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Rough Notes

ON

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Some of the Customs
of Sweepers, Gwalas,
Dhobis and Menial
Purbia Castes, residing
in Quetta



CALCUTTA
SUPERINTENDENT GOVERNMENT PRINTING, INDIA
1919



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PREFACE.

While I was doing the City Magistrate's work in Quetta for about six months this year (1918) some cases came up for trial which were connected with the women of some of the Menial (Indian) castes found in Quetta. The advice and assistance of the leading men of the castes concerned was sought and the cases were satisfactorily settled. It appeared to me that it would be useful, for future reference, to collect information regarding some of the customs of these castes; I consulted the leading men (*punch*) of the various castes, made enquiries from them, and the result is these Notes on Sweepers, Gwalas, Dhobis and Menial Purbia castes.

These notes were submitted, in draft, to Colonel A. B. Dew, C.S.I., C.I.E., Revenue and Judicial Commissioner in Baluchistan and Major H. B. St. John, I.A., C.I.E., Political Agent, Quetta-Pishin, both of whom considered the Notes not only interesting but most useful. Incomplete and rough as they are, they are being printed in the hope that they may prove of some help in the settlement of cases, and that the officers who have to deal with such cases may be able to add to them, or modify them in the light of further experience.

JAMIAI RAI,

*Settlement Extra Assistant Commissioner in Baluchistan,
and*

*Revenue Assistant to the Revenue Commissioner in
Baluchistan.*

QUETTA;

The 1st October 1918.

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No. I.

SWEEPERS.

Notes on some of the customs of sweepers residing in Quetta (verified and attested on 24th June 1918).

These notes deal with the Hindustani, and the Punjabi sweepers, Informants, who are residing in Quetta. The information has been furnished by the following leading men :—

HINDUSTANIS.

1. Ghisa, son of Bhola, caste Pihal, resident of Sold, District Rohtak.
2. Bhiku, son of Mukha, Durguchh of Beri, District Rohtak.
3. Indráj, son of Chiman, Durguchh of Mundka, District Delhi.
4. Bhágmall son of Khushál, Dhikáo, of Bijwasi, District Delhi.
5. Launga, son of Trikha, Sodé, of Nagar, District Delhi.

PUNJABIS.

1. Shamira, son of Khuda Bakhsh Matṭu, of Bhoma Bathil, District Gujranwala.
2. Fazla, son of Rangu, Luthar Bhatti, of Majra, District Sialkot.
3. Budhu, son of Soda, Kandialé of Kanwan Lit, District Sialkot.
4. Nihál Gadḍa, son of Jaura, Sahotrē of Gude, District Lahore.
5. Mantu, son of Shama, Haraudāwē of Bainks China, District Gujranwala.

I have also consulted Bhai Viram Dass, an Udasi Sádhu, who is in charge of the sweepers' *dharamsala* in the compound of the Station Hospital.

2. There are about fifty families of the Hindustani sweepers in the Quetta town, and about two hundred families in the Cantonments. Their principal sub-castes are :—

Families and castes.

Pihal, Durguchh, Dhikáo, Sodé, Didlan and Bhut.

There are about eighty families of the Punjabi sweepers in the town, and about five hundred families in the Cantonments. The principal castes of the Punjabi sweepers are : Chhapirband, Gill, Sahotrē, Kandiare, Luthar Bhatti, and Matṭu.

Religion.

3. The Hindustanis believe in Lal Beg, and the Punjabis in Rishi Balmik, and are known respectively as the Lal Begi and Balmiki. The sacred books of the former are Vedas, and that of the latter Ramayan Balmiki. Some of the Balmikis also believe in Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of the Sikh religion, and the Sikh Scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib).

These sweepers have their own Brahmans who officiate at marriages and other ceremonies.

A considerable number of the sweepers have been converted to Christianity, and these converts are said to be making marked advancement in education, and in their social life.

Places of worship.

4. The sweepers have a *mandir* or place of worship in the sweepers' street (north of the Gaisford Memorial School), at Quetta. There are two *Guru dvaras* (Guru's chamber), one in the Lalkurti lines, and the other in the compound of the Station Hospital in the Cantonments, where *Guru Granth Sahib* is kept, and recited daily by the Bhais. The Hindustani sweepers also visit Hardwar.

The Hindustanis take oath on Lal Beg, Ganga, and Jamna (rivers), while the Punjabis take oath on Balmik. Private disputes are often disposed of by an oath which is administered in the following manner :—

The parties, with some of the leading men (*panch*) assemble in the *mandir*, the person who is required to take an oath, bathes, strikes, three, five, or seven strokes with a stick on the kettle drum (*nakāra*) which is kept in the *mandir* and taking the name of Balmik makes his statement, thus "In the name of Balmik I deny the charge which has been brought against me."

The dead bodies are buried in the burial ground, which is on the east bank of the Lohra on the Brewery Road. Cooked food is given in alms, among the Hindustanis on the 3rd and 13th day, among the Punjabis on the 7th and 40th day.

In all cases (men, women, children, married or unmarried persons) mourning is observed for thirteen days.

Circumcision is practised among some of the Punjabi sweepers who follow the *nikah* system of marriage, but even among them it is not general.

Food and Drink.

5. Both the Hindustanis and Punjabis assert that they have given up eating *mūrdār* (dead animals of any* kind) and they eat the meat of goats, sheep and fowls; and do not eat beef or pork. Hare (*Khargosh*) they consider as a sacred animal, would not kill it or eat its flesh. The men drink country liquor and also smoke, but women are supposed not to drink, and only a few of them smoke. The Punjabi and Hindustani sweepers interdine.

Language.

6. The Hindustani speak Hindustani and the Punjabis, the Punjabi; a few of the men can read Hindi and Gurmukhi and about 80 of their children are now learning Urdu in the schools which have been opened by the Christian Missionaries, in the town and cantonments.

* This seems to be doubtful.

7. Here in Quetta all are engaged in their legitimate profession, *Occupation.* i.e. scavenging; some of them, especially converts to Christianity, have taken service such as cooks, bearers, etcetera, and their females work as Ayahs (nurses) and *dais*. In their own country a good many of them are engaged in agriculture as tenants or day labourers.

8. The mother is considered impure for thirteen days after the birth *Birth.* of a child; on the 40th day she is ceremoniously pure when the house is washed and cleaned and a Brahman is fed. On the same day the child is given a name, among the Hindustanis by a Brahman and among the Punjabis by the parents.

9. Among the Punjabis a father has the right to give away his daughter in marriage; and a mother can only exercise such right with the consent and approval of the near male relatives of her deceased husband. When no such relatives exist, the mother can give away her daughter in marriage. In the case of a step-daughter, the step-father has the same rights about the disposal of her hand as the real father. *Betrothal and marriage.*

Among the Hindustanis, the girl's father goes to the boy's house where some leading men of both the parties assemble; he presents a *chaddar* (wrapper) and one rupee to the boy and puts a *tilak* (vermillion mark) on his forehead.

Among the Punjabis, the girl's father goes to the boy's house and presents a date (*chhuhara*), one rupee, 1½ seers of rice and five lumps of *gur* to the boy; also applies *kesar* (saffron) to the boy's garment. Then the boy's father presents to the girl a suit of clothes (*Dopata*—wrapper, *Kurta*—shirt and a pair of pyjamas. All these clothes must be of some coloured cloth, preferably red), a pair of shoes; about five seers of dry fruit (*mithai* raisins, dates and almonds); and if he is well-to-do some ornaments such as *phul*, *chaunk*, *has* and *karian*.

These are the binding portions of the betrothal ceremony.

Among the Hindustanis the minimum age at which girls and boys are married is 7 and 10 years respectively, and among the Punjabis 11 or 12 in case of girls and 14 or 15 in case of boys. Infants are sometimes betrothed.

Among the Hindustanis marriage can't take place in the *gots* of mother, father and grand-mother (*dadi*), but among the Punjabis, the only *got* in which a marriage can't take place is that of the father. Thus, a Punjabi lad cannot marry his uncle's daughter, but he can marry his *masi's* (mother's sister's), *mama's* (mother's brother's) daughter.

The converts to Christianity marry among Christians—but some of those who are in the probationary stage (and are known among the Christians as *Kacha Isāi*) occasionally take girls in marriage from among their old *biradri*.

10. The Hindustanis erect a *Vedi*-marriage booth (like Hindus), and the binding portion of marriage is seven *phas* round the sacrificial fire. *Marriage ceremony.* For purposes of marriage, the Punjabis are divided into two classes: those belonging to trans-Ravi Districts (Gujranwala, Sialkot, Jhelum, Gujrat, etc.), who observe the Muhammadan *nikāh* ceremony which is performed by a Musalman *mulla*, while those belonging to the Cis-Ravi Districts

(Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana, etc.) perform the *phera* ceremony. Those who believe in Sikh Scriptures also conform to the *phera* ceremony. But marriages can take place between (i) Hindustanis and (ii) Punjabis of both sections, and the marriage ceremony is performed according to the section or caste to which the bride belongs. No marriages are performed on Tuesdays, and among the Hindu-Chuhra none during the periods proscribed by the Hindu *Shāstras*. Musalman sweepers don't celebrate marriages during the Muharram.

Bride price and exchange.

11. The system of exchange of girls in marriage (known as *watta satta* or *atta satta*) does not exist among the sweepers; but bride price is paid, which varies among the Hindustanis from Rs. 200 to 300, and among the Punjabis from 100 to 300. This is known as *kharch* and is paid in advance, half at the time of betrothal and half on the day of marriage. Well-to-do, and respectable families, especially those who observe *phera* ceremony, do not take this *kharch*.

Both Hindustanis and Punjabis give dowry (known as *das* or *dāj*) to their girls on marriage, which varies according to the means of the parents. The Hindustanis give to their girls clothes and cash (from Rs. 11 to 101) and the Punjabis give suits of clothes, ornaments, cooking pots and household furniture, but no cash.

The girl retains her name on her marriage; but when a man takes a second wife, the first wife having died, his parents give the second wife a new name.

The system of *Ghar-Jamai* (house son-in-law) is known that is—a man agrees to marry a girl and live with her parents. But unless a written agreement exists, the *Jamai* can leave his wife's home and take her away at any time he may like.

A girl who has been married before puberty cannot revoke her marriage; but the husband can repudiate the marriage on attaining majority.

Dress and clothes.

12. Clothes dyed in *kazumba* are not worn by men or women. A virgin generally wears *dandi* (small ear rings); a married woman wears *dandi*, *Thumke*, *Nath* (nose ring) which is the distinctive mark of a married woman, and coloured clothes (red); and a widow must not wear a *nath* (nose ring) and must wear only white clothes. A married woman who goes about in white clothes is considered to be indecent.

Divorces.

13. Both among the Hindustanis and Punjabis a woman is generally divorced for misconduct; among the Hindustanis the divorce (*faragh-khatti*) must be formally announced in the presence of *panch* (five men), while among the Punjabis the *talāk* is given by a written document.

A woman cannot claim divorce if her husband deserts her or refuses to maintain her, but she can claim maintenance (*nan-o-nafkah*). To obtain a divorce she leaves her husband's protection and misconducts herself.

Until a woman is divorced, she can claim maintenance allowance from her husband which amounts to about Rs. 5 per mensem for herself and about Rs. 3 for each of the children, if she has any. If after the marriage, the husband is found to be impotent, the wife cannot claim a divorce but with the consent, or connivance, of her husband she can

cohabit with a brother or a cousin of her husband, and the children born of such union belong to the husband.

A divorced woman can remarry any one she likes, but among the Hindustanis she cannot remarry her first husband; and the man who marries her has to pay to the first husband compensation which is about half of the amount spent by him on his marriage, the exact amount being, generally, settled by the *panchayat*.

14. There are no restrictions to *polygamy*, but in practice a man only marries a second wife, when he has no children from the first wife. A man can have two sisters as co-wives.

15. Among the Hindustani sweepers a brother-elder or younger (*dewar* or *jeth*) of the deceased husband has the first right to marry the widow; but among the Punjabi sweepers she is free to choose her second husband. In the first case, the question of *kharch* does not arise; and in case of Punjabis, no *kharch* is payable if the widow marries a *dewar* or a *jeth*, but if she marries an outsider she can make her own terms.

The children of the widow go to the legal heirs of her deceased husband; she keeps unweaned children for a year or so and the heirs of the deceased husband pay her for their maintenance at Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 per mensem for each child.

When a widow marries a *dewar* or a *jeth* she takes with her the property of her deceased husband, if she has no grown up son or sons; but if she marries an outsider she can only carry with her the clothes (*lire*) she is wearing, i.e. *suthan*, *kurta* and *dopata*. If there be a grown up son of the deceased husband he takes possession of the property even when the widow marries a *dewar* or a *jeth*.

Among the sweepers who observe the Musalman system of marriage (trans-Ravi sweepers of Punjab) the *nikah* must be performed, but in the case of sweepers who observe the *phera* (Hindu) ceremony of marriage the widow is married by the ceremony known as *chaddar andazi* (putting a wrapper). At the ceremony *panch* or leading men assemble, the bride-groom brings a white cotton sheet, four corners of which are dipped in saffron paste; he puts this sheet (*chaddar*) over the head of the widow. Then follows a feast to the *biradri*.

A widow must not, according to custom, take a second husband within twelve months of the death of her first husband.

16. Among the Punjabi sweepers, in case of *Siah kari* of an unmarried girl (whether betrothed or not) the parents of the girl and her seducer pay a fine to the *panchayat* which varies from Rs. 7 to Rs. 25; this money is spent in feeding the *panchayat* or rather in drink. The seducer cannot, according to custom, marry the girl.

In the case of a married woman, the husband and the *Siah kar* both pay a fine (amount same as in case of unmarried girl) which is spent on drink.

In case of a widow, the *panchayat* fine (*dand*) is paid by the heirs of the widow and her seducer.

If it be proved that the woman was not a consenting party, the amount of *dand*, payable by the seducer is raised, sometimes to as much as Rs. 50.

If the seducer of a woman belongs to a caste other than sweepers, the husband of the woman pays the ordinary *dand* to the *panchayat* if he takes the case to the court; but if he does not go to court, he has to pay double the amount of *dand*. Thus if a sweeper woman misconducts herself with a Hindu or Musalman, and the case is taken to a court, the husband of the woman pays the ordinary *dand* (Rs. 7 to 25) but if he does not seek redress in a court of law his *dand* is 14 to 50 rupees.

Among the Hindustani sweepers, if adultery is committed with the consent of the woman (unmarried girl, married woman or widow) and the case is not taken to a court, the woman's heirs (unmarried girl and widow), or husband has to pay a *dand* of Rs. 25 and the seducer Rs. 50, but if adultery is committed without the consent of the woman, and the case is not taken to a court, the seducer alone has to pay a *dand* of Rs. 100. The woman (virgin or widow) remains with her heirs, and if she is married she remains with her husband.

If a widow or a married woman, who has been abducted chooses to remain with her seducer, compensation is paid to the woman's heirs or husband, which is determined in each case by the *panchayat*. The ordinary compensation for a widow is Rs. 200 and for a married woman it varies from Rs. 300 to 450. In such cases, the *panchayat dand* payable by each party (the heirs of the woman and the seducer) is Rs. 5.

Panchayat.

17. The sources of income of these *panchayats* are :—

- (i) a fee of Re. 1 or 1-4 paid on birth of a son.
- (ii) a fee of Rs. 2-8 levied from the parents of the bride, and from the bridegroom on marriage.

No such fee is paid on the remarriage of a widow or a divorced woman.

The amounts thus realised are expended in charities.

The *panchayat* deals with civil cases, petty criminal cases of the *biradri*, and with social offences, and the punishments awarded are :—

- (i) small fine or *dand* which is spent in drink.
- (ii) stopping of *huka pani* (excommunication).

This latter punishment is awarded in case of *sikh kari* of a sweeper man or woman with a member of the castes considered inferior such as *Sansis* and *Gagras*; if a woman uses bad language towards a *panch*; or when a person refuses to pay the *dand* imposed by the *panchayat*.

Taboo.

18. The Hindustani sweepers do not cut a *pipal* tree; they do not pluck a *sita phal* (pumpkin) off the plant or cut it, but they do not object to cook and eat it if cut by someone else. No sweeper would give to a married daughter of the family, as a gift, a broom (*Jharu*), a *chhaj* (winnowing fan) or a *chhanri*-sieve.

Inheritance.

19. Adoption is permitted; the rules of inheritance are not very definite, but *chunda wand* system of division of property is followed.

NOTE.—For a detailed account of sweepers, the article on Chuhras in the "Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province (vol. II, pages 182-212)" should be consulted.

No. II.

GWALAS.

Note on some of the customs of Gwalas (*Ahirs*) residing in Quetta verified and attested on the 9th July 1918.

1. The information embodied in this note has been obtained from *Informants.* the following leading men of the *Gwalas* residing in Quetta :—
 1. Rāmphāl, son of Dip Singh, *Jhaka* (*Ahir*) of Bahrapur, District Aligarh ;
 2. Bihāri, son of Katu, *Ghosi* of Allahabad ;
 3. Ajudhia son of Ganesh, *Kalyan* of Allahabad ;
 4. Chhotu. son of Purai, *Jhausa* of Allahabad ;
 5. Radha son of Nawajū, *Maṭhor* of Allahabad, and
 6. Their Brahman or *prohit* (who officiates at their marriage and other ceremonies)—Pandit Bhagwati Parshad, son of Bhārion Parshad of Barabanki.
 2. There are about 30 families of *Gwalas* in the Quetta Municipal *Families and Castes.* limits (*Gwāl Mandi*), twenty families in the cantonments, and a couple of families each at Chaman, Pishin, Sibi and Loralai. The principal castes are Maṭhor, Gadriya (known also as *Charia* or graziers) and *Ghosi*.
 3. The *Gwalas* are Hindus by religion, they believe in Krishna *Religion.* Aytār, and their sacred book is Bhagwat. They have no place of worship, at present, in Quetta, but a Thakar* Dwara is being built in the Gwal Mandi, in which idols (*Mūrti*) will be placed—the principal one being that of Krishna.
- They do not seem to have any system of prayers, in the families.
- In disputes the binding oath is that of Ganga (River Ganges).
- The *Gwalas* have their own burning and burial ground (apart from that of other Hindus), at the foot of the Murdār Hill. Bodies of children up to ten years of age are buried, while of those (both males and females) above this age are cremated. In case of cremation, the bones (*phūl*) are gathered on the third day, put in an earthen jar, kept buried in the ground and sent to Hardwar whenever an opportunity occurs. The ceremony known as *sudh* is performed on the 10th day, and Brahmanas are fed on the 13th day, after death.
- The period of mourning for children is five days, and for adults thirteen days.
4. They both (men and women) eat meat of sheep and goats, but *Food and drink.* do not eat fowls and eggs, nor the meat of any other animal or bird. The meat eaten is *kalāl*, and not *jhatka* ; in fact eating of *jhatka* meat is considered a social offence. The men, even boys above the age of five years, drink wine, and most of them smoke.

* This was opened and consecrated on the Janam Ashtmi Day 20th August 1918.

They would eat *kachi* food (i.e., food cooked in water) of a Brahman, and *paki* (food cooked in ghi) prepared by a *halwai* (Hindu confectioner), but do not eat *kachi* food prepared by any other castes.

Language.

5. They speak a vulgar form of Hindustani ; and none of them are literate. A couple of the boys are now learning Urdu in the Quetta boys' school. Some of them, who have larger transactions, keep an account book of sales of milk, etc., in which entries are made daily by a Munshi and the account is made up monthly. The Munshi is paid some remuneration, for keeping the account, this varies from 2 to 3 rupees per month. Their letters are written, generally in Urdu, by the professional letter writers who charge about one anna for writing a letter, including cost of paper.

Occupation.

6. They are graziers and milkmen ; they keep cows and cow buffaloes, but no sheep or goats. All the household work is done by the women who also sell milk in the various parts of the town and cantonments ; and also sell *Uplas* (dried coudung cakes). A cow calves in 9 months and 15 days, and a cow-buffalo in 10 months and 15 days. The milk of a newly calved cow or buffalo is not used or sold for the first 9 days. In India some of the Gwalas are engaged in agriculture. No Gwalas would sell milk on the *Dewali* day ; many of them do not give away milk by sale or otherwise on Puranmashi day, and some do not sell any milk on Tuesdays. The Gwalas do not manufacture butter or *ghi*, and buy *ghi* when required from the bazar.

Birth.

7. A mother is considered ceremoniously impure for eleven days after child birth ; on the 12th day the purification ceremony known as *bráho* is held, when a Brahman performs the *puja*, for a fee of about one rupee. A feast is given to the kinsmen. The mother, however, does no household work for forty days. A child is given a name, on the day it is born, in consultation with a Brahman.

Betrothal and marriage.

8. A girl can be betrothed by her father, or a male guardian or relative, but when no male relatives exist, a mother can give away her daughter in marriage.

Preliminary negotiations for betrothal (*sagái*) are made by the elders of the parties ; generally by the women ; when this has been done, the bridegroom's father invites the *panch* and the bride's father to some place (not his own house), when the *panch* are served with wine, at the expense of the bridegroom's father and the engagement is announced. The bridegroom's father then sends five rupees to the bride. The announcement of the engagement in the presence of the *panch* (headmen) and the handing over of Rs. 5 to the bride are the binding part of the *sagai* betrothal.

The ages at which marriages are ordinarily celebrated are :—for boys 12 to 16, and for girls 7 to 11 years. The *phera* (circumlocution of the sacrificial fire) ceremony of marriage is observed. The bride goes to the bridegroom's house for a couple of days, then returns to her parents ; and the *gauna* (leave taking) ceremony is performed when the bride is about sixteen years old. Then she finally goes to the bridegroom. Consummation only takes place after the *gauna*, also known as *Makhlawa*. When the bride's parents have no male children of their own, they

sometimes arrange that the bridegroom should live with them after his marriage. This is called *ghar jamai*.

Marriages can't take place in the father's and mother's *got* of a boy.

No bride price is paid, nor does the custom of exchange of girls in marriage prevail among the Gwalas.

Dowry (*dahej*) is given by the parents of the girl according to their means. The bride retains her own name after marriage.

The distinctive ornaments of a married woman are *Jhanjhar* (anklets) ordinarily made of brass or bell metal-*phul*.

9. Custom does not, ordinarily, permit a divorce, but if the husband or the wife changes religion, divorce necessarily follows. If a husband deserts his wife or refuses to maintain her she applies to the *panch*, who consult the husband, and with his consent set the woman free, and she can then choose her second husband. The marriage ceremony performed in such cases is that which is known as *chāddar andāzi*. A married woman who deserts her husband and misconducts herself is allowed to remarry on payment of a *dand* (fine) to the *panchayat* (see *Siah kari*). The children, if any, remain with the father. A divorced woman must not remarry within twelve months of her divorce. Divorce.

10. A man can only take a second wife, with the consent of his first wife even if she be childless. If a man marries a second wife without the consent of his first wife, he is ex-communicated (*hukā pāni band*) from his *biradri*; and the *panch* impose a fine on him. The *panch* can also compel him to divorce his first wife and let her remarry if she so desires. The cases of polygamy are very rare among the Gwalas, there being only two men (*Chhotu* and *Parma*) each of whom has two living wives. In both these cases, the first wives were childless. In case of *Parma*, he abducted *Babo's* wife, who became his second wife, he having paid compensation determined by the *panchayat* (see *siah-kari*). Polygamy.

11. A *dewar*, i.e., a younger brother of the deceased husband, who has no wife of his own living, has the right to marry the brother's widow. If there be no unmarried *dewar* or the unmarried *dewar* does not want to marry the widow she can choose her second husband, according to caste rules; but the husband she chooses is required to pay as compensation, Rs. 250. Of this rupees 50 are spent on feeding the *biradri* (chiefly in wine), and Rs. 200 are paid to the heirs of the deceased husband. The son or sons are entitled to receive this money, but if there be no sons the money is payable to the nearest male relative of the deceased husband, who also takes charge of the children if there be any of the first husband; but unweaned children remain with the mother for 12 or 18 months and no maintenance allowance is paid. On remarriage, a widow takes with her, out of the property of her deceased husband, only the clothes she is wearing. A widow must not remarry within 12 months of the death of her first husband. The marriage ceremony in the case of a widow is what is known as *chāddar andāzi*; the man who wishes to marry a widow brings her a new suit of clothes, the wrapper or *dupata* must be white, the corners of which must be dyed in turmeric water, and Widows.

a pair of *jhanjhar* (anklets) and in the presence of some men puts the wrapper on the widow. The *biradri* are then feasted. The Gwala feasts generally consist of wine only which is freely served to all present.

A widow cannot take any active part in the ceremonies of marriage of other persons, and she is not allowed even to touch the clothes or ornaments which may have been prepared for the bride or the bridegroom, she being considered unlucky. She must not wear *jhanjhar*, nor apply *sandūr*-vermilion to her *māṅg*-hair parting.

Siah kari.

12. In case of a virgin, there is apparently no punishment to the girl's parents; but the seducer is made to pay a fine to the *panchayat* and the girl is married to him by the *phera* ceremony.

In the case of a betrothed girl, the seducer is made, by the *panch*, to pay *dand* (compensation) to the man to whom she was engaged, and is allowed to marry the girl. The amount of *dand* is determined by the *panch* according to the merits of each case; and until it is paid the seducer and the girl's family remain excommunicated.

In the case of a married woman, the seducer has to pay to the aggrieved husband Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 2,500 as compensation, and keeps the woman. Until the compensation is paid, the family of the seducer are excommunicated. If the man is poor, and cannot pay the amount himself, he asks for contributions from the members of his *biradri*.

About three years ago, Babo's wife was abducted by Parma (section 10) who had to pay Rs. 2,500 as compensation, of which the *panchayat* feasts cost about Rs. 700, the balance being paid to Babo.

If a widow is abducted, her heirs are entitled to a compensation (Rs. 200) and the *biradri* to Rs. 50 which are spent on drink. If a divorced woman is abducted, no compensation is demanded.

When a Gwala woman commits *siah kari* with a Hindu of any other caste than a Gwala, her husband pays a *dand* to the *biradri*, which varies from 5 to 100 rupees. If she commits *siah kari* with a non-Hindu (Musalman, etc.) she must go to Hardwar (Ganges) to be purified; on her return the *panch* assemble and impose a *dand* on her which varies from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200. Until the *dand* is paid, the family is excommunicated. On payment of the *dand*, the *biradri* is reconciled and the woman lives in peace with her husband.

It is admitted that the morality of the Gwala women is very low; the husbands connive at the misconduct of their women, and the *biradri* only intervenes when a *flagrant case* comes to their notice.

In the feasts that are held at the expense of delinquents, all male members of the community (even boys five years old) are invited, and country liquor is served. Women do not join these feasts.

Panchayat.

13. There is no regular *panchayat* of Gwalas in Quetta; but grey beards and men of means are recognised as elders (*panch*). When a dispute or a social offence has to be decided, all the male members of the community are invited, and their opinion obtained. It is creditable to this community that very few, if any, of their cases come before the courts. The severest punishment which the *panch* can impose, is the excommunication—known as *huka pani band*. When a person or a

family is placed under this ban, no member of the community would associate with them, dine, drink, or smoke with them, and would not even help them in carrying their dead to the cremation ground. This punishment is inflicted in serious cases such as :—

- (i) *Siah kari*.
- (ii) Eating food, or smoking *hukka* with a person of prohibited castes.
- (iii) Associating with a person or family who has been excommunicated.
- (iv) Eating *Jhatka* meat.
- (v) Refusal to pay debts which have been judged as due, by the *panch*.
- (vi) Refusal to pay the *dand* imposed by the *panch*.

14. Like all other Hindus, the Gwalas consider cow as a sacred *Sacred animals.*
 animal.

15. A wife has life interest in the property of her husband, and *Inheritance, etc.*
 grown up and married sons cannot claim a share of the property so long as the mother is living. On her death or remarriage, the property devolves on the sons, all of whom have equal share. Unmarried girls are entitled to maintenance.

The custom of adoption prevails; the boy adopted must be a near relative—son of a brother or of an uncle.

No. III.

Hindustani Hindu Dhobis.

Notes on some of the customs of Hindustani Hindu Dhobis residing in the town and Cantonment of Quetta (verified and attested on the 29th July 1918.)

The information has been furnished by the following leading men :— *Informants.*

1. Ghisa, son of Baldu, resident of Meerut;
2. Kallan, son of Pūran, of Agra;
3. Jawahār Lāl, son of Parsādi of Agra;
4. Gajādhar, son of Kishen of Sitapur; and
5. Balli, son of Lahori, of Kangra.

These five men live in the town. The leading men among the Dhobis of the Cantonments are: Chaudhris Mullā, Dyal (Staff College), Husaini (Lal Kurti), Pat Kaurich, Narain (Top Khana), Kallu and Devi.

2. There are about two hundred families of the Hindustani Dhobis *Families and*
 in the Quetta town and Cantonments; of these two families are of *castes.*
 Mārwaris, one of Bundela, and the rest are said to be Kanaujia. In olden days the Dhobis, so they allege, were known as *jal paohar* Khatri. The Kanaujia consider themselves superior, and do not interdine or

intermarry with the Marwari or the Bundela. They do not seem to recognise any other sub-castes.

Religion.

3. By religion they are Hindus of the orthodox (Sanatan Dharama) School; they believe in the Hindu sacred books, and sacred places, and worship, in Quetta, at the temples of Pani Nath (Jogi) and Mahabir (Hanuman). They have no separate place of worship of their own. The binding oath is that on the Ganga.

The dead bodies of unmarried persons (males and females) are, irrespective of their ages, buried in a burial ground which is within the Cantonment limits, while those of married persons (and of widowers and widows) are cremated and the ashes and bones thrown in the Quetta Lohra. Unlike other Hindus, these Dhobis do not send the bones (*phūl*) to Ganges at Hardwār. Mourning is observed for three days; and on the 13th day a feast is given to the *biradri* and the family of the deceased is then considered ceremoniously pure. Until this ceremony (known as *terwan*) is performed, the family does not interdine or smoke with other families. The *terwan* feast is only given in the case of persons who had been married (including widows and widowers) and consists of *puri*, *dahi*, and vegetables; and country liquor is also freely served. Females also join this feast, but take their food after the men have eaten.

The *kirya* is also performed in consultation with a Brāhman, generally on the 10th or 11th day after death. Like all Hindus they perform annual *shradh* for their dead.

Food and Drink.

4. The Dhobis eat meat of sheep and goats, and also eat fish, but they do not eat fowls, eggs or pork. The meat eaten is *halal*, but there is no caste objection to eating *Jhatkā*. Men drink wine and some smoke tobacco, and the women are not supposed to drink, but some of the old women take to *kukka* smoking. Dhobis would not eat *kachi* (food cooked in water) from the hands of members of any other castes, but they would eat *pakki* that is sweets, *puris*, etcetera, cooked in *ghi*.

Language.

5. The language spoken is Hindustani; none of the Dhobis can read and write.

Occupation.

6. The occupation followed is that of washing and cleaning clothes; a Hindu Dhobi has no scruples in washing clothes for Musalmans and Christians, but he will not wash for sweepers and other untouchable castes. Donkeys are kept for carrying clothes to *ghats*—washing places. When the work is done piecemeal, the wages vary from 12 to 16 clothes per rupee; and when Dhobis take private service in a family for the whole time they are paid monthly from 20 to 35; some of the Dhobis earn as much as Rs. 60 per mensem by washing for more than one small European family, and charging Rs. 8 to Rs. 14 per month from each family. The women do all the household work, assist in drying, ironing, etc. of clothes, taking clothes to the families, taking food to the men at the *ghats*; but those who have male relatives fit for work do not do the actual washing.

Birth.

7. The mother is considered ceremoniously impure for 1½ months; at the end of twelve days she has her first bath, when she begins to do her household work. On the 40th day, she has the final bath, when

members of the *biradri* are feasted. The children are named on the day of the birth in consultation with a Brahman. The names given are those common among Hindus such as Bhaghwan Dass, Hem Raj, Kalyan Dass for boys, and Ganga Devi, Narain Devi for girls. But some of the names are peculiar such as Ghisa, and Husaini for men and Dallo for women.

The tonsure ceremony (*Mundan*) is performed, both of girls and boys, at the age of 1½ months, at the temple of Pani Nath. The Dhobis do not wear *Janeo* (sacred thread).

8. The father has the right to give his daughter in marriage; in the absence of father, his near male relatives, and when no such relatives exist, the mother can give away her daughter in marriage. The betrothals (*sagai*) are arranged through the *Chaudhris* or leading men. A *Chaudhri* interviews the father or guardian of the girl and of the boy and obtains their consent. Having done this, the *Chaudhri* invites the leading men of the *biradri* and the fathers or guardians of both parties, when the betrothal is announced and the ceremony of *piyala piyali* is performed. This consists of presentation, in the presence of the leading men of the *biradri*, by the girl's father, of a white turban and one rupee to the boy's father, and their exchanging cups of wine. After this ceremony, a suitable day is fixed, when the boy's father invites leading men of the *biradri*, and by their hand sends to the girl a *hasli* (silver necklace) and sweets worth about two rupees, which being accepted by the girl's father render the betrothal binding. The bridegroom's father presents rupees five to the *panch* and these are used in drink. Betrothal and marriage.

Marriages do not take place in the father's and mother's *gots*. The ages of girls and boys, at marriage, vary from 5 to 12 and 7 to 14 years respectively among the well-to-do people, while among the people of ordinary means girls and boys are seldom married below the ages of 20 and 25 when they are fit to take the duties and responsibilities of householders. In the former case the bride does not go to her husband's home until she reaches the age of puberty. The date of marriage is fixed by a Brahman, and the binding part of the ceremony is the seven *phera* circumlocation round the sacrificial fire. The Brahman who officiates at marriage is paid a fee of Re. 1½ by the bridegroom. Respectable and well-to-do people consider it derogatory to accept bride price, but among the poorer people it is generally demanded and paid, the amount varying from Rs. 30 to Rs. 100. The bride's father gives dowry according to his means. The Dhobi women do not wear a nose ring (which among some of the Hindu castes is considered the distinctive mark of a married woman), but the ornaments specially worn by a married woman are the *churis* (bracelets) and toe rings. The married woman applies *sendur* to the *mang* (hair parting) and *masi* to her teeth—which custom does not permit a widow to use. The girl retains her parental name after the marriage.

The marriage expenses vary: the brides' party spending from Rs. 80 to Rs. 300 and the bridegrooms from Rs. 100 to Rs. 500 according to their means.

9. A woman can be divorced for misconduct, or when she deserts her husband. The divorce can be effected in consultation, and with the approval, of the *panchayat* to whom the husband pays Rs. 12 as penalty known among the Dhobis as *Chhināli*. Out of the 12 rupees, a small amount is paid to the *Nai* (barber) who summons the *panch* and serves them when assembled, and larger portion is spent by the *biradri* on drink.

A married woman who has no children and whose husband proves to be impotent can obtain divorce by applying to the *panchayat*, and she can be remarried. The woman, who is divorced, can only take with her the clothes she is wearing, and has no right to any clothes, ornaments or utensils which may have been presented to her by her parents at her wedding or given her by the husband.

Polygamy.

10. Polygamy is not prohibited by custom, though in practice it is rare. There are at present two cases among the Dhobis; Kalu and Dibbu (Devi) each of whom has two living wives.

Widows.

11. Remarriage of widows (*rānd*) is permitted; the *dewar* (younger brother) having the first claim to the widow's hand, but a widow must in no case marry an elder brother (*Jeth*) of her deceased husband. If there be no *dewar*, or if the *dewar* does not want to marry the widow, she can, subject to caste restrictions, choose her own husband, and in such a case the heirs of the deceased husband can claim compensation—which is ordinarily half of the money expended by the husband on the marriage and which varies from Rs. 100 to Rs. 400. The children, if any, remain with the heirs of the first husband.

The marriage ceremony of a widow is simple. The intended husband invites half a dozen leading men, feeds them; then he goes to the widow's home with a suit of clothes, sweets worth about 2 rupees, some rice and *dal*. These he presents to the widow, who puts on the new clothes, and comes home with him. The husband then pays Rs. 18 to the *panchayat* which are spent on drinks. The rite of widow remarriage is known as *dharona*.

There has been one case of widow remarriage, recently in Quetta, Babu Lal, Dhobi, married the widowed daughter of Nanwa with the consent of her mother.

Siakh kari.

12. If the parties be both Dhobis, the custom is as follows :—

- (a) In the case of a virgin, the *siakkar* pays a *dand* of Rs. 50 and the parents of the girl pay Rs. 18. This is called *chhināla*. Of the 18 rupees 12 are spent on feast by men and Rs. 6 by the women of the *biradri*.
- (b) In the case of a betrothed girl, the *dand* payable is the same as for a virgin, but in addition to the *dand*, the seducer has to repay to the man to whom the girl was betrothed the expenses incurred on the *Sagai*-betrothal.
- (c) In the case of a married woman, the seducer has to repay the husband the expenses incurred by him on the marriage.

and he and the husband of woman each pays to the *biradri* a *dand* of Rs. 18. The husband can still keep the woman if he likes.

In the above three cases the seducer cannot marry the girl or the woman seduced, but she can be married to someone else.

(d) In the case of a widow the seducer pays the *panchayat* a fine of Rs. 18 and keeps the woman.

If a Dhobin commits *Siah kari* with a man of another caste, and the case is not taken to a court, the woman is forgiven her first offence, by payment of a *dand* of Rs. 18 to the *panchayat*, but on the commission of a second such offence, she must be divorced by her husband and excommunicated from the *biradri*. If the husband still wishes to keep the woman he too would be excommunicated. If in the case of the first offence, the offender be non-Hindu, the husband of the woman has to pay the usual fine (Rs. 18), also pay to a Brahman for reciting for him the story from a Sacred book known as the *katha* of *Sat Narain*, keep fast and feast the *biradri*.

The charge of *Siah kari* cannot be admitted and the customary punishment awarded, unless supported by the evidence of two eye-witnesses who must be Dhobis.

(e) If a Hindu Dhobi commits *Siah kari* with a non-Hindu woman, he has to pay a *dand* of Rs. 18 and has to perform the *katha*, etc., mentioned above.

13. *Panchayat*. There are certain men who are recognised by the *biradri* as their leading men and are known as the *Chaudhris*, but when a *panchayat* is held all male members of the community, above the age of five years, join. The *panchayat* has a meeting place, which is hired, a servant, generally a *Nai*, is kept, who summons the members when necessary and furniture and cooking utensils for feasts of the *biradri* are provided. The following are the sources of income of the *panchayat* :—

	Rs. a. p.
(1) Fees paid on the birth of a son	7 0 0
(2) Ditto of a daughter	3 0 0
(3) Fees paid by the bridegroom's party on betrothal	5 0 0
(4) Fees paid on marriages :—	
By bridegroom's party—	
For male members of the <i>biradri</i>	13 0 0
For female ditto	7 0 0
By the bride's party :—	
For male members of the <i>biradri</i>	6 8 0
For female ditto	3 8 0
(5) On the death of a married person male or female	5 0 0
(6) <i>Dand</i> or fine imposed for various social offences	—

The income thus derived is spent chiefly on feasts to the *panchayat*, in maintaining the place where the *biradri* hold their meetings, in

charities to Sadhus, and in the cremation or burial of indigent persons among the Dhobis.

14. The *panchayat* deals with petty civil and criminal cases between the members of the community and enforces its awards by moral pressure. Anyone who refuses to abide by the *panchayat* award is excommunicated (*hukka pani band*). The *panchayat* imposes *dand* in the following cases :—

- (a) For unintentionally smoking the *hukka* of an inferior caste, Rs. 2 to Rs. 5.
- (b) For the first offence of intentionally smoking *hukka* of an inferior caste, *dand* as in (a) ; also *katha* of *Sat Narain*. For a second such offence the offender must be excommunicated.
- (c) A Dhobi or Dhobin committing *siah kari* with a member of an inferior caste—first offence Rs. 18.
- (d) For unnecessarily giving oath to a Dhobi Rs. 5.

Sacred objects.

15. Dhobis, like all other Hindus, hold cow as sacred. A Dhobi must not cut a green *pipal*, or a fig tree, nor must he pluck off the plant a *Lauki*, *Kasiphal* or *baingan*.

Adoption.

16. The custom of adoption is recognised, the boy, to be adopted must be a near relative, brother's or uncle's son. The adopted son (*palak beta*) has the same rights as the real son.

No. IV.

MISCELLANEOUS PURBIA MENIAL CASTES.

Note on some of the Customs of the Menial Purbia Castes
(13th August 1918).

These notes deal mainly with the following Purbia Menial Castes, found in Quetta, chiefly among the private servants of British Officers. I have also added brief notes about Pasis (another Purbia caste) and the Mochis of Kathiawar who are residing in Quetta.

Informants.

1. Bedesi Ram, son of Jagū Rām, Jeswara of Jaunpur.
2. Jamedar Behāri, son of Ramchand, Jeswara of Jaunpur.
3. Shiv Charan, son of Saifu, Jeswara of Jaunpur.
4. Sheobālak, son of Sukhlal, Jeswara of Azampur.
5. Beni, son of Bhola, Jeswara of Azampur.
6. Budhai, son of Bechū, Kori of Sultanpur.
7. Devi, son of Bhinda, Kori of Sultanpur.
8. Hanūmān son of Sukhai, Kori of Partabgarh.
9. Panchu, son of Badal, Kori of Sultanpur.
10. Rāman, son of Siri Ram, Kori of Agra.

11. Gapu, son of Bansi, Kori Ghagharpal, of Gonda.
12. Hanū, son of Ganeshi, Beswāra Kori of Rai Bareilly.

Besides the Jeswara and other castes there are Hindustani Mochis, whose leading men in Quetta are :—

13. Mangal Ram, son of Badal Ram, Beswara of Unao ;
14. Bachu Lall, son of Basgat Ram, Dhusia of Benares ;
15. Phalli, son of Nanda Ram, Jeswara of Jallundhar ;
16. Tūfāni, son of Bhada Ram, Dhusia of Meerut ;
17. Tuli Ram, son of Siv Barat, Dhusia of Rawalpindi ; and
18. Kalū, Dhusia of Benares.

2. The approximate number of families of these castes, in the Quetta town and Cantonments is as follows :—

Jeswara	40 families.
Kori of Sultanpur	40 "
" Agra	10 "
" Partapgarh	10 "
Koli	10 "
Ghagharpal (Kori)	11 "
Beswara (Kori)	100 "
Khatik	4 "

Mochis (of various castes) 50 families comprising about 125 persons (including females and children).

Each of these castes is self-contained, that is to say the members of each caste intermarry and interdine only within the caste; even the Koris of Sultanpur do not intermarry or dine with the Koris of Agra. The only thing common among them is the wine. When a general *panchayat* of the castes is assembled, wine is served, but each caste must have their own glasses, failing which they must drink with their hands (holding the two hands together, pouring wine in them and then drink), but they must not use the glass of another caste. Similarly the members of different castes may smoke *chilum* (earthen bowl of the *hukka*, in which tobacco is placed), but must not use the *hukka* of another caste.

Some of the Koris would eat *Kachi* food (cooked in water) from the hands of Brahmans and other superior castes; and all would eat sweatmeats made by Hindu confectioners in the bazar.

3. The majority of these Purbias are Hindus of the orthodox class Religion. (Sanatanists), worship God, by the name of Shiv Narain, and have a sacred book of their own which is called the Granth. It is also known as the Sham Granth or Anyās which is said to have been composed by Muni Vias. It is in Hindi. They also believe in some of the Hindu sacred books—Ramayan, Mahabarat and Bhāgwat. These Purbias have a place of worship (*Gurdwara*) of their own in the Gharibabad street (near the old *mandir* of the Arya Samaj) where an image of Hanūmān

is stuck up in the wall in the verandah, and the Granth (the sacred book) is kept in an inner room under a canopy, and there is an *Udasi* Sadhu (a sect of Hindu ascetics) in charge. The headquarters of their cult or the big *Gurdwara* is at Sasna Bahadurpur, Post Office Belthia Road, District Balia in the United Provinces where there is said to be a large number of Sadhus well versed in the religious lore. The head priest is Bawa Sant Sewak Ram Mahant Mulki. Ordinarily they take oath by repeating Ram Ram, but in the settlement of disputes an oath taken in the *Gurdwara* standing before the Granth is considered decisive and binding.

One of the Mochis, Mangal Ram professes to be a follower of the Vedic Dharama i.e. Arya Samajist.

They have an initiation ceremony, known as *Gurdharana* (accepting a Guru or spiritual guide) both for males and females which can be performed any time, even when a child is 40 days old. It consists of imparting, by the Guru, to the disciple of a sacred text (*Gurmantra*) and feeding the poor and Sadhus, which feast costs from Rs. 5 to Rs. 50. In the case of infants this *mantar* is breathed in the ear by the Guru. The *mantar* is one and the same for all disciples, which is kept strictly secret. The Guru gives each disciple a certificate of initiation, known as the *parwana*, which contains instructions for the guidance of the disciple. From this secrecy of the initiation ceremony outsiders conclude that the cult is a branch of the *Bām Mārag*.

The dead bodies of those who have been initiated (*Gurudharan* or *Gurmukh*) are buried while those of uninitiated are cremated, and bones (*phūl*) sent to Hardwar. They used the Hindu burning ground (*marghat*) before, but the place being overcrowded, they have now been given a separate burial ground in the Cantonments close to the Cattle Slaughter Yard. Bodies to be cremated are still taken to the common Hindu burning *ghāt*. The Sadhu—or in his absence an elder of the caste—recites certain *mantras* from the *Granth* and the body is then laid in the grave, and covered with earth.

The *kirya* ceremony for the dead is performed on the 13th day, when Sadhus are fed, and the family of the deceased are then ceremoniously pure. There is again an offering of cooked food in the name of the deceased at the end of 1½ months (*tin pakhi*), six months (*chhimasi*) and twelve months (*baras pati* or *roti*), the whole of the *biradri* being feasted on the *baraspati* day. Some of the members of these castes perform *Shradh* annually for their dead ancestors—when one or more Brahmans are fed. This is called *barkhi*. Ordinarily no marriages are celebrated for twelve months in a family in which there has been a death of an adult male, but if a son or a calf be born in the house within the twelve months (the period of mourning), a marriage may be celebrated.

Food and drink.

4. They both (males and females) eat meat of goats and sheep, also fish, but do not eat fowls, eggs, ducks, and the flesh of hare. The Mochis, however, do not object to eat fowls, eggs and pork, but would not eat ducks. Men drink wine and some of the women too; some also smoke *hukka*, and have no caste prejudices against the use of other intoxicants such as *bhang*, *charas* and *ganja*.

Men who work as *khansamah* (cooks) and *khitmatgars* do not object to handle beef, pork, fowls, etcetera, which they cook for their masters.

At the dinners (*khānā*) given to the brotherhood, two kinds of food (meals) are recognised, one being known as the *kachi* and the other as *pakki*. The *kachi* meal consists generally of rice, *dall*, meat, vegetables—cooked in water; while the *pakki* consists of *puris*, etcetera, baked in *ghi*. The members of a particular caste would eat *kachi* food among themselves only; but the *pakki* food prepared by a member of another caste might be partaken.

Those who have taken a vow of *bhagti* (and are known as *Bhagats*—devotees) abstain from wine and live on vegetarian food.

5. The language spoken is Hindustani, also known as Brij Bhāsha; *Language.* and some of them can read and write the Nagri script of which there are two different kinds one being known as the Nagri and other as Kaithī. Their correspondence is generally carried on in the Nagri characters. Some of the Mochis can read and write Urdu also, and a few of them speak English. Four of the Mochi boys are attending the Sandeman High School.

6. The ordinary occupation in which the Purbias are engaged is *Occupation.* domestic service of European officers :—

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Jeswaras | Work as syces, cooks, bearers and <i>khitmatgars</i> . |
| Koris | Work as syces but do not take service as cooks and bearers; some among the Koris would not serve as syces. |
| Ghagharpals | Work as syces, but in their own country are mostly weavers, and some are engaged in agriculture. |
| Beswara Koris | Do not take service as syces, bearers, etc., but serve as <i>chaprasis</i> , <i>chaukidars</i> , <i>malis</i> ; and some have shops for selling tobacco, <i>pan</i> , etc. |
| Kolis | Are cooks, and |
| Khatiks | Work as syces; rear pigs and poultry. |

Some of the Jeswaras are blacksmiths, and some of the Koris and Beswaras sell *atta*, *dall*, *ghi*, etc., and also *pans*. Koliṣ make ropes.

In pre-war days the ordinary wages of syces, cooks, *khitmatgars*, bearers and *malis* were Rs. 12, Rs. 18 to Rs. 20, Rs. 18, Rs. 16, and Rs. 12, respectively, but since the war their wages have nearly doubled and even at these double rates it is, at times, difficult to obtain good servants in Quetta.

The Mochis are engaged in making new boots and repairing old ones; they do not tan the leather themselves, but import it from Bombay, Cawnpore and other places. They would not touch *kacha chamra* (hides) of any animal. Though Hindus by religion and strict in their observance of caste prejudices, the Mochis have no scruples in using the cured leather of any animal (including cows and buffaloes), except that of a cat. The infringement of this rule (use of the skin of a cat) entails heavy social penalties such as excommunication from the caste. The women do not generally assist in the trade, and their work is confined to household duties. These Mochis consider the slab or

stone (*sil*) on which they work as sacred, possessing as they hold miraculous properties, and a representation of Vishv Karma (the heavenly artificer). Before the day's work is begun, this *sil* must be washed and its blessings invoked ; and to step over it is considered a sacrilege. The wages of a Mochi vary, according to his skill, from As. 8 to Rs. 2 a day.

Birth.

7. The mother is considered ceremoniously impure for thirteen days on the birth of a son and for twelve days on the birth of a daughter. She takes bath on the 12th or 13th day and *biradri* are feasted.

Among the Mochis, the mother is considered pure on the sixth day of child birth (*chhati*) when she has her first bath ; and on the 12th day she has the second bath known as the *Bārwañ*.

The children are named, among Beswaras and the Mochis on the day of birth, and among other castes on the sixth day (*chhati*) in consultation with a Brahman, when wine is served to the members of the *biradri* who are invited. It costs about Rs. 25 in the case of a son, but in the case of a daughter the expense is much less as fewer guests are invited.

The *bari* is held on the 12th day, when the guests are again invited, in a larger number, each guest makes some present to the child, it may be a piece of cloth, some clothes, or trinket, and wine is served. The cost varies from Rs. 10 to Rs. 100 according to the means of the family.

The tonsure (*Mundan*) ceremony must be performed on the *bari* day, or at any other suitable time within six months of the child's birth. Near relatives are feasted on the occasion. Among the Mochis, however, there is no particular time fixed for the *Mundan*, and it may be performed any time.

Betrothal and marriage.

8. The father, and in the absence of father, the mother has the right to give a girl in marriage. In case of a boy, the duty of finding a wife for him devolves, in the absence of his father, on his uncle or other male relatives, the consent of the mother being also necessary.

Among the Mochis, the mother of a fatherless girl cannot give her in marriage without the consent of her deceased husband's male relatives.

Preliminary enquiries are made through the elders of the community and when the betrothal has been arranged some of the leading men assemble, and the girl's father or guardian presents one rupee (or more if he likes) to the boy. This is called *barachhia* and renders the betrothal binding.

Among the Mochis, the boy's father with some of the leading men of his *biradri*, go to the girl's father, who serves them with wine, and presents to the boy's father a glass of wine in which he places one rupee. The boy's father drinks the wine and takes the rupee. This is called *piyala piyali*.

Marriages cannot take place in the mother's and father's *got*. The day of marriage is fixed in consultation with a Brahman, and the binding portion of the ceremony is the seven *phas* round the sacrificial fire under the guidance of a Brahman who recites certain sacred texts.

Strictly according to the sacred books in which these castes, like most of the Sanatanists, believe, the girls must be married when under 12 years of age preferably under seven, and the boys may be a couple of years older; but the bride generally does not go to the husband's home until she has completed 12 years of age, when she finally takes leave of her parents, the ceremony being known as the *gauna*. But in these days of *kali yug* (the Iron Age) the dictates of religion are conveniently overlooked, and girls are generally married when they have attained puberty—and are fit to keep a home. Most of the people now take bride price, the amount of which varies from Rs. 40 to Rs. 400, but some well-to-do parents don't accept a price for their daughters given in marriage. The Mochis, however, allege that among them even a poor man would consider it derogatory to accept a price for the hand of his daughter. Such marriages are known as *dharam* (free gift). The system of exchange of girls in marriage (*gulāwat*) does not prevail among these castes.

At the wedding, the bridegroom has to present the following clothes, etcetera, to the bride—this is known as *charāwa*.

	Value Rs.
A suit of clothes, consisting of a <i>dhoti</i> and a <i>kurta</i>	5
<i>Hasli</i> or Silver necklace	5 to 15
<i>Hamel</i> (rupee or 8-anna pieces strung together in a silk thread)	
12 pieces	6 to 12
5 anklets of brass	6
Ear-rings (<i>bali</i>)	2

The relatives of the bride, who are invited to the wedding, make her presents of cash, clothes, ornaments, etc., to which the father must add 5 cooking pots, clothes worth about Rs. 25 and ornaments Rs. 40 to Rs. 50. All these are handed over to the bride and are known as the *dahej* or dowry. The distinctive mark of a married woman is the *sandur* applied to her *mang*—hair parting. A widow ceases to use this mark. Any clothes dyed in indigo would not be used by males or females among the Mochis.

9. Polygamy is permitted by custom, but it is in rare cases that a *Polygamy*. man takes more than one wife. The second wife is generally a widow, or divorced woman who is married according to *chadar andazi* system and is known as *Udheri* as distinguished from *biyahata*—married according to the *phera* rites.

Mangal Mochi has two wives living, one of them was the widow of his elder brother Dukhia.

The custom of these castes does not permit a man marrying two sisters.

10. Except the Dhobis, other castes allege that they do not recognise *Divorce*. divorce. Among the Mochis, however, a husband may divorce his wife for proved misconduct, and a childless wife may claim a divorce on the ground of her husband proving impotent and obtain it through the *panchayat*. A divorced woman can be remarried, by the *phera* rite if the man marrying her has no other wife living, but if he has already a wife then the marriage with a divorced woman will be performed by the *dharanna* ceremony. Two instances are given: about seven years ago, Sham Lal's wife obtained a divorce through the *panchayat* on the

ground that her husband was impotent, and she was married to Sham Lal's younger brother. About four years ago : Kalu's *dharauna* wife (remarried widow) was divorced for misconduct, and her seducer paid to Kalu Rs. 30 as compensation. A Dhobi can divorce his wife for misconduct with the consent of the *panchayat*.

Widow.

11. Remarriage of widows is practised. The younger brother (*dewar*) of the deceased husband has the first claim to the widow's hand, but if he does not wish to maintain her, she can choose a husband with the consent of the heirs of her deceased husband, and can be married after four days of the death of her first husband among Mochis, and after six months among other castes. The marriage ceremony is known as the *Dharauna*. The man who proposes to marry the widow, goes with some leading men to the widow's house, where they are entertained. Then he presents her a new suit of clothes and a white *chadar*, four corners of which are dipped in turmeric water, and brings her home. Here he holds the marriage feast to which he invites his near relatives only. The cost of such a marriage is within 50 Rupees; it may be less. The children, if any, remain with the heirs of the deceased husband. Out of the property of her deceased husband the widow can, on re-marriage, take with her only the clothes she is wearing.

Siah kari.

12. When the parties belong to the same caste, the penalties for *siah kari* among the Purbia castes, except the Mochis are the following :—

- (a) In case of a virgin, her seducer pays compensation to her parents and the girl is married to him. The amount of this *dand* is fixed by the *panchayat* in each case and it varies from Rs. 200 to Rs. 400.
- (b) In case of a betrothed girl, the seducer pays to the *panchayat* a *dand* of Rs. 22 and the girl is married to the man to whom she was betrothed.
- (c) In case of a married woman, the seducer pays a *dand* of Rs. 22 to the *panchayat* and the woman remains with her husband. But if she chooses to live with her seducer, the husband is paid compensation which is ordinarily Rs. 120. In such cases the consent of the *panchayat* to the woman's marriage with her seducer is necessary and no further *dand* (fine) is levied.
- (d) In case of a widow, the seducer pays no fine, but has to give a feast to the *biradri* and marries the widow according to *dharauna* rite.
- (e) If a married woman of one caste commits *siah kari* with a man of another caste, the money spent by the husband on the marriage is paid back to him by the seducer, who keeps the woman and has to give a feast to the *biradri*. But if either the man or the woman refuses to have the case settled by *panchayat*, the case is taken to a court for settlement.

Among the Mochis there have been the following cases :—

An unmarried daughter (mikia) of Hazari Mochi ran away with some one to Karachi, and after some time came back herself. The case was referred to the *panchayat*, Hazari was made to pay the *panchayat* a *dand* of Rs. 20 give one *kachi* and one *pakki* meal (S. 4) to the *biradri* and the girl was married to Sant Bakhsh. Similar treatment would, it is stated, be accorded in the case of a betrothed girl, the girl, however, would be married to the man to whom she was engaged if he does not object. Hazari's second daughter, who was married to Pamai, misconducted herself when living with her parents, who were made to pay a *dand* of Rs. 35 and give one *pakki* and one *kachi* meal to the *biradri* and the woman was divorced by her husband.

13. Each caste has its own *panchayat*, but when an important *Panchayat* matter is in dispute, or in which members of more than one caste are concerned a mixed or general *panchayat* is held to which leading men of all the castes come.

The *panchayat* has a *mandir* of their own in Quetta, where a Sadhu is maintained. The members of various castes pay monthly subscriptions towards its support, varying from annas 2 to 8 per month. On 'Basant Panchmai day, a *mela* (fair) is held in the *mandir* and special subscriptions are raised for charities. These special subscriptions sometimes amount to as much as 500 rupees. A *Khazanchi* (treasurer) appointed by the *panchayat* keeps the money and the accounts and an annual contribution is sent to the head *mandir* in Balia after the Basant Panchmai festival.

The *panchayat* deals with petty criminal and civil cases of the *biradri*, and punishes with *dand* the various social offences. These *panchayats* also settle such of the more serious disputes as may be referred to them by the courts. The principal social offences are :—

- (i) Taking food from the hands of a member of another caste.
- (ii) Drinking liquor in the glass from which a member of another caste has drunk.
- (iii) Smoking *hukka* of a member of another caste.
- (iv) Cases of *Siakh kari*.

The *dand* in these cases varies according to the seriousness of the offence and the money is spent on liquor by the *biradri*.

- (v) Abusing a headman, insulting a woman of the *biradri*, being obstructive in the discussions of the *panchayat* and refusing to abide by the decisions of the *panchayat*.
- (vi) If a man kills a cat, or a cow, a cow when tethered dies in his house, he is required to take a pilgrimage to Hardwar, and on return has to feed some Brahmans and his own castemen, and also pay a Brahman for the recitation of the *Katha* of *Sat Narain*.

The punishment which is ordinarily awarded by the *panchayat* for social offences consists of a *dand* (fine) which is spent on drinks; giving one or more *kachi* or *pakki* meals to the *biradri*, feeding a number of Brahmans, and in serious offences a pilgrimage to Hardwar, and stopping the use of *hukka*.

When a *kachi* meal is given the members of the delinquents' caste alone would ordinarily partake of it, and members of other castes attending the feast would be given *sida*—or the food stuffs (*atta*, rice, *dall*, *ghi*, etc.) which they would cook themselves. But if *pakki* meal cooked by a Brahman or a *halwai* is provided all castes would partake of it.

Sacred Objects.

14. Cow is considered sacred; and so are the *pipal*, *anjir* and *bohar* trees which must never be cut when green. These castes also do not pluck *kasi phal* off the plant, but have no objection to eat it. As already mentioned (section 5) the Mochis hold the *sil* on which they work as sacred.

Adoption.

15. The custom of adoption (*dharam beta*, *pus put*, or *le palak*) prevails; a boy of the near-relatives such as brother, uncle, etc., or one belonging to the same *got*, being adopted. He has the same rights as the real sons. Hulasi Beswara has recently adopted his brother's (Kali Din's) son, who is 15 years old.

Inheritance.

16. It is alleged that a widow inherits the property of her deceased husband even to the exclusion of sons, but if she squanders the property, the *panchayat* can intervene, and allot her a maintenance allowance, the property being handed over to the sons.

Among the Mochis, however, it is the sons who inherit, the widow and daughters being entitled to maintenance, so long as they are unmarried. The sons of a *dharauna* wife, however, only receive one-fourth of the share which the son of a *biyahia* wife would get.

Pasis.

17. There are about one hundred Pasis in Quetta whose principal castes are :—

1. Baorāsi,
2. Gūjar,
3. Bāchar,
4. Kainthwās,
5. Raspasia, or Rajpasia,
6. Gharsainta or Horak, and
7. Baoria.

Castes Nos. 1 and 2 intermarry and interdine among themselves, but not with the other castes and their leading men are :—Ishwari, Baorāsi; Durga, Matan, Ori, and Chman Gujars. The remaining five castes are considered to be socially inferior to Baorāsi and Gūjar, but they are also exclusive and intermarry and interdine among their respective castes only. Their chief occupation is agriculture and gardening, and they would not engage in menial services—such as syces, cooks, etc.

All the seven castes consider themselves much superior to the Koris, etcetera, dealt with in these notes, and would not even drink water from the hands of members of these castes.

These men generally live alone in Quetta and do not bring their families with them.

18. There are five families of these Mochis in the Quetta town; all of the Sochi sub-caste and their leading men are Jadu Jetha, Dhanjee Ranchhor, Devjee Premjee, and Palljee Anjee :—

The Kathiawar Mochis.

They profess to be Hindus of Santan Dharma, and believe in Bhagwat Gita and other Hindu sacred books. An oath on the Bhagwat Gita is binding among them. They worship at Hakeem Tola Ram's *Thakardwara* and the temple of Pani Nath.

The bodies of children up to five years of age are buried, while those of above that age (and of married persons irrespective of age) are cremated; the bones being generally thrown in the Sariat Lohra. Those, however, who can afford, send the bones of the dead—*phul* either to River Indus at Sukkur or to Hardwar. The *kirya* ceremony for the dead is held on the 11th day, and Brahmans are fed (uncooked food—*sida* is given as a Brahman would not eat food cooked by a Mochi) at the end of six months (*chhemasi*) and twelve months (*varsi*).

These Mochis eat meat of goats and sheep (*halal* and not *jhatka*) and fish, but will not eat fowls, eggs, ducks, or pork. They drink wine, and smoke tobacco, but are not addicted to the use of other intoxicating drugs such as *bang*, *charas* and *ganja*.

They speak Gujrati language, which they can also read and write. They work in cured leather (*pakka chamra*, which they import from Bombay, Cawnpore and Ahmadnagar, but would not handle *kacha chamra* (hides); their principal occupation is making of boots, country shoes they do not make. The wages of a skilled Mochi vary from Rs. 30 to Rs. 60 a month. They allege that most of them are heavily in debt, the reasons assigned are (1) that they have to pay for the leather in cash, while they borrow money for which they have to pay heavy interest to the money-lenders; (2) the exorbitant rent paid for the shops in Quetta; (3) the heavy cost of living in Quetta, and (4) the irregular payments by their customers for work done. To these may be added the heavy bill for wine in which most of these people (including also the Purbia castes dealt with in these notes) freely indulge.

The mother, on the birth of a child has her first bath on the 7th day, the second on 9th day and the third on the 40th day when she goes to the nearest stream (or other source of water) and makes an offering of some sweets, flowers and a cocoanut. The child is given a name, in consultation with a Brahman, on the 6th day (*chhatti*), and the tonsure (*Mundan*) ceremony has to be performed within five years of the child's birth. But this can only be done at the temple of Devi (goddess) in their own country (Kathiawar) and not in Quetta.

Betrothals are arranged by the elders of the families; when negotiations have been completed, the elders of the boy's family visit the girl's family taking with them five pieces of cocoanut, and sweets worth about two rupees. The parents of the girl accept these, and distribute



the sweets and cocoanut among those present, and return one cocoanut to the boy's father. Then follow dinners by both parties and the presentation of some sweetmeats to the girl by the boy's parents, which renders the betrothal binding. The marriage ceremony is performed by a Brahman, there being four *phas* and not seven—as is the case among most of other Hindu castes) round the sacrificial fire under a *vedi* (marriage booth). Bride price is paid which does not exceed Rs. 100. Girls must be married while under twelve years of age; but the boys at marriage are generally much older. The distinctive ornaments of a married woman are the ivory or bone bracelets (*churis*) which must be broken immediately a woman's husband dies. If a widow does not wish to remarry she puts on gold bracelets. She wears a black *chadar* for twelve months, and can thereafter put on a white *chadar*.

Remarriage of widows is permitted; the younger brother (*dewar*) of the deceased husband having the first claim to the widow's hand. If he does not want to marry her, she goes back to her parents (leaving the children, if any, and all the property except the clothes she is wearing with the heirs of her deceased husband) with whose approval she can choose her second husband. Bride price is paid, the amount of which varies and is about half of what is payable for a virgin. The man who proposes to marry the widow goes with some of the leading men and a Brahman to the widow's house, where the Brahman performs some *puja* for the couple. Then the woman puts on new clothes, and taking with them some fruits, flowers, sweets and a brass pot filled with water she and the husband go to the temple of Mahadev and make the offering. Thence they go home and there give a feast to their *biradri*. The remarried widow is known as *ghar gahnra* as distinguished from a *Shadi wali* wife.

It is alleged that there have been no known cases of *Siah kari* or divorce among these Mochis—not even in their own country—Kathiawar.

They have no recognised *panchayat* few as they are, and the cases are generally taken to Courts for settlement. These cases are mostly petty ones such as quarrels, assaults and defamation due largely to over indulgence in country liquor; and of debts.

HOS

J. RAI.