoken of as 'making *pūjā*'. Thus, on several occasions, when I found my *Orāon* or *Muṇḍā* friends drinking rice-bear in their houses and asked them what they were doing, they laughingly replied that they were making *pūjā* (worshipping the spirits), thus clearly indicating that drinking the sacrificial liquor is in their estimation equivalent to worshipping the spirits. Beyond this, they do not appear to have any explicit idea of communion with the god or spirit by joining with him in the consumption of the sacrificial meat or sacrificial drink.

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III.—Sacrifices and Sacrificers.

In this section I shall describe the ritual observed in the propitiation or conciliation of the different classes of *Birhōṛ* deities and spirits with the object of securing 'luck' and avoiding misfortune, and of preserving, energising and ennobling life.

Sing-Bōṇgā Pūjā.—As for the Supreme God, *Sing-Bōṇgā*, there is no special season or special ritual for sacrificing to Him. When some serious calamity threatens or visits a family, the head of the family with his face turned to the east offers a white fowl or a white goat to Him and prays for succour. A white fowl is also offered to him by the *Nāyā* on the occasion of the annual *Sāngī-Pūjā*, for the protection of the *ṭāṇḍā* from harm. *Devī Māi* and other Mother-Goddesses also receive sacrifices at the *Sāngi-Pujā* besides special offerings to avert some special calamity.

Oṛā-Bōṇgā-Pūjā.—The propitiation of the guardian deity, the *Oṛā-Bōṇgā* or *Būrū-*

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Bōṇgā of each clan is esteemed by the *Birhōṛ* to be of paramount importance. The sacrifice is offered on a Friday or a Monday in the month of *Pūs* or *Māgh* (January-February) with the following rites: On the day preceding the ceremony, the head man of the clan living in the *ṭāṇḍā*, brings a twig of the *merel* (myrobalan) tree. The twig is dried in the sun and burnt into ashes. A loin-cloth of the man is cleaned by boiling in water mixed with the ashes of the myrobalan twig, and is laid out to dry. The man remains fasting the whole day. Members of the clan living or encamping within some distance are invited to join in the *pūjā*. The man bathes without smearing any oil on his head or limbs, puts on the cloth cleaned and dried the previous day. Then he goes with his kinsmen and friends to the spirit-hut, if any, of the clan, takes the small *bōṇgā-peṭi* or spirit-box containing a little vermilion in a *kiā* (snuff-box) and some *āruā* rice for the *pūjā* kept in a bam-

boo tube in which the *Oṛā-bōngā* is also supposed to stop, and goes to an open space a little further away from the huts. His companions carry a knife, an axe, the requisite fowls or goat, and some rice for cooking a meal. The place is now smeared by some man with cowdung or mud diluted in water;—no woman is permitted to go there or witness the ceremony. Different *Oṛā-bōngās* require different sacrifices. To the *Oṛā-bōngās* of most of the clans, two fowls—one red and one white—are offered; those of the *Gerōā*, *Shāmjhākōā*, *Aṇḍi* and *Khāngār* clans require one goat each; the *Oṛā-bōngā* of the *Mūrūm* clan requires one fowl and one goat, and that of the *Nāgpuriā* clan requires a bullock. On the space cleaned with cowdung, a mystic diagram with four compartments is drawn with rice-flour. In one of the compartments is placed an emblem of the totem of the clan, a bit of skin or horn of the totem animal, or wing or feather of the totem bird, such as has been already

mentioned in detail (pp. 102-106 *ante*). When everything is ready for the sacrifice, the man with his face turned in the direction of the hill reputed to be the original home of his clan which is identified with his *Būrū-bōngā* or *Oṛā-bōngā*, stands on his left leg with his right heel resting on his left knee, and, stretching his hand forward, pours a little water three times on the ground and invokes the spirit by name and prays for luck in hunting and physical well-being to the members of the clan. He then sits down on one of the compartments of the rice-flour diagram, makes three vermilion marks on the ground and prays for health and abundance of game to the clan. The head of each fowl is then cut off with the knife, and the severed heads placed on the ground, and blood from the decapitated trunks of the fowls is dropped on the heads. Then the heads are skinned and cut up and mixed up with rice and made into a lump and roasted. Every male member of the clan present scrapes off with the nails of his fingers a little of this roasted

meat and offers it to the *Oṛā-bōngā*, saying, "We offer this head to you; enjoy this meat and drink; give us health and luck in the chase." The men of the clan eat the head then and there. Then they besmear each his own face with oil. The bodies of the fowls are then cut up and dressed and boiled with rice as *khichri* and eaten by the men of the clan. If they cannot eat up all the *khichri*, what is left over is burnt in the fire. Then the party return to the *āngan* or open space in front of the hut of the head of the clan. On the way the latter goes on sprinkling water on the path from a jug *(loṭā)* until he reaches home. There he sprinkles a little water here and there on all sides, and a little at the door of the hut; the rest of the water in the jug is sprinkled in the *āḍing* of his hut where the jug is finally left. The wife of the man now fills the jug again with water, comes out with the jug in her hand and washes the feet of all the men who attended the

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sacrifice. Each of the men then puts a little oil first in his own ears, then over his eyes and finally all over his body. If any one omits this, particularly if his hands and legs are not smeared with oil before he visits other people's houses, the sacrifices will have no efficacy, and he will have to offer the sacrifices over again.

The *Uṭhlu* clans, however, generally offer pigs to their *Oṛā-bongās*, and the pigs are sacrificed by the *kuṭām* process, that is to say, by striking them at the neck with the butt-end of an axe. One *Uṭhlu* clan, known as the *Mussal gotra*, [27] offer sacrifices of either fowls or goats to their

[27] This clan name has been omitted from the list at pages 90-92 *ante*. The clan appears to have originated from the union of a Mahomedan with a Birhor woman. The clan is found in the Bāgmundi *thānā* of the Mānbhum District, and also in the Tāmār *thānā* of the Rānchi District. Two other clans whose names have been omitted in the list are the *Tāiyo* and the *Tūdū*. I have come across these clans since the book went to the press.

Oṛā-bōngās by the *jabāi* process (with two and half strokes of a weapon) in the manner of the Muhammadans.

Sacrifices to the Mānitā deities.—Except sacrifices to the *mānitā-bōngās* of women, of which I have spoken in section II, sub-section (ix) above, sacrifices to other *Mānitā bōngās* are offered by the head of the family or clan which has accepted them as *mānitās*, at such intervals as have been agreed upon for all time. Thus, in one *ṭāṇḍā* I found the *Ludāmbā gotrā* men offering annually one white goat to *Sipāhi bhūt*, two pigs to *Bir-Bānhē*, one red goat to Ánand Singh and Chhunnat Singh jointly, one red goat to *Lūgū Pāhāṛ*, one black goat to *Māi*, one black virgin she-goat to *Diṇḍā-beṭi*, and one speckled fowl to the family *Bāghout* spirit.

Sacrifices to Sāngī Bhūts.—All the *mānitā Bhūts* of the different families of the *ṭāṇḍā* who have their seats at the *thāāns* of the settlement together with such *bhūts* as the *ṭāṇḍā* have made their common *mānitās* receive annually either in the month of

Māgh (January), or, failing that, in Asārh (July) a joint sacrifice of not less than twelve fowls in one year and two goats in the following year and so on in each alternate year. Each family, as I have already said, contributes four fowls for each hunting net owned by it, and to meet the price of the two goats a proportionate subscription is collected by the *Kōṭwār* from each family. The Nāyā officiates as the sacrificer. An open space at one extremity of the *ṭāṇḍā* is cleaned by smearing it with cowdung or mud diluted in water by a woman of the Nāyā's family who after ablutions goes there with water in a new earthen vessel. After thus cleaning the spot she places on the ground thus cleaned a new *sūp* or winnowing basket containing about a *seer* (two lbs.) of *ārua* rice, a little vermilion, a little salt, a few pieces of turmeric and a few chillies, and goes away. The Nāyā holding another *sūp* in his hand now goes to the *thāān* and leaves it there and then goes to bathe in some stream or spring. On his return, he takes the *sūp*

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Plate XXVIII.—A Birhōṛ *rājā* or priest.

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and, accompanied by the *māti*, goes to the place where sacrifices are to be offered, and there asks the *māti* to put himself in his accustomed hypnotic state. The *māti* goes on muttering his *mantras* until he begins to swing his head *(jhūpnā)* and works himself up into something like a frenzy, when he is believed to be possessed by some spirit. The *Nāyā* now places a little rice from his winnowing basket on the palm of the *māti's* hand and asks him, "Who art thou?" The *māti*, or rather the spirit that has possessed him, replies—"I am such and such a *bhūt* (names)[28]. Then the *Nāyā* tells him, "Do thou examine the rice and see whether the sacrifices we are going to offer on this day of *Māgh* (or *Asāṛh*, as the case may be) will bring us luck or not. Thou art a spirit and, of course, seest future events." The spirit through the

[28] Generally it is either the *Sipāhi bhūt*, or *Lūgū* or Mahādeo, or Devī, who is believed to possess the *māti* on such occasions.

mouth of the *māti* says, "Come, boys, it will be all right. Begin your sacrifices. You will have nothing to fear." It is said that on such occasions, the *māti* or rather the spirit that comes to him invariably predicts success. The goat or fowls to be sacrificed are next brought to the *māti* for examination. The *Nāyā* tells him, "Examine these too: see whether they are sound or not, and whether they will please the deities." The *māti* takes up in his arms one of the fowls or the goat, as the case may be, and says,—"Go to; these are all right; begin your sacrifices." Now the *Nāyā* takes a little water in his right hand and sprinkles it on the head and body of each of the goats or fowls. He next puts three marks of vermilion *(sindūr)* on the ground and a *sindūr* mark on the head and a *sindūr* mark on each of the two horns of the goats; in the case of fowls a *sindūr* mark is made on the head of each. Now the *Nāyā* with his face turned to the east and with one of the goats or fowls, as the

case may be, in his arms stands on his left leg with the right leg crooked behind it. He prays, "To-day in this month of *Māgh* (or *Asāṛh*) we are offering the promised *(mānitā)* sacrifices to all the *Sāngī bhūts.* May the *ṭāṇḍā* remain in health and happiness. May no disease or other evil enter the *ṭāṇḍā*". He then squats on the ground puts down the goat or fowl on his left, and asks all the villagers to sprinkle rice. The other goats or fowls, as the case may be, are placed by the side of the former. All present sprinkle on the victims rice from the *sūp.* Then the *Nāyā* invokes all the gods and spirits whose names he can call up, and prays,—"To-day in this month of *Māgh,* (or *Asāṛh*) we call upon you, Oh *Sāngi bhūts,* do ye command and control *(hānkāo, dābāo)* all *bhūts* from outside *(upriā chāpriā).* You verily are the masters *(māliks,* i. e., over other *bhūts).* Do not allow disease and calamity to approach the *ṭāṇḍā.*" Then the victims are offered up by cutting their throats with an axe in the case of goats and with

a knife in the case of fowls. The red goat [29] is sacrificed before the black one. Each victim's head is put down on the ground, a little blood from the body is dropped on the head, and then more blood is poured on a leaf-cup. When most of the blood in the body has been thus let into the leaf-cup, the body is put aside. The other victims are dealt with in turn in the same way. Then the heads of the sacrificed goats or fowls are taken up, the hair on them is burnt, and the meat chopped into pieces. In the case of the goats, the brains of the red ones are mixed with *āruā* rice and wrapped up in two *sal* leaves and roasted by placing burning charcoal above and under this bundle. The roasted brains are taken to the spot where the sacrifices were offered and a little of it is taken with his nails by the *Nāyā* and offered to the *Sāngī-bhūt*s; while offering it, the *Nāyā* says, :—"Here

[29] The red goat is said to be meant for *Dūrgā* and the black one for *Kālī*.

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I offer you the head and neck *(muṛi-khāṇḍi)* of the goats. We shall eat it and so will you too." Here is an indication of the *Birhōṛ's* conception of communion with the god or spirit by 'eating *with* him'; and we have seen at pp. 331-2 an indication of his conception of 'eating the god.' Only the *Nāyā* and the men of his clan in the *ṭāṇḍā* may eat this roasted brain "with the gods." The flesh of the head of the red goat is boiled in water with *āruā* rice and a little oil and turmeric. This too may be eaten only by the *Nāyā* and the men of his own clan in the *ṭāṇḍā*. The entrails, lungs and heart of the victims can be eaten only by the women of the *Nāyā's* clan. The rest of the flesh of the red goat as also the flesh of the head and body of the black goat is divided among all the families of the *ṭāṇḍā*, including the *Nāyā's* family, and they take their respective shares home. The fowls sacrificed to the *Sāngī-bhūts* are dealt with in the same manner as the black goat. Except in certain cases mentioned in

section III (ix) above, women may on no account partake of the meat of the head either of any fowls or goats or other animals offered to any spirit or even of those obtained by hunting, although they may eat the meat of fowls or animals purchased from outside the *ṭāṇḍā* and not sacrificed to any deity. The *Sāngī-bhūts*, as I have said, are characterized as *ārhāiās* or spirits possessing power over other spirits.

Sacrifices to Niṇgchhā Bhūts.—With the exception of some minor ailments, most of the ills that flesh is heir to, is attributed by the *Birhōṛ* to the action of spirits or other extra-human powers and energies. In all cases of sickness, the assistance of the *māti* is sought; and he finds out either by the *Khāri-hōrā* or by the *dūb-hōrā* process described above, or by rubbing a little oil on a *sal* leaf and looking in it for the reflection of the *bhūt* which is responsible for the illness. If it is a *bhūt* of the family who is found to have caused the trouble, the customary sacrifices to him are offered. If, however, it is a *bhūt* from

outside the house, the *māti* declares from which direction of the compass it has come and indicates the number and colour of the fowls it requires. The *niṇgchhā* ceremony is now performed by the *māti* in the following manner. He takes up each fowl, waves it three times round the head of the patient, places some *ārūā* rice on the extended palm of the patient's hand, and the fowl is made to eat a little of this rice. The *māti* orders the fowl, saying,—"So long you have given trouble. Get hence from to-day. Here are offerings for you. Do not give further trouble." The *māti* with a companion now takes the fowl in the direction from which the afflicting spirit is believed to have come, to the common boundary of two settlements or villages. While the *māti* goes out of the hut of the sick man, the latter throws away the rice remaining in his hand in the direction in which the *māti* goes with the fowl. Arrived at the boundary of two settlements, the *māti* sits down with his face to the east, puts three marks of

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vermilion on the ground, and drops grains of rice over the head of the fowl. While the fowl eats the rice as it falls on the ground, the *māti* kills the fowl by twisting its head with his hands. The head thus torn off from the body is placed on the ground, and blood from the body is dropped over it by the *māti* while he addresses the spirit thus,—"To-day I offer thee this (sacrifice); do not come to so-and-so's (names the head of the sick man's family) house again. If thou comest again to the house, curse *(tālāk)* be on thee." Now the *māti* stands up with his face turned in the direction of the *ṭāṇḍā* and with legs apart, and through the space between the two legs throws away the decapitated body of the fowl behind him in the direction from which the *bhūt* is supposed to have come. Thus is the spirit driven away; and the *māti* makes water on a leaf-cup, and pours the urine from the cup on the severed head of the fowl, saying—"Here is liquor for thee. Do not approach the sick man again." The body of the fowl (or fowls)

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is now taken away by the *māti* and his companion to some place other than that of the sick man's hut, roasted and eaten. Here again we see the sacrificial fowl identified with the spirit itself.

When the *mānitā bhūt* of some other family is found by the *māti* to have caused the trouble, the sacrifices required by the *bhūt* are provided, and the *māti* after waving them three times over the head of the patient and making them eat rice-grains from the hands of the patient as described above secretly takes out the fowls, kills them by twisting their heads, and leaves the severed heads near the hut of the family whose *bhūt* caused the sickness.

Driving away spirits by force.—Another method by which a *māti* detects and drives away a mischievous spirit not belonging to the *ṭāṇḍā*, is this. The *māti* with a cane in hand goes to bed thinking of the spirit which is causing illness, and then in a dream he sees the *bhūt* and at once gets up and chases it out of the village.

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IV. Feasts and Festivals.

The *Uṭhlū* section of the *Birhōṛs*, whose time is entirely taken up in the quest for food and precautions against the consequent dangers from natural and supernatural sources, have no leisure to indulge in regular religious festivals. From year's end to year's end they are in a state of almost constant anxiety for securing food.

But even an *Uṭhlū Birhōṛ* both before he proceeds in the food-quest and after he secures the desired food, takes care to propitiate the spirits whose good wishes or at any rate absence of ill-will, are considered essential to success in this as in every other affair of life. Thus, *Birhōṛs* of the Kāwān clan, who are mostly *Uṭhlūs*, before they begin digging for yams and tubers strike the ground three times with their axes and invoke their clan-god or Hill-god *(Buru bōngā)* known as *Hāser bōngā* or the yam spirit (in imitation of the crowing of a cock) by uttering the queer cry of "Kōk-rō-chō,"

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Plate XXIX.—Type of Birhōṛ adult male (Front view). [Lupung clan].

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and pray to the spirit for plenty of yams and tubers: And all *Birhōṛs*, *Uṭhlū* as well as *Jāghi*, as soon as they have gathered honey must offer to the *Chowrāsi hāpṛōm* and other spirits a few drops of honey and minute grains of pollen or other matter (which they call remnants of honey-flowers) found in the cells of the comb. It is believed that if this is omitted, they will have no success in honey-gathering in future.

We have seen in a previous chapter how before proceeding on their hunting expeditions, *Uṭhlūs* as well as *Jāghis* invoke the spirits and offer water and rice to them to ensure success, and how when any game is bagged, its liver *(ihim)* is roasted and a bit of the roasted liver is offered to the spirits. Again, as soon as a deer is killed, a number of *sāl* leaves are tinged with its blood by the *Diguār* and handed over to the *Nāyā* who puts down on the ground by way of an offering one blood-stained leaf in the name of each spirit ; and finally the man in whose net

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the deer has been caught distributes powdered tobacco and lime to every other member of the party: And this they call 'the feast of the slain deer'.

While *Uṭhlū Birhōṛs* cannot indulge in the luxury of more elaborate religious feasts than this, the *Jāghis*, particularly those amongst them who have taken to regular cultivation of land, are in a better position. They enjoy periods of respite from incessant struggle for existence, when hopeful anticipations of plenty of food or the actual acquisition of such food make them rejoice, and by way of thanksgiving and expression of their joyfulness and also with a view to ensuring future good luck and avoiding bad luck in agriculture, they celebrate certain periodical festivals which they have adopted from their more civilized neighbours and congeners, the *Muṇḍās* and the *Sāntāls* These festivals or *parōbs* are the *Sosō-Bōngā* and *Nawājōm* festivals in the month of *Asāṛh* (July), the Karmā and Jitiā in the month of *Bhādo* (September), *Dasāi*

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in *Aswin* (October) and *Sōhōrāi* in *Kārtik* (November). These festivals have not all been accepted by every *Jāghi* group. As I have already noticed in chapter IV, some clans have adopted a few festivals but not the others, and other clans have accepted one or more of these festivals but not the rest. Thus I have found families of the *Shāmjhākoā* and *Mūrūm* clans observing only the *Karam* and *Sōhōrāi* festivals but not the *Jitiā* nor the *Dāsāi parōbs.* A number of families of the *Lāṭhā, Chāuli Hembrōm, Nāgpūria, Māhali,* and Gidhi clans have adopted the *Karmā* but not the other festivals. A family of the *Aṇḍi* clan that I know has adopted the *Jitiā* and *Sōhōrāi* festivals but not the *Karmā* and the *Dasāi parōbs.* One family of the *Hembrōm* clan that I know has adopted the *Dasāi* but not the other festivals and certain families of the *Bhuiyā, Khāngār* and *Geṛōā* clans who own cattle, have adopted the *Sōhōrāi* but not the other three festivals. The spirits to whom

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sacrifices or offerings are made at these festivals generally fall under the category of *mānitā bhūts.* Thus any person from whom the *Kārmā bhūt* or the *Dasāi bhūt* demands sacrifices in dreams or by causing illness or other calamity makes a *mānitā* of the *bhūt.* In some instances, one or other of these festivals come to be adopted by a family through some accident. Thus, one of my *Birhōṛ* friends of the *Aṇḍi* clan had a son born to him on the day of the *Jitiā* festival, and he accordingly named his son as *Jitu* and for the 'luck' of the son took to celebrating the annual *Jitiā* festival. After a few years, however, he omitted to celebrate the festival for two successive years. In the third year, on his way back from a journey, he was attacked in the jungle by a wild bear but escaped with his life, though badly mauled. Then he consulted a spiritfinder as to the cause of the mishap; and he learnt that it was the *Jitiā bhūt* who thus punished him for neglecting his *pūjā.* And thenceforward

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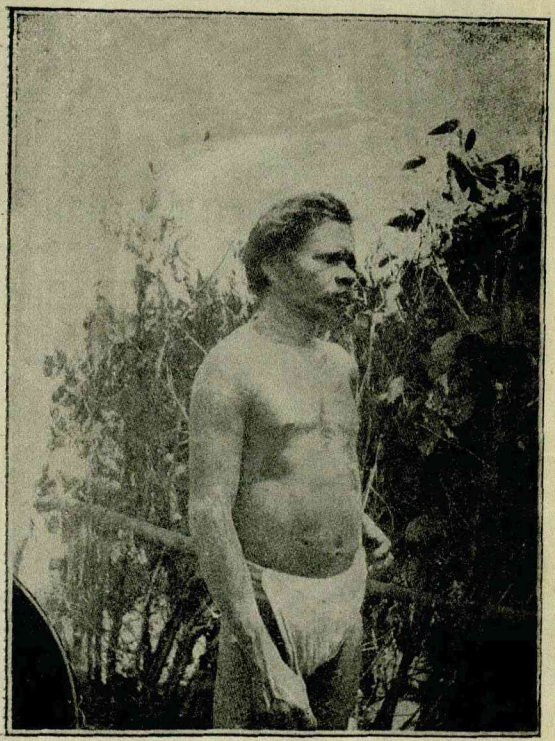


Plate XXX.—Profile of the man in the preceding plate.

the annual *jitiā* festival has been regularly celebrated in the family. As for the *Sōhōrāi* festival, any family that comes to own cattle must observe it. All the landed *Jāghi Birhōṛs* that I have known have also adopted from the *Muṇḍās* and other neighbours the *Sōsō Bōngā* and the *Nawājōm* festivals. The rites observed in these festivals are given below.

The Sōsō-Bōngā festival.—One evening in *Asāṛh* (July), after transplantation of the paddy seedlings is finished, the head of each of the few *Jāghi Birhōṛ* families that have taken to wet paddy cultivation brings a few branches of the *sōsō (semicarpis anacardium)* plant and calls in a person who has learnt the details of the ceremony. The courtyard *(āngan)* of the house is cleaned with water mixed with cowdung, and the figure of a square is drawn with rice-flour in one part of the *āngan*. Around the square on each side of it three or five figures of the shape of petals of flowers are drawn with coal-dust; and above each of these petals two similar petal-like

figures are drawn one above another, the middle row with red earth and the uppermost row with coal-dust. A winnowing basket *(sūp)* with a hen's egg and a twig of the *sōsō* plant on it is placed before him. The man now recites the Asūr legend and at the same time goes on rubbing the rice on the *sūp* with his hand. At the end he calls upon the Evil Eye to give up its victims. The yolk of the egg is offered to *Singbōngā*, and mixed with rice and baked. Next morning one of the *sōsō* branches is planted in the manure pit of the cultivator, and one in each of his cultivated fields to ward off the Evil Eye from the crops.

Navā Jōm.—This is the ceremony of eating the New Rice. On the morning following the *Sōsō-bōngā* festival, the owner of the fields, on his return from the fields after planting the *sōsō* branches, bathes and comes home. In the meanwhile his wife has cleaned the *āngan* again with cowdung and water and gathered some fresh *sōsō* leaves and some new upland

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(gōṛā) rice from a neighbour's field, threshed the rice and made *chiuṛā* (flattened rice) of it. A little milk in a jug or cup, some *chiuṛā* on *sōsō* leaves, and molasses *(gūr)* and clarified butter *(ghi)* on leaf-cups, are placed in the *āngan* where the man first takes up the jug of milk in his hand in a standing posture goes on dropping the milk on the *chiuṛā* placed on the ground over *sōsō* leaves. As he drops the milk he prays,—*Sirmāre Sing Bōngā tihingdo emkānāing dūd kūsūm. Ne jomēmē. Lāi hūsū bōhō-hāsū bānuā tihing, āte, etc.*" Thou *Singbōngā* in heaven, to-day I am giving (Thee) milk (lit., milk-flower). Eat (drink) this. From to-day may there be no sickness in stomach or head." A little *chiuṛā* is also offered to the ancestor-spirits *(Būṛhā-Būṛhi)* by putting the *chiuṛā* on *sōsō*-leaves at the *āding*. Then all eat new *chiuṛā* and drink rice-beer. A screen is hung over the spot in the *āngan* where the offerings to *Singbōngā* were made. In the afternoon when rice has been boiled, and meat of fowl cooked

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a little of this rice and meat are offered to the *Būṛhā-Būṛhi* in the *āding* by the head of the family. Then all the members of the family and any friends who may have been invited partake of the feast. The leaf-plates on which they have eaten are stowed away in a corner of the hut. When in the evening the canopy has been removed from the *āngan*, these leaf-plates are thrown away in the *āngan*.

The Dasāi Festival:—This festival is celebrated in the month of Aswin. The sacrificer and, if possible, other adult members of the family remain fasting the whole day and night; goats are sacrificed at the family *thāān*.

The Karam Festival:—The *Karam* festival is held on the eleventh day of the moon in the month of *Bhādo*. A *Karam Adina cordifolia* branch is brought to the *āngan* where it is ceremoniously planted. And the story *(kāhāni)* of the two brothers *Karam* and *Dharam* is recited by some one who knows it by heart.

The Jitiā Festival:—This is celebrated

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annually twelve days after the *Karam* festival. The head of the family and his wife remain fasting the whole day. The man plants in his *āngan* a branch of *Jitiā pipar* tree *(ficus religiosa)*, and the branch of the *sekrē* or *sidhā* tree, and a twig of the *mohuā (bassia latifolia)* tree, a bamboo and a sugarcane all tied together with a straw rope in their middle. The *Jitiā Kāhini* is recited by some one who knows it, preferably by a *Brāhman*, if available. Offerings of *Gulāichi* flower, *bael (Aegle marmegos)* leaves, *āruā* rice, milk, molasses, clarified butter *(ghi)*, rice-flour cakes *(piṭhā)*, and flattened rice *(chiurā)* are offered to the *Jitiā* branch and its associates.

Conclusion.

Such in brief is a rough outline of the religious ideas of the *Birhōṛs* as I have understood them and their religious practices as I have observed them,—some, when they were being actually performed, and

others, by making the men enact the ceremonies for my benefit. The impression borne in upon me by all that I have seen with my eyes and heard from the people themselves is that their religion is concerned with beings who in certain cases are to them not vague impersonal powers or energies but conscious personal agents as real and living to them as their own selves. Risley's [29] characterization of the religion of the Chota Nagpur aboriginal that "in most cases the indefinite something which they fear and attempt to propitiate is not a person at all in any sense of the word" appears to be only a part of the truth. These impersonal powers, though they do indeed occupy much of the *Birhōr's* thought and attention, are the subject-matter of the magical side, so to say, of their religion, to which they assign a comparatively subordinate part in the direction of human affairs. True, they conceive

[29] Report of the Census of India, 1901. Vol. 1, Part 1. p. 352.

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of themselves, as Risley says, as "passing through life surrounded by a ghostly company of impersonal powers, elements and tendencies." It is no less true, however, that what at present causes them greater concern is not these impersonal or non-personal powers or energies which are amenable to control but those real personal beings whose name is legion and between whom and themselves a never-ceasing trial of stength is ever silently going on. When the power of such a spirit proves too strong for man, a promise is made to provide him regularly with food to sustain his powers, and the *Birhōr* enters into personal relations with him, provides him with food calculated to sustain and increase his strength and "eats with him"—partakes of a communal feast—to increase and strengthen his own soul-stuff. The more fortunate persons in the tribe can enter into direct communion with them in dreams and trances when their inner eyes "in a fine frenzy rolling" have vivid visions of the spirits. These persons known as *Mātis*

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or *Deoṇrās* are believed to have attained, in a more or less degree, what the *Birhōṛ* regards as the *summum bonum* of life—the power to control and direct the *impersonal* energies and powers and the stray *personal* powers,—and secure the good-will of the more important *personalized* powers or spirits. A study of the religious ideas and practices of the tribe thus appears to indicate that the religious consciousness of the *Birhōṛs* consists in a continual sense of the presence all around them of super-physical and semi-spiritual 'personal' powers and impersonal energies; their religious sentiment consists mainly in a sense of fear in some cases approaching 'awe' in the presence of such powers and energies, and a consequent sense of mysterious 'sacredness'; their religious rituals have for their object the propitiation and conciliation of these *personal* powers of various grades of potency and 'sacredness' so as to secure 'luck' and avoid misfortune, to themselves their family and their *ṭāṇḍā*,—to prevent disease and dearth

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of food, and to energise and ennoble life by eating the sacrificial meat which they appear to consider as equivalent to "eating the god"; and their magical, or as they are sometimes termed, magico-religious rites aim at securing greater strength to themselves to repel the evil influence of the harmful lesser 'personal' powers and impersonal energies and at ridding themselves of these malevolent powers and keeping them out of harm's way by threats and tricks and spells.

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CHAPTER X.

Magic and Witch-Craft, Omens and Dreams.

In the last chapter, I discussed the *Birhōr's* conception of spirits and other extra-human and super-normal entities and powers that arouse his 'religious sense'; and I further described the methods of placation and propitiation, prayer, sacrifice and ritual feast that the tribe has adopted with the object of entering into some sort of harmonions relations with the more important spirits and the methods of cajolery, trickery and intimidation adopted to delude or scare away or control the lesser spirits so as to secure good luck and avoid bad luck to the community, the family and the individual. In the present chapter, I shall give a brief account of the rites and practices, spells and taboos by which the *Birhōr* seeks to attain the

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same ends either by utilising or avoiding some magical virtue supposed to inhere in certain material objects or in certain pantomimic or other practices or in certain words or spells, or through the help of certain impersonal powers or energies which the *Birhōr* magician thinks he can set in motion through appropriate actions to further his own ends or those of his clientele or community. We have already seen (pp. 108–109 *ante*) how some magical rites can be performed effectually only by men of certain clans.

Ordinarily a *māti* or magician is born and not made. Some men are from childhood more sensitive to supernatural influences than others. And such a sensitive person acquires either in a dream or a trance a familiar spirit or a tutelary deity by whom he is instructed as to the proper method of its propitiation. It is by the aid of such a spirit or deity that the *mati* is enabled to ply his art.

Any man may, however, be initiated by an expert into the mysteries of the

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Training of a Magician.

mātiāo or the magic art. The disciple, like his master, is required to remain fasting on Sundays till noon, when he has to make offerings of *bael* leaves and *gulaichi* flower, and burn incense in honour of *Mahādeo*. Special rules of diet have also to be observed. A woman whose tongue is black is believed to possess an innate power of bewitching any person by simply staring at him.

But witch-craft, as an art, is rare amongst the *Birhōrs*. Such wizards or witches as exist amongst them are believed to harm a person by throwing some rice in the direction of that person's house and inciting their familiar spirit to move in that direction and afflict the person with some disease or other trouble.

I. Magical Practices to control the Elements.

1. In the collecting stage of economic

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Plate XXXI.—Type of Birhōṛ boy (Front view.) [Lupung clan].

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culture, continual rain is extremely undesirable. The traditional magical practice by which the *Birhōṛ* seeks to stop rain is as follows :—The youngest member (whether minor or adult) of a family puts some *mahuā (Bassia latifolia)* flowers into an earthen jug, fills it with water and covers up its mouth with a leaf of the *sāru*-yam, which is tied up with a string passing round the neck of the jug, and then buries the jug in a hole dug in the ground. The hole is then covered up with earth. It is believed that this is sure to stop rain. *Birhōṛs* do not, like their *Muṇḍā* neighbours, set up in the *āngan* a plough with the plough-handle pointing upwards with the object of stopping rain.

Stopping Rain.

2. At the sound of thunder or at the sight of flashes of lightening, a *Birhōṛ* woman throws a husking pestle into the open space in front of her hut with the object of preventing thunder from

Stopping Lightening.

bursting and passing from the clouds to the earth.

3. The *Birhōṛ* believes that a child born of a mother who has not had the menstruous flow before conception, attracts lightening towards itself; and *Birhōṛs* will keep at a distance from such a person when lightening-flashes are seen or the sound of thunder is heard. Such a child is known as a *lāmbi-hōn.* During a thunder-storm, such a person wears at his waist a rounded pebble which is believed to prevent lightening from coming near or harming him.

4. *Birhōṛ* women also throw a husking pestle on the *āngan* when high winds blow or hail storms occur, and this is said to make the wind abate its violence and hail-stones to cease falling. It is believed that *Bhīr Dhīr Panchō Pānṛoā* is the spirit that presides over such storms, and that it is this spirit of Herculean strength who uproots big trees and sweeps away the *Birhōṛ's* leaf-huts during storms. As *Bir-*

Stopping Storms.

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Plate XXXII.—Profile of the boy in the preceding Plate.

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hōṛs of the *Jegseria Lāṭhā* clan in particular sacrifice to this spirit at their *thāāns* or spirit-seats. Storms, it is said, always abate their force when approaching a settlement or encampment of this clan. And when high winds threaten the safety of their settlements, *Birhōṛs* of other clans too invoke *Bhīr Dhīr Panch Pānṛōā* and pour libations of water to this spirit at their *thāāns*, praying,—"Do not pull down our poor leaf-huts; leave us in peace and pass on to other villages and towns where people have brick-houses and substantial buildings".

Rain-making.

As the *Birhōṛs*, as a tribe, have not yet taken to agriculture, they scarcely feel the need for seasonal rains. Those few *Jāghi* families amongst them who have secured lands for cultivation have adopted from their *Muṇḍā* neighbours their magical rain-making ceremony which is as follows: Early in the morning, they go up the nearest hill and push down stones

of all sizes which produce a rumbling noise in falling to the ground; and this noise is at the same time intensified by beating a drum so as to produce a low, heavy, continued sound in imitation of the pattering of rain on the roofs of their huts.

II. Magical Practices to Control Animals, &c.

1. When a *Birhōr's* dog strays, he puts into a leaf-cup the refuse of boiled rice from his plate, and places the leaf-cup over the eaves of his hut on a Sunday night and calls out the dog by name three times. After this, it is believed, the dog is sure to return home before long, whither-so-ever it may have strayed.

Recovering a lost dog.

2. To remove the pest of bugs *(mōe)* the *Birhōr* smokes his hut by burning the wood of a tree struck by lightning.

Driving away bugs and mosquitos.

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3. When the *Birhōṛ*'s hut is infested with mosquitos *(siṅkri)*, as generally happens in August, he places a lump of boiled rice on the roof of his hut just near the eaves, and calls upon the *Bhūsṛi bhūt* (Mosquito-spirit) saying,—"Here is offering for thee ; do not come inside the hut any more". Here we have religion rather than magic proper.

4. If a snake of the species known as *Jāmṛu-bing* (Hindi, *dhāmna sāp*) passes through a field of the *janhe* millet *(paspalum scrobicalatum)*, the grain when boiled and eaten will cause intoxication. To prevent this, the *Birhōṛ* roasts some mustard seeds and throws them in the direction which the snake has taken. By doing so, the intoxication, it is believed, is transferred to the snake. As instances of imitative magic connected with animal life the following may be mentioned :—

(1) A *Birhōṛ* must not leave a rope or string hanging from the eaves of his hut. Should he do so, a snake will enter the hut.

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(2) A *Birhōṛ* like a Sāntāl, must not wear a plaited loin-string. Should he do so, he will be bitten by a snake.

III. Magical Practices to control or affect Human Beings.

Attracting a beloved person.

1. When a *Birhōṛ* wishes to win the affections of a person of the opposite sex, he gathers the roots of two plants named respectively as *Jagmohani* and *Chāndoa*, pounds them and mixes them together, and then with the help of an intermediary called *gāhi*, manages to mix this magical medicine with some article of food for the beloved person. It is believed that as soon as this food is taken, the latter will feel an irresistable attraction for the person on whose behalf the spell is used.

Causing death or sickness to an enemy.

2. In order to cause death or sickness to an enemy, an *Uṭhlu Birhōṛ* takes up some *aruā* rice in his hand and invokes his *Nāsan* spirit and throws the rice in the direction of the

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house of the enemy, at the same time exhorting the spirit to go in that direction and afflict the enemy.

IV. Magical Practices to Control Plant Life.

1. In order to secure an abundant crop of maize, *gōndli (Panicum miliare)* and the like, the head of a *Birhōr* family performs the following magico-religious rites. On the evening of the full moon of the month of Baisākh (April-May), some member of the family catches a small fish from a neighbouring stream or pool, brings it home and keeps it in a jug of water. Next morning the space in front of the door of the hut is smeared with a coating of mud or, if available, cowdung, diluted in water. On this space is kept a *gāṇḍu* or low wooden stool besmeared with rice-flour and marked with three marks of vermilion on the side turned towards the west. A bamboo basket painted all over with thick white lines of rice-

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flour and spotted with three red marks of vermilion, is placed above the *gāṇḍu*. Inside this basket is placed a wooden *paila* (grain-measure) similarly besmeared with rice-flour and marked with three marks of vermilion. In the wooden *paila* is kept a handful of seed-grains. If the family had rice cultivation in the preceding year, these seed-grains are taken from the *giri-bānāri* paddy or paddy of the last sheaves which were left over at one corner of a field while the rest of the paddy was reaped and ceremonially cut on a Friday evening.

Water of the jug in which the fish was kept overnight is sprinkled all over the house, and also on the seed-grains, on the basket, the *gāṇḍu*, and the *paila*. The head of the family sits before the low stool *(gāṇḍu)* with his face to the east, feeds a white fowl with some *āruā* rice placed on the ground and makes an *āgōm* or vow to *Sing-bōngā*, saying, "I make this vow to Thee, O *Sing-bōngā*, may grains grow in abundance, and I shall sacrifice this (white

fowl) to Thee at the time of threshing". The white fowl is then let off. A black fowl is now sacrificed (by cutting it by the neck), in the name of all the neighbouring villages (which are named), so that the evil eye of any resident of those villages may not fall on the crops. A few drops of blood of the sacrificed fowl is sprinkled on the seed grains, the *paila*, the *gāṇḍu* and the basket. The seed-grains are then taken to the field and sown. The fish is now taken back to the river, stream or pool from which it was brought. It is believed that as the fish will grow so will the paddy-plants or other cereals on his field.

Preventing pumpkins from rotting.

When pumkin gourds begin to rot on their stems, the owner of the plant plucks one of the rotting pumpkins on a Sunday morning, cuts it into a few large slices, daubs the slices with ashes, and lays out at the junction of two pathways each of these slices on a leaf taken from the plant on which

the pumpkins grew. This is called the *bānā-sānā* ceremony of pumpkins. It is believed that after this, the pumpkins will not rot for fear of being hacked into pieces and treated like that other pumpkin.

V. Taboos of Women.

1. A *Birhōṛ* woman, like a Sāntāl woman, must abstain from eating such fruits of the *tārōp (Buchania latifolia)* or the *terel (Diospyros tomentosa)* tree as may grow together in one accrescent calyx. If she infringes this taboo she will give birth to twins.

2. A woman must not comb her hair at sunset. Should she do so her hair will fall on *Singbōngā's* rice as that is the time when *Singbōngā* (identified with the Sun) retires to eat.

3. A woman must never sit on a yoke. Should she do so, the oxen or buffaloes will have swellings on their necks.

4. A pregnant *Birhōṛ* woman must not eat the head of the *chōṛā* fish. If she

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does so, her nose will bleed as also her private parts.

5. A pregnant woman must not eat *tiki lād* (i. e., bread which is made of rice-flour enclosed within two leaves and boiled in water in an earthen vessel). Should she eat it, her child's ears will get wrinkled.

6. A pregnant woman must not step over a *sagaṛ* or block-wheel cart. Should she do so, her child's throat will emit a creaking sound like that of a *sagaṛ*.

7. A pregnant woman must not step over a dog. Should she do so, her child's belly will make a rumbling noise like that of a dog.

8. Neither a pregnant woman nor her husband must go to a pool or stream where people are catching fish by poisoning the water (which is done by squeezing the juice of the *Ponrka* or the *Sukripuṭi* plant into the water). Should either of the two go there, no fish will be caught, as their 'shadow' *(chhāir)* is believed to be 'heavy'. It will cause no harm, however, if either of them goes to a pool, tank or

stream where fish is being caught by the processes of netting or trapping or by drawing the water and seizing fish by the hand.

9. A pregnant woman must not eat the flesh of deer or hare or porcupine or other animals with hair on their body nor even look at them when brought home by a hunting party. Should she do so, she will give birth to children with hairy bodies.

10. A woman must not step over a hunting net or hunting stick or club. Should she do so, there will be no luck in the chase. The stick or club in such a case is thrown away.

VI. Taboos of Youth and Children.

1. *Birhōr* youths and maidens must not eat the flesh of the *Suiā* bird : should they do so, their marriage proposals will fail.

2. Youths and maidens must abstain from eating the brain of an animal, as that will turn the hairs grey.

3. A bachelor must not plant a plantain tree. For should such a tree fall down with its head to the south, the planter will die.

4. The turmeric-dyed cloth of a *Birhōṛ* bride or bridegroom, while being boiled previous to washing it, should not be allowed to stick to the pot and get burnt; for, if that happens, the birde or bridegroom, as the case may be, will get fever.

5. A *Birhōṛ* youth must not eat an egg which emits a sound when shaken; should he do so he will get pus in his ears.

6. A *Birhōṛ* youth or maiden must not plaster a wattle door. Should they do so, they will be childless.

7. As soon as a child is born, it is first given a sip of goat's milk, if available, and then only is mother's milk given. But after that, goat's milk is taboo to children, as it is believed to make children quarrelsome.

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General Taboos.

1. A *Birhōṛ* must not either sit on the hearth. Should he do so, he will be afflicted with sores.

2. A *Birhōṛ* must not sit on a winnowing-fan. Should he do so, his maternal uncles will be afflicted with starvation.

3. A *Birhōṛ* must not point with the finger at the rainbow *(bāṇḍā lēlē)*: should he do so, the offending finger will get maimed or curved.

4. A *Birhōṛ* must not point with the finger at the fruit of the *kōhṇḍā (cucurbita moscheta, Duchesne)* or the *hōtōt (curbita lagenaria)* varieties of the pumpkin when it is forming. Should he do so the fruit will rot on the plant.

5. If anyone looks at a *Birhōṛ* with one eye in the morning, the latter will get no game or *chōp* that day. To prevent this, the former is made to look at him again with both eyes open.

6. A man suffering from opthalmia

must not comb his hair. If he does so, the pain in the eyes will increase.

7. A *Jāghi Birhōṛ* must not bathe in rain water which has just fallen. If he does so, he will get opthalmia.

8. It is considered unlucky to kill a lizard of the species known to the *Birhōṛ* as *Chāṭu-hōrhōni* (lit., guard of the cooking-pots).

9. When a *Birhōṛ* sells his goat, sheep or ox, he must pull out a few hairs from the waist of the animal. Should he omit to do so, the luck of his family will depart with the animal.

10. A *Birhōṛ* whose parents are living must not cut off the top-knot on his head, as that is considered equivalent to cutting down his parents.

11. A *Birhōṛ* must not look back when leaving home to join a hunting expedition, as that will bring him ill luck in the chase.

12. A *Birhōṛ* must not sit on the threshold of his hut as it will bring ill-luck to the house. When a man sits on the door-

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way, people say, "So-and-so is sitting on his mother's chest".

13. On the first day that a *Jāghi Birhōṛ* begins to reap his rice-harvest, if any, he must not give away a sheaf from the field. Should he do so his luck will leave him with the sheaf.

14. A *Birhōṛ* must not sit on the central part of a yoke. Should he do so, the necks of the oxen or buffaloes will chafe and swell.

15. A marriage or other auspicious ceremony must not be celebrated on a Sunday or a Tuesday or a Saturday as those days of the week are considered unlucky by the *Birhōṛ*.

16. Although a *Birhōṛ* may give cotton-seed to others, yet it portends ill luck to the giver if it is taken away in a cloth.

16. A *Birhōṛ* must not give fire from his hearth to another person when rice is being cooked, but he may give it when only water is being boiled but rice has not yet been put into it.

18. A *Birhōṛ* must not micturate into fire.

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Should he do so, he will have swelling in his private parts.

19. A *Birhōṛ* must not throw used leaf-plates into fire. Should he do so, he will have ill-luck.

20. A *Birhōṛ* must not spit on the hearth, Should he do so, he will suffer from sores in the mouth.

21. A *Birhōṛ* who celebrates the *Karam* festival must not use the timber of the *Karam (adina cordifolia)* tree either as fuel or for building or repairing a hut.

22. A *Birhōṛ* who celebrates the *Jitiā* festival must similarly abstain from using the wood of the *jitiā pipar (ficus relligiosa)* tree. Otherwise he will have ill luck.

23. A *Birhōṛ* must not burn the leaves or the wood of the *sōsō (Semicarpus anacardium)* tree until the *jōm-nawā* (or ceremonial eating of the new crop) has been celebrated: Should he do so, he will suffer from sores in his body.

24. A *Birhōṛ* must not burn the wood of the *lōa (Ficus glomerata)* tree. Should he do so, bugs will infest his hut.

25. A *Birhōṛ* family must not leave any metal utensils outside their *kūmbā* or hut. Should they do so, a thunderbolt will strike the hut.

VI. Omens from animals, reptiles and Insects.

1. If two hens are seen touching or pecking each other by their beaks, two female relatives are expected as guests; if two cocks are seen doing so, two male relatives are expected; if a cock and a hen do so, a male and a female relative are expected; and if two or more pairs are found doing so, as many male and female relatives are expected.

2. If hens are seen spreading out their wings in the sun, rain is expected.

3. If a jackal of the *Fekar* kind (which emits a peculiarly hoarse sound) is heard calling near a *Birhōṛ ṭāṇḍā*, it is apprehended that some one in the *ṭāṇḍā* will fall ill or die.

4. If a jackal is heard calling when it

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is raining, it is believed that the rain will be followed by hot sunshine; and if it is heard calling during sunshine a storm is apprehended.

5. The coughing of cows and oxen portends rain.

6. The croaking of a raven near a *Birhōṛ's* hut is believed to indicate that the news of the death of some near relative is about to come; and the direction to which the tail of the croaking raven points is believed to be the direction in which the death has occurred.

7. If a vulture alights on the roof of a *Birhōṛ's* hut, fever or death in the hut is apprehended.

8. It is considered unlucky if a goat enters the threshing-floor of a *Jāghi Birhōṛ*. To counteract the evil, one of the ears of the goat is cut off by the owner of the threshing-floor and handed over to the owner of the goat.

9. If a *gitil* insect burrows into the sole of a *Birhōṛ's* foot, seasonable rain is expected.

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Miscellaneous Omens.

1. When a meteor or shooting star *(chāṇḍi)* is seen, all *Birhōṛs* spit in its direction, saying, "There goes *Chāṇḍi. Thoo ! thoo ! thoo !*" This is believed to ward off any calamity that might otherwise follow in the wake of the meteor.

2. In a year in which the *Kidu Ipil* or the Evening Star is more in evidence than the *Bhūrkā* or the Morning Star, famine is apprehended.

3. If before the umbilical cord of a new-born child is cut the child sneezes, it is believed that, in later life, whenever this child sneezes at the commencement of any undertaking or a hunting or other expedition, the undertaking or expedition will have ill-luck, whether he be a party or not to the undertaking or expedition.

4. If the milk of a pregnant woman escapes, it is apprehended that her child will be either still-born or die shortly after birth, for such milk is regarded as the tears of the child in the womb.

DREAMS.

1. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of a man wearing a black coat, he will meet a bear; and if he dreams of a bear, he will meet a man with a black coat on.

2. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of honey he will tread on human excrement; and if he dreams of human excrement he will get honey on the day following.

3. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of a cart, a corpse will before long be carried out.

4. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of a house being built, it portends that there will be a death in the family or settlement *(ṭāṇḍā)*. [It should be remembered that, as stated at pp. 276–277, *ante*, on the occurrence of a death the *Birhōṛ* has to construct a miniature leaf-shed which is burnt down with a view to tempt the departing shade to return to his old home.]

5. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams that another person's house is on fire, it portends that either his own house will burn or that he or some other member of his family will die; but

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if he dreams of his own house being on fire, some other man's house will get burnt and the dreamer will have good luck.

6. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of money or wealth, it portends that he will soon have to pick up the burnt bones of some relative (i. e., some relative will die).

7. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of a snake, he will expect a visit from some relative.

8. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of a flowing river, he expects to be treated to drink at the house of a relative or friend.

9. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of singing, it forebodes ill-luck and he will have quarrels with his fellows or other trouble which will make him weep. If, on the contrary, he dreams of weeping, he will, before long, have cause to rejoice.

10. To dream of a funeral or of the death of a human being augurs the death of some animal either in the chase or otherwise.

11. If a man dreams that either himself or some one else is eating human flesh or that a human corpse is being carried, or

even if he dreams only of a corpse, he will have signal success in hunting deer or other big game if he goes out to hunt the following morning.

12. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of a plough, he will catch a *torhot* (a species of large lizard) on the day following. If he dreams of pumpkins, he will catch either a *torhot* or a *tōgō* (a species of wild cat).

13. If a man dreams of buying a goat, he will have success in hunting if he goes out to hunt on the day following.

14. If a man dreams at night of hunting, it will rain on the day following.

15. To dream of a monkey indicates that the spirit known as *Bāndar-bīr* (Monkey-spirit) is displeased and will cause failure in hunting unless appeased by suitable offerings. And, similarly, to dream of a baboon indicates that the *Hanuman-Bīr* (Baboon-spirit) is displeased. [Such a dream, it is believed, occurs to a *Birhōṛ* only in the event of a female walking across the flesh of a baboon or a monkey; for,

ordinarily the sight of a female disturbs the spirits.]

16. To dream of a sheep or a bearded man indicates that the *Dārhā* spirit is displeased and has to be appeased with proper sacrifices.

17. To dream of an armed man indicates that the *Laṛānkiā-bhūt* (vide p. 301 *ante*) is displeased and will cause trouble unless promptly propitiated with appropriate sacrifices.

18. To dream of a man being beheaded denotes that someone in the *ṭāṇḍā* will be sacrificing some animal or fowl.

19. If a man dreams of honey-bees or wasps buzzing near him, he will soon have quarrel with some person or other.

20. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of quarrelling or fighting with some one, it indicates that his clan-spirit—*Oṛābōngā* or *Būrū-bōngā*,—is quarrelling with the clan-spirit of the other man.

21. To dream of *pūjās* or sacrifices indicates that the spirits are dissatisfied and require sacrifices and that a failure

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to offer sacrifices will bring sickness or death.

22. If a *Birhōṛ* dreams of breaking a cooking-vessel, there will be a new birth in his family.

23. To dream of a human birth signifies the birth of a child to one of the spirits known as *Sāt-Bahini* (vide p. 294 *ante*).

24. If a man dreams of having sexual intercourse with a woman (whether it be his own wife or not), it signifies that he had in his sleep sexual intercourse with one of the *Sāt-Bāhinī* spirits. [Pollution in sleep is attributed by the *Birhōṛ* to such intercourse. *Nāgē-eṛā*, *Bindi-eṛā* and the whole legion of elemental nature-spirits are classed as '*Sāt-Bāhini's*. Echoes and other weird sounds proceeding from caves *etc* are attributed to these spirits.]

25. If a man dreams of a river in flood, he will soon have plenty of liquor to drink.

26. If a man dreams of copper, he will have scabs on his body.

27. If a man dreams that he is felling either a *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*) or a *kusum*

(*Schleichera trijuga*) tree, a death will occur either in his family or clan. If a man dreams of another person doing so, a death will occur in the family or clan of that other person.

28. If a man dreams that he is eating cucumbers or figs (*Glomerata ficus*) or *keond* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) fruit, or the jack fruit (*Artocarpus folia*) or the *dahu* fruit, he will have flesh to eat.

29. If a man dreams of bones, he will get silver coins. And, on the other hand, if a man dreams of silver coins he will see the bones of some member of his clan, or, in other words, a death will occur in his clan.

30. If a man dreams of bread, he will get a *dumbur chhātā* or the hive of a small species of honey-bee. [The *Birhōrs* eat both the honey and the hive.]

31. If a man dreams of oil being smeared over his body, he will have some hurt or wound from which blood will come out. And, conversely, if a man dreams of blood, he will have oil to anoint his body with.

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32. If a man dreams of dance and music, he will have to witness or join in lamentations over some deceased person.

33. If a man dreams of feasts or banquets, he will have nothing to eat on the day following.

34. If you dream of a person being married, it indicates that that person is ill or will shortly fall ill.

35. If you dream that you are on intimate terms with another person, you will soon fall out with that person. And, conversely, if you dream that you have incurred the displeasure of another person, it indicates that such person is highly pleased with you.

36. To dream of failure in hunting augurs a successful hunt; and to dream of a successful hunt forbodes failure in the chase.

37. To dream of joy forebodes some impending sorrow.

38. To dream of being given what you ask for, indicates that you will not get what you want. And, conversely, to dream

of being refused anything you ask for, indicates that you will get what you seek.

39. If a man dreams that he is being beaten, he will soon fall ill. If a man dreams he is beating another, that other will soon fall ill.

40. If you dream of clear eyes you will have sore eyes (opthalmia); and if you dream of having sore eyes you will have clear or sound eyes.

41. If you dream of clouds in the sky, you will wake up to see a clear sky and fine morning, and, conversely, if you dream of a clear sky, you will wake up to see a cloudy morning.

42 If you dream of coal, you will find some black fruit such as black *jamun (Eugenia Jambolana)* or black berries in the morning.

Such are some of the folk-beliefs and folk-practices of this rude tribe which civilized people label as 'superstitions'. Most of these beliefs and practices do

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indeed betray a profound ignorance of the processes of nature and the causes of phenomena, and have their source in a dark imagination unillumined by knowledge. At the back of these superstitious beliefs in omens and dreams, magic and witchcraft, there exists, however, in the *Birhōṛ's* mind a lively recognition of a powerful spirit-world all around him and of a mysterious spiritual force or energy behind various animate beings, in animate objects, natural or artificial, and even in certain immaterial things such as a spoken word, an expressed wish, a name or a number. This ever-present sense of the supernatural in its two different but analogous aspects expresses itself, as we have seen, in two closely allied modes of behaviour or classes of practice which we term respectively—Religion and Magic.

Their sense of awe or wondering fear of the unseen spirit-world has led the tribe to devise methods by which they expect to enter into friendly relations with the more important spiritual powers. Under

the guidance of some ancient or modern 'seers' amongst them, the *Birhōrs* have personified these powers as *bōngās* or *bhūts* and *deōs*—spirits and deities,—and assigned to each of the more important ones a symbol, a habitation and a name, and prescribed suitable periodical sacrifices by which to conciliate them and enter into communion with them. This attitude towards the spirit-world and the practices that have sprung from it constitute *Birhōr* Religion and *Birhōr* worship. Their sense of the presence of an impersonal spiritual force (or what the Melanesians call *mana*) behind various inanimate objects and animate beings and in certain immaterial things, in particular movements of certain living beings, particular situations of certain material objects and particular phases of certain natural phenomena, has led the tribe to devise methods by which to render this mysterious force or energy innocuous and, if possible, propitious. These methods constitute what we call *Birhōr* 'magic'.

In cases, such as those of omens and dreams, in which neither of these two methods of dealing with the supernatural is applicable or effective, the *Birhōr* seeks to protect himself by flight or avoidance, where possible, or else bows to the inevitable as best as he can.

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CHAPTER XI.

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Folk-Tales.

In the last chapter we studied some of the folk-beliefs and folk-practices current among this people. In the present chapter I shall record a few folk-tales of the *Birhōrs*, the recital of which of an evening forms one of the very few recreations in the strenuous life of this unfortunate people.

I. The Story of Creation.

In the beginning all was water. A lotus *(sālki)* plant stood with its head above the waters. *Singbōngā* or the Supreme Spirit was then in the nether regions *(pātāl)*. He came up to the surface of the waters through the hollow of the stem of the lotus *(sālki)* plant. He took His seat upon the lotus flower. He (then) commanded the

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Tortoise *(Hōrō)* to bring up some clay. "Go thou", said he, "and bring up some clay from underneath the waters". The Tortoise inquired, "Where shall I leave my house (the shell or carapax) ?" *Singbōngā* ordered, "Take your house with you". The Tortoise dived into the waters. It took up some clay and placed it on its back. In coming up, the clay was washed off the shell. And thus the Tortoise failed. *Singbōngā* now summoned the Crab *(Kārkom)*. The Crab appeared. *Singbōngā* told it, "Go thou underneath the waters, and bring up some clay". The Crab dived down to the bottom of the waters, took up some clay in its legs. And so the crab too failed. Then *Singbōgā* summoned the leech *(Lendad)*. The Leech appeared. *Singbōgā* told it, "Go thou and bring me some clay from beneath the waters". The Leech dived down to the bottom of the ocean and devoured its fill of clay. It then came up to *Singbōgā* and vomitted out the clay from its stomach into the hand of *Singbōgā*.

Singbōngā pressed this clay between his hands just as *māṭis* press rice between their hands for purposes of prognostication. Then *Sing-bōgā* threw a bit of this clay in each of the four directions of the compass. And forthwith there arose on the surface of the waters a four-sided land mass. And thus was formed this Earth of ours. The waters that receded to the four sides of this land mass became the seas *(Gangās)*. The earth was moist and uneven. *Sing-bōgā* began to level the earth with an iron *mer* or leveller. In the process of levelling the surface of the land with the *mer*, earth came to be heaped up at places, and these heaps became the hills and mountains, and the level lands the valleys and plains. Now, *Sing-bōngā* had with Him all kinds of seeds. He scattered them arround, and trees aprang up all over the earth.

Sing-bōngā then created the winged Horse konwn as *Pankhrāj*. He next proceeded to create mankind. He made a clay figure of a man in the day-time and left it to dry. But at night, the *Pankhrāj* Horse came

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and trampled it under its feet and spoilt it. The Horse did this as it was afraid that if Man was created, he would subjugate the horse and ride it. Next morning, *Sing-Bōngā* found the clay figure of man thus damaged. He then made a clay figure of a Dog, and a fresh one of a man. He laid them out to dry, with their faces turned in the direction from which the wind was blowing. By evening, the clay figure of the dog dried up and the wind entered its nostrlis, and it became endowed with life. But the figure of the man was not yet dry, and so *Sing-Bōngā* set the dog to guard it. At night, the horse sought to approach the human figure but the dog kept barking at the horse; and the horse could not approach the image and damage it. When it dried up, *Sing-Bōngā* endowed it with life. But now it was discovered that the joints of this First Man were inconveniently stiff, and he could neither sit down nor walk properly. Then *Sing Bōngā* took back life from this

uncouth physical frame, and re-made it by making its joints more supple. Then he gave it life again. Such is the origin of the present race of men.

II. The Asur Legend.

Men at first used to employ sticks and stones as their tools and weapons. The *Asūrs* were the first to smelt iron on this earth. The intolerable smoke that began to issue from their furnaces disturbed *Sing-Bōngā* up above. *Sing-Bōngā* sent messenger after messenger to dissuade the *Asūrs* from smelting iron. But the *Asūrs* refused to desist from their favourite occupation, and mutilated and drove away *Sing-Bōngā's* bird-messengers. The messengers returned to *Sing-Bōngā* and reported how they fared at the hands of the *Asūrs*. So *Sing-Bōngā* Himself came down to the earth and in the shape of a boy afflicted with sores contrived to trap the male *Asūrs* into a furnace and burn them alive. And finally *Sing-Bōngā* hurled the female *Asūrs*

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in different directions; and their spirits still haunt rocks and woods, pools and streams and springs on which they fell. Such is the origin of some of the Elemental spirits.

III. Creation of the Buffalo.

Sing-Bōngā (God) after he had killed the race of *Asūrs* in the furnace flung the *Asūr* women in different directions. One of them who was pregnant at the time was flung into an *ikir* or pool of water and was there delivered of a buffalo-calf. A man who was fishing in the pool, caught the buffalo-calf with his fish-hook and took it home; and out of that buffalo-calf has sprung the present race of buffaloes.

IV. The Creation of Mosquitos, Insects, the Tiger, the Vulture and the Serpent.

The god *Mahādeo* had been out in the jungle to cut wood suitable for making a plough, plough-handle and plough-share all out of the same log. At home, *Pārvatī*

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(the wife of *Mahādeo*) finished cooking their meal of rice and vegetables and was wondering at the delay of her husband in returning home. So she rubbed some dirty excretion off her neck and made a swarm of mosquitos out of it and told them, "Go and frighten *Mahādeo* by your buzz so that he may hasten home". The mosquitos went and began to buzz about the ears of *Mahādeo*. But *Mahādeo* took up clippings of wood and made them into a number of *Dūlūs* or insects that eat up mosquitos. And forthwith the *dulus* devoured the mosquitos. At home, *Pārvatī* was wondering all the more, and again out of the dirty excretion of her skin fashioned a tiger and sent it to frighten *Mahādeo* so that he might return home at once. But when *Mahādeo* saw the tiger he seized a piece of wood and exclaimed,—"At it, Oh *Chāonrā Bhaonrā*", and the wood turned into a *tāni* (a dog-like animal which attacks tigers) and it chased the tiger and put it to flight. *Pārvatī* became impatient and again with the dirty

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excretion of her skin made a number of snakes, and sent them after *Mahādeo* to frighten him into returning home. But as the serpents went hissing towards *Mahādeo*, he took up a piece of wood and made it into a *gāṇḍā gaṛūr* bird (a kind of Vulture) which eats up snakes. And it devoured all the snakes but one which took shelter under the wooden slippers on *Mahādeo's* feet. This was a female snake and *Mahādeo* took pity on it and out of this snake sprang the present race of serpents.

V. The Birhor's Version of the Story of Ram, Lakshman and Sita.

Sing-Bōngā or *Bhagwān* (God) created this earth and entrusted it to the keeping of Ravan Raja. But Ravan began to kill men for his food. Then mankind made piteous complaints to *Bhagwān*. *Bhagwān* replied, "Have patience. I shall take birth in a human womb and then shall kill Ravan Raja.

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There lived two kings named respectively Janak Raja and Dasarath Raja. Neither of them had any issue. Raja Dasarath who had seven wives but no children, came across a powerful *Brāhman.* He besought the *Brāhman's* magic aid to procure him a son.

The *Brāhman* prescribed many penances and ceremonies by which to get a son. And while departing, the *Brāhman* secured a promise from Dasarath that he would hand over to him his first-born son or sons. Before long four sons were born to the Raja. And after a time the *Brāhman* appeared before the *Rājā* and demanded of him the fulfilment of his promise. Raja Dasarath made over his two sons, Bharat and Saturghan by name, to the *Brāhman.* The *Brāhman* went away with them, and, on arriving at the junction of two roads, asked the boys, "Here are two roads; this one leads to a splendid town, and that one to a jungle infested with tigers and bears and other fearful beasts and reptiles. Which way will you

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take ?" The boys wanted to take the road to the town. This choice convinced the *Brāhman* that these could not be the first-born sons of Dasarath; and he returned with the boys to the Raja, and told him, "These are not your first-born sons. Give me your first-born (*lit.*, first-fruits)". Then Raja Dasarath made over his sons Ram and Lakshman to the *Brāhman*. The *Brāhman* took them with him. Arrived at the junction of two roads, he inquired of the boys, "Which way would you go ? This one leads to a big town, and that other to a jungle infested with wild beasts and reptiles". The boys selected the jungle road; and this convinced the *Brāhman* that these boys were the first-born of Raja Dasrath's wives. The *Brāhman* travelled about with them in the jungle.

In the meanwhile, in the kingdom of the childless Raja Janak there was a severe drought. The *Panch* (council of tribal elders) told the *Rājā* that the only way to secure rain was for the *Rājā* himself

to drive the plough. And so the *Rājā* began to drive the plough with his own hands. And, in a furrow made by his plough, there appeared a beautiful female child. As she was found by ploughing *(Sī-tān)*, she was named Sita. The *Rājā* took the new-found baby home and brought her up as her own child. Every morning Raja Janak's wife used to smear with cowdung and water an open space *(āngan)* where the *Rājā* used to offer sacrifices. One morning, the *Rāṇī (Rājā's* wife*)* had fever and so asked Sita to smear the *āngan* with cow-dung. On the *āngan* there lay from before an enormously large and heavy bow which nobody could ever move. When Sita went to cow-dung the *āngan*, she saw the bow and pushed it aside as if it was an ordinary bow of no weight and cleaned the entire *āngan* with cow-dung and water, and then put back the bow in its former position. When tbe *Rājā* came there for his daily *pūjā*, he wondered how the bow could have been removed and who could have done it. He asked the

Rāṇī (King's wife). The *Rāṇī* told him that as she was ill she asked Sita to clean the place, and she must have done it. And Sita, on being questioned, admitted she had done it. And both *Rājā* and *Rāṇī* marvelled at her strength. Now the *Rājā* desired to secure a suitable match for *Sītā* and proclaimed all round the country that he would give *Sītā* in marriage to the person who would succeed in lifting the bow. Suitors from far and near came and tried their hand at the task but failed. At length, Ram and Lakshman arrived there with the *Brāhman*. Janak asked the *Brāhman* "Will these young men be able to lift the bow ?" The *Brāhman* said, "Give them a trial". Ram asked Lakshman to try. But Lakshman protested, saying, "No; you better try; for should I win her, she will be taboo to you as your *iriul* (younger brother's wife), and will not be able to look after your comforts properly". So Ram went forward and lifted the bow without any effort as though it were a toy bow, and

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with it he shot an arrow which flew with the sound of a thunder, so that even the deaf heard it, the crooked became straight, and the blind recovered their sight. So Ram was married to Sita. Then the *Brāhman* went back to Raja Dasarath with Ram and Sita and Lakshman. The *Rājā* received them with open arms. And for a year or two Ram and Sita and Lakshman lived happily in their own home.

But then one morning when Ram and Lakshman returned home from a bath, they saw a writing on the lintel of the house in the hand-writing of Dasarath that Ram and Lakshman were to live in exile in the jungle and Bharat and Saturghan were to get the kingdom *(rāj)*. The sons obeyed. Ram, Lakshman and Sita repaired to the forest where they lived in *kūmbās* or small leaf-huts like the *Uṭhlu Birhōṛs*. Once they made their *kūmbās* under a large tamarind tree *(Tamarindus indicus)* which protected their huts from rain water, for in those days the tamarind tree

Why Tamarind Leaves are so small.

had large leaves. But Ram told Lakshman, "We have been exiled to the forest to bear hardship and privations, but these leaves shelter us from the rain. Shoot at the leaves with your bow and arrow". Lakshman obeyed and the leaves of the tamarind tree were split asunder into innumerable tiny bits and admitted water into their *kumbās*. And since then the leaves of the tamarind tree have remained so small.

Why Khijur Leaves are long and narrow.

Again, in their wanderings they once encamped under a *khijūr (Phoenix sylvestris)* tree. In those days the *Khijūr* tree too had large and broad leaves. And these effectively protected their *kumbā* from the rain. Ram again asked Lakshman to shoot his arrow at the leaves and Lakshman obeyed. And the leaves were thus split into numerous thin strips; and ever since then the *Khijūr* has borne long and narrow strips of leaves.

Ram, Lakshman, and Sita continued to lead a wandering life in the jungles like

the *Uṭhlus*, living in temporary *kūmbās* of which one portion used to be marked off for Sita, and the two brothers occupied the remaining portion. Ram and Lakshman used to gather edible roots and tubers, which Sita boiled for their meals. Sita used to hand over his share of the boiled tubers to Lakshman, saying, "Take, Bābu, here is your share". Lakshman used to take them and stow them away but did not eat them on the ground that Sita merely asked him to 'take' the food but did not expressly ask him to 'eat' it. Lakshman used to appease his hunger by eating earth.

Now it so happened that for a few days Sita noticed a beautiful dwarfish deer moving about near their *kumbā*. So one day she told Ram, "Why do you go far in search of food? For the last few days, I have noticed a fine small deer moving about near our *kūmbā*. Do not leave the *kūmbā* to-day; and when the deer comes, kill it". So they remained in the *kūmbā*, and when the deer came by,

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gave it chase and in the eager pursuit was drawn far away from the *kūmbā* but could neither catch nor hit it. In the meanwhile, Lakshman seeing that the deer was drawing them further and further away from the *kūmbā* hastened back to the *kūmbā*, gave *Sītā* a handful of mustard-seeds which he had charmed with some magic spells and told her, "Keep these, and throw them at any outsider approaching the *kūmbā*. If you cast one of these seeds at any person, he will lie down as dead for an hour and then revive, if you cast two seeds at him he will lie down as dead for two hours, and so on". Then Lakshman went back to join Ram.

After Lakshman had gone out of sight, Ravan Raja arrived at the *kūmbā* on a chariot *(rath)* from above. Sita cast one of the charmed mustard seeds at him, and he lay as dead for an hour; then he cast a second mustard seed and Ravan lay as dead for another hour, and so on till at length Ravan Raja told her, "Why take all this trouble ? Why not cast all the

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seeds at once at me so that I may die altogether ?" Sita took him at his word and cast all the seeds at him and he died, and flames issued out of them and burnt Ravan to ashes. But, lo and behold ! out of the ashes Ravan Raja sprang into life again. Then he seized Sita by the hair, and carried her off in his chariot. In the evening, when Ram and Lakshman returned unsuccessful from the pursuit of the deer, they were surprised to see no light in the *kūmbā*. So Ram asked Lakshman to go inside the *kūmbā* to see what Sita was doing. Lakshman was nonplused to find the *kūmbā* empty and stood there motionless. Impatient at Lakshman's delay, Ram took up his bow and arrow to shoot at Lakshman, when suddenly light appeared in the *kūmbā*. Then Ram went in, and both the brothers began to weep at the disappearance of Sita.

Then they summoned a bear to divine the secret of Sita's disappearance, for bears and monkeys were the only companions they had in their jungle home. Ram placed

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some rice *(chāul mānji)* in the paws of the bear for the purpose. The bear began to swing its head backwards and forwards in the manner of a human *māti*, looked at the rice, and through divine afflatus saw what happened, and exclaimed,—"No, *Māmū* (maternal uncle) ! she is nowhere near. Ravan Raja has taken her far away". On hearing this, Ram and Lakshman started in search of Sita. Hanuman was then in the womb of his mother, and cried out from within his mother's womb, "Wait, *Dādā* (Elder brother), I shall also accompany you". Hanuman forthwith took birth and accompanied Ram and Lakshman.

How the Jujube came to be so hardy.

Hanuman, Ram and Lakshman went on till they came to a plum *(Zizyphus jujuba)* tree. They asked the tree, "Well, friend, did you see Sita being carried off by Ravan Raja ?" The tree answererd, "Yes, I caught hold of her cloth, and here is a bit of the cloth"; and the tree pointed to a rag entangled in its thorns. At this Ram

blessed the tree, saying,—"Well done, friend, henceforth you will not die, however much you may be hacked at and mangled. Even if a single root is left, you will spring up afresh from that root". And since then the plum tree has become one of the hardiest of plants.

Origin of the Stork's long neck.

Advancing further, they met a stork and inquired, "Did you see Sita being carried off?" "No", said the stork, "What do I care for your Sita or *Fitā*? I am engrossed with the thought of my own belly (i. e., quest for food)". Annoyed at such a rude reply, Ram told Lakshman, "Seize hold of the bird". Lakshman caught the stork and pulled it by the neck, and since then the stork has a long neck.

Origin of the marks on the Squirrel's back.

Advancing still further they came across a *Chirrā* or squirrel. They asked the squirrel, "Did you see Sita being carried off?" "Yes", answered the squirrel, "I saw her being taken along this

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way". Ram blessed the squirrel by drawing three lines with his fingers upon the back of the squirrel and said, "From now you will not be hurt even if you fall down from the heavens" (i. e., from whatever height you fall). Ever since then the squirrel has three lines stamped on its back, and can take the longest leaps down the highest trees.

At length Ram, Lakshman and Hanuman reached the sea-shore and saw a wide impassable expanse of water before them. Hanuman told Ram,—"Shoot your arrow, *Dādā*, and you will see how I cross the sea". Ram shot his arrow which stuck in the middle of the sea, and only the point of the arrow remained above water. Ram handed over to Hanuman a ring which he was to carry to Sita as a token. At one leap Hanuman alighted on the point of the arrow sticking out from the middle of the sea; and another leap took him safe across the sea to the opposite shore. There he met with a number of women carrying water

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from a spring *(ḍāri)* to bathe Sita, who had, by magic spell, raised up repulsive sores all over her body so that Ravan might not seek to violate her.

Under orders of Ravan Raja, water from scores of pitchers used to be carried by the women every day and poured on Sita morning and evening to cure her of her sores, but to no effect. One of the women whom Hanuman saw carrying water for Sita was an old woman who lagged behind her companions. Hanuman approached her in the shape of a *sūgā* bird and dropped the ring into her pitcher of water, and told her, "Tell your new queen to spread out her cloth, and pour the water of the pitcher on it". The old woman marvelled at this and acted as directed. As she was pouring the water on Sita's cloth the ring dropped on it and Sita recognised it as Ram's. And she exclaimed, "Ah ! now my husband is arrived. Where did you get this ring ?" The woman replied, "A *sūgā* dropped in into the pitcher".

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Before long, Hanuman in the shape of a *sūgā* appeared before Sita. Ravan's people had given Sita five mangoes to eat. Sita had eaten two, and the remaining five she now gave to Hanuman saying, "Help yourself with one, and take the other two for your brothers *(Dādās,* meaning, Ram and *Lakshman).* The fruit tasted exquisitely sweet and Hanuman ate up all the three. Then he went back to Sita and told her, "The fruit tasted very sweet and so I have eaten up all of them. Do please, tell me where the trees grow". Sita said, "The trees are guarded day and night by fierce watchmen who will kill you if you enter the garden". Hanuman insisted, "Do tell me, and I shall anyhow manage to get some mangoes". So Sita pointed the way and Hanuman went to the garden. There he begged of the gaurds to give him four or five mangoes. He ate them and they tasted so sweet that he leaped about all over the garden, plucked any number of mangoes, ate some and threw a number of others across the sea to where Ram

and Lakshman were, and heaped up others under the trees. For fifteen days Hanuman in the disguise of a *sugā* thus despoiled the garden and feasted himself full on mangoes. The guards exerted their utmost efforts to prevent the bird from dispoiling the garden but in vain. If they set traps to catch it, it swelled its limbs to such large dimensions as to burst the traps open, and if they shot their arrows at it, it shrunk its body to such minute proportions that it could hardly be seen and precisely aimed at, and all their arrows missed their mark. Then the *sugā* laughed at them and told them, "That is not the way to kill me. I shall now tell you how you can do that. Bring all the oil you can find in your town, and all the cloths except the new queen's (Sita's). Wind up the cloths in the shape of a huge rope and make me wear it as a tail; soak it profusely in oil, and set fire to it ; and thus you will burn me to death". The poor guards, not knowing what else to do, followed Hanuman's instructions. When the 'tail'

was ablaze, Hanuman in his proper shape leaped about from roof to roof and burnt down to ashes all the houses in *Lankā*.

Then Hanuman went to Sita and asked her how the fire on his tail might be put out. Sita told him, "Quench the fire as best you may". Hanuman thereupon jumped into the sea and his huge form extended from one shore of the sea to the other. Hanuman caught hold of his tail with the hands and examined it, and then looked at his hands and found they had turned black. He then wiped his hands on his face and the face too became black. Then he caught hold of an ebony or *Keond (Diospyros melanoxylon)* tree, and it too assumed a black colour. Hanuman's huge body and tail served as a bridge over which Ram and Lakshman easily crossed the sea to Lanka.[30] Then issued a fierce struggle between Lakshman and Hanuman

[30] For a variant of this portion of the story, see Folk-tale No. VI, *post*.

on one side and the people of Lanka on the other, in which all the people of Lanka except Ravan and an old woman got killed. As for Ravan, when his head was cut off, twelve other heads sprang in its place, and again as one of these was cut off, another would spring up by its side, and so on. Lakshman and Hanuman rested for a day after their strenuous labours, and then reported to Ram the condition of affairs. Ram told them, "Leave the old woman for the present, and concentrate your efforts against Ravan".

So they again proceeded to fight Ravan. Ravan told them, "You seek in vain to kill me. None but a person who has fasted for twelve years will succeed in killing me." Hanuman again assumed the shape of a *Sūgā* bird and wheedled Ravan into divulging the secret as to where his life was secreted. Ravan told him that his life was deposited in a small closet with golden walls inside the inner apartments of his brick-built palace. Hanuman and

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Lakshman entered the palace and broke open the closet and freed Ravan's life from confinement. Then Lakshman and Hanuman went to fight Ravan and as Lakshman had actually taken no food (except earth) for the last twelve years, he at length succeeded in killing Ravan.

Then Ram and Lakshman went to the old woman who appeared to be the only survivor in Lanka, and told her, "We have killed Ravan Raja, and now we make over this kingdom to you. You will be the *Mahārāṇi Kōmpāni*[31] here." But now there suddenly appeared before them the gigantic figure of Kumbhakarna, a brother of Ravan who had been in bed all these years—for Kumbhakarna had the extraordinary gift of sleeping soundly for twelve long years at a stretch. And Kumbhakarna

[31] 'Maharani Kompani' is a curious expression coined to signify the supreme sovereign. 'Kompani' is a reminiscence of the East India Company which once exercised sovereign sway over India. And the term 'Maharani' is a reminiscence of Queen Victoria whose name, in the minds of the masses of India, still stands for the most powerful sovereignty.

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caught up the two brothers Ram and Lakshman in his arms, and took them for sacrifice before a pit within which dwelt the goddess *Kālīmāi* in those days. Kumbhakarna placed some *āruā* rice on the ground at the mouth of the pit and asked Ram and Lakshman to eat the rice from the ground (*lit.*, graze on the rice) in the manner of fowls and animals about to be sacrificed. The brothers said, "We have never done this. So, please, show us how to do it." At this Kumbhakarna stooped down to show them how to 'graze' *(āting)* on the rice, and just as he stooped sufficiently low, Lakshman forthwith cut off his head. Then *Kālīmāi* came out of the pit and thus addressed the brothers, "So long Ravan used to offer me sacrifices. Now you have killed him. Who will henceforth give me food offerings *(bhōg)* ?" Ram told her, "Go thou to all parts of the earth. Men all over the earth will henceforth offer thee sacrifices." And so she did; and since then the cult of *Kālīmāi* (mother Kali) has spread over the earth.

VI. How the Monkey came to have a tail and how the Birhors came to catch and Eat Monkeys.

[The following is a variant of the latter part of the above story of *Rām, Lakshman and Sītā*:—]

Ravan Raja abducted Sita to his kingdom in *Lankā* (Ceylon ?). Ram, Lakshman and Hanuman went there to rescue her. The Birhors were then living in those parts. When Hanuman first appeared within the *garh* of Ravan, his men sought to catch Hanman but failed. At length Ravan ordered them to call some Birhors as they lived in the jungles and might be more skilful in catching the Hanuman. An old Birhor couple were brought. But all their efforts were unsuccessful. Then Hanuman took pity on them and taught the old man how to make suitable nets. "Make your nets", said he, "with interstices thrice the breadth of a human finger. And then you will be able to catch me". And so they did; and Hanuman was caught in the net,

But then Hanuman told the Birhor, "Why should you kill me ? I shall kill myself. Just do what I tell you. Wind up all available cloths in the shape of a tail and attach it as a terminal appendage here (pointing to the extremity of the vertebral column) ; smear the 'tail' profusely with oil and *ghee* and set fire to it". And the Birhors did as they were instructed. And Hanuman with his tail all aflame leaped from house to house all over the town of *Lankā*, and thus all the houses in the town were burnt down. Then Hanuman caught hold of his own 'tail' with his hands, and thus the palms of his hands turned black. And then he caught hold of a *Keond* tree with his hands and it too became black; and then he sought to clean his hands by rubbing them against his own face and his face too turned black. Ever since then the colour of the *Keond* tree and of the face and the inner part of the hands of the race of Hanumans (baboons) have remained black.

Finally, Hanuman plunged into the sea to wash himself clean. Then he asked

Ram who was his maternal uncle *(māmā)*, "Who will dispose of my body when I am dead ?" Ram replied,—"Those who entrapped you—the Birhors—and their progeny will eat you and your race". And since then the Birhors have taken to eating the flesh of different sorts of monkeys and baboons.

VII. The Story of the Origin of the Sabai grass *(Ichaemum angustifolium)*.

In a certain place, there lived together seven brothers and one sister. Every day the seven brothers would go out to hunt, leaving their sister to gather edible leaves and tubers and prepare their meals.

One day while the brothers were out hunting, their sister gathered some edible herbs and while about to boil them for food, accidently hurt her finger from which blood came out. To avoid staining the wall with the blood from the cut in her finger she wiped her bleeding finger with the *sāg* leaves and then boiled the leaves for their

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evening meal. When the brothers returned home in the evening after an unsuccessful hunt they sat down to dinner, and found that the *sāg* tasted uncommonly sweet. They wondered at this and asked their sister what she had mixed with the *sāg*. She at first said that it was only common *sāg* and nothing else. But when the brothers said, "Mere *sāg* never tasted so sweet before", and insisted on her speaking the truth, she told them how she wiped her bleeding finger with the *sāg* leaves. "Ah! that is the secret of the exquisite sweetness of this *sāg*", they said.

On a subsequent day, on their way back from the jungle, the brothers thus talked amongst themselves. One said, "Her blood tasted so sweet: how much sweeter must her flesh taste!" Another proposed, "Let us slay her and eat her then." And so they agreed,—all except the youngest brother who was particularly attached to his sister. His heart began to bleed at the thought,

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though for fear of his elder brothers he could utter not a word of protest.

Soon afterwards they took their sister to a *jārā* or cleared space in the jungle, put up a wooden scaffold *(māchān)* and told her, "Sister, sleep here this day"; and so she did. When the other brothers were about to shoot at their sister, the youngest brother wept within himself and stood aside, sullen and sulky. His six brothers, one after another, shot their arrows at their sister but all missed their aim. So they called up their youngest brother and bade him shoot at her. "Aim all right", said they, "and kill her, else we shall kill you and eat your flesh". He said within himself, "Whether you spare me or kill me, I cannot shoot her". And so he aimed his arrow in a wrong direction. But it so happened that the arrow hit all right, and stuck into his sister's chest, and she dropped down the scaffold and died.

Then the elder brothers ordered the youngest, "Go, bring fuel wood in your hands without using any string or rope

to make them into bundles". And so he had to go and gather fuel. And as he was puzzled how to carry so much wood without tying them up with a string, he wept bitterly. A *Dhāmna* snake saw him weeping and asked him what distressed him. He related what troubled him. And the snake said, "Don't worry", and coiled itself around the bundle of fuel-wood. He carried the wood to his brothers and the snake slipped away.

His brothers next ordered him to fetch water, and gave him for the purpose an earthen pitcher with a hole at its bottom. To prevent water from escaping out of the hole, he caught some fish and crabs and put them into the pitcher, but still the water leaked out. He went down into the stream and wept aloud. A frog heard him weep and asked him what was his trouble. He narrated his story and the frog took pity on him and entered the pitcher and closed up the hole by sitting tight on it. and the young man carried the pitcher of water with the frog and fish and crabs in it to his brothers.

His brothers next ordered him to bring some fire. He asked, "How shall I bring it ?" They said, "Bring it on the palm of your hand". He went to the village and secured fire. But in carrying it on his hand, he felt his hand burning, and he wept. Singbonga (God) took pity on him and appeared before him and gave him one of His own hands, saying, "Carry the fire on this hand and return the hand to me when you have done with it". And so he safely carried the fire to his brothers, who roasted the meat of choice parts of the body of their sister. They gave their youngest brother the entrails and legs of their sister to roast for himself and eat. He took them to some distance, lighted a fire, and roasted fish and crabs for himself. He ate the fish while his brothers were eating the meat of their sister and he munched the roasted crabs while his brothers were chewing the bones of their sister. Finally he buried unobserved the entrails and legs of his sister in a hole which he dug into the ground.

Then all the brothers returned to their hut.

Before long, there shot up a fine bamboo stalk from this hole. In fact, it was the entrails and legs of his poor sister which thus turned into bamboo. An old couple, who earned their livelihood by begging from door to door, playing on a guitar and singing, wanted to cut the bamboo for making a guitar *(kendrā)* with. As the old man began to strike his axe against the bamboo, the bamboo sang in a piping voice,—

"Do not, do not, cut me down, old man !
This bamboo by my brother planted". [32]

The old man hesitated but his wife urged him on; and he cut down the bamboo and brought it home and made a *kendrā* out of it.

In the meanwhile, the six brothers had married and reared up families of their own. But the youngest brother remaind unmar-

[32] The original is in Chota-Nagpuri Hindi, and runs as follows:

"Nā kāt, nā kāt, Būrhā,
Eh tō, bhāiāke rōpal bāns"

ried and lived by himself in a hut of his own, not far from that of the other brothers. He had a guitar *(kendrā)* of his own with which he used to beguile his weary hours when not otherwise engaged.

One day the old couple who had cut down the mysterious bamboo and made a guitar *(kendrā)* of it, went with their *(kendrā)* to the house of the six brothers to sing and beg alms, but the *kendrā* struck up,—

"Sound not, sound not, O *Kendrā*,
This be thy enemy's house, O *Kendrā*",[33]

At this, the old couple marvelled and left the house in haste and stopped at the hut of their youngest brother. And now the *Kendrā* struck up a different music,—

"Sound, sound, Oh, *Kendrā*,
This be my brother's house,
Oh, *Kendrā*".'[34]

[33] The original runs thus;

"Nā bājrē, nā bājrē, Kendrā !
Eh tō dūsmankēr ghar hāi, rē Kendrā"!

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When the young man heard this he eagerly invited the old couple into his hut, plied them with drink and managed to exchange his own guitar with theirs. And he treasured up this mysterious guitar as his most cherished possession.

Thereafter, every day when the young man went out in quest of food, his sister would come out of the *kendrā* and prepare nice dishes for him and re-enter the *kendrā* before her brother returned home. And his brother would eat with unwonted relish the food thus prepared, and great would be his wonder and delight.

When this went on happening day after day, the young man decided to solve the mystery at all hazards. So, one day, he concealed himself near the hut and lay in wait to surprise the secret visitant. And as soon as his sister issued out the guitar, he entered the hut and seized her by the

[34] The original runs as follows :—
"Bāj bāj rē, Kendrā !
Eh tō bhāiakēr ghar, rē Kendra" !

hand. He at once recognized her and related to her all that had happened and declared, "I did not eat a single morsel of your flesh". And both rejoiced at the meeting.

Then one day he invited his other brothers to a feast at his hut, saying, "I am going to give a funeral feast in memory of my poor dear sister". And the six brothers came and had a hearty dinner which was prepared by their sister. As soon as they finished eating, their sister appeared before them and said,—

"So then, my brothers, my blood tasted sweet,
And for that on my flesh you feasted !
Whose hands prepared this feast to-day ?"

At this the six brothers were smitten with intense compunction and exclaimed, "Shame, shame on us ! Let the Earth cleave in twain, and we shall hide ourselves under the earth for very shame". And forthwith a wide cleft appeared on the earth at their feet and engulfed the six brothers. As the brothers were being thus engulfed, their sister caught hold of them by the tufts of

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their hair, but in vain. The yawning chasm in the earth closed up again, engulfing the six men, but leaving the tufts of their hair in the hands of their sister. These tufts of hair turned into what thenceforth came to be known as *Sābai* grass *(Ischaemum angustifolium)*.

VIII. The Sky Myth.

In ancient times, the sky *(rimil)* was so very low as almost to touch men's head. Once while an old Birhōṛ woman was husking rice with a pestle and mortar, her pestle *(ṭākā)* happened to strike against the sky with great force. And, as a result, the sky receded upwards, and it has since then remained suspended high up in the air.

IX. How a Prince and a Princess carried away the 'Luck' of their respective parents.

There once lived a Rājā who had seven sons. One of the sons always neglected his lessons. So the Rājā gave him a pony and

told him, "As you are a good-for-nothing fellow, you have no business here. Take this pony; leave my place and shift for yourself". The young prince rode the horse and went away.

After he had ridden a long—long—distance, he felt very hungry. As he had no money to buy food with, he entered a village and offered to pawn his horse for a leaf-cup *(dōnā)* of boiled rice. He went about crying.—"Who will take this horse for a *dōnā* of rice ?" One of the villagers gave him rice to eat in exchange for his horse. The prince, however, bargained with him that he would be given back the horse whenever he returned a leaf-cup of rice. Again, after he had ridden half a day and felt hungry, he entered a village and went about enquiring, "Who will give me a *dōnā* of rice in exchange for my shoes ?" One of the villagers agreed to the exchange, and gave him a *dōnā* of rice; and the prince extracted a promise from him to hold the shoes only as a pawn and return them when he brought back to him a *dōnā* of rice. Then on

and on he went till he felt hungry again, and entered a village and went about enquiring, "Will any one give me a *dōnā* of rice in exchange for my waist cloth ?" Some one offered a *dōnā* of rice and he handed over to him his waist cloth, and extracted a promise from him to return the cloth when he brought back a *dōnā* of rice to redeem it.

Again, after another half a day's journey, he felt hungry and on entering a village, went about enquiring, "Who will take one of my legs in pawn for a *dōnā* of rice ?" One of the villagers accepted the proposal, cut off one of his legs and gave him a *dōnā* of rice. "Take care of the leg", said the prince, "and when I bring back to you a *dōnā* of rice, return my leg to me". The man agreed to this. Similarly, the prince pawned first his other leg, then his two arms one after another, and lastly his trunk without the head, for a *dōnā* of rice each, and extracted promises to restore the leg and arms and trunk to him when he returned a *dōnā* of rice for each.

Now the head only was all that was left of the prince. And then the prince or rather the head continued its journey till at length it reached the bank of a small stream where seven young princesses were bathing. Seeing them, the head concealed itself behind a bush and began to cry piteously: "Give me a little water to drink ! A little water to drink !" The princesses heard this piteous appeal and the elder sisters told their youngest sister, "Do thou go, and give some water to the thirsty one, whoever he may be". So the youngest princess went behind the bush and gave some water to the mysterious head. And on her return told her sisters what she saw.

On their return home, the elder princesses told their father, "Father, Bābi (*meaning*, her youngest sister) gave water to the head of some person of unknown origin. Pray, don't admit her into the house". At this, her father expelled his youngest daughter from the house. Not knowing what to do, the princess thought within herself, "Now I have no one to go to. So I shall go to this

mysterious head; and if it agrees to have me, I shall follow it". And so she went to the head and the head was happy to have the princess for its mate. They both went to the house of the village Māhtō (headman) in a neighbouring village. Out of respect for the king's daughter, the Māhtō welcomed them to his house as honoured guests.

The head asked the princess to borrow an axe from the Māhtō, and so she did. Then, at the request of the head, the princess took up the axe and followed the head to a neighbouring jungle. There the head asked her, "Cut a *chōp* creeper with your axe, and tie up the axe with the *chōp* here on my head". And she did as bidden. Then the head moved about in the forest with the axe tied on to it, and as it moved, the axe went on cutting down all the trees that it came across. And in this way the forest was cleared of its trees for an area of over 24 miles (12 *gaudis* or *koses*) in length by the same breadth. Then they returned home to the Māhtō's house.

In a month's time the trees thus felled dried up. Then the princess at the bidding of the head set fire to these trees. The ashes, thus produced, served as manure for the land cleared by the head. The head then told the princess, "Go, bring rice-husks from somebody's threshing-floor". And she accordingly brought a basketful of husks. The head requested the Māhtō to help them to plough and sow the land. The Māhtō ploughed up for them the whole area of 12 *kōses* square in one day and sowed it with the husks brought by the princess. Although there was no more than one basket of mere husks, this miraculously sufficed for sowing the whole field with. And the field yielded a bumper crop of rice. Again, at their request, the Māhtō helped them in reaping the crop. As soon as a few sheaves of rice were reaped, the rice on the rest of the area of 12 *kōses* square came to be reaped within a short time as if by magic. Then the head sought the Māhtō's assistance in carrying the rice to the threshing-floor. As soon as a

few bundles of rice-stalks were carried there, lo and behold !—the threshing-floor became filled with all the rice from the field. Then the head requested the Māhtō to lend a hand in threshing the rice. Before the Māhtō's bullocks made one or two rounds over the rice-stalks spread out on the threshing-floor, all the rice got threshed. Then as the Māhtō began to lift the straw with a pitchfork, all the straw got sifted of themselves. Again, as soon as rice-grains were once taken up in a winnowing fan and shaken backwards and forwards in order to blow away the chaff, the whole heap of rice-grains on the threshing-floor got cleaned of their chaff. Then as soon as the Māhtō began to tie up the rice-grains in one or two *mōrās* or receptacles made of straw-ropes, scores of such *mōras* were made, of themselves, and got filled with rice.

The princess then husked some rice and boiled it. Then, at the bidding of the head, she kept apart two *dōnās* of boiled rice for redeeming the two arms of her husband,

two *dōnās* for redeeming the two legs, one *dōnā* for the trunk, one *dōnā* for the shoes, one for the turban and one for the pony. Then the princess arranged the *dōnās* of rice in a basket which she took up on her head, and with it followed her husband.

They first went to the village where the Prince's trunk had been pawned. The head told the man who held the trunk in pawn, "Here is your *dōnā* of rice. Please, return the trunk". The man readily returned it on getting back his *dōnā* of rice. And the trunk got stuck to the head all right. Similarly, the legs and the arms, were redeemed, and they got stuck to the trunk all right. Then the shoes, the waist-cloth and the turban were similarly redeemed and fitted into their respective places; and the head looked again the Prince that it once was. Finally, the pony was similarly redeemed.

Now, the Prince and his wife took up their quarters *(ḍerā)* in a place not far from that of the Prince's father. In the mean-

while, the father of our Prince and the father of our Princess had both lost all their possessions and were reduced to extreme poverty. This was due to their having driven out these two from their respective houses. One day the mother of the prince arrived at the latter's place and begged for alms. She did not recognise her son. But the prince recognised her and asked her, "Who are you ? How many sons have you got ? And where are they ?" She replied, "I had seven sons. We drove away the youngest. And now we have lost all our wealth and property, and live by begging". The Prince gave her rice and cloth and asked her to bring her remaining sons with her as soon as convenient so that if they were found suitable he might employ them as labourers. "Bring also the old man", he added.

The old woman went back in joy to her husband and sons and asked them to come with her. "Where will you take us ?" they asked. She said, "A generous Prince has taken up his quarters not far from this

village. He gave me this cloth and rice, and he may give you work". They followed her with alacrity.

When they appeared before the Prince, he asked the old man, "Why did you drive away one of your sons ?" The old man replied, "He did not mind his lessons, and so I sent him away". The Princess gave them a hearty meal. And the Prince told his father,—"I am the expelled son. How do you relish the dishes ?" The father embraced him with tears streaming down his eyes and took him up in his arms. "I have found my long-lost son at last ! He had taken away with him all my *hūṛū-chāuli* (*lit.*, paddy-rice, *meaning* prosperity, luck)" .

Now, the Prince and his wife took the old man and the old woman with their other sons to the Māhtō's village, where the prince was now as good as a Rājā. And there they all lived happily together.

Not long afterwards, the sisters of the princess who had great difficulty in maintaining themselves, turned up one day and

begged of the princess the loan of a *pailā* (about 2 lbs.) of rice. The princess recognised them and said, "*Then* you said that 'Bābi' had given some one of an unknown caste water to drink and should be outcasted and driven away. And *now* how is it that you come to beg of her for a loan of rice ?" At this the sisters went away. The Prince and Princess lived long as king and queen of those parts.

X. How the Dead Prince and His Bride Rose from their Graves.

A Rājā had two sons and a daughter. The elder son, on being married, went to trade in a distant country with pack-bullocks laden with merchandise. He left his wife alone in his own separate house. The young wife waited long for her husband's return, and then thought of taking some other mate. So in the guise of a hawker of curds she went *incognito* to her husband's parents' house carrying some curds *(dahi)* in an earthenware pot. There she found her *iriāl*

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(husband's younger brother) playing on a guitar *(kendrā)*. She asked him, "Will you buy *dahī?*" He said, "Wait, I am going to call my mother". When her *iriāl* went to call his mother, the disguised curds-seller made away with her brother-in-law's guitar.

When he came back and found his guitar missing, the prince went out in search of it, and came to know that it it was with his sister-in-law. So he asked his mother to go and bring it back. His mother went and asked her daughter-in-law to return the *kendrā* of her *iriāl*. She replied,—"O mother-in-law, why does he not himself come to take back his *kendrā?* Let him come for it himself". Then her husband's sister came to ask for her brother's *kendrā*, and her sister-in-law replied, "Why does he not come himself for his *kendrā?* Go, sister-in-law, and send him to take back his *kendrā.*" So she too went back and and told her brother, "She won't give it to us. You better go and have it." So the *iriāl* went in pro-

cession to his elder brother's wife's place carrying with him a sword, a scimitar, a shield and a spear, and leading a horse, an elephant, a camel and an ass. Arrived at the door of her sister-in-law, he demanded, 'O sister-in-law, do please return my *kendrā*'. His sister-in-law replied from within, "Do come in, my *iriūl*, and take your guitar". On being thus invited into the house, he fastened his elephant, horse, camel, ass, sword, shield and scimitar one at each of the seven successive gateways leading to the inner apartants of the house, and entered the inner apartments spear in hand. And there the two lived together as husband and wife.

In due time, the woman gave birth to a child. Two days after the birth of the child, they were startled by the jingling of bells *(ghāṭi-ghūmar)* such as are worn on the neck of pack-bullocks. The prince said to his sister-in-law, "Listen! Do you not hear that jingling sound like that of the bells

on the neck of my brother's pack-bullocks?' The woman replied, "Ah, no ![35] Brother-in-law, it must be the sound of the fall of the water over the precipice in the river". The prince went up to the roof and saw at a distance someone wearing a turban *(pāgri)* like that of his brother, approaching." And he exclaimed, "O Sister-in-law ! There, I think, I see the *pāgri* of my brother." The woman replied, "Ah, no ! Brother-in-law, you mistake the flowers of the *kāsi* plant for a *pāgri*". Soon the figure of a horse could be clearly distinguished, and the man exclaimed, "O Sister-in law, there ! it looks like my brother's pony". The woman replied, "Ah no ! Brother-in-law, it is only a deer from the forest". But now her husband could be clearly recognized, and so she concealed her brother-in-law under a large bamboo-basket *(ḍimni)* such as is used for storing grains.

Before her husband actually reached home, the woman cut up her baby into pieces and set the meat boiling in a pot over the

hearth. When her husband arrived at the door she went with a jug of water to wash his feet. As she stooped down to wash his feet, drops of milk from her breasts fell on her husband's feet, and he asked, "O, Rāṇī ! What milk is this ?" She replied, "O Rājā, this is only goat's milk". As he entered, he saw the elephant and asked, "Whose elephant is waiting here ?" She replied, "For thee, O Rājā, I have brought this elephant". Then the Rājā noticed successively the horse, the camel, the ass, the sword, the shield and the scimitar, and made similar enquiries and received similar replies. Then he entered the inner apartments. The Queen now served him with a dish of rice and meat. He asked, "O Rāṇi, what meat is this ?" "It is the meat of a goat-kid", she replied. Then as he began to turn the meat in the dish with his hands, he came across what looked like a human finger, and asked, "O Rāṇi, whose finger is this, now ?" She replied, "It is the leg of the kid".

Now the Rājā noticed a rustling sound

coming from the direction of the *ḍimni*, and asked, "O Rāṇi, what sound is that?" The Rāṇi replied, "O Rājā, it is only a mouse moving about." Now the Rājā felt sure that his wife had a lover during his absence, and asked his wife, "Is he one of us (the family) or a stranger?"[35] The woman foolishly replied, "An outsider". At this, her husband became so very indignant that he thrust his spear through the bamboo-basket *(ḍimni)* and it pierced his brother in the chest. His brother issued out of the basket and pressing his wounded chest with his hands ran back to his house and lay down on a string-bed *(pārkōm)* and told his mother, "Mother, place a pot of fire (to warm me) under the bedstead. My days are numbered". Blood

[35] The words used by the Birhor who narrated the story to me were *"āpan ki biran?"* (our own or a stranger?) This indicates that to have such relations with a member of the family (not within prohibited degrees of relationship) is a venial transgression. In fact, such relations between a woman and her husband's younger brother are permissible among the Birhors, and the junior levirate is customary in the tribe.

began to fall in drops on the ground. His mother heard the pattering sound of something falling, and asked, "O Son, what is that dripping with a pattering sound ?" The man replied, "My brother gave me some hot water, and that is dripping with a patter". His father and his sister asked him the same question and received the same reply. His brother's wife now came and asked the same question and received the same reply. Then his brother asked him, "O Brother, what is that dripping ?" "O Dādā", he replied, "You gave me 'hot water', and it is that which is dripping". Then the man died of his wound.

A certain young princess had been engaged to be married to him when his brother would return home. Now when this princess heard of his betrothed's death, she begged of her father to give her a pony, an elephant and a handful of powdered chillies. And her father ordered these to be given to her. With these she proceeded to the place where her betrothed was about to be cremated. Arrived at

the cremation-ground she told all present, "Look above and see how the stars have come out to witness the prince's cremation". As all present raised their eyes towards the sky, she adroitly sprinkled the chilli-powder into their eyes, and while they were rubbing their eyes, she jumped into the funeral pyre and got herself cremated with her affianced bridegroom.

According to custom,[36] women of the late prince's family gathered the bones of the couple in a new earthen urn and in due course the bones were buried under a stone slab in an abandoned site known as *Purnā-gaṛh* (the old fort) just outside the village.

After all the ceremonies attendant on death had been duly performed, the spirit of the deceased prince used to rise every night from the grave, go unobserved to his father's stable, take a horse and ride it and go to a stream for a bath. And the spirit of his affianced bride would similarly rise from the grave, fetch water from a spring

[36] See *ante*, pp. 271 *et seq.*

(ḍāri) in an earthen pitcher *(gāgrā)*, and cook food for themselves; and both the prince and his affianced bride would eat the food thus prepared and re-enter their graves. The Rājā observed that the horse was thinning away day after day, and demanded an explanation from the groom in charge of the stable. The groom could offer no explanation and was ordered to be more careful and keep stricter watch. And so the groom began to watch the movements of the horse day and night, and soon reported to the Rājā that every night some person from Purnāgaṛh would come and spirit away the horse and, after a time, put it back into the stable in an exhausted condition. Thereupon the Rājā set two more watchmen to find out all about the matter. The new watchmen confirmed the groom's report and further stated that the spectral rider of the horse resembled the late prince. So the Rājā and his wife (Rāṇī) themselves watched what happened, and one night when the spectral prince had ridden away to the

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stream to bathe and the spectral bride to fetch water from the spring, they removed the empty burial urn from *Punāgaṛh.* The unsuspecting Prince and his bride took their meals and prepared to re-enter their grave, when the Rājā seized the prince by the hand and the Rāṇī caught hold of the bride. The spirits protested in vain. The prince and his bride was led back to the Rājā's palace, and the Rājā and Rāṇī installed them in their own places as King and Queen.

XI. The Adventures of Two Lovers.

Once upon a time there lived in a certain town, a Hindu King and a Muhammadan merchant who became fast friends to each other. When their wives were both in the family way, they made mutual promises of marrying their prospective children to each other if the two turned out to be of opposite sexes, and to bind them in a tie of ceremonial friendship if they happened to be of the same sex. In

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due time the merchant's wife was brought to bed of a male child and the Rājā's wife of a female child. But then the Rājā changed his mind about the marriage of his daughter. "I am a Rājā", he said to himself, "how can I marry my daughter to a Muhammadan ? No, I won't".

As the boy and the girl grew up, they had frequent opportunities of meeting, and became attached to each other. When they attained youth and came to know that the Rājā was opposed to their union, the merchant's son secretly arranged with the Rājā's daughter to elope with her one night. On the appointed night, the Rājā's daughter ordered the groom *(syce)* in charge of the Rājā's horses to bring a pony for her. A horse was brought and the princess gave it some gram to eat and asked it to carry her, but the horse replied, "I owe nothing to your father. I do not eat his grams, but graze at large in the fields". So she sent away the horse. Then an elephant was brought and it too made a similar answer and was also sent

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away; and next a camel and then an ass, and they too made similar replies and were also sent away. Then the princess asked the *syce* to bring the Rājā's own *Pankhrāj* horse. This Pankhrāj (winged) horse was accordingly brought and it agreed to take her wherever she desired. She got up on the horse and it flew with her on its back to a *Pipar* tree, which was the place of assignment. When she reached there, a rustling sound among the leaves was heard and down came her lover from the tree and sat by the side of the Princess on the *Pankhrāj* horse.

Away on and on they rode till they came to a place where a *Rākhshasī* (a female monster) lived with her seven sons. When the lovers arrived there, the *Rākhshasī's* sons were away from home on the look out for men or other animals for food. The *Rākhshasī* welcomed the princess and her lover and gave them rice, vegetables, *ghee* and fuel and earthen vessels to cook their food, and said 'Wait, I am going to catch some fish too for your dinner". She went to a

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tank, put off her clothes and stood waist-deep in water. The hairs on parts of her body were of such density and length that shrimps easily concealed themselves in them; and when she came out of the waters, she picked up the shrimps from within their hairy shelter and carried them home. The princess who had followed her unobserved towards the tank saw her bared body and understood that she was a *Rākhshasī*. She returned long-before the *Rākhshasī*, and seeing that the fuel that was given to them consisted of raw wood full of sap, inferred that it was a trick of the *Rākhshasī* to delay the cooking and detain them there as long as possible, and therefore she asked her lover to soak a cloth in *ghee* (clarified butter) and put it into the fire. And so he did, and the fire gave a steady flame. And thus rice and vegetables were quickly boiled. They took a hasty meal and were about to ride away when the *Rākhshasī* arrived. "So must you go away, son-in-law ?" She asked. "Yes, we must," replied the merchant's

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son. And while the lovers were mounting their horse, the *Rākhshasī* made up a parcel containing a *seer* (2lbs.) of mustard seeds and fastened it unobserved to the tail of the horse.

Now, when the *Rākhshasī* saw her sons return home, she told them, "Couldn't you have come earlier? A he-goat and a she-goat had been here". Her sons asked, "How far may they have gone ?" She replied, "Go, follow the trail of mustard-seeds which must have been dropped on the way by the horse to whose tail I tied those seeds. Where you find shoots of mustard sprouting on the road, you may be sure that they are not far off". The *Rākhshas* brothers now went out in pursuit of the princess and her lover. The six elder Rākhshas brothers went ahead; and the youngest followed them a little behind, as he was carrying a huge quantity of boiled rice and roasted buffalo meat for their meals. When the six brothers came in sight of their coveted prey, they rushed to attack them; but when they sought to

attack them from behind, the *Pankhrāj* horse would repluse them with violent kicks and when they sought to give them a frontal attack, the merchant's son would hurl his spear at them. And thus, one after another, the six Rākhshas brothers were killed. And the Princess and her lover were about to ride away when the youngest son of the Rākhshas came up and saw the fate of his elder brothers. In the guise of a simple rustic, he approached the merchant's son and begged to be employed as a *syce* or groom for his horse. His prayer was granted and he was allowed to take his seat behind them on the horse.

When they arrived at the bank of a large pool inside a forest, the merchant's son stopped the horse, got down and went away to satisfy a call of nature, leaving his spear, sword and shield on the ground. The '*Syce*,' too, got down, took up the weapons in his hands, and waited. As soon as the merchant's son returned, the '*syce*' cut off his head with the sword, and attempted to mount the

horse again. But the horse kicked him with such violence that the pretended *'Syce'* fell down dead.

Now the princess dismounted, and took up in her arms the severed head and body of her dead lover, and began to wail piteously. The horse also began to neigh in sympathetic grief. The god Mahādeo and his spouse Pārvatī happened to be passing within ear shot on their way from the jungle where the had been to cut wood for making ploughs with. Pārvatī was touched with the piteous wails of the princess, and exclaimed, 'Listen ! Some one is weeping aloud in grief'.

But Mahādeo pooh-poohed him, saying, "Pshaw ! You females always hear people weeping and wailing. I say, that's nothing." But Pārvatī was importunate. "Let us go and see", she insisted, "somebody seems to be in distress". So Mahādeo had to yield, and they both went where the princess was bewailing her murdered husband. Mahādeo and Pārvatī asked her how it happened, and she related the story. They

told her, "Look up and see what a number of stars have come out in the sky". And just as she looked upwards, they sprinkled powdered chillis into her eyes so that she could not see anything and began to rub her irritated eyes. In the meanwhile, Mahādeo sprinkled a life-giving beverage on the corpse, and the merchant's son got up as if from sleep, and asked the princess, "Have I slept long ?" In the meanwhile, Mahādeo and Pārvatī turned into shadows and disappeared.

The princess related to her lover all that had happened. Then the princess exclaimed, "If I be really the daughter of a king, may there spring up a city here in this jungle and a palace in the centre for us to live in". And forthwith a city and a palace appeared, and there the two lived happily as King and Queen.

XII. THE PRINCE AND HIS UNGRATEFUL BROTHERS.

A certain Rājā had seven sons. The Rājā of a neighbouring city had seven daughters. And it was arranged to marry the seven sons of the former each to one of the seven daughters of the latter. Seven palanquins were brought to carry the seven princes to their affianced brides' house. But the eldest prince said that he would not himself go but send his own sword and shield as his proxy. Accordingly his sword and shield were placed on one of the palanquins and the other princes seated themselves on the remaining palanquins. While they were setting out in marriage procession, the eldest prince warned his brothers not to take the shorter route, for by its side dwelt a fierce Rākhshas, and instructed them to go by a round-about route. Accordingly, the procession went by the round-about route.

When the palanquins approached the brides' place, the eldest princess saw that

the foremost palanquin was without a human occupant, and she lamented in song:—

"In seven palanquins but six grooms come !
O Father ! O Mother ! My groom here is none !
In seven palanquins but six grooms ride;
In mine no groom but mere sword and shield".

Then the weddings were duly solemnised. The eldest princess was wedded to the sword and shield and the younger princesses to the six princes respectively.

When the marriage procession was returning home with the newly wedded brides, the princes decided to take the shorter route. "We have such a large retinue", they said, "How can the Rākhshas harm us" ? So they went by that route, and the Rākhshas devoured them whole,—not only the princes and their brides and retinue but even palanquin and all. When the eldest prince found that the return home of the marriage party was long overdue, he suspected that they had taken the shorter route and been devoured by the

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Rākhshas. He accordingly secured some common peas and a number of iron peas, and with these set out for the place where the Rākhshas lived. As soon as he was within sight, the Rākhshas exclaimed, "Ah ! There again, I have got a new victim". The Prince told him, "Wait ! Here are some peas. You take some of these and so do I. First grind them into bits with your teeth, and then you will eat me up. But if you fail to grind them down and I succeed, I shall cut you up into pieces". The Rākhshas tried the iron peas and failed; but the prince took the real peas and chewed them and ate them up. And so he cut down the Rākhshas with his sword and ripped open his stomach. And out came the entire marriage procession just as it had been devoured by the Rākhshas,—the brides and bridegrooms and the sword and spear all in their respective palanquins, and the retinue in their rear.

The six princes consulted one another and agreed, "Our brother has cut down

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such a powerful Rākhshas. If he lives, he may also kill us one day. So let us put him to death". And accordingly one of them thrust his spear into the body of their unsuspecting deliverer, and the procession moved on leaving him there mortally wounded. The eldest princess now returned to her father's place and the other princesses went with their husbands to theirs.

While the wounded prince was writhing in mortal pain, Mahādeo and his wife happened to be on their way to see how their dominion (the earth) fared. The goddess' notice was attracted to the wounded prince writhing in agony. And she induced her husband to go and see him. So they went to the wounded prince and asked him what happened. He related the whole story. Mahādeo told him, "Look and see how many stars have come out in the sky above !" As he tried to lift his eyes upwards, they sprinkled powdered chillies into his eyes, and while he was rubbing his eyes, they sprinkled life-giving water (nectar) over his wound; and all at once his

wound disappeared and he stood up quite hale and hearty.

Now he reflected within himself, "I saved my brothers from death, and they sought to kill me in return. I should not go back to the house where they live". And so he went *incognito* to the house of the Rājā whose daughter was married to him by proxy, and took service under him as a field labourer *(dhāngar)*.

One evening, after he had finished his day's work, some boys of the Rājā's household pressed him to tell a story *(kāhini)*. So he began to repeat his own story in the third person, from the starting of the marriage procession of the princes and the sword and spear up to the employment of the eldest prince as the *dhāngar* in his father-in-law's house. Now, the eldest princess overheard the story and discovered that he was no other than her own husband. And husband and wife were now happily united and went to live in a house of their own.

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XIII. How the Dead and Buried Children of the Raja were restored to Life.

A certain Rājā had seven Rāṇīs (queens) but none of them bore him any child. One day a Brāhman sage happened to visit the Rājā's palace. He instructed the Rājā as to how he might get sons : "Go with your sword and shield to a mango tree, throw your sword at the tree and bring home as many mangoes as fall on your shield, and let all your queens eat those mangoes". The Rājā did as he was instructed but could get only one mango. And he brought the mango home and gave it to his wives to eat. His youngest wife was away from home at the time. And so her co-wives divided the mango amongst themselves. When the youngest Rāṇī came home and saw the rind of a mango, she asked the other Rāṇīs, "Where did you get the mango ? Have you not kept a share for me ?" They said, "We got it by chance, and forgot to keep a share for

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you." So the youngest Rāṇī scooped out the rind and ate what little she could get out of it.

In time the youngest queen showed signs of pregnancy but the other Rāṇīs showed none. When the time for his wife's delivery was at hand, the Rājā went out on a hunting expedition, leaving instructions with his other wives and his servants to sound a golden drum if a son was born to the youngest queen and to sound a silver drum if a daughter was born. In due time the Rāṇī gave birth to twins—a son and a daughter. Before the mother could look at her new-born babes, her six co-wives secretly removed the twins and in their places placed a broom and a piece of half-burnt fire-wood in the lying-in room. The mid-wife, at the instance of the six elder *Rāṇīs* threw away the new-born infants into a pit from which pot-makers *(Kūmhārs)* used to take earth for making pottery.

Soon afterwards an old childless Kūmhār couple came to take earth for their

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pottery from the pit, and saw the two babies lying in the pit. The old man told his wife, "Let us not miss this opportunity. Earth we may take from the pit whenever we like. But we can't get another chance of possessing children. So let us take these abandoned children to ourselves". And so they did.

In the meanwhile, when the Rājā returned home, the other Rāṇīs told him that the youngest Rāṇī had given birth to a broom and a piece of half-burnt fire-wood. At this news the Rājā's exasperation knew no bounds, and he ordered the youngest Rāṇī to be driven out of the house. And the Rājā's order was duly carried out.

Now when the adopted children of the Kūmhār grew old enough to walk, they would often play about in the neighbourhood of the Rājā's palace. And the Rāṇīs saw them and suspected who they were. And so one day when the boy and the girl were playing about near their house, their step-mothers managed to give them poisoned bread to eat. And they ate the bread and died.

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The Kūmhār buried them in the jungle close by. From the grave of the boy there shot up a plantain tree and from that of the girl a *pinjār* tree.

Once the Rājā's servants *(dhāngar)* while cutting wood near the graves saw a beautiful *Pinjār* flower. And as one of the servants attempted to pluck the flower, the flower sang,—

"O ! Plantain tree ! Thou Brother dear !
The Rājā's man seeks Pinjār flower".

The plantain tree sang back in reply,—

"O Pinjar flower ! Dear sister mine !
Leave then the earth, and heavenward rise."

At this, the flower lifted itself in mid-air. And the Rājā's *dhāngars* marvelled, hastened home to their master and reported to him what they saw and heard. Thereupon the Rājā himself went to the spot in his palanquin. Before the Rājā arrived, the flower had been back to its place. As the Rājā stretched out his hand to pluck it, the flower sang,—

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"O Plantain tree ! My brother dear !
My Father here seeks Pinjār flower.
What say'st thou, my brother dear ?"
The plantain tree replied,—
"Thou Pinjār flower ! My sister dear !
Leave thou the ground, and heavenward rise."

At this the Pinjar tree with its flower ascended a little way up above the ground. Then the Rājā sent for his eldest Rāṇī, and asked her to try and pluck the flower. As the Rāṇī stretched out her hand to pluck the flower sang,—

"O Plantain tree ! My Brother dear !
Our eldest mother [37] wants Pinjār flower"
The plantain tree sang in reply.—
"Thou Pinjar flower ! My Sister dear !
Leave thou the earth, and heavenward rise."

[37] A step-mother who is senior to one's own mother, is called 'Barā-māi' or 'elder mother', and when there are more than one step-mothers, they are respectively described and addressed by their step-children as 'Barā-māi', (eldest mother), 'mājhlā-māi' (second mother) and so on according to seniority.

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Thereupon the *Pinjār* tree rose higher up in the air. Then the other five Rāṇīs were successively summoned and they similarly tried to pluck the flower and failed. And similar dialogues in song passed between the *Pinjār* flower and the Plantain tree.

The songs aroused the Rājā's suspicions and he sent his men to seek out the youngest Rāṇī. The Rājā's men found her out and informed her of the Rājā's wishes. She said, "How can I go ? I have neither suitable clothes nor a presentable appearance ; my nails have grown long, my hair is unkempt, and I have not bathed for a long time". They went and reported all this to the Rājā. And the Rājā sent her suitable clothes and other things that she required. She had her nails pared, bathed, put on new clothes, and went to the spot on a palanquin.

Arrived there , she held out a portion of her cloth for the flower to drop into it. The flower now sang,—

"O Plantain tree ! Thou Brother mine !
My mother seeks the Pinjār flower.
O Plantain tree ! Thou brother mine !"
The plantain tree joyfully sang back in reply,
"O Pinjār flower ! My sister dear !
Come down from heaven to earth below.
O Pinjār Flower ! Thou sister dear !"

And now all on a sudden the Pinjār plant and the plantain tree were transformed into a girl and a boy and sat down, one on each knee of their mother, the youngest Rāṇī.

The Rājā now took the youngest Rāṇī and her two children home in great pomp. He then ordered six wells to be excavated as soon as possible. When the wells had been dug to half the standard depth, the Rājā said that water will not issue out of the wells unless the 'chumān' ceremony of the wells, as at marriage (*vide* pp. 193—4 *ante*) is performed. And so he asked the six elder Rāṇīs to make *chumān* of the wells. As soon as the six Rāṇīs each approached the mouth of one

of the six wells for the purpose, the Rājā's servants in obedience to the Rājā's orders, pushed down the six Rāṇī's into the six wells and buried them therein.

The Rājā now went home with the youngest Rāṇī and her children and lived happily with them.

XIV. A Ghasi Youth, his Rakhshas Uncles, and Heavenly Wife.

A Rājā had seven wives. An old Ghāsi woman used to supply the Rājā's wives (Rāṇīs) with garlands of flowers every day. The Ghāsi woman's son used to catch fish with a fish-trap *(kāmni)*. One day an exceedingly beautiful *Bintāṛikā Kadāmb* flower entered the boy's fish-trap and he brought it home. His mother was delighted to see it and said, "I shall take this to the Rāṇī and secure a hadsome reward for it." She took it to the eldest Rāṇī and was handsomely rewarded. The other Rāṇīs asked for one such flower each, on

the old Ghāsin said, "Only one was caught in my son's fish-trap". So the other Rāṇī's went to the Rājā and told him, "The old Ghāsi woman has brought a beautiful *Bintāṛika kadamb* flower for the eldest Rāṇī. Please, order her to bring one for each of us too. The Ghāsi woman and her son were summoned, and the Rājā ordered the young man to bring six more of such flowers on pain of death.

The Ghāsi youth was at his wits' end and knew not what to do. His mother told him, "Take heart, my boy. Go straight along yonder road. At some distance you will come to a hill by the road side. That hill is your maternal uncle. Strike at it with your axe; and your maternal uncle will appear before you in his proper shape". And accordingly the young man walked on, axe in hand, till he came to the hill. And as soon as he struck it with his axe out came a Rākhshas, hungering for human flesh. "Now, at length, after long long years, I have found meat to eat", exclaimed the Rākhshas.

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"Jōhār (obeisance) to thee! My dear Mānu (maternal uncle)!" said the Ghāsi youth to the Rākhshas. The Rākhshas said to himself, "Ah! This boy calls me 'māmū' (mother's brother); otherwise I would have cleaned my teeth of their dirt (i. e., by chewing human meat)." Then the Rākhshas asked his Ghāsi nephew what brought him there and why he sought him out. The nephew told his uncle, "My mother told me you have got *Bintāṛikā kadamb* flowers. I am in sore need of some". The Rākhshas directed him to another hill, and said, "In that hill you have another *māmū* of yours who can give you such flowers. Go and strike the hill with your axe and he will come out". The young man went to the other rock, struck his axe against it, and his maternal uncle came out in his proper shape of a Rākhshas. Before the Rākhshas could seize this opportunity of satisfying his cannibal propensities, he learnt that the man was his sister's son and came for some *Bintāṛikā kadamb* flowers. So the Rākhshas had to

forego the anticipated enjoyment of feasting on human flesh, and had to entertain his nephew as his guest. He gave him one grain of rice to boil; but, when boiled in water, it yielded two jar-fuls of *bhāt* (cooked rice); and he gave him one grain of pulse which, when boiled, yielded one large jar-ful of soup. When they had finished their meals, the Ghāsi youth asked his maternal uncle, "Mamū! When shall I have the flowers I have come for?" The Rākhshas said, "I had them with me. But they are now with another *māmu* of yours". And he told him the whereabouts of that other *māmū*.

So the Ghāsi youth went to the latter's place and asked him for the flowers. "All right", said the Māmu, "You will have them soon. Stop here for a few days, and look after my cattle. And I shall in the meanwhile find out some of those flowers for you". So the Ghāsi youth began to graze his uncle's cattle. His uncle warned him not to go himself nor take the cattle in a particular direction, although he might go

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at will in every other direction. Every day he used to go out to graze the cattle, and took some *mūṛhi* (fried rice) with him for eating when he felt hungry. For three days he avoided going in the direction against which his uncle had warned him. But on the fourth day, his curiosity got the better of him, and he took his cattle to graze in that direction. After proceeding some distance he came across a tank in which Sing Bōngā's (the Sun-God's) daughters were bathing. The youngest daughter of Sing-bōngā, was the fairest of all. He remembered that one of his uncle's neighbours had told him that the daughters of Sing-bōngā would give him the flowers he wanted, if only he could remove the clothes which they left on the bank of the tank while bathing. He now saw the clothes of Sing-bōngā's daughters lying on the bank of the tank. Sing-bōngā's daughters noticed him and called him and said, "Halo ! Shepherd boy ! Would you have some oil and tooth-brush to cleanse your teeth and take a bath ? The youth said,

'yes', and took the proferred oil and tooth-brush, cleansed his mouth and took a hasty bath, and was then making away with the clothes of the heavenly maidens, when the elder daughters of Sing-bŏngā addressed him in song.—

"Turn round, turn round, fair youth !
Our youngest Sister we'll give to thee".

At this he turned back and was forthwith metamorphosed into a tree.

In the meanwhile his maternal uncle wondered at the delay in his nephew's returning home with the cattle, and suspected he might have trespassed into the forbidden quarter. So he himself went in that direction and found that his nephew had been transformed into a *semar (bombax malabaricum)* tree. He cut down the tree, and forthwith his nephew returned to life in his proper shape. His Māmū now demanded of him why he had gone that way, though forbidden to do so. He avoided an explanation by saying, "They promised to give me their youngest sister in marriage if I turned round, and

so I did and was thus transformed". The *māmū* eagerly asked, "Did they say 'We will *give*' (her to you) ?" His nephew replied, "Yes, they positively said so". Then his *māmū* told him, "Go again, and this time take care that you don't look back". So the Ghāsi youth again went to the tank and was again asked if he would have oil and tooth-brush. He accepted them, took a hasty bath and again made away with the clothes of Sing-bōngā's daughters. Again, the daughters of Sing-bōngā sang :—

"Turn round, turn round, fair youth !
And this fair maiden here will be yours."

But this time, the Ghāsi youth, without looking back, ran straight to his *māmū's* house. The girls ran after him, and, arrived at his *māmū's* place, complained to him, "Your nephew has brought away our clothes. Do, please, ask him to return them". The *Māmū* asked them, "What did you promise to give her on the former occasion ?" They admitted that they had promised to

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give him their youngest sister for his wife. "Then do give her to my nephew", said the uncle. And the fair heavenly maiden was given to the Ghāsi youth as his wife.

His bride told him, "Come, and live with me in my parents' house". And the husband complied. At night when his wife would go from their bedroom to join her sisters in dancing, the Ghāsi youth would go there by a different route ; and the daughters of Sing-bōnga not suspecting who he was and taking him to be a stranger would ask him to play on the earthen drum, and he would gladly do so. Before his wife returned to their bed-room he would go back and lie down on his bed. One morning he told his wife, "I was dreaming that your seven sisters were all dancing and I was playing on the drum". She now suspected that her husband was the supposed stranger who played on the drum. Then she told him, "Let us go to your parents' place". He said, "But I am sure, you won't live there. How then shall I live without you ?" She gave him

a flute and told him, "Whenever you play on this flute, I shall be with you". And the Ghāsi youth took the flute and went home, as desired. And whenever he played on the flute, his wife would join him. One day he missed his flute. He had dropped it on the road and some other man had picked it up, and played on the flute. At the sound, the Ghasi's heavenly wife appeared and found that a stranger had got hold of the flute. She contrived to make off with the flute and returned home to her father's place.

In the meanwhile her husband, taking his pet *sūgā* bird (parrot) went to his *māmu's* place, and told him about his misfortune. At his *māmu's* advice he sent his *sūgā* to his wife with a message. As instructed, the *sūgā* went to her and told her "O Mother ! Have you deserted my father for good ?" She understood that the *sūgā* had come from her husband. So she made an assignation through the *sūgā*. And at the appointed hour she went to him. And thus reunited once more,

they decided they should not part again, but should henceforth live in a *kūmbā* (leaf-shelter) of their own and earn their own living. So they built a hut for themselves near a certain Rājā's city, and the man made with his own hands a wooden bedstead *(pārkōm)* for sale. They took it to the market. But when intending purchasers inquired about its price, they said, "Take it and the *pārkōm* will tell you what it is worth". People wondered at the reply and avoided the *pārkōm* as something uncanny. The Rājā of the place, however, felt inquisitive and said, "I shall learn its price from the bedstead then. Let me have it". And he took it home and at night lay down on it, but could not get a wink of sleep. After a while, thinking that the Rājā was asleep, one of the legs of the bed told the other legs, "The Rājā is now asleep, so let me go and take a walk all round the city to see what it is like". And so the leg went round the city. And in a secluded part of the city it saw four thieves dividing amongst themselves

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a heap of silver and gold coins they had stolen from the Rājā's house. The leg struck a violent blow at each of the thieves and they all fell down dead. On its return, the leg related to its companions what it had seen; and the other legs also decided to take each its turn in visiting the city. The second leg then went out and saw a man embracing another man's wife at a corner of the road, and it struck a violent blow at them and left them both dead on the road. On his return, the leg related to its companions what it saw. As the night was nearly ended, the other two legs decided to visit the city next night.

Now, the Rājā lay awake all night and heard all that the legs said. As soon as day dawned, he sent some of his servants to examine the places mentioned by the two legs and to report at once what they found there. And their report fully agreed with what the two legs of the bed had reported.

Then the Rājā sent for the strangers who made and sold the bed. The Ghāsi youth

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and his heavenly wife came. The Rājā asked them, "What price do you demand for the bed?" The man said, "Did not the bed tell you what it is worth?" The Rājā insisted, "Say, what you will take for it." The Ghāsi's wife replied, "We do not want any money. Do thou order that the *kūmbā* in which we are now living turn into a palace". In those days, the words of a Rāja were words of power. The Rājā said, "May the *kūmbā* turn into a palace". And the *kūmbā* was forthwith transformed into a palace. And there Singbōnga's youngest daughter and her human husband lived long in happiness and prosperity.

XV. How the Sun ate up His Children.

The Sun (*Singi*) and moon *(Chāndu)* are related to each other as brother and sister. Of the stars *(iṗil-ko)* the more brilliant are the children of the Sun and the rest are the children of the Moon. The great heat that emanated from the Sun and his children,

troubled all creation. One day the Sun asked her sister for some vegetable curry.

She gave him a dish of curry made of the lotus flower *(Sālkid-bā)*. The curry tasted exceedingly sweet. And so the Sun asked his sister what the curry was made of. The Moon, with a view to save creation from being scorched up by the cumulative heat emanating from the Sun and his children, cunningly replied, "This curry is made of the flesh of my children, the stars". And the Moon soon afterwards took care to keep her own children in hiding. The Sun began to eat up his own children, and thus one by one the brilliant stars were eaten up—all except one who had gone to a distant place for dancing. This was Bhuṛka or the Morning Star.

XVI. THE STORY OF DALEL SING AND MAKUND SING. [38]

An old Birhōṛ couple had two sons, Dalel Sing and Makund Sing by name. While other young men of the *ṭāṇḍā* worked, Dalel and Makund would loaf about, doing nothing. One day the old couple went to the jungles to collect creepers yielding fibres of which strings and ropes are made. They came across a *lāmā jūrū* or *gūngū* bush which was laden with fruit known as *chihōr*. The old woman began to gather the fruit while the old man began to cut and collect the creepers. When the woman had gathered quite a heap of *chihōr* fruit, she opened a few and found them all stuffed with silver coins. Then the couple made bags or receptacles with the creepers to carry the fruit home. The bigger receptacles called *pōtōms* were

[38] This story was related to me by Budhu Birhor of Pahar-Sing (thana Angara, Dt. Ranchi) who had heard it from some Uthlu Birhors of the Hazaribagh District.

carried home by the man in a carrying-pole, and the smaller receptacles known as *dipil* were carried by the woman on her head. When the do-nothing sons saw what the *chihōr* fruits contained, they were elated with joy at the sight of so much silver. They shook off their accustomed lethargy, aspired to be kings of the land, and with an army of labourers set out to demarcate the boundary of the country which they wanted to have for their kingdom. They halted at village Mōsōngā in the Tamar Pargana, and there set up some *chōp (Bauhinia Vahlū)* fibres as the emblem of the Birhōṛ Raj.

Now, it so happened that at that time the Sing Rājā (Rājā of Singhbhum) had invaded the capital of the Rājā of Chōṭā Nāgpur, and the latter fled from his capital and took refuge in Katkin Gaṛh near Paina Pahāṛ (about four miles from Jonha). When the Rājā ot Choṭā Nāgpur heard that Dalel Sing and Makund Sing wanted to found a kingdom wider than his, he sent for them. When Dalel and Makund arrived

at Katkin Gaṛh, they found that the Rājā had gone for a bath in the Hundru Falls. The two brothers went there. When the Rājā saw them, he asked them who they were. On being told their names, the Rājā asked them, 'Have you marked off the area that you want to rule". "Yes, Sir," they answered. Then the Rājā told them "Go and see if the Sing Rājā is still at my capital or has left it. If he be there still, slay him, and if he has left, bring me news, and you shall have the territory that you seek". They accordingly went to the capital of the Choṭā Ngāpur Rājā and found that the Sing Rājā had gone back to his own kingdom. Then Dalel Sing and Makund Sing returned to Katkin Gaṛh and informed the Rājā that his enemy had departed.

Thereupon the Rājā returned to his capital with them. The two Birhōṛ brothers lived at the Rājā's palace for a few days and then asked him when he was going to give them the promised Rāj. The Rājā consulted his counsellors, and decided that the most troublous part of the country

should be assigned to them and if they could subjugate it and survive they might rule there as kings. And so the Rājā assigned to them the country then occupied by the Ramgaṛh Rājā. When they arrived at Ramgaṛh, the Rājā of the place had gone out to take a bath. The two Birhōṛ brothers waylaid him and cut off his head with a battle axe, and occupied his territory. The ruins of buildings [39] now seen at Rāmgaṛh are [pointed out as] the remains of the Birhōṛ Rājā's palace. Dalel Sing and Makund Sing next fought and killed the chiefs of Chaingaṛha, Karanpura, Gola and eighteen other chiefs and ruled over the entire country. The present Rājās of Ramgaṛh are the descendants of the Birhōṛ Rājās Dalel Sing and Makund Sing. [40]

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[39] They are really the ruins of the forts and buildings of the Chiefs of Ramgarh, the ancestors of the present Raja of Padma, who occupied it for about a hundred years after they left Badam in 1670. Ramgarh is about thirty miles from Ranchi.

[40] The present Ramgarh (Padma) Rajas claim to be descendants of one Bagdeo, the younger of two Rajput brothers (the elder being known as Singdeo)

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Such are some specimen of Birhōṛ folk stories, the dramatic recital of which with characteristic gestures and varying intonations to an eager and intensely sympathetic audience has to be actually witnessed to appreciate their full significance to the narrator and the listeners. The minds of the narrator and his listeners appear to electrify and react upon each other and combine in moulding the style and diction of the narrative, of which a halting translation in a foreign tongue can give no idea. At one of these evening recitations you find the audience *en rapport*, as it were, with the story-teller, listening with rapt attention as if to their own utterances, punctuating the narrative now and again with nods of approval, exclamations of pity or of surprise

who are said to have come from Bundelkhand and taken service under the then Rājā of Chōtā-Nāgpur. Bagdeo gradually carved out a kingdom for himself after duly subjugating the petty chiefs of the territory now known as Ramgarh. The geneology of the present Raj family names one Dalel Sing as the fourth in descent from Bagdeo and Makund Sing (1763—1772) as tenth in descent.

and bursts of hearty laughter. Besides affording delightful recreation, these stories supply a rude kind of food for the intellect, imagination, and emotions of this primitive people, and serve to blend their rude present with a ruder past—to weave together their present rude beliefs, customs, and modes of life with a ruder stage which they have since outgrown but reminiscences of which linger on in these folk stories. True, some of their folktales appear to have been borrowed from their neighbours of a somewhat higher culture; but the matter and form of those stories have been so transformed by their own ways of thought and expression, and their own intellectual and emotional needs, and have been so interwoven with elements from beliefs and customs, arts and crafts characteristic of their own social life, that they may be fairly regarded as genuine social products of the tribe.

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CHAPTER XII.

Science and Natural History, Fine Arts and the Useful Arts, Games and Amusements.

I. Science and Natural History.

The primitive Birhōṛ, like his civilized fellowman, seeks to explain to himself the causes of natural phenomena according to his own feeble lights. Ignorant of the proper method of scientific investigation, he naturally draws mostly upon his imagination and invents explanations which, though crude and often fantastic, appear to satisfy the primitive mind.

We have already seen how the Birhōṛ has invented or perhaps borrowed and adapted myths to explain the creation of man, the position of the sky, and the origin of the stars.

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Origin of Solar and Lunar Eclipses.

As for the causes of the eclipses of the Sun and the Moon, these luminaries, Birhōṛ myths tell us, stood security for the debts of poor men. The creditors now and again send *chāprasis* or bailiffs to arrest the Sun and the Moon for the debts of those for whom they stood security. When the Sun or the Moon is thus seized by the bailiff and there is a struggle, the luminary concerned is for a while partly or totally concealed from view, and we call it a solar eclipse or a lunar ecilpse, as the case may be. On the occasion of a lunar eclipse a Birhōṛ strikes two iron implements against each other three times, apparently to scare away the poor bailiffs, and then exposes the iron implements in the open. Later, these implements are given to a blacksmith who makes them into bracelets and anklets to be worn on the arms and legs of children to protect them from the evil attentions of spirits and to ward off bad dreams (of ghosts and the like).

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The Morning Star is called by the Birhōṛ the *Bhūṛkā* and the Evening Star as the *Kidū Ipil.* The bright star that apears earlier than the *Bhūṛkā* is called the *Kumbuṛu lāgū Ipil* (thief-driving star). In a year in which the *Kidū Ipil* appears to the Birhōṛ to be more in evidence than the *Bhūṛkā*, the Birhōṛ apprehends famine or scarcity; and in a year in which the *Bhūṛkā* is more in evidence than the *Kidū-Ipil*, plenty of game and other food is expected. The reason which the Birhōṛ assigns for this is as follows: Evening is the time when the Birhōṛs on their return home with game or other eatables from the forest take as hearty a meal as they can procure, and the *Kidū Ipil* seeing the Birhōṛs happy and rejoicing evening after evening, reports to *Bhagwān* (God) that the Birhōṛs have plenty and to spare, and so God sends famine. But the Bhūṛkā sees the Birhōṛs rising hungry from their beds at dawn and reports to *Bhagwān* that

The Stars.

the Birhōṛs are famishing for want of food. And God accordingly sends them plenty.

The origin of Hail-storms and Hoar-frost.

The formation of hail-stones is thus accounted for by the Birhōṛ: In olden times the climate of the Birhōṛ country was much colder than it is now, and hoar-frost *(rātāng)* used to 'fall from above' every night and was found in the morning covering the surface of the earth. But the climate is much warmer now than of old and we have much less frost now than before and that too only for a short time during the year. So the frost goes on accumulating in the sky and falls down from time to time as hail-stones (*āril*). Some Birhōṛs say that hoar-frost *(rātāng)* is the 'offspring' of hail-stones. If hoar-frost does not 'fall' as soon as it 'takes birth' (*i. e.*, is formed), it goes on 'growing' and later falls down as 'full-grown' (fully-developed) hail-stones.

The rainbow, according to the Birhōṛ, is formed by water which the *Bāṇḍe-lēlē*

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The origin of the Rain-bow.

snake gurgles out of its mouth.

The mythical heroes Rām-Lakhshman have an old grudge against the species of yellowish frog known as *Chōkey* which leaps about from tree to tree and croaks at night in the rainy season. Whenever Rām-Lakhshman see one of these frogs, they shoot their arrows at it with their mighty bow from above and the roaring sound of the huge bow is what men call thunder, and the arrow-heads come down as thunder-bolts *(ṭher)*. The Birhōṛ identifies these thunderbolts with prehistoric stone-celts which are now and then picked up or ploughed up or dug up in the fields or elsewhere. These stone implements are called by the Birhōṛ *ṭher-diri* or thunder-stones.

The origin of the Thunder and Thunder-bolt.

An Earth-quake is attributed by the Birhōṛ to a giant who sleeps in the bowels of the earth, turning on his sides.

The Earth-quake.

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The seasons and the cardinal points.

The Birhōṛs recognise three seasons: *viz.*, *sitāng din* or the summer, *Rābāng din* or the cold season, and *Jārgi dā* or the rainy season.

The Birhōṛs recognize only the four cardinal points, namely, *Singi rākāb* (*lit*, the direction in which the Sun rises) or the east, *Singi āyūb* (*lit.*, the direction in which the Sun sets or causes evening) or the west, the *Bō-kandru* (*lit.*, the direction of the head *i. e.*, of a corpse) or the north, and *Kāṭā-jambar* (*lit.*, the direction of the feet *i. e.*, of a corpse) or the south. Usually, however, the Sanskritic terms *Uttar* and *Dakshin*, employed by their Hindu and Hinduised neighbours, are used by the Birhōṛs for north and south respectively.

Numerals and counting.

Although the Birhōṛs have words for numerals up to ten (see Appendix) they generally use the Hindi numerals. They count by scores and use the fingers beginning with the little finger of the left hand and counting three on each finger

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from bottom upwards, (i. e., on each of the three joints of a finger, leaving out the tips), thus making fifteen, and then counting the five finger-tips and thus completing a score.

To keep records of articles or coins taken or paid, the Birhōr makes knots on a string.

Records of number.

The number of things of the same kind taken or given at one time are represented by knots placed close to one another, and those of the same kind taken or given at a different time are represented by knots on the same string a little apart from the former group of knots.

Although the current coin of the land consists of coins of the British Goverment mints, barter is more in

Currency.

vogue among the Birhōrs than buying and selling for cash.

Wooden cups, known as *pailās*, of different sizes, are, when necessary, used as grain-measures. As for

Weights and measures.

iron or other weights, ordinarily the Birhōr uses

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none. Nor is the weighing beam in common use amongst them.

Diseases and Medicines.

The two diseases which are commonly met with among the people are Fever and a kind of bladder affection which they call *Rās Kodrā* (strangury) and which is attributed to walking bareheaded in the sun. The Birhōṛ is a good field naturalist and utilises various plants and tubers for medicinal and other purposes. Thus, as a common remedy for Fever he uses pills made by pounding together the bark of *Sinkṛi-bā*, the tuber of *tiri bāsī kāndā*, and the vegetables known as *sega-dāla*, *rāi-pān*, *rām-dāton*, and *ban-ghongrā*. A common remedy for *Rās kōndrā* or strangury is a tuber known as *bāns-kohoṛā* which is pounded and mixed with sugar and eaten.

Stimulants and Narcotics, and Religious Observances connected therewith.

Tobacco is usually taken in the form of powder which is mixed with lime and chewed. A few Birhōṛs have taken to smoking cigarettes *(phikā)* made up of bits of tobacco-leaf rolled up in a *sāl*-leaf. Very

rarely some old Birhōṛ may be found smoking hemp *(gānjā.)* Rice-beer is the favourite drink of the Birhōṛs as of other aboriginal tribes of Choṭā Nāgpur. The method of preparation is the same [41] except that the Birhōṛ uses a bamboo sieve to strain the liquor. Before drinking home-brew, the Birhōṛ must put down a few drops on the ground in the name of his ancestor-spirits or *hāpṛōm.* When the Birhōṛ is out on a hunting expedition, whenever he wants to chew tobacco-powder (which is always mixed with a little lime) he must first drop on the ground a pinch of the powder in the name of his ancestor-spirits.

II. Fine Arts.

Such artistic capacity as the Birhōṛs possess is expressed more in their music, songs and dances than in either representative or decorative or symbolic art.

The Birhōṛs have three principal varie-

[41] Vide, *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, pp. 167-68.

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ties of dances known severally as the *Dōng*, the *Lāgṛē*, and the *Mūṭkār*. In addition to these, the Jāghi section of the tribe appears to have adopted from neighbouring tribes the *Jadūr* (with *Genā*) and the *Karam* (with *Khemṭā*, *Jhumar*, and *Hānsdā*) dances. A few *Uṭhlā* groups, too, may now be seen dancing the *Karam* dance. Each of these dances have their appropriate songs known respectively as the *Dōng siring*, the *Lāgṛē siring* and *Mūṭkār siring* and so forth. The characteristic Birhōṛ dances—the *Dōng*, the *Lāgṛē* and the *Mūṭkār* are really marriage dances and are danced in accompaniment to marriage songs on occasions of weddings. A few specimens of *Dōng* and *Mūṭkār* songs are given below. *Lāgṛē* songs are mostly worded in Hindi.

Songs and Dances.

Dong Siring (Dong song.)

Kitā-lātār-rē jik ;
Bānūng-lātār-rē hārbā ;
Tāi-ālangmehālē jik dō
Therāng-ālāngmehālē hārba.

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[TRANSLATION.]

Under yon palm-tree [was] a porcupine;
Within yon ant-hill [was] a *hārbā* [42],
With our arrow we have shot the porcupine,
From afar we have shot the *hārbā*.

Dong Siring.

Chetān kūlhirē Muchi-tūmdā,
Lātār kūlhirē māndāṛiā ;
Birid misi ho māndāṛiā,
Lōlō situmkō ālōm bātāō.

[TRANSLATION.]

On th'upper end of the road [lies] the Mōchi's drum ;
Farther down the road [rests] the drummer !
For once, O Drummer, arouse thyself,
Mind not the [earth's] heat nor the sun !

Dong Siring.

Sārjom ṭheṛārē chāndō hōpōn enejkānāko,
Sōnārō tūmdā rupārō ṭāmāk,
Tāmbā ḍāṇḍōm tikin ruikānā.

[42] This is the name of a small animal with a scaly skin.

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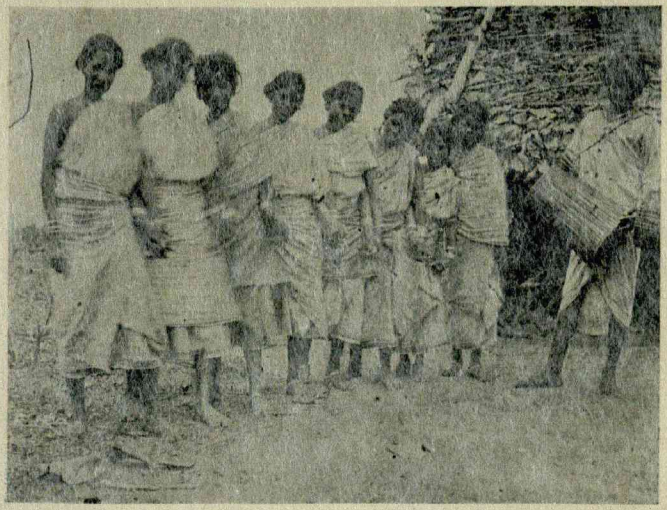


Plate XXXII.—Birhōṛ women at a dance.

[TRANSLATION.]

Up above the *sāl*-tree dance the children
of the Moon ![43]
[Their] Silver *nāgera* [44] and *māndal* [44]
of gold,
[Played on with] Copper sticks [how sweet]
at mid-day sound !

Mutkar Siring.

Gāṛā beṛā dōktā rōā ledāing;
Dōktā dō pāṇḍu-ānā.
Pāṇḍu būṛi hōntē kuṛi
Sindūr bāṭikiāing.

[TRANSLATION.]

Tobacco by the river side I sowed,
The tobacco [with heat] turned white.

[43] The children of the Moon are the stars. [*Vide* Folk-tale No. XV, pp. 486—7 *ante.*]

[44] *Nagera (tāmāk)* and *māndāl (tumḍā)* are the two varieties of drum in general use among the aborigines of Chota Nagpur.

Th'white-headed old dame's girl, I seized
And her forehead with vermilion smeared.[45]

Mutkar Siring.

Nāmdōnām sāsāntānā
Hāṛām-mē dō hāsutānā
Hāṛām-mē gōijānrē
Bindārbichāoām.

[TRANSLATION.]

Now thou art dancing [free from care],
Thy old man [at home] lies ill ;
But should thy old man [soon] be dead,
Who knows [with whom and where]
thou'lt go !

Mutkar Siring.

Lāpu lāpu noṛāring tāhikenā.
Sonā chitā lākṛā dō lōṛō-lidīāe

[45] This refers to the *Sipūndūr bāplā* or marriage by forcibly anointing vermilion on the forehead of a girl *(Vide* pp. 176-7 *ante.)*

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संस्कृति मंत्रालय · भारत सरकार

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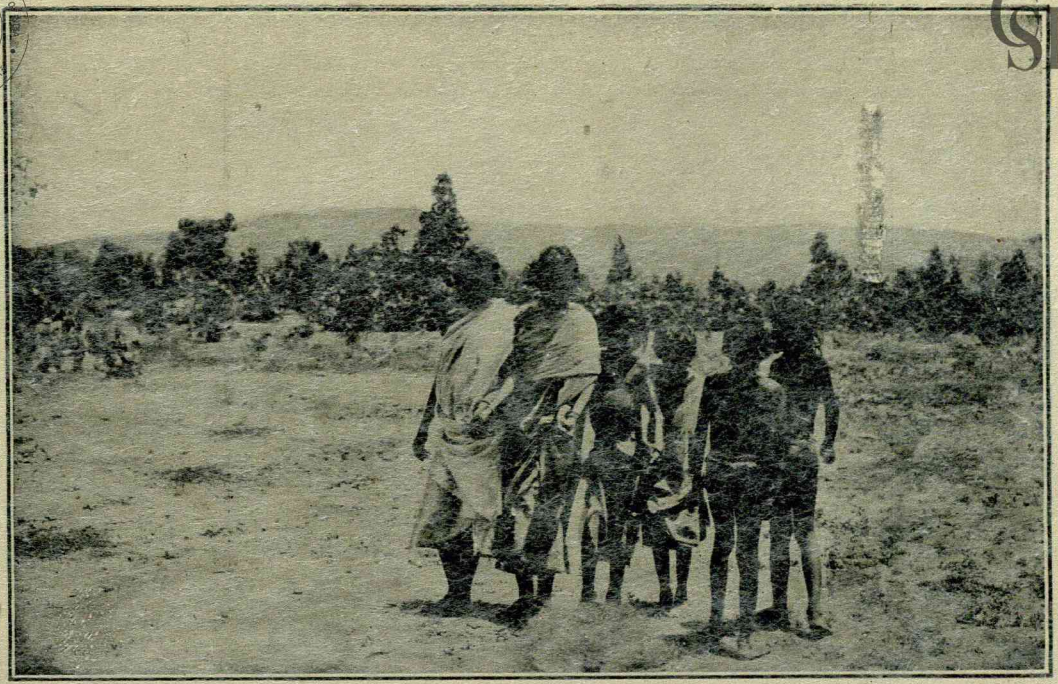


Plate XXXIV.—Birhōṛ dance.

Bāṇḍā setā tāpikanerē tō
Jibōn tāhi enāting.

[TRANSLATION.]

In a rickety hut I dwell, [and once]
The gold-hued leopard on me would pounce,
But [my] tail-less dog being by my side,
My life by him was saved.

Musical Instruments.

Besides two kinds of drums known respectively as *tāmdā* (Hindi, *Māndal*) and *ṭāmāk* (Hindi, *nāgerā*), the Birhōṛs make and use the *tirio* or bamboo flute with 3 or 5 or 7 holes along its length and stopped by the fingers, the *Kendrā* or banjo with a wooden body and a sounding board covered with the skin of the *torhot* lizard and strings played with a bow, and clappers and ankle-bells *(ghūngūrs)* both made of brass.

The interval, modulation and rhythm of their music, either vocal or instrumental, appear to resemble those of their congeners the Muṇḍās very closely.

House-architecture.

As may be expected, the Birhōṛ is almost a stranger to architecture as an art which combines with practical utility a pleasing symmetry of form—the close correlation of every detail with each other and the whole. In the eyes of the civilized man, a Birhōṛ hut is as much devoid of beauty of design and execution as of practical utility. The typical conical hut (figured in the *frontispiece*) of the *Uṭhlū* Birhōṛ is a little less than five feet in height and about nine feet in diameter, and the only opening which serves as the doorway is not more than twenty inches wide at the bottom (where it is widest) and about twenty-two inches in height. These huts are made by sticking in the ground, in something like circle, a number of *sāl* saplings or leafy boughs of some big trees, in a slanting position so that their tops meet at a point, and then thatching over this wooden framework with either *gāngā (Bahunia Scandens)* or *sāl* (*shorea robusta*) leaves and placing other saplings or branches

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of trees over against these leaves for further protection. Such a hut is naturally used only for sleeping at night and keeping the scanty possessions of a family. These possessions consist generally of one or two pieces of cloth and perhaps a small quantity of dried *mohua* (*bassia latifoliā*) kept in a bamboo basket, a hunting net and perhaps some *chob* strings with which to make carrying nets or hunting-nets, a brass jug (*lōṭā*), and usually one or more brass dishes and cups, one or two mats made of wild date leaves, and one or two winnowing baskets (*keier* or *sūp*), and a small earthen jug containing rice (*chauli jāng*) for offering to the spirits. Earthen cooking-pots and water-pots are kept outside the hut, and cooking, the husking of grains and all other house-hold work are carried on in the open. Each hut (*kūmbā*) is tenanted only by a man and his wife, each married son having a separate *kūmbā* of his own, and grown up unmarried boys sleeping together in a separate hut or huts and so also grown-up unmarried

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girls in a separate hut or huts. The more pretentious hut of the Jāghi Birhōṛ (*vide* pp. 48–49), with its slightly raised floor and sloping roof usually thatched over with leaves or grass and with its walls made of side-posts filled in with wattle and mud, are imitations on a smaller scale of the similar style of huts of their more civilized neighbours. Midway between these two styles, the conical huts or sheds of an *Uṭhlā* encampment and the rectangular huts of a Jāghi settlement, stand the triangular leaf-huts generaly met with in newly founded Jāghi settlements and sometimes also in old settlements. These appear to mark the transition between the conical *Kūmbā* of the *Uṭhlā* Birhōṛ and the regular rectangular hut of the Jāghi Birhōṛ.

Sculpture and Carving.

As may be expected, there is no attempt at sculpture or carving on the stones and wooden pegs that represent the deities and spirits to whom the Birhōṛs make offerings or sacrifices. Their only attempt

at carving that I have come across is on combs (*sāwār*) which a few Jāghi Birhōṛs make of *sisu* or other wood. On these combs, rude figures of horses or other animals or birds are occasionally carved by the men.

Painting and Drawing.

Painting is an art practically unknown to the Birhōṛ. There is little of art in the smearing of the arms or chests of young Jāghis with a white paint made of rice-flour on the occasion of the Sohorāi festival. The marks of white rice-flour paste alternating with marks of a red paste of *geru* earth made on the outer walls and posts of certain Jāghi Birhōṛ huts on the occasion of the Dasahārā festival are neither decorative in their purpose nor indicative of any artistic capacity. These white marks are said to stand for the white ashes of the deceased progenitors of the owner of the hut and the red marks for their blood. As the goddess Ṭhākurāṇi or Devī is believed to visit people's huts

on the Dasharā night, these white and red marks are painted on the walls and posts to inform the goddess that the ashes and blood of the deceased parents of the owner of the hut were duly offered to her. The diagrams drawn on the ground with rice-flour &c. on the occasions of certain socio-religious ceremonies (such as at the *Tāk-Chāṇṛhi* ceremony, p. 153 *ante* and the *Sōsō-Bonga* festival, p. 355 *ante*) though not pictorial or naturalistic but merely symbolic and conventional in their character, are generally well drawn. The people appear to have forgotten the exact meaning of these drawings.

III. Useful Arts.

The food-quest of the Birhōṛs, as we have seen, takes the forms of hunting wild animals of the forest and collecting roots, fruits and honey. Fishing in their native streams and pools is also occasionally practised to some little extent. Their methods of hunting have been described

Collection of Food.

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in a previous chapter. The net is the chief appliance used by the Birhōṛ in hunting. For each net two wooden poles called *ṭāinis* are carried by the hunter and planted on the ground to hold the net in position. Wooden clubs are used to kill animals. *Tāngās* or axes are also carried by the hunters to clear bushes and other undergrowths. In ordinary hunts, bows and arrows are seldom used, but in the annual *disūm sendrā* or territorial hunt, some of the hunters may be seen carrying bows and arrows with iron heads. Arrows with wooden heads are used to kill birds. Pellet bows are also used for the same purpose. The use of bird-lime in catching birds is considered 'sinful' by the Birhōṛ. The most usual method of fishing is to put two parallel embankments extending from bank to bank of a stream which is naturally shallow or has been rendered shallow by diverting its water along a new channel, then to bale out the remaining water with a

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bamboo basket called *dātōm*, and pick up fish by the hand from the slime and mud in the embanked channel. A less frequent method is to dam up a portion of a stream or tank when it partly dries up in summer, and sprinkle into it a quantity of a poisonous powder which is prepared by pounding up the stems of the *sākūri-pāṭi* plant to which powdered fruit of the *pōṛkā* plant is sometimes added. The water is then thoroughly stirred with a long twig or branch of some tree. Fishing with casting nets or fishing traps like the *kūmmi* and the *pilni*, such as are used by their neighbours the *Māṇḍās* and the *Orāons*, is not practised. The use of the fishing-rod, line and hook is almost equally unknown, although a few Jāghi Birhōṛs have been occasionally found to try it. No magical practices or religious observances appear to be connected with fishing among the Birhōṛs.

Although the Birhōṛs, as a tribe, have not as yet taken to agriculture, and the cultivation of rice is practically unknown

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Food and its Preparation.

among them except in a few sporadic instances among the Jāghis, rice is highly esteemed as food. They generally exchange game, honey or *chōp* strings for rice, and, whenever available, take a meal of rice boiled in water,—boiled *sāgs* or edible leaves usually forming a side dish. Salt and red pepper and sometimes turmeric are the only condiments they use. Honey-combs together with the eggs and larvæ in them are eaten with relish. These are eaten either raw or after being scorched in the fire with a *sāl* leaf placed above and another below them. The Birhōṛ drinks honey without diluting it in water, and water is drunk afterwards. Food is usually cooked by the women inside their huts among the Jāghis, and outside their conical (and sometimes triangular) leaf-sheds (*kūmbās*) by the Uṭhlus. Their hearth or *chūlhā* consists of a shallow roundish hole in the ground with three low conical projections or horns above the ground on three sides, a little apart from one another, over which the

cooking-pot is placed. Fuel-wood is shoved in through the opening on that side over which there is no projecting horn. Food for men and women are cooked together. Father and sons take their meals before the mother and girls do. A man will not eat from the same plate or drink from the same cup with his wife or other married woman—not even with a married daughter: It is believed that if he does so, the spirits will not accept sacrifices offered by him, and, as a consequence, some misfortune is sure to overtake him.

I have not come across any traditions among the Birhōṛs regarding the origin of fire or of the art of cooking.

Fire-making. The orthodox method of making fire is with two pieces of split bamboo, each about two feet long. These fire-sticks are called *gūlgūs*, one of which has a slight notch cut into it towards the middle of its length and is called the *engā* or the female stick. The *engā* stick is placed on the ground with the notch looking

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upwards and one end pressed under the operator's left foot and the far end placed in a slightly inclined position over a stone to keep it steady. The other stick which is called the *sānṛē* or male stick is inserted perpendicularly into the notch on the *cugā* stick and rapidly twirled round and round between the hands until the charred dust produced by this process of drilling takes fire. The Birhōṛ does not keep fire continually burning, but produces it with the *gūlgū* whenever required.

Ceremonial Observances connected with Fire.

There is no rule as to age, sex or condition of persons who may make fire with the *gūlgū*. On the day of the ceremonial purification or *ṭhaṭhi* ceremony after the birth of a Birhōṛ child (*vide* pp. 228 etc., *ante*) as also on the occasion of the *hoyon* or purificatory shaving ceremony (*vide* pp. 275–6 *ante*) after a death in the family, all fire in the house is ceremonially extinguished and the cinder and ashes in the hearth are thrown away, and new fire is lighted.

On a day on which any sacrifices have to be offered in a Birhōṛ family, no fire nor even fire-sticks or *gūlgūs* belonging to the family will be given away or lent to others, for otherwise some calamity, such as the death of one of its members, is sure to visit the family.

Vegetable and other Food.

The Birhōṛs have discovered the properties of a variety of wild plants, leaves, flowers, fruits, tubers and other products of their native forests. Some of these they use for food and others for medicinal purposes. The principal tubers and roots which they boil and eat are the *pēṭē sāngā*, *arrhā*, *durā*, *kundri*, *kūkūi*, and *piskā* yams. A few of these are especially treated to render them innocuous and fit for food. Among the edible leaves which are boiled and taken as side-dishes with boiled rice or other grains are those of the *jereng*, *hāsā-ārā*, *koinār*, *kāṭāi*, *māṭhhā*, *māngā* and *pūi*. Among wild fruits commonly eaten raw by the Birhōṛs may be mentioned, *keond* (*melanoxylon*), *piar*

(*Buchania latifolia*), *Kadam* (*Anthocephalus Cadamba*), *bar* (*ficus bengalensis*), *pipar* (*Ficus religiosa*), *koer* (*Zizyphus jujube*), *kanthal* or the jack-fruit (*artocarpus integrifolia*), mangoes and figs. Fruits of the *mohuā* (*bassia latifolia*) and the *sakhuā* (*shorea robusta*) besides pumpkin gourds of the *kōhnṛa* and *lāuā* varieties, the *dōṛō* or lady's finger, the *simbi* or beans, are boiled and eaten.

Of animal food, the Birhōṛ eats almost anything that he can procure, except the flesh of his totem beast, bird or reptile, and the flesh of tigers, bears, jackals, wild cats, domestic cats, snakes and frogs, and,—among birds,—of crows, cuckoos, kites, storks and vultures. The tortoise is not eaten but fishes of all available varieties are relished as food. Though reputed to have been anthropophagous at one time, the Birhōṛs of our days are not known to eat human flesh. Nor have they ever been accused of offering human sacrifices.

We have seen that on the occurrence of a death in a Birhōṛ *tāṇḍā*, no one in the

Ceremonial restrictions and observances connected with Food.

settlement is permitted to eat animal meat until the *hoyon* or purificatory shaving ceremony is performed *(vide* p. 265 *ante)*. It is worth noticing that the violation of this taboo is regarded as tantamount to eating the flesh of the deceased person.

The Birhōṛ will not eat *mahuā* flowers or *mahuā* fruit or upland rice or *gūndli*, until he has offered the first fruits of the season to the spirits. Similarly he will not drink honey from *Dhāwāi* flowers until a few drops of his first find of such honey in its season is offered to the spirits.

Offering of the first fruits to the spirits.

The domestic utensils of the Birhōṛs are necessarily few in number and simple in construction. In the manufacture of *chōp* strings, he uses a small bamboo *salā* or needle consisting of a short piece of thin bamboo split at both

Domestic Utensils, Tools and Weapons.

ends, a small peg of some hard wood, such as *sisu* or *sāl*, called *chāṭeli* for tightening the twisted strands of a string, and a *hönöd* or wooden polisher for the strings. A knife called *hāsid chhāri* is employed for polishing or plaining the carrying-pole *(bāhinga)*, and a *basilā* or chisel is used in making rude wooden cups and bowls. Mortars fixed in the ground called *kāṇḍis* and pestles called *(sāmāṭ)* are made of wood by Jāghi Birhōṛs. The Uṭhlus make wooden *sāmāṭs* and removable wooden mortars called *ūkhūrs*. The net, as we have seen, is used in hunting. A Birhōṛ, while going out to hunt, carries, besides his net, two *ṭāinis* or poles to fix the nets and a *ṭhengā* or club to kill the game. Some members of the hunting party carry *ṭāngis* or axes to clear bushes *etc.* from their path, and one or more men who may possess a *tablā* or a *pharsā* axe carry these to kill and cut up games when required.

Except on the occasion of a *disūm-sendrā* or big tribal hunting expedition in which a few of the younger men

may sometimes be seen carrying bows and arrows with iron heads, such bows and arrows are seldom carried or used. But Birhōṛ boys employ pellet bows with wooden heads to kill birds. Although the use of bird-lime is avoided as sinful, a simple noose called *phānsi* for snaring birds is sometimes used. It is made with the hair of the cow's tail by some Birhōṛs. Besides hunting nets *(jhāli)*, the Birhōṛs make small nets called *tāṛ-jhāli* for snaring squirrels *(chiḍrā)* and similar small animals, and make and sell strings and ropes of *chōp* fibres for different purposes, such as *dhāuri* ropes for fastening oxen together while threshing corn, *kuā-ḍorā* or ropes for drawing water from wells, *pāṭhhān* or strings for string beds, *jōṛa* ropes for tethering cattle, and strings for carrying-nets or *sikās* which are variously known as *chār-kānia*, *pānch-kānia* or *chhai-kānia*, according to the number of strings used.

Such ornaments and articles of clothing as the Birhōṛs use are all purchased from outside and not made by themselves.

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Dress, Toilet, and Ornaments.

The ordinary clothing of an old man and a stay-at-home Birhōṛ consists solely of a *kaupin* or a short narrow strip of cloth passed between the legs and attached to a waist-string called *ḍāṇḍā-ḍōr* made of *chōp* fibres. From this waist-string a pair of iron pincers *(chimṭā)* for extracting thorns is sometimes suspended, as also a *chānauṭi* or small wooden or metal receptacle for carrying lime which is eaten with powdered tobacco. The average adult Birhōṛ, particularly while going to some village or town, wears a *bhāgoā* or *kāreā* which is a short narrow strip of cloth, one end of which is wrapped round the waist the other end being passed between the legs and tucked in through the part which serves as the girdle. Women wear round the waist a *lāhāngā*, about one and a half to two yards long and one and a half cubit wide. A portion of this cloth is allowed to pass diagonally over the upper part of the body so as to cover the breasts. Children up to

about five years of age go naked, and after that age boys wear either *kaupins* or *bhāgoās*, and girls wear a piece of cloth called *pāṭli* about 4½ feet long and one foot wide. Comparatively well-to-do Jāghi Birhōṛs, when going to some village or town, sometimes wear a short *dhōti* which is simply wrapped round the waist over the *kaupin* or sometimes the *bhāgoā*. They also wear either a *gāmchā* or napkin or a *pechhouri* or wrapper over the shoulders. In the winter, men who can afford to do so wear as a wrapper round the body a *pechouri* and women either an unstriped cloth called *ṭheṭhi* or a striped cloth known as *pāṛia*. At weddings and on festive occasions, people wear the best clothing they possess, but neither the *Nāyā* nor any body else is required to put on any special dress for *pūjās* or other ceremonial purposes. Neither the Nāyā nor any other man, whatever be his position, is required to wear any sort of head-dress as a distinctive mark. As a protection against the sun, a Birhōṛ may occasionally be seen wearing a cloth wound

round the head as a *pāgri*, although round his waist he may be wearing only a *bhāgoā*. Although women wear their hair long, men crop their hair short in order to avoid the hair being entangled in bamboo thickets and other trees and bushes in the jungles. They employ no barbers, but exchange the services of each other for cutting their hair or shaving their beards. Moustaches are worn. The hair on the face is ordinarily not luxuriant; but, when it is so, the moustache is trimmed but the beard is not allowed to grow, being generally shaved clean. We have seen that when a baby is born in a *ṭāṇḍā*, all the men in the *ṭāṇḍā*, whether belonging to the same clan or not, shave their beards by way of ceremonial purification. As for toilet, I have said, that the Birhōṛs, both men and women, bathe in some neighbouring stream or spring about once in a week and, if possible, smear over the skin some oil made either of *surgujā* (*Guizotia Olifera*) seeds or *karanj* (*Pongamia glabra*) seeds or mustard seeds. It is only after this weekly bath and on

occasions of some marriage festival and the like that the women always, and men sometimes, comb their hair either with bamboo combs or wooden combs. The hair is sometimes combed in order to get rid of lice. The comb is seldom worn as an article of adornment. Women comb their hair backwards and sometimes intertwine with it long braids of false hair (*nāchā*) made of sheep's hair or sometimes of human hair, and the whole is formed into a chignon at the back of the head. The only ornaments generally worn by young men consist of one iron bracelet (*berā*) on each arm and bead necklaces purchased from neighbouring markets. Some young men may also be seen with brass rings in the lobes of their ears. Birhōṛ women wear brass bracelets (*berās*) and anklets (*bānkis* and *āndūs*), bead necklaces and sometimes metal necklaces, and brass rings for the fingers and the toes. Nose ornaments and nose-sticks are not in use, but rolled-up strips of palm leaf or *sāl* leaf and short pieces of the stem of the *bajrā* plant are sometimes

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inserted into the ear-hole by way of decoration. Married women smear vermilion on their forehead on festival days, occasions of wedding and the like. Feathers are not worn on the hair as is done by Oraon girls, but, on festive occasions, flowers are worn. And they celebrate a form of ceremonial friendship between two girls, the essential ceremony in which consists in the sticking of flowers into each other's ears. And here it may be noticed that the Birhōṛs have adopted various forms of ceremonial friendships in vogue among their aboriginal and non-aboriginal or semi-aboriginal neighbours. A short account of them is given below.

Ceremonial Friendship.

'Flower' Friendship.

When two boys or two girls perceive a a strong attachment for each other and desire to make the bond permanent, they may enter into a form of artificial friendship with the approval of their

parents. The ceremonies in the *Phōōl* (flower) form of friendship consist in each girl sticking a flower into the other's hair in the case of girls, and sticking flowers above each other's ears in the case of boys, clasping each other in a cordial embrace, and calling each other 'my flower' (*phōōl*) and swearing eternal friendship. Mutual feasting and present of clothes to each other follow either on the same day or on a subsequent day. The two girls or boys will no longer call each other by name but address each other as 'Flower' and speak of each other as 'my Flower'.

A similar friendship called *Karamḍāir* is formed between either two boys or two girls.

Karam-Dair Friend-ship.

The ceremonies are the same except that in place of a flower, a *karam* (*Adina cardifolia*) leaf is stuck into the hair in the case of girls or inserted above the ear in the case of boys; and this is done only on the morning following the day of the Karam festival.

The *Jiliā-ḍāir* form of ceremonial friend-

ship is entered into by young men (and not girls) amongst themselves. The ceremonies are the same as in the *Karam ḍāir* friendship except that a *jitiā* leaf is worn above the ear in place of a *karam* leaf, and this is done on the morning following the *Jitiā Pūjā* day, and a branch of the *jitiā* tree is planted in the *āngan*, and it is before this *jitiā* branch that the alliance is ceremonially entered into.

Jitia-Dair Friend-ship.

Somewhat analogous to the *Jitiāḍāir* friendship of boys is the *Jāwā-ḍāli* friendship of girls. On the morning following the Karam festival, two girls who desire to enter into this form of friendship insert ceremonially above each other's ears a barley shoot grown for the purposes of the festival. The mutual feasting and present of clothes are the same as in other forms of friendship.

Jawa-dali Friendship.

When two girls bear the same name,

they sometimes enter into the *Sāpāki (lit,* name-sake) or *Mitin* form of friendship, with the same avowal of eternal friendship, exchange of presents of clothes and mutual feasting as in other forms of friendship. After these girls are married, their husbands address their wives' *sāpākis* or *mitins* as their own *mitins.* Sometimes when two boys or men have the same names they enter into the *mitān* form of friendship with similar ceremonies.

Sapaki or Mitin Friendship.

The *Sahiārō* form of friendship is entered into by two married women, one of whom possesses the same number of sons as the other. This form of friendship is found only among Jāghi Birhōṛs and not among the Uṭhlūs and is clearly borrowed from their neighbours the Orāons and others. As a matter of fact, this form of friendship is entered into only in certain years all over the countryside when a mandate (none knows whence it proceeds) goes round

Sahiaro Friendship.

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after the winter paddy is harvested that in that year *Sahiārō* alliances have to be contracted. Jāghi Birhōṛ women enter into such alliances often with women of other tribes or castes in their neighbourhood. The ceremonies observed on this occasion have been described in my monograph on *The Orāons of Chota Nagpur* (pp. 396-402); but generally Birhōṛ women usually simplify them and do not go through all the elaborate procedure gone through by Orāon women, unless one of the contracting parties belongs to the Orāon tribe or some other caste or tribe who may be particular about the details of the ceremonies.

Prasad and Ganga-Jal Friendships.

Two forms of ceremonial friendship which the Birhōṛs have clearly borrowed or rather imitated from their Hindu or Hinduised neighbours are the Prasād and the Gangā-Jal forms. Both these forms of ceremonial alliance are entered into only by males among themselves. In the Prasād form,

each of the two friends buys some sweets and exchanges his leaf-cup *(dōnā)* of sweets with that of the other, and, in the presence of assembled friends and relatives, each of the two friends clasps the other to the bosom, and distributes the sweets to all present, saying, "From to-day we have become 'Prasāds'. Take this and eat." Mutual exchanges of presents of clothes and feasting follow. Although the name (meaning 'dedicated food') of this form of friendship has been borrowed from their Hindu neighbours, the Hindu practice of exchanging and distributing only sweets offered to some deity has not been adopted. Similarly, in the *Gangā-Jal* form of friendship, the two friends drink a little water from the same *lōṭā*, (not actual Ganges water as among the Hindus but water from any stream) and then embrace each other. Mutual feasting and exchange of presents of clothes follow either on the same day or on a later day.

The fact that in most cases these alliances are formed by Birhōṛs with their neighbours

of other tribes or castes would further appear to indicate that these forms of artificial relationship have been borrowed by the Birhōṛs from their comparatively more civilized neighbours. But these artificial relationships are now regarded by the Birhōṛ as real and sacred as actual blood-relationships. Two such 'friends' are not permitted to take each other's name. Each observes all ceremonial pollutions and taboos of the other's family at birth, death and marriage.

Games and Amusements.

The Birhōṛ cannot be said to have any games of movement intended to develop and exercise physical powers; and indeed they require none. From a very early age, Birhōṛ children become, of necessity, inured to all sorts of hardship and fatigue. I have known one Birhōṛ family going practically without food for a day and a

Physical Endurance, Walking, Climbing, Swimming, Throwing, &c.

half. Birhōṛs become accustomed early to walking long distances. In walking, the hands, unless carrying some loads, hang loosely to and fro and are not placed akimbo, and the feet go outwards rather than inwards, and the legs appear bent outwards. A healthy adult Birhōṛ can easily walk from 30 to 40 miles a day and carry a load of about 2 maunds (160 lbs.). The Birhōṛ climbs high trees by catching hold of the trunk. When the straight, high trunk is too thick to be clasped round with the arms, he ties a stone at one end of a long rope and throws that end of the rope over an upper branch, holding the other end of the rope with his hands so that the weighted end may come down, and when it does so, he holds the rope by both the ends, and swings himself up the tree with the help of the rope.

Very few Birhōṛs can swim. Those who do, swim with their arms thrown forward in a swinging circular stroke while the body turns towards the side away from the stroke. Breast-strokes and swimming on

the back are not practised. The Birhōṛ has a good aim in throwing sticks and stones at animals or fruits.

Games of Dexterity and Emulation.

Uṭhlū Birhōṛ boys indulge in practically no athletic games, but the Jāghis have adopted a few from their *Muṇḍā* and other neighbours. The principal games of Jāghi Birhōṛ boys are the Khāṭi and the Chhūṛ. In the *khāṭi* game, in which a number of boys take part, the player propels a small flat piece of wood by holding a short stick upright behind it and striking against this sharply with a third stick.

In the *Chhūṛ*, the players divide themselves into two parties of equal number. Parallel lines are scratched on the ground. Members of one party guard the lines, those of the other seek to enter the furthest portion within the lines which is called the 'salt-house' (*nōngharā*). When the latter party succeed in reaching the 'salt-house' without being touched

by a member of the opposite party guarding the lines, the parties change places.

In the *Dāndā Enā* which is played by young boys, a boy's eyes are blind-folded and his playmates slap him one after another. When he can recognise a boy slapping him, his eyes are uncovered, and the boy who has just slapped him and has been recognised, takes his place and is blind-folded in his turn.

In the *Til-gāṭi* game, seven small holes are made on the ground in each of two parallel lines. In these holes two opposing players shift five small stones about.

In the *Ukā-enā*, one boy hides himself and others try to find him out.

Children's Toys. Children play with a rough-hewn wooden top which they spin on its point by drawing a *chōp* string round its stem. Birhōṛ children also sometimes amuse themselves by winding a *chōp* string round a species of longish fruit known as *helhāṛā* and whirling it round and round by holding one end of the string with the

hands. While the fruit is thus rapidly whirled round, a peculiar rattling sound is produced.

Games of Imitation.

Small Birhōṛ children sometimes amuse themselves by playing at building make-believe huts with sand or dust. This is called *ōṛā-bāi-bāi-enē* (*lit.*, house-make-make-play). Birhōṛ children, both Jāghi and Uṭhlu, play at hunting with miniature hunting-nets in imitation of their elders. Birhōṛ children begin to practise dancing from the age of four or five years.

Of dramatic games, Jāghi Birhōṛ boys have adopted the Jack-fruit game or the *Kāṇṭāra-Kāṇṭāra enē* from the *Muṇḍās*. An account of this game has been given in my monograph on the *Muṇḍās*[46] and is not reproduced here.

Intellectual Amusements.

I have already given a brief account of the intellectual efforts of the Birhōṛs in the

[46] *The Mundas and their Country*. [1912] pp. 492-4.

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shape of myths, songs and folk-stories. Their intellectual efforts also take the shape of riddles which the younger people learn from their elders and with which the younger folk amuse themselves after their evening meals. As for proverbs, I have come across a very few genuine Birhōṛ ones although some *Muṇḍāri* and Hindi proverbs are current amongst them. With reference to a man who criticises the quality of the food offered to him, the Birhōṛ applies the proverb, *Aghāt bākli pōṭhi titā-kānāe, bāng rengech-redō madkōm hō kāe bagiāe dā māṛi hō nunāmea* (*i. e.*, To a well-fed stork the *pōṭhi* fish tastes bitter; otherwise—when it is hungry—it will not omit [to eat] even the *madkam* or *bassia latifoliā* fruit and will drink even *dā-māṛi* or gruel). To an unworthy person presuming to place himself on an equal footing with one above him in social position, the Birhōṛ applies the indelicate proverb—"*Aññe jēje bār bānuā noē bānālo milān nāmkānāe*", (*i. e.*

Proverbs.

[He] has no hair on his private parts, [yet] seeks friendship with the [hairy] bear !)

Riddles.

A few specimens of Birhōṛ riddles or *Lūtūm kā'āni* are given below :—

QUESTION :—*Aṭāmāṭā birko tālārē, miād urī tolekānāe. Mār lūtūmemjā.*
[A bullock is tethered in the middle of a dense jungle. Well, name it.]

ANSWER :—*Lumām.* [The silk-cocoon.]

Q.— *Hātu-rē hāsā-āṛūngkānākō, hāāng gelej-kānākō. Mār lūtūmem.*
[They take out earth in the village, scratch out a hollow. Well, name it.]

A.— *Muid-ko.* [Ants.]

Q.— *Aṭāmāṭā birkō tālārē barchhā bindā-kānā. Mār, lūtūmem.*
[A spear is planted in the middle of a dense forest. Well, name it.]

A.— *Kuril heltā.* [The stem *(kuril)* of a bamboo.]

Q.— *Mōyōn hōpōn dō āngā-enā gumē-kānge tāhikānāe. Mār, lūtūmem.*
[A boy that strikes itself (against

some hard substance) every morning. Well, name it.]

A.— *Med pipini.*

[The eyelid (which on being opened in the morning repeatedly rises and falls like a cloth which the washerman washes by striking it repeatedly against some hard substance.)]

Q.— *Miān hōpōn dō āngāenchi pelhōbe-rāgē tāhikānāe. Mār lāṭāmemjā.*

[A boy that begins rolling over the ground in the morning: Well, name it.]

A.—*Jōnō.* [The broom (with which Birhōṛ women—mostly Jāghis—sweep the floor and the *āngan* in the morning).]

Q.— *Miān tānri-rē dō bāklikō dingēkānā. Mār, lāṭāmēmjā.*

[Storks have collected on a plot of high ground. Well, name it.]

A.— *Jonrā āṭāeākū ohejrē; enakānā.*

[Maize that is being fried on a broken earthen-pot; that is it.]

Q.— *Dubmē Demkā ing dāṛū diju-kānā-ing. Lūtūmem.*

["You get down, O Demkā, (while) I get up the tree."]

A.— *Piskā.* [The Piska creeper (which is supposed to address its yam or tuber as 'Demkā' and ask it to lie under the ground while the creeper itself climbs up a tree).]

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CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

I have now finished my rough sketch of the life and culture of one of the most backward of Chotā Nāgpur tribes. Cut off in their jungle haunts from either extensive or intimate contact with superior cultures, the Birhōṛs exhibit a culture which is, as may be expected, relatively very simple. These denizens of the forests have necessarily had to depend mostly on their natural environment for the satisfaction of their needs. And thus they have worked out their economic adjustment by adopting the hunting of wild animals,—particularly monkeys and other small animals,—the gathering of wild roots, fruits and honey, and the manufacture of wild vegetable fibres into strings,

ropes and nets, as their main economic pursuits. Their choice of this work in *chōp* fibres as their main industry cannot, however, be accounted for solely as a reaction to their present environment; the hereditary tendencies to response, whether innate or acquired in the course of their past history, may also have something to do with this preference. Having once solved their economic problem by adopting monkey-hunting and rope-making as their main occupation, they have stuck to these with considerable conservativeness. And thus even though some Birhōr families now and then settle down in one place and take to some sort of agriculture, they very rarely stick to it for any length of time, but are apt, on the slightest disturbance, to revert to their old life of nomad hunters and gatherers.

As is but natural under such conditions, their social organization, too, is almost as simple as their economic system. Although the Birhōrs, in common with the other

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Muṇḍā-speaking tribes, recognize the larger exogamous patrilineal totemic group of the clan as the controlling factor in the regulation of marriage and kinship, the smaller economic group of the *ṭāṇḍā* or hunting camp is indeed, at the present day, the more effective social unit, possessing, as it does, a greater degree of solidarity born of constant association in the food-quest, participation in common joys and sorrows, joint sacrifices to the same local and departmental spirits and intimate association and emotional rapport on ever-recurring ceremonial and festive occasions.

Although membership of a *ṭāṇḍā* group was originally purely voluntary, it soon came to be determined more or less by birth, the son generally attaching himself to the same *ṭāṇḍā* as his father, unless, as in some cases, he joined, on his marriage, the *ṭāṇḍā* of his wife's people. Sometimes, again, a non-Birhōṛ is adopted as a member of the tribe and of the particular *ṭāṇḍā* to which he attaches himself by union with one of its females. From the

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existing practice of the legitimatization of the children of a Birhōṛ male by a woman of another tribe, and that of the occasional adoption, as a member of the tribe, of a non-Birhōṛ who may have fallen in love with a Birhōṛ female and the consequent inclusion of non-Birhōṛ tribal or caste names (such as Bhāṭ, Bhuiya, Gōār, Māhāli, Mōdi, Mussal) among Birhōṛ clan names, it is evident that the tribe represents, to some small degree, a fusion of peoples and, to a much smaller degree, of cultures. Indeed, the ideas, customs and culture of these adopted members of the tribe have, on the whole, been, more or less, of the same type and level as that of the Birhōṛs, and, in physical type, too, these new-comers do not differ much from that of the Birhōṛs; and thus such intermixture has produced no appreciable effect on Birhōṛ physical type nor any serious complexity in Birhōṛ culture; and Birhōṛ physical type, like Birhōṛ culture, has remained dominant. Still when we find a Birhōṛ's daughter's

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sons inheriting the property of their mother's sonless father, or a sister's son inheriting the property of a deceased Birhōṛ who has left no children or brother's children, we may not unreasonably suspect the influence of racial miscegenation and cultural contact upon a people among whom succesion is ordinarily patrilineal. Birhōṛ myths and folk-tales, dances and music, games and amusements, ceremonial friendships and a few other customs also bear some evidence of cultural contact. As in social so also in economic culture, the contact of cultures and peoples has not been altogether without its effect which is particularly marked among the Jāghi section of the tribe.

As for the clan organization, it has no longer any economic or political function in Birhōṛ society. Besides its social function of regulating marriage, the clan, however, has, as we have seen, one important religious function to this day. This is the annual sacrifice to the clan spirit—*Būrū-bōngā* or *Oṛā-bōngā*—in which men

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of the same clan at each *ṭāṇḍā*, with their faces turned in the direction of their traditional cradle, offer sacrifices to the presiding spirit of the hill-cradle which is believed to possess a mystic connection with their totem, and is represented at the sacrifice by some symbol, such as a bit of the skin, horn, or claw of a bird or beast totem, the cow-bell *(ṭharki)* in the case of the *Gōār* (cowherd) totem and so forth. On such an occasion men of the same clan, belonging to *ṭāṇḍās* close to each other, may sometimes be seen coming together and joining in the sacrificial feast. In these sacrifices, the totem emblem of the clan, as we have seen in a previous chapter, serves as the visible representation of the clan as also of the clan god. In fact, the clan, the clan totem, the clan god and the hill which is reputed to be the cradle of the clan, are not only associated together in thought and ritual but are intuitively identified with one another as analogous aspects of the same supernormal power or force which forms the basis of their

world-view—of their 'science' and religion.

If, as appears probable, the clan organization is historically a later development than the small local food groups or *tāṇḍās* of the collecting stage, it may be reasonably inferred that the case of Birhōṛ society of the present day is one of degeneration from a more organized stage of clan life in the past to their present life of mere nomadic groups of hunters and gatherers. This is in consonance with the tradition still current among the tribe that it originated out of an incestuous union of a Muṇḍā brother with his sister. The erring couple, it is said, were excommunicated by their tribe-fellows and had to wander about in jungles, subsisting on jungle roots, fruits and wild honey. They happened to cut down certain creepers and found that they yielded strong fibres which could be twisted into serviceable strings and ropes; and this led them to adopt work in *chōṛ* fibres as their principal industry. Besides gathering vegetable food, they used to kill small animals such as rats,

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hares, porcupines and the like for food. Later, when the Hindu epic hero Rām Chandra gave the Birhōṛs 'permission' to do so *(vide* p. 427 *ante)*, they took to catching and eating monkeys. In those days of tradition, so my informant [47] told me, the numerical strength of the tribe was smaller than at present, but it has since increased through occasional intermarriage with men and women of other tribes. Whether this account of the increase in their population since the days of Rām Chandra be well-founded or not, there can be no doubt, however, that a process of depopulation has now set in. Whatever be the cause of the recent decrease in the population of the Birhōṛs, whether it be the increasing economic stress due, among other things, to the rapid deforestation of the country, or whether the decreasing zest in life due to the gradual elimination of their old habits

[47] Budhu Birhor of the *Andi* clan, now belonging to a Jāghi *tāndā* on a hill near village Paharsing in *thana* Angara, Ranchi district.

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and customs, or other circumstances too, be responsible for it, the fact that a process of depopulation is now at work in the tribe, is amply borne out by statistics. The census figures show that the Birhōṛ population in Chota Nagpur has dwindled from 2,340 in 1911 to 1610 in 1921.

To return to their social organization: As a result of the clan organization, the relationship system of the tribe is what is known as classificatory, though not of the thorough-going type common in Polynesia and called the Hawaiian system. There is now no trace in Birhōṛ society of any form of sexual communism out of which the classificatory system is supposed to have originated. Marriage or sexual union within the clan does, indeed, sometimes take place, but the evils apprehended from it may be averted by the propitiation of the clan god and *ṭāṇḍā* spirits and by a fine which is utilised for a feast by the *ṭāṇḍā* community.

There is hardly any differentiation of social function between either the different

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clans or the different *ṭāṇḍās.* The only socio-religious and magical functions which are allotted to particular individuals in a *ṭāṇḍā* are those of the *Nāyā* or *ṭaṇḍā* priest and the *Māti* or sorcerer. But neither the *Nāyās* nor the *Mātis* can be said to form a privileged class. Besides the natural family group and the socio-economic group of the *ṭāṇḍā* and the kinship group of the clan, Birhōṛ society knows no functional or occupational grouping nor any political, religious or other grouping. Voluntary groupings such as secret societies and clubs do not appear to exist. The unmarried young men of a *ṭaṇḍā* who sleep together in the same hut or dormitory *(gitij-ōṛā)* do not form an organized social group or association with definite social regulations as among their neighbours the Oräons. And the same is true of the group of unmarried girls who sleep together in one hut.

As for Birhōṛ tribal organization, there is hardly anything to speak of. The different

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ṭāṇḍā groups and clan-groups that make up the tribe now hang loosely together, the only bond between them consisting in the tradition of common origin and the possession of a common name, common language, common occupation, and, to some extent, common customs and institutions.

The tribe, as a whole, has, as we have seen, little to do, at the present day, with the regulation of the social life of the different *ṭāṇḍā* groups and clan groups that it comprises. There is no periodical social gathering or religious festival in which the members of the tribe or even of a particular *ṭāṇḍā* act as one unit. And naturally certain differences in customs, rites and ceremonial observances are now found to exist in different clans and local groups.

As for the religious (including in that term what is sometimes called magico-religious) system of the Birhōṛs, it has its basis, as we have seen, in a haunting sense of the presence of innumerable powers and forces behind the visible world. And it is in this conception of a multiplicity of

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powers and forces that may be found one great difference between these early forms of religion and the more advanced forms in which the Power behind the universe is conceived of as One though with many manifestations. The Birhōṛ's dim conception of a Supreme God is represented by a vague Creator named Sing-bōngā or the Sun-God who, however, does not take any active part in the direction of the universe and in the affairs of men. It is the innumerable mysterious powers and forces, from the most powerful personal spirits to vaguest impersonal mystic forces of the nature of the Melanesian 'mana' with which Birhōṛ faith fills the environment, that are regarded as the real agents or causes of the numerous phenomena in nature and happenings in life which the tribal intelligence cannot otherwise account for. These 'sacred' powers and forces of Birhōṛ faith, either existing as independent entities or inhering in some natural or artificial objects or even in such immaterial things as a name or a

number, are believed to be the only active sources of all bad luck and the potential sources of good luck to the individual and the community. It is these that now and again cause failure in his food-quest, cause sickness and death and other troubles, and otherwise baffle him in his endeavours to make life worth living.

These invisible powers and forces are to the Birhōṛ not mere figments of the imagination but real and living entities that appeared to ancient Birhōṛ 'seers' in vivid visions, and still sometimes appear to present-day medicine-men and other mediums in trances and visions and to the average Birhōṛ in dreams. This realization of the presence of supernatural powers and energies in various places and physical features, natural and artificial objects, and even in immaterial things, naturally led the people to aproach them with fear and caution and treat them as a class 'apart' or 'sacred'. And this sense of 'sacredness' is of the essence of the religious attitude. The most

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important problem of life that the tribal mind had to solve was how to deal with these sacred powers and forces so as to ensure tribal and individual well-being and avoid misfortune,—to secure for the community and the individual the fulfilment of their desires and comparative freedom from fears and anxieties. The solution that Birhōṛ society, like other societies on the same plane of culture, has found is to seek conciliation and communion with the more definite and potent personal powers and to deal with the more indefinite and impersonal powers by way of control, expulsion or avoidance. Appropriate rites and ceremonies and spells to compass these ends were determined upon by the tribal mind, or, rather, were revealed to their ancient 'seers', as on occasions they are still revealed to some latter-day 'seers' as well.

Human appetites and human desires came to be naturally projected into the spirit-world. The Birhōṛ's life, whether individual or corporate, is, as we have

seen, in the main a striving for the satisfaction of physical needs. His gods and spirits, too, are naturally conceived of by the average Birhōṛ and 'visualized' by Birhōṛ 'seers' as anxious, above all things, for animal food and a regular supply of it. When that is assured to any spirit by a family or a *ṭāṇḍā*, the spirit may be expected to be favourably disposed towards it. The occurrence of sickness or other misfortune in a family or *ṭāṇḍā* is regarded as a notice of demand issued by some spirit or other for animal sacrifice. The notice is interpreted by the *māṭi* or spirit-doctor to whom the hungry spirit reveals itself and names the coveted sacrifices. If it be a stray spirit not connected with the *ṭāṇḍā*, it is generally lured away by the *māti*, with the bait of some sacrifice, to some distance from the *ṭāṇḍā* and there the desired sacrifice is offered to bribe it off, and none but the *māti* may eat the sacrificial meat; but in the case of sacrifices to clan spirits and *ṭāṇḍā* spirits, the people of the

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clan or the *ṭāṇḍā*, as the case may be, may all partake of the meat.

Birhōṛ customs regarding the eating of the sacrificial meat would appear to point to three successive stages through which the doctrine and ritual of sacrifice may have passed. From the practice of offering by way of conciliation a part of the sacrificial animal or fowl to the gods or spirits and the sacrificers consuming the rest of the meat, appears to have naturally developed the practice of man joining with the gods or spirits in the consumption of the sacrificial meat and thereby cementing the bonds of fellowship between the human community and the spirit-world. And a still closer union came to be effected between the sacrificer and his god by the former sacramentally eating the head of the sacrificed animal or fowl which, as we have seen, is identified, in the Birhōṛ's mind, with the god himself. And such union with the god, though temporary, came naturally to be believed to add to the spiritual strength or soul-stuff of man. Thus, in this Power-

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cult of the Birhōṛs, there has gradually come to be added to the original attitude of unmitigated fear and anxiety an element of joyous but cautious fellowship and assurance periodically renewed.

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APPENDIX I.

Birhor Vocabulary.

The Birhōṛs, as I have said [48], speak a language now classed among the Austric linguistic family which is said to extend from India and Burma through Indonesia and Melanesia to Polynesia. The *Māṇḍā* languages to which the Birhōṛ speech belongs are classed along with Khāsī, Mon-Khmer, Wa, Palaung, Nicobarese and the aboriginal languages of Malacca under the Austro-Asiatic sub-family of this great Austric family. Although the stock of words of the Birhōṛs is necessarily scantier than those of their neighbours and congeners the *Muṇḍās*, the *Santāls* and the *Hōs*, who stand on a relatively higher level of culture, the vocabulary of the Birhōṛs, like those of other branches of the same

[48] Page 59 *ante*.

group, is fairly rich in words for different varieties or different parts of some particular animal, plant or fruit or other concrete object that they know, but extremely poor in words to denote either collective or abstract ideas. Thus, although the Birhōṛs have no general word for the genus of rodent mammals known to Zoologists as *mūs*, they have terms for its different varieties, e. g. a small mouse is called a *chūṭlā*, a middle-sized mouse a *kābā* or *guṛu*, a large rat *bhūsh*, and a musk-rat *Chūndi*. As in other dialects of the *Muṇḍā* group, the same Birhōṛ word may be used as a noun, an adjective, a verb or even an adverb, often with little variation. Except in a very few instances, traceable to outside influence, in which a feminine termination is used, Birhōṛs do not distinguish natural gender by any modification of the noun itself; but this is done, in a few instances, by using different words, but, more often, by adding words meaning 'male' and 'female'. Suffixes *-kin* and *-kā* respectively are employed to denote the

dual and the plural numbers; such case-suffixes *(-ke, -ātē, -rā)* as are employed appear to have been borrowed from Hindi or Bengali. I shall not enter into details of the grammatical structure of the language which resembles that of the other languages of the *Muṇḍā* group in its main features. I shall conclude this introduction to this Birhōṛ vocabulary by citing only a few instances to illustrate how faithfully the language of the people reflects their economic, social and mental life.

Birhōṛ society knows no distinction between 'rich' and 'poor', for all Birhōṛs are almost equally poor. So when they now see this distinction among their neighbours and require to express it they have to borrow the terms 'dhanīn' (rich) and 'garīb' (poor) which are in use among their Hindi-speaking and Bengali-speaking neighbours. Again, in a society, where all are equal, honorific pronouns are necessarily unknown and every Birhōṛ addresses every other man as *ām*, 'thou'.

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In their strenuous life, every Birhōṛ has to work and requires to be strong and courageous and he has no leisure to be idle and no reason to be weak or feeble, and consequently the Birhōṛ has no terms of his own to express the ideas of 'weakness' and 'weak', 'idleness' and 'idle'. And so when he sees such distinctions among his neighbours he borrows (with phonetic modifications) the words with which their Hindu or Hinduised neighbours express these ideas, namely, *dūrbal* for 'weak', *balīmān* for 'strong', *dilgār* for 'courageous', and *kōṛhi* for 'idle'. As a keen hunter, the Birhōṛ has a name for every distinct part of the body *(hōṛmō)* of an animal, viz, its head *(bōhō)*, the top of the skull *(dōṛōm bōhō)*, forehead *(mōlōng)*, hair (*nūb*), eyebrow *(med-khuṭi)*, eye *(med)*, nose *(mū)*, mouth-hole *(āngōb)*, mouth *(mōchā)*, chin *(dāchō)*, cheek *(jōhā)*, ear (*lūtūr*), neck *(hōṭō)*, the back of the neck *(tūtkā)*, the face just below the ears *(lūtūr hupā)*, tooth *(dāṭā)* jaw *(chowhāṭ)*, upper lip *(lācho)*, lower lip *(lūṭi)*, chin *(dāchō)*, chin-hair *(gūchā)*,

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tooth *(dāṭā)*, throat *(nārṭi)* shoulder *(tāran)*, breasts *(tōā tānel)*, hand *(ti)*, upper arm *(sūpū)*, finger *(angur)*, nail *(rāmā)*, chest *(ḳāndāṛām* or *kāṛām)*, navel *(būkā)* stomach *(lāhi)*, the large intestines *(dānā pōṭhā)*, the small intestines *(nānhā pōṭhā)*, the convolutions of the intestines *(dūgdūgiā pōṭhā)*, the male organ *(koṛā)*, the testicles *(bili)*, the buttocks *(chuturā)*, palm of the hand *(ti-thhalkā)*, back of the hand excluding the fingers *(āngur lūlūhā)*, lap *(kōyōng)*, thumb *(chuṇḍūl āngūr*, or *dhābū āngūr)*, little finger *(kāni āngūr)*, big toe *(bākārea dhābū āngūr)*, little toe *(bākārea kāni āngūr)*, bone *(jāng)*, hip-bone *(chūki-jāng)*, thigh *(būlū)*, arm joint *(fārkāṭ jāng)*, elbow-joint *(ūkkū)*, front of the foot including the toes, (*bākā*), leg excluding the foot *(nārhāṛā)*, upper part of the foot excluding the toes *(sūpli)*, sole of the foot *(bākā thhālkā)*, knee-joint *(mūkūṛi)*, the thigh-bone *(dhāpē-jāng)*, heel *(iṛgi)*, sides of the body *(khōkhā)*, bile-bag *(ihim)*, lungs *(bōrkōd)*, flesh *(jilū)*, blood *(māyōm)*, and skin *(hārṭā)*.

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It is interesting to note that the word for flesh (*jilā*) is also employed to signify 'deer', as its flesh is to the Birhōṛ the most delectable and coveted animal food. As for the monkey (*gāṛi*), the catching of which forms a favourite ocupation of the Birhōṛs, they have different words for the animal in different stages and conditions of its life. Thus, the male monkey is called *bhākōr*, the female monkey *engā bhākōr*, a pregnant monkey *āṇṛhowrā*, a female monkey carrying a child on its back *hōmōing*, and so forth.

Although in the languages of some of the comparatively advanced branches of the Muṇdā race the first ten numerals are their own, the Birhōṛs have words only for the first four numerals (*miā, bāreā, peā,* and *pāniā*). For the rest he uses the Hindi or Bengali terms (*pānch, chhai, sāt,* etc.). It is interesting to note that the Birhōṛ has only two terms to distinguish colours, namely *hendē* (black) and *pāṇḍi* (white). For 'red' he uses the Bengali word *rāngā*, whereas 'yellow' is described as *sasāng baran* (turmeric-colour). He

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can hardly distinguish between 'green' and 'blue' and has naturally no term of his own for these colours, but uses the Hindi word *hariār* (green) for both. He has no name, indigenous or borrowed, for 'brown'. It is also noticeable that to express the abstract conception of colour, the Birhōṛ borrows the Bengali word 'baran'.

Instances might be multiplied to any extent to show that the languages of lower culture, such as that of the Birhōṛs, are deficient in the expression of abstract conceptions and class names; and so his words mostly express concrete ideas. Thus, to give one example, the Birhōṛ has no term for 'food' in general or for 'corn' but has names for the different articles of food that he takes, as, for example, *jilū* for animal flesh and particularly the flesh of the deer, *jō* for fruit, *hōrōnsi* for honey, *madkam* for the *mohuā*, *sim* for fowl, *holony* for bread, and so forth. The Birhōṛ has no general words for 'time' or 'place', for which he uses the Bengali or Hindi words *sōmae* and *jāegā*, but he has words for different periods or points of

time (*māhā*, last year; *kālom*, next year; *tihing*, to-day; *gāpā*, to-morrow, *nidā*, night, *singi*, day; and so forth), and for different places that he knows. Again, although the Birhōṛs do not appear to possess a general term for cutting, they employ the term *mā* 'to cut at a stroke', and *ged* 'to cut slowly'. Although a strictly general term for the idea of cutting does not exist, the word '*mā*' is, however, employed for the purpose except when the process of cutting is markedly slow.

In the subjoined vocabulary I have marked the words that are common to the Birhōṛ and the Muṇdāri languages; and among these the Sanskrit-knowing reader will not fail to notice the large proportion of undoubted and probable Sanskrit or Sanskritic words. The probale ethnic significance of this I have discussed in an article in the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (1923, Vol. IX, pp. 276–293).

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BIRHOR VOCABULARY.

A.

ā', Bow (cf. M. *ā'ā*).*
āben. You two. M.
ābūng. To wash any part of the body.
āchām. To marvel, wonder (cf M. *ākadanda*.)
āchū. To order; to employ.
āchur. To move round ; crooked.
āchhū. To sneeze (cf. M. *achū'ū*.)
ād. To loose.
āder. To take inside. M.
āḍu. To micturate ; urine (M. *Duki*).
āgu. To take away. M.
āji. Grand-mother. M.
ājom. To feed. M.
ākō. They. M.
ālāng We two (I and thou). M.
ālāng. Tongue. M.
ālchū. To overflow (said of water).
ālē. We. M.
āling. We two (I and he) M.
ām. Thou. M.
āmbṛū. Hog-plum.
āndā. To boil
āndhrā. Blind. H.

* In this list, the letter M. stands for *Mundari*, and when it appears alone after the meaning of a word it indicates that the same word is used in the same sense in the Mundari language. Similarly , H stands for Hindi and B. for Bengali.

āngā. Morning (cf. M. *āng.*)
āngōb. Mouth-hole.
āngur. Finger (M. *Dāṛō.*)
ānjed. To dry up.
āṇṛhōnra. Pregnant monkey.
ānto. Then. M. *ente.*
āpe. You (more than two). M.
āpegar. Quarrel. (M. *Epeger.*)
āpir. To fly.
ārāṇā. Yoke.
āṛā. Vegetable; to set free. M.
āṛgū. To descend; to bring down. M.
ārid. To gaze, stare. M.
ārō. And. (M. *ōṛō.*)
āṛū. Urine, to urinate. (M. *Duki*; *Dōḍō.*)
āsūl. To bring up, to support; to tame.
āta. To fry. M.
ātar. To burn. M.
āted. To spread. (M. *urmi.*)
āten. To hear (cf. M. *āyum.*)
āting. To graze. M.
ātkir. To fly [with something] (cf. M. *atingir*).
ātom. Side.
ātū. To be carried away [as, by waves] M.
ātūr. To winnow [corn].
āu. To take. M.
āuri. Not yet. M.
āyā. His own. M.
āyub. Evening. M.

B.

bāgi. Leave. (M. *Bāge, bāgi.*)
bāhā. Flower. M.
bahin. Younger sister. (M *Buini.*)
bahirā. Deaf. H.
bāka. The front portion of the foot (including the toes.)
bākhāṇṛ. To talk; to describe (M. *Bakāṇri*)
bāklā'a. Tree bark. M.

bākli. Heron, stork. M. *Bākā.*

balimān. Strong

bālu. Mad; lunatic M.

bālē hōpōn. Infant; child. (M. *Bāle hōn.*)

bāmṛe. Brāhman. M.

bānā, bir-miṇḍi, Bir-bārhiā. The bear (M. *Bir-miṇḍi.*)

bānām. Fiddle [M. *Bānōm*] (cf. Sanskrit, *Bīnam.*)

bānāō. To make. (M. *Bāi, Bānao.*)

bānār. Both. (M. *Bārānā.*)

bānārsāth. Both sides; twice [M. *Bārāngsā.*]

bāndā. Embankment. M. (H. *Bāndh.*)

bānū. Not [M. *Bānō.*]

bāonā. Short. H.

bāplā. Marriage, marriage-procession. (M. *Bālā.*)

bāptā. To scratch; witch; ringworm. (M. *Bābtā.*)

bār, bāre. Two. M.

bāṛē. Large. (H. *Bāṛā*; B. *Bāṛā.*)

bārābāri. Equally. M.

barhiāum. A carpenter. (M., *Baṛāi.*)

bāru. kusum tree (*seblechira trijuga*) M.

bāsiām, basi-māṇḍi. Breakfast.

bāu-honjhār. Husband's elder brother. M.

bāyār. Rope. M.

bedā. To deceive, to tell lies; false; a cheat. M.

bejāt. Bad. (M. *Etkāu*)

beler. Uncooked; raw. (M. *Berel.*)

benghār. Brinjal (M. *Bengar.*)

benkō. Bent, crooked. (M. *Bepdhō.*)

berā. A bracelet. M.

bērāo. To spoil. (M. *Bāgṛāo.*)

bes. Good.

bet. Handle (of some instrument). (M. *Dāmīm*; *ḍāṇṭi*).

bey. To spit; spittle. M.
bhādul. The bat. (M. *Bhadūr*; H. *Bādūr.*)
bheñt. To meet. M.
bhingā. Separate (M. *Bingā.*)
bhitār. Inside. (M. *Bitar*) H. and B.
bhūs. A large rat.
bhūsṛi. Mosquito. (M. *Hāṇṛū.*)
bhūti. Day-labourer. M.
bhū'. To make a hole (M. *Bu'u.*)
bhū'ū. Bark of dog (M. *Bu'u*)
bi. To be satisfied with. (M. *Bi, Biu.*)
bid. To plant. M.
bihin. Seedlings [of paddy &c.] (M. *Biānr.*)
bijūt Bad.
bili. To ripen, ripe. M.
bing. Snake. M.
binti. To beseech. M.
bir. Jungle. M.
birāi. To tempt. M.
birsukuri. Wild boar M.
birid. To rise, to get up. M,
bish. Poison (M. *Bisi*)
bisi-jāng. Spine M.
bōhō. Head. (M. *Bō*)
bokā. Foolish, stupid. (M. *Dōṇḍō.*)
bōkō. Younger brother. M.
bōlō. To enter. M.
bōngā. Spirit; a god. M.
bōṛ. A plaited straw-receptacle for grains M.
bōrō. Fear.
bōrōkōd. lungs. (M. *Bōkōd.*
bōrōey. Timid; to fear. M.
bōrsi. Fire-pan. (M. *Bāñṛsi*)
bōsō. To rub, anoint (M. *Gōsō.*)
bōtor. To frighten. (M. *Bōtong.*)
būgi, būgin. Good. M.
bukā. Navel (M. *Būti*)
būl. To be drunk. M.
būlū. Thigh. M.
bulūng. Salt. M.

buru. Hill. M. The original signification would appear to have been 'god'.
busu. Straw. M.

C.

chābā. To finish. M.
chāhāp. To yawn (M. *chab.*)
chāṇḍu. The moon; month. M.
chāpi. To wash up. M.
chāpuā. Bellows. M.
chāpud. Husk; to husk. M.
chāri. A reed for sewing up leaves.
chātā. To tear; rend. M.
chātom. Umbrella. M.
chāuli. Rice. M.
chāyā; rō. A kind of insect-pest which destroys paddy crops. (M. *chāyā.*)
chē, chejā. Why. (M. *chiā.*)
chenṛe. Bird. M.
cheptā. Flat. (M. *chōpōd.*)
chēntā. Envy. foolish.
chetāu. Upon, above. M.
chetāō. To advise. M.
chi. What. M.
chiāri. Arrow-head.
chilekā. How. M.
chilikan. What sort of. (M. *chilekan.*)
chimināng. How much.
chipū. To squeeze. (M. *chipa.*)
chipūd. Handful. M.
chirā. To split. (M. *cherā.*)
chirgā. To awake.
chirgāl. To be awake; cunning. (M. *chirgal*)
chitri. Partridge. M.
chōkē. A frog. M.
chōpōd. To suck. (M. *Chepod; jemhed.*)
chūkā. A small earthen jug. (M. and H.)
chūi. A calf. M.
chūmā. To kiss. (M. *Chū*, H. & B. *chumā.*)
chāmān. Waving a light ceremonially. M.
chūṇḍal. To point with the fingers.

chūndi. A musk-rat. M.
chūndāl āngur. Fore-finger next to the thumb.
chūril. To leap.
chūtūṛā. Buttocks.

D.

da. Hive. (M. *dāhā.*)
dā'. Water. M.
dab. Hatch, covering M.
dab-ruaṛ. To repair. M.
dāi, didi. Elder sister. M.
dāl. To beat, to strike. M.
dāli. Pulse. M.
ḍāṇḍā. A stick. M.
ḍāṇgṛā. Bullock. (M. *Hāṛā.*)
ḍangṛā. Bachelor. M.
dāpōm. To meet with one another. (M. *Dapārōm.*)
dāṛi. To be able. M.
dāru. Tree.
ḍāṭā. Tooth. M.
datrōm. Sickle. M.
de'. Climb. M.
delāng. Come along. (M. *Delā*)
deyā. Back. M.
dengā. Assist.
deonṛā. Magician; witch-doctor. M.
deṛē, depṛē. To have sexual intercourse. M.
ḍhāngā. Tall. B.
dhāngṛin. Spinister. (M. *Dhāngri*)
ḍhānk. Drum. M.
dharti. Earth. M.
ḍhichua. The king-crow. M.
dhīmak. Proud.
dhing. Young.
ḍhinki. Rice-cleaning pedal. M.
dhūkū. Knee-joint. (M. *mukuṛi.*)
dhūnā. Resin. (M. *Dūāu.*)
dhūṛā. Dust. M.
diju. To walk.
dinaki. Daily. M.
ḍindā. Virgin. M.

dipil, dūpil. To carry upon the head. (M. *Dūpil.*)
dipli. Time. M.
diri. Stone. M.
diring. Horn. M.
dōhōe. To place, to keep. (M. *Dō'*)
ḍol. Lower porton of an arrow-shaft.
dōlāng. Go.
dolābu. Let us go.
dōlōb, upāsh. Fast; to fast. M.
duār. Door. (M. *Durā*; H. & B. *Duār*)
ḍūbhā. Brass-cup. (M. and H.)
dūbrā. Weak. (H. *ḍublā.*)
dūḍṛum. To doze.
dūkū. Pain, sorrow. M.
dulār. Beloved. (M. *Dulār.*)
ḍunḍū bing. Dhonrā snake. M.
dūrāng. Song; to sing. M.
ḍuriā. Plaited thread. M.
Dūrūb. To sit. (M. *Dūb.*)
duṛūm; dūdūṛūm. To be drowsy, to sleep. M.
dutām. Match-maker. M.

E.

e.' Lac. M.
eger. To abuse. M.
eklā. Alone. (M. *eskār.*)
eklā'. To tremble. M.
em. To give.
em ruāṛ. To return [a thing.] M.
en. To thresh.
ende Thereabouts.
endrej. Day after to-morrow. M. (*Miang endre.* two days after to-morrow.)
enē'. To dance. (M. *sūsūn.*)
engā merōm. She-goat. M.
engā sādōm. Mare M.
engā sim. Hen. M.
enreo. Even. M.

epger. Quarrel, to quarrel with each other. (M. *Epeger, Eperang.*)
erɑ. Adult female. M.
eṭā. Different. M.
eṭē. Beginning. M.
eṭe'. To tease. M.

F.

jesiāṛ. To hoax; cheat; a cheat; a liar. M.
phōksā. Lungs. (M. and H.)

G.

gādel. Crowd. M.
gādi. Dumb.
gādi. By the side of. (M. *Genā.*)
gadlē. A water weed. (M. *Gāded.*)
gālāng. To weave. M.
gām. To agree; to promise; to speak. (M. *gabāo.*)
g m . To rain. M.
gāṇḍū. Low stool. M.
gāpa, To-morrow. M.
gāṛā. River; stream.
gāṛi. A monkey. M.
gāti. Friend, companion. M.
ga'ui. To make a sign. M.
ged. To remove the entrails; to cut [meat]. M.
gēgē. To cut.
gejā. Quarrelsome.
gēlē. Ear of corn. M.
ger. To bite. (M., *Hūā.*)
gerāng. To groan. M.
get. To cut. (M. *Hād*)
ghāni. Oilpress. (M. *Ghaṇḍi,* H. & B. *ghāni.*)
gidhi. Vulture. (M. *Gid, Gidi*)
gil. To cuff; fist. M.
giṛi. To throw down. M.
gitij. To lie down, to sleep; sleep. M.
gitil. Sand. M.
gō' To carry. M.
gōd. To pluck a fruit. M.

Sun or the Moon. M.
hātāng. Brain. M.
go'e. To die. M.
gondli. The grain *panicum malabaracum*. M.
gonong. Price, cost. M.
gōt. Herd of cattle; (M. & B. H.); place where cattle is herded.
gōṭā. Round.
gōṭā. To scratch.
gūngi. Snail. (M. *Gurtu*.)
gūṛū. Field-rat. M.
gūrgudū. Arm-pit. (M. *Gōtē*.)
gūchū. Beard and moustache. M.
gūl. Whistle. (M. *Gōte*.)
gūm. To winnow. M.
gūrij. Dung of cattle.

H.

hāgā. Brother. M.
hāgā kimin. Younger brother's wife. M.
hāke. An axe. M.
hāku. Fish. M.
hālāng. To pick up.
hāmbāl. Heavy. M.
hāngā. A large ditch. (M. *Hāngi*.)
hānhār. Mother-in-law. M.
hāṇṛed. To shut. (M. *Hanted*.)
hāñṛu, sinkṛi. Mosquito. M.
haṇṭing. Part; share. M.
hāpē. To be silent. M.
hārā. To grow. M.
hāṛam. Old man. M.
hāṛām-herel. The wood-pecker.
hārbā. The Indian scaly ant-eater. M.
hārhad. Bitter. (M. *Hāṛad*.)
hārōm. To collect. M.
hārōb. To be cured. M.
hārtā. Leather; hide.
hāsā. Clay, earth. M.
hāsū. Ill; illness. M.
hāsuṛ. Setting of the

hātlā. Arm-pit. (M. *Gōte.*)
hāṭing, hānāṭing. To share; to divide.
hātom. Father's sister. M.
hāyā. Lust; desire. M.
hēbē. To carry [e. g. a child] astride at the waist. (M. *Hebep.*)
heṛe. Chaff. M.
herel. Adult male. M.
heṛem. Sweet. M.
higar. To separate [from a mass or herd.] M.
hiju. To come. M.
hilāng. Hate (M. *Hilā, hilāng.*)
hili. Elder brother's wife. M.
hirchi. To sprinkle. M.
hisir. Necklace. M.
hōhō. To call.
hōkā. Hang up. M.
hōla. Yesterday. M.
hōn. Son. M.
hōmōing. A female monkey with a young one at its back.
hōpōn. Small.
hōṛ. Man. (M. *Hōṛō*) (Sāntali *Hōṛ.*)
hōrā. Road. M.
hōṛmō. Body. M.
horomsi. Honey (M. *Hurumsuku.*)
hōyō. Wind. M.
hoyo āndhi. Storm.
hōyo. To shave. M.
hōyōn. Shaving.
hūchā. To break. (M. *chōā.*)
hūrū. Paddy (M. *Bābā*)

I.

iām. To weep, M.
ichā, iti. To pinch. (M. *Ichū.*)
ichā-hākū. Prawn. M.
idi. To take away; to carry.
idū. Perhaps.
idūn. Who knows! Don't know. (M. *Idurō*)
ihim. Bile-bag, liver. (M. *Imi-āṛ.*)
ii. Stools. B.

Ij; Ṭaṇḍi. To ease oneself; stools.

Ili. Beer made from rice or other grains. M.

Imis. Then (M. *Imtang, imtā.*)

Inā mente. Therefore, for that. (M. *Enā mente.*)

Ipil. Star. M.

Ipir-piung, bhāg-jōgni. Glow worm, fire-fly. M.

Ir. To reap.

Irgi Heel (M. *Iṇḍkā.*)

Iṛi'. To quench (M. *Eṛenj.*)

Iriul. Husband's younger brother (M. *Iriul-koṛā.*)

Iriul-kuṛi. Husband's younger sister (M. *Iriul-kuṛi.*)

Isin. To cook. M.

Iti. To pinch ; pinching.

Itil. Fat; fatty. M.

Itir. To rub; shampoo.

J.

Jā. Perhaps. (M. *Derāng.*)

Jāhāi. Any one (M. *Jetāi.*)

Jāhānā ; Jāhan jetan } Anything. (M. *Jetānā.*)

Jāha-lekā. Of some sort (M. *Jelikā.*)

Jaikōṛā. Son's son ; daughter's son. M.

Jaikuṛi. Son's daughter ; daughter's daughter. M.

Jālting. To fly about; hover about. M.

Jānāo. Always. M.

Janṛhūm. Nightingale. (M. *Chepō.*)

Jāng. Bone ; seed. M.

Janjid. Bamboo fishing trap. M.

Jānum. Thorn. M.

Jāoā. Twins. (M. *Juṛi.*)

Japid. To close the eyes. (M. *Japid.*)

Jārgi. Rainy season. (M. *Jargi; Jārgi-sā.*)
Jārūm. To ripen. (M. *Jārōm.*)
Jerkā. Joined (as two fingers or two fruits) [M. *Jirkı*]
Jeter. To dry in the sun (M. *Jeḍer*)
Jhāli. Net. (M. *Jālōm.*)
Jhōla. Scorch, roast. (M. *Rō.*)
Jhumpā. Cluster, bunch. (M. *Jhumpā.*)
Jhūṛ. A bower; bush. (M. *Jhūmbāṛ.*)
Ji. To smell (active.)
Jijilāt. To slip by the foot. [M. *Jilad; chūpād*]
Jik. Porcupine. (M. *Jiki.*)
Jiling. Long. M.
Jilu. Flesh, (M.) Deer.
Jinēd. To live (*Jid*)
Jirūb. To warm oneself in the fire. M.
Jirāo. To take rest.
Jō. Fruit; to bear fruit. M.
Jō-ō. To sweep. M.
Johā. Cheek. (M. *Jōā.*)
Jōhār. To salute. M.
Jōjō. Tamarind; sour. M.
Jokhā. Equal. (M. *Jokā.*)
Jōm. To eat. M.
Jōm-ti'. Right hand. M.
Jonrā. Maize (M. *Jōnhār; Jondrā.*)
Jōnō. Broom. M.
Jonorāo. Joint. (M. *Jōnōṛē.*)
Jōṛi. Equal. (M. *Juṛi.* H. *Joṛi.* B. *Juṛi, Joṛā.*)
Jōrō. To leak. M.
Jōt. To wipe off. (M. *Jōd.*)
Jotā. Equal. M.
Jōted. To touch. (M. *Jutid.*)
Jōter. To dry in the sun. (M. *Jedēr.*)
Jūl. To kindle.
Jūmṛi. Gluttonous. (M. *Jumbṛi.*)
Jūṛū. Creeper.

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Jūrūpūṭū. Too old to walk properly. (M. *Jōrōi-pōṭā*.)

K.

Kāhū. Crow. (M. *Kau*.)
Kālōm. Ensuing year. M.
Kāmi. To do, work. M.
Kāmni. Female labourer. (M. *Kāmṛi*.)
Kāpi. Battle-axe. M.
Kaṛbā. The handle of a plough. M.
Kāṛē. Oil-cake. M.
Kāshā. Acid. (M. *Heben*.)
Kā'som. Cotton. M.
Kāṭā. Foot, leg. M.
Kārtāl. Cymbal. M.
Kāṭā-tālkā. Sole of the foot. M.
Kāṭū. Finger. M.
Khāli. Empty.
Khārā. To expectorate.
Kharchā. Money; food. (M.) [H. & B. *kharchā*. *kharach*, expense.]
Kharpā. Wooden slippers. (M. *karpā*.)
Khāṭkhaṭā. Beef-steak bird. M.
Khis. Anger. M.
Kichṛi. Cloth. M.
Kidū'. Evening star.
Kimin. Son's wife; younger brother's wife. M.
Kiring. To buy. M.
Koē. To ask.
Kōer. Plum (M. *Dōdāri*.)
Kōkōr. Owl.
Kōṛhi Idle.
Kōṭlēy. Jute plant.
Kōyōng. To take [a child] on the lap. M.
Kūd. To carry [e. g. a child] on the back. M.
Kūhūra. Frog. (M. *Kūhāsi*.)
Kūlā. Tiger. M.
Kūli. To ask. M.
Kūm. A big earthen vessel.
Kumbuṛū. Thief; to steal. M.

Kūmkāl, kūmbhār. A kind of fly which makes small burrows into walls.
Kūmū. Dream. M.
Kūnduram. Chest (M. *Kūṛām.*)
Kūpūl. Relation; guest. M.
Kuṛā. To roll up. M.
Kuṛai, Wages. M.
Kūṛi. Woman.
Kūṛi hōn. Girl.
Kūṭām. To grind; hammer.

L.

Lāchō. Upper lip. M.
Lādi. Load. M.
Lāhā. Increase, exceed. M.
Lāhi. Stomach, belly. M.
Lāi hāsū. Stomach-ache. M.
Lāndā. Laugh. M.
Lāngṛā. Lame.
Lāp. Handful. M.
Lāpāndā. To interchange smiles or laughs.
Lāpṛāi. To fight with one another. M.
Lāpūd. Chicken pox. M.
Lāt. Cave (M. *Lātā, tāpāngā.*)
Lāṭāb. To clip, (M. *Lāṭāb lānātāb,* Scissors; to clip.)
Lātār. Below. M.
Lātum. A mouthful.
Lēbē. Soft. M.
Lekā. Like. M.
Lel, nel. To see. (M. *Nel.*)
Lel-beṛā. To look about. (M. *Nel-beṛā, hetā-beṛā.*)
Lel ruar. To look behind. (M. *Neṭa-ruar.*)
Lendād. Earthworm. M.
Leser. To sharpen. M.
Lēy. To put out the tongue. M.
Limbir. Cloud. (M. *Rimil.*)
Lingi. To flow. M.
Lipi. The sparrow. M.
Lo'. To burn. M.
Lōā. Fig. M.

Lōhōt. To be wet; Wet. (M. *Lām*)
Lōlō. Hot ; warm. M.
Lopod. Wet. (M. *Lōpūd.*)
Lōsōd. Mud. M.
Lōyōng. Low-lying rice-field. M.
Lūdām. A kind of tree. M.
Lūlūhā, wrist.
Lūmām. Silk-worm. M.
Lūṇḍi. A ladle. M.
Lūpū. Husk of rice. M.
Lūpū-mūi. A kind of small ant. M.

M.

Mā. Day. M.
Mā'ā. To cut. M.
Mād. Bamboo. M.
Madkām. Bassia latifolia. M.
Māhā. Last year. M.
Māhānder. Day before yesterday.
Mailā. Dirty, dirt.
Mā-mā'. Well ! (M. *Mār.*)
Mānchi. Chair. M.
Māndā. Cough. M.
Māṇḍi. Rice. M.
Mānhāl. Flat bean. (M. *Malau.*)
Māni. Mustard seed. M.
Māpārang. Big. M.
Māpā-tūpūin. To fight with cutting weapons. M.
Mārang. Big ; Large. M.
Marchi. Red pepper.
Mārmār ; dhāoṛi mārmār. Scorpion (M. *Mārmār.*)
Māri. Old [things] M.
Māṛi-māṛitē. Slowly. M.
Māṛōā, māṇḍōā. A earthen platform for ceremonial purposes. M.
Marsāl. Light ; sunlight. M.
Māyom. Blood. M.
Meāng. Day after tomorrow. (M. *Miāng.*)
Meāng endrej. Two days after tomorrow.

Med, Eye. M.
Med-kāṇḍōm. Eyebrow. M.
Men. To say. M.
Mentē. To that place (M. *Ente*.)
Merōm. Goat. M.
Miā. One. (M. *Miād*, *Mia*.)
Mid-jāng. Very little. (M. *Itij toṛāng*)
Mina, *Mini*. That. (M. *En*, *Enā*.)
Miṇḍi. Sheep. M.
Mirā. Parrot. M.
Misā. Once. M.
Misā-misā. Sometimes. M.
Misāte. Together. M.
Misi. Sister. M.
Mō. To swell. M.
Mōchā. Face. M.
Mōlōng. Forehead. M.
Mū. Nose. (M. *Mūhū*.)
Mū-bhū. Nostril. (M. *Muhu-ūndā*.)
Mui. Ant. M.
Mūkūing. Tired, satiated, anxious. M.
Mūkūṛi. Knee. M.
Mūlū. New moon. M.
Mūni, *oni*. He. (M. *Ini*.)
Mūnū. Beginning. M.
Mūrūd. Parās tree. M.
Mūrūm. A species of deer. M.
Mūtūl khūṇṭā. Central post of a hut.

N.

Nāchā, *dōriā nāchā*. False hair. M.
Nāhel. Plough. M.
Nājōm. Wizard. M.
Nāki'. Hair comb. M.
Nālhā. Wages. (M. *nālā*.)
Nām. To search. (M.); To find.
Nānhā. Thin. (M. *Naub*.)
Nārādurā. Weak. M.
Nāṛi. Pulse. M.
Nāri. Creeper. M.
Nārkā. To wash the head with mud. M.
Nāsi-sāri. Falsely.
Nel, *lel*. To see. M.
Nel-uṛūng. To discriminate. M.

Neṇḍā, Neṛā. Appointed time.
Nidā. Night. M.
Nidir. White ant. M.
Nighā. Axle. M.
Ni'i. Open. (M. *Nij, nig.*)
Nimidō. Now. (M. *Nādō, nā.*)
Nimin, nimināng. So much. M.
Ninkā. So (M. *Enkā.*)
Nir. To run; to flee. M.
Nirāl. Good-looking; beautiful. (M. *Niral.*)
Nir, nipir. To run. M.
Niurā. Mongoose. M.
Nōe. This. (M. *Ni.*)
Noṇḍo. Here. (M. *Nērē.*)
Nōtō. On this side. Hither. [M. *Netē.*]
Nū. To drink. M.
Nūāte. From here. (M. *Neātē.*)
Nūbā. Dark; darkness. M.
Nuā-lekā. Like this. (M. *Nelekā.*)
Nūnā. Breast of a woman; milk. (M.) to suckle, to give a a drink.
Nūrā. To wash clothes. M.
Nūtūm. Name. M.

O.

Okoā. Whose. M.
Okōē. Who (M.) (absolute.)
Om. To give. M.
Omōn. To grow, spring up. M.
Onā. Other. (M. *Eṭā.*)
Ong. To blow (as with the mouth.) M.
Optōng. Copulate; sexual intercourse. (M. *Dērē, depērē.*)
Or. To drag. M.
Oṛā. House. M.
Oṛēy, Oṛej. To break, to tear. M.
Orōng. To blow a pipe.
Oṭā'. To open. M.
Oṭāng. To fly. M.
Otē. Earth, land. M.

Otōng. To follow. M.

P.

Pachhtāe. To repent. M.
Pādā. To kick (M. *Phādā.*)
Pāghā. Rope. (M. & H)
Pāichā; ādhrā. Loan for a short term. M.
Pāinā. A goad. (M. *Paiṇṛā.*)
Pāṇḍu. White. M.
Pāṇḍū-bing. Cobra. M.
Pāṇṛki. Dove. (M. *Pūlām.*)
Pāṛā. To split (M. *Phāṛā'.*)
Pārkōm. Bed stead; string-bed. M.
Pārōm. To cross; across. M.
Pasrā. Smithy. M.
Paṭā'. To lay cross-wise; to throw another down by inserting one's leg into that other's legs. M.
Perej. Full.
Peṭej, Peṭe hūṛū. Chaff. (M. *Pete bābā.*)
Phāl. Ploughshare. (M. *Pahal.*)
Phāṇḍil. To rebound. (M. *Paṇḍil.*)
Pharich. Neat, clean. (M. *Pharchi.*)
Pheriā. Clear.
Phiri. Shield. M.
Phōnka. A hole, to open out. (M. *Pōnkā.*)
Piāj. Onion. (M. *Piājō.*)
Pichhā. To follow. (M. *Pichā.*)
Pilāhi. Spleen (M. *Pilhi.*)
Piṇṛngi. Verāndā. M'
Pini'. Bow-string.
Pipini. Eye-lashes. M.
Pitid. To spin cotton. M.
Pōkhar. Tank. (M. *Pukhari.*)
Pōṇḍē. Dirty water. (M. *Bōṛā.*)
Pōṭont. A bundle (of

grains &c.) packed in straw. M.
Pāguṛi. Pocket-money. M.
Pāṇḍi. White. M.
Purā. Much. M.
Pāṛā. Leaf-cup. M.
Pāsi. Cat. M.
Pūtrid, Puri. Froth. (M. *Pūtrid.*)

R.

Rā'. To cry; to call. M.
Rābāng. Cold. M.
Rābāng din. Cold season.
Rāchā. Courtyard, open space before a house. M.
Rākāb. To climb up. M.
Rāmā. Nail. M.
Rāmrā. Phaseolus. M.
Rāngā. Red.
Rānu. Medicine. M.
Rāpā. To burn. M.
Rāpūd. To break a hollow thing (e. g. a pot.) M.
Rāsāo. To be morose; to be beside oneself.
Rātāng. Frost. M.
Rāwāl. Light; easy. M.
Reaṛ. Cold. M.
Rehed. Root. (M. *Red.*)
Rej. To snatch, to rob. M.
Rekāe. To do. (M. *Rika.*)
Rengē. Hunger; hungry, poor. M.
Rid. To grind in a stone. M.
Rim. To lift. M.
Ringa. Famine. M.
Riṇi. Debt. M.
Rimil. Cloud. M.
Rimil-sāṛi. Thunder. M.
Riring. To forget. M.
Rohōṛ. Dry. M.
Roko. A fly. M.
Rū. To beat a drum. M.
Rūā. Fever. M.
Rūaṛ. Return. M.
Rukṇā. Chisel (M. & H.)
Rānu. To tremble. M.

Rārung. To poke or give a thrust, as with a stick.

S.

Sā. Side, direction. M.
Sāb. Seize, hold. M.
Sādōm. Horse. M.
Sāgṛi. Cart. M.
Sahan. Fuel. M.
Sāhet. Breath. (M. *Sāiād.*)
Sāil. Wild buffalo. M.
Sākam. Leaf. M.
Sāki. Namesake. M.
Sākōā. Conch; trumpet.
Sākōm. Bangle. M.
Sālāngi. High. M.
Sāmā. Gratis; empty. M.
Sāmāgē. Empty; with empty stomach. M.
Sambaō. To put in; arrange. (M. *Sānju.*)
Sāmbir. To lie on the back; lie with face upward. M.
Sāmrāo, Sāpṛāo } Prepare; preparation.
Sāmṛōm. Gold. M.
Samuchā. All; whole. [M. *Sāmūtā.*]
Sānām. All.
Sānāing. Wish, desire. (M. *Sānāng.*)
Sāngen. Put forth new leaves; new leaves. M.
Sāngil. To gaze, look up. M.
Sāngin. Distance, far. M.
Sānṛ. Bull. M.
Sānṛē-sim. Cock.
Sānṛi bhākōṛ. A male monkey.
Sāsang-lekā. Yellow; *lit.*, like turmeric. M.
Sāphā. Clean.
Sār. Arrow-head. M.
Sārjōm. *Shorea robusta* tree. M.
Sa'rmā, sāṛmi. Roof. (M. *Saṛmi.*)
Sāri. To know. M.
Sārte. True. (M. *Sarti.*)
Sāṛi. Sound, voice. M.
Sasān. Burial place. (M., B., H., S.)

Sāsāng. Turmeric. M.
Sāset. To persecute. (M. *Sasati.*)
Sāuṛi. Thatching-grass.
Sehel, Sehel-kūṭi. A hollow embedded in the floor for husking rice. M.
Sen. To go. M.
Sengel. Fire. M.
Ser. To melt. M.
Sered. To pound. (M. *Siled*, to mix.)
Setā. Dog. M.
Seta'. Morning. M.
Sibil. Sweet; tasty. M.
Sikhā. To learn (M. *Itān.*)
Sikhāo. To teach. (M. *Itu.*)
Sikid. To scratch. M.
Sikṛi. Chain. (M. *Sinkiri.*)
Sim. Fowl. M.
Sim-hōn. Chicken. M.
Sindūr. Vermilion. (M. *Sinduri.*)
Sing-bōngā. (*Lit.*, Sun-god) God. M.
Singi. Day, the Sun.
Singi hāsūr. The West, sun-set. M.
Singi-rākāb. (The east; *Singi-turo.* (Sun-rise. M.
Sipūd. To blow the bellows. M.
Siring. Song, to sing. (M. *Durāng.*)
Sirmā. Sky. M.
Sisir. Dew. (M. *Sisirdā.*)
Sithed. Wax. (M. *Situād.*)
Sitūng. Heat (particularly of the Sun.) M.
Sitūng din. Summer.
Siu, Si. Plough. M.
Sō. Smell, to smell (passive.) M.
Sōj. Straight. M.
Sōndrō. Pus. M.
Sōng. To measure. M.
Sōpāō. To place in charge. M.
Sōrō. To close doors with a bar; door-bar M.
Soṛōi. To whip; to beat.

Sōsō. Marking nut. M.
Sōṭā. Cudgel. M.
Sūbā. Under (particularly, under a tree.) M.
Sūhūd. A spring. M.
Sūkū. Happy, happiness. M.
Sūkūl. Smoke. (M. *Sūnkūd.*)
Sūkūri. Pig. M.
Sūlij. Mucus of the nose; snot.
Sūnum. Oil. M.
Sūnūtū. Younger brother. M.
Sūpid. Chignon. M.
Sūpū. Upper arm. M.
Sūrsā. To bolt a door. M.
Surtā. To turn on the side when lying down. M.
Sūsār. To serve. M.
Sūsi. Opportunity. M.
Sūsūn. Dance. M.
Sutām. Thread. M.
Suti. Right mind; sane; come to senses after intoxication or a fainting fit. M.
Sūed. To mix up. (M. *Sūid.* To mix up.)

T.

Tāben. Flat rice. M.
Tāber. To stoop, to lie with face downward. M.
Tāenōm. After; behind (M. *Tāiom.*)
Tāenōm-sā. Back-side (M. *Tāiom-sā.*)
Tāher. Cucumber. (M. *Tāihār.*)
Tāhi. To remain. (M. *Tāin.*)
Ṭākā. Rupees. M.
Ṭākūi. To spin. M.
Tālā. Middle. M.
Tālā-nidā. Midnight. M.
Ṭāṇḍā. Settlement; encampment.
Ṭangilā. A small axe. (M. *Ṭōngē.*)
Tāran. Shoulder. M
Tārōb. The *piar* (*Buchania latifolia*) tree. M.

Tāsing. Afternoon. M.
Tāsi. To spread. M.
Ṭāṭhi. Earthen lamp. M.
Tāyād. Place. M.
Tekād. To bar. M.
Telā. To receive in the hand. M.
Ṭendā. Rice-gruel. M.
Teng. To weave. M.
Ṭenjāng. Elder sister's husband. M.
Ṭenṛō. A small spotted species of leopard M.
Teō. To fry. M.
Terej. Third day after tomorrow.
Tetāng. Thirst. M,
Tēte', Moonlight (M. *Tetej.*)
Ṭhāuṛkā. Right. M.
Ṭhekrej. To bask in the sun. (M. *Ṭheker.*)
Ṭher. Thunder-bolt.
Ṭhōr. To understand, know. M.
Ṭhōṛ. Beak. M.
Ṭhūkūṛi. To collide M.
Ṭhūniāo. To aim (e. g. an arrow) [M. *Etel.*]
Ti'. Hand. M.
Tihing. To-day. (M. *Tising, ising.*)
Ti-jhumpā. Back of the hand.
Tiju. Worm, insect. M.
Ṭikin. Midday. M.
Tilāc. Kettle. (M. *Chelō.*)
Tilir. Ebony. (M. *Tiril.*)
Tilming. A kind of oil-seed; linseed. M.
Tinjlā. To stretch the legs. (M. *Tinjul.*)
Ṭipā'. Drop. M.
Ṭir. Arrow-staff.
Tirio. Flute (M. *Rūtū.*)
Tirub. Bow down the head. M.
Ti-talkā, Palm of the hand.
Ti-ṭhāpṛi. Clapping the hands. M.
Tō'. To hit. M.
Toā. Milk. M.
Tobē. Then. M.

Tōhot. Sprain. (M. *Tōt*).
Tōl. To bind. M.
Ṭōṇāng. Small jungle. M.
Tōndōm. Knot. (M. *Tōnōng.*)
Tōre'. Ashes. (M. *Tōrej.*)
Ṭoṭā. Snapping [as, of a rope.]
Ṭōṭē. Arrow-shaft with a wooden knob at one end. M.
Tūd. To uproot, pull up. M.
Ṭūghrā. To walk slowly.
Tūi. To shoot an arrow. M.
Ṭūilā. A stringed instrument. M.
Tūiyū. Jackal. M.
Tūkū. A pestle. M.
Tūlā. To weigh. M.
Ṭumbal. To glean. M.
Tūmbid. To fall down with face downwards M.
Tūmda. A small drum (M. *Dūmāng.*)
Ṭūṇḍāng. To creep. M.
Ṭūṇḍū. End. M.
Tūpū. To steep in water. M.
Tūpkūṛi. Collision. M.
Tūṛ. Squirrel. M.
Tūṛam. (Wooden) pillar. M.
Tūtkūn. Cold. M.
Tūtūkā. Back of the neck. M.

U

Ub. Hair. M.
Uchūng. To poke with the elbow.
Ud. To Swallow; M.
Udū. To inform, tell. (M. *Udūb.*)
Udūr. To push (M. *idūr, iting.*)
Uihār. To remember.
Uiyū. To fall. M.
Ukā. Elbow. M.
Ukū. To hide; secret. M.
Ukṛūm. To kneel. (M. *Ikṛūm.*)

Ulā. To vomit. M.
Uli. Mango. M.
Um. To bathe. M.
Umbūl. Shade. M.
Uṇḍu. Narrow hole.
Ungūd. To stoop, bend. M.
Uni. Yonder. (M. *Hān, hāni.*)
Uplāo. To float. M.
Ur. To dig.
Urgūm. Tepid. M.
Urher. To entice away
Urū. A species of black bee. M.
Urūm. To feel, to recognize. M.
Urūr. To fall down. M.
Uskūr. To excite, to poke (e. g. fire.) M.
Ūsū. Lean.
Usūr. To irritate; to be angry. M.
Uyū. To throw. To bring down. (M. *Huāng, hūtmā.*)

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APPENDIX II.

Census Figures for Birhor Population in 1911 and 1921.

Birhor Population in 1911.

The total Birhōṛ population in 1911 was 3,085 (1,489 males and 1,596 females.) Of these there were 1,024 in the Hazaribagh District, 927 in the Ranchi District, 104 in the Manbhum District and 27 in the Palamau District, and 745 in the labour districts and States outside Chota Nagpur.

Birhor Population in 1921.

The total Birhōṛ population in Chota Nagpur dwindled down to 1,510 in 1921. Their distribution by districts is shown in the following tabular statement:—*

District.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Hazaribagh.	297	285	582
Ranchi.	181	193	374
Palamau.	23	23	46
Manbhum.	65	63	128
Singbhum.	183	197	380
Total in Chota Nagpur.	749	761	1510

* Unfortunately the Indian Census Report for 1921 omits the statistics for Birhor population ; and so no statistics for Birhor population outside Chota Nagpur is available.

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APPENDIX III.

Anthropometrical Measurements of Some Adult Birhors.

Names.	Head-Breadth.	Head-Length.	Cephalic-Index.	Nose-Breadth.	Nose-Length.	Nasal-Index.
1. Aaman.	13·5 in-	17·7 in-	76·3	4·5 in-	3·5 in-	77·7
2. Jita.	13·4 ches.	18·6 ches.	71·9	4 ches.	4·8 ches.	83·33
3. Budhu.	13·2 ,,	18·7 ,,	70·59	4·2 ,,	5·1 ,,	76·39
4. Lalka.	13·13 ,,	17 ,,	76·49	4·1 ,,	5·1 ,,	80·4
5. Kodo.	12·4 ,,	16·5 ,,	75·01	4 ,,	4·4 ,,	90·9
6. Kobora	13·2 ,,	16·6 ,,	80	4 ,,	4·2 ,,	95·01
7. Jugna.	12·5 ,,	17·4 ,,	71·8	4·1 ,,	4·4 ,,	93·18
8. Dibru.	13·4 ,,	17·3 ,,	77·9	4 ,,	5·6 ,,	71·43
9. Chita.	13·4 ,,	18·1 ,,	74	4·2 ,,	4·3 ,,	97·69
10. Sukhlal.	12·8 ,,	18·1 ,,	70·7	4·4 ,,	4·5 ,,	97·7
11. Pushna.	13·7 ,,	18·8 ,,	71·58	4·2 ,,	4·6 ,,	91·51
12. Lenga.	13 ,,	17·5 ,,	74·29	3·9 ,,	4·8 ,,	81·21
13. Elwa.	13 ,,	17·6 ,,	73·9	4·2 ,,	4·5 ,,	93·3
14. Garku.	12·5 ,,	16·3 ,,	76·25	3·2 ,,	4 ,,	80
15. Lakhiram	12 ,,	15 ,,	80	3·4 ,,	3·5 ,,	97·01
16. Burka.	13·4 ,,	17·8 ,,	75·3	4·1 ,,	4·7 ,,	87·24
17. Kuli (female.)	12·2 ,,	16 ,,	76·25	3·4 ,,	5 ,,	78

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APPENDIX IV.

Size and Sex of Families.

From the Census figures for Birhōṛ population, we have seen that there is a slight excess in the female population over male population. The following statistics of the size and sex of the families in one Birhōṛ settlement might seem to indicate that the first-born child of a Birhōṛ is generally a female. But for accidental death and loss of life through wild animals, particularly tigers, the Birhōṛ, and in particular, the Jāghi or settled Birhōṛ, is fairly long-lived. The excess of the female population over the male population may perhaps be partially traceable to the greater loss of life amongst males through wild animals. Thus, in one family of the Bhūiya gotrā I found that two out of three brothers had been killed by tigers. And the genealogies of several families that I gathered showed cases of similar untimely loss of life through tigers.

1. Dibru (male) of the Ludambā clan, now aged about 60, was married at the age of 24 to Budhni three years younger, and in 36 years of married life, has had 2 sons and 6 daughters, of whom all except one daughter are living. The first-born child was a daughter.

2. Sukhlal (male) of the Lupung clan (now aged about 52) was married at 28, and in 24 years of effective married life, has had 4 sons and 5 daughters of whom all except one son are living. The first-born child was a daughter. His wife Chunia (of the *Aṇḍi* clan) is now about 48 years old.

3. Buṛkā (male) of the *Aṇḍi* clan, now aged about 32, was married at the age of 25 to Koili of the Lupung clan (now aged about 29) and in 7 years of married life has a male child who is now living.

4. Mangal (male) of the Aṇḍi clan, now aged about 45, married at the age of 25 Pairo of the Hembrom clan, now aged about 43, and in 20 years of effective married life has had 1 male child and 5 female children. Of these all but one

female child are living. The first-born child was a female.

5. Lālkā (male) of the Sāmdhōar clan (now aged about 42) married at the age of about 22 Birsi of the Hembrom clan (then aged 20) and in 16 years of effective marriage had 7 male children and 3 female children by her, and on her death, about 4 years ago, again married Sumri of the Lupung clan and has one male child by her. The sex of the first-born by his former wife was also male.

6. Asman (male) of the Bhūiya clan, now aged about 26, married at the age of 22 Somri of the Nagpuria clan (then aged about 20) and has had one male child, who is living.

7. Etwa (male) of the Bhūiya clan, now aged about 39, married at the age of 22 Radha of the Murum clan, about three years younger than himself, who deserted him within a year of marriage, and the next year he married Bhinsāria of the Ludambā clan (now aged about 25) by whom he has had 2

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male and 2 female children, all living. The first-born was a male.

8. Chaitu (male) of the Bhūiya clan now aged about 23 married, 2 years ago, Chaiti of the Murum clan and has yet had no child.

9. Pusua (male) of the Ludambā clan, aged about 26, married at the age of 18 Budhni then aged 16, (who is the daughter of a Munda father by a Birhōṛ wife), and in 8 years of married life has had only one female child who is living.

10. Koṛo (male) of the Murum clan, now aged about 29, married, at the age of 25, Genda of the Lupung clan three years younger than himself, and in four years of married life has had only one female child who is living.

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