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# India and Dual Organisation.

By W. KOPPERS.

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## *1. Critical Review of Previous Investigations.*

Taking the division of the tribe into two exogamous moieties as the fundamental characteristic of an ethnological dual classification system, several scholars have in the course of the last decades raised the question whether traces of such a dual classification system are to be found among the peoples of India, and if so, among which of them.

W. H. R. RIVERS<sup>1</sup> was, so far as I know, the first to put this question. He was strongly inclined to the opinion that the custom of cross-cousin marriage, so widely spread especially in South India, could be satisfactorily explained only on the basis of an ancient dual classification system, which he himself, however, acknowledges "has now completely disappeared"<sup>2</sup>.

Other writers, such as F. J. RICHARDS<sup>3</sup> and E. A. WESTER-MARCK<sup>4</sup>, were quick to take up the cudgels in opposition to RIVERS.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Marriage of Cousins in India." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1907, 611-640. "Kinship and Social Organisation", London 1914. Also *Rivers'* article on "Marriage" in *ERE*, VIII, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> *Rivers* (1907) p. 623.

<sup>3</sup> "Cross Cousin Marriage in South India." *Man*, XIV, 1914, 97.

<sup>4</sup> "The History of Human Marriage." II, 78 f.

RICHARDS does not even mention dual classification in his article and believes that the chief reason for the custom of cross-cousin marriage in South India is to be found in the economic conditions which resulted from the overlapping of matrilineal and patrilineal types of social organisation. According to RICHARDS the cross-cousin marriage was given the preference because, even where matrilineal rights were established, it offered the possibility of keeping property in the family and above all of enabling one's own son to share in it. "So also my mother's brother cannot transmit his property to his son, for my mother and her children are his heirs. His only way out of the difficulty is to marry his son to my sister." It may also be remarked (others have alluded to this point and I myself found it confirmed by my experience among the Gonds and Baigas) that, especially in the case of exchange-marriages (i.e. when a brother and sister of the one family marry sister and brother of the other family) cross-cousin marriage largely obviates the necessity of offering a price for the bride; a consideration which does much to facilitate marriage among the peoples of South India.

WESTERMARCK's criticism of RIVERS' conclusions is summed up in the words: "but apart from the significant fact that no such organisation of society is known to have existed in India, it is difficult to understand why it should have led to the marriage of first cousins to the exclusion of marriages between other members of the two exogamous moieties."

WESTERMARCK's assertion that no such organisation of society as the dual classification system can be proved to have existed in India brings us straight to the point of our present investigation. I think I can prove that WESTERMARCK's opinion, great sociologist that he was, is substantially correct.

It may be remarked in passing that RICHARDS' arguments were not without effect on RIVERS himself. Writing in 1916 and referring to RICHARDS he expressly states: "but elsewhere it [i.e. the cross-cousin marriage] seems to be actuated by the desire to keep property within the family <sup>5</sup>."

Some years later GOVIND S. GHURYE published his article on "Dual Organisation in India <sup>6</sup>" quoting RIVERS as his authority and quite overlooking the fact that RIVERS himself had later conformed to RICHARDS' opinion, or at least given it serious consideration (see quotation above). In direct opposition to the conclusions of WESTERMARCK (and RICHARDS) GHURYE is then at pains to prove that abundant traces of dual organisation are still to be found in the

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<sup>5</sup> ERE, VIII, 1915, p. 926 (article "Marriage").

<sup>6</sup> JAI, LIII, 1923, 79-91.

sociology of the primitive tribes of South India. It remains to be seen whether his proofs are convincing.

As regards his reference to an alleged dual classification system among the Gonds, we shall see later that recent research, notably that of GRIGSON, has shown that no tangible proof of such organisation is forthcoming. But of this more recent research GHURYE, who took his facts mainly from RUSSELL, could of course know nothing.

It is probable that another group quoted by GHURYE, the Tamil speaking Malaiyālis who carry on primitive agriculture in the hills of the Salem district, must, in view of recent investigations also be eliminated. Baron EHRENFELS, who did extensive fieldwork in these parts in 1940 never so much as mentions dual classification in his recent report<sup>7</sup> and this negative testimony carries the more weight because EHRENFELS was, as we shall see, personally interested in this question.

As chief witnesses to his theory GHURYE brings forward three other groups of castes: the farming, Telugu speaking Tottiyān in the district of Madura; the cattle-breeding, Telugu speaking Golla in Mysore State and elsewhere; and finally the nomad Korava tribes to be found in wide stretches of Southern India. As in the case of the Gonds and Malaiyālis, we have various older accounts of these tribes which would seem to point to the existence of dual classification. But since more careful research work has shown that no really convincing traces of dual classification are to be found among the Gonds and Malaiyālis we are entitled, if not in conscience bound, to await the results of up-to-date research before coming to a decision about the Tottiyān, Golla and Korava. This attitude is further justified by the following considerations. Among the peoples in question we find, side by side with groupings which seem to follow the dual system, numerous and varied other classifications, particularly endogamous groups of a kind frequently to be found among Hindus and also among tribes which have come under the influence of Hinduism. It must also be borne in mind that Hindu influence is clearly visible (at least to the expert) in various other aspects of the life of these tribes. We are, for instance, told that among the Tottiyāns widows are forbidden to remarry, while sati and other phenomena which invariably indicate Hindu influence are not unknown. It is needless to point out that under these conditions extremely careful examination is required before the existence of any pre-Hindu sociological phenomenon can be assumed to be proved.

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<sup>7</sup> "Traces of a Matriarchal Civilization among the Kolli Malaiyālis." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay*. Letters. IX, 1943, 29-82.



Ten years after the appearance of GHURYE's study H. NIGGEMEYER published an article<sup>8</sup> throwing considerable light on the problem of dual classification in India. NIGGEMEYER, who is well versed not only in ethnology but also in indology, rightly eliminates all those dual classifications which can be clearly traced to the influence of Hinduism. Such are, for instance, the divisions into "big" and "little", "superior" and "inferior", "greater" and "lesser", etc., where one moiety has come under the influence of Hinduism



Fig. 1. "Impure" Bhil boy "shooting arrows with all his strength to long distances" (*hariyañ slápan*). Rambhapur, Jhabua State.

(Photo Koppers.)

while the other has remained comparatively or completely untouched. We shall later hear more of particular cases of this kind. It is typical that in all the forenamed cases it is not exogamy which is the most marked characteristic but rather endogamy, which is universally associated with the Hindu caste system. When the moiety which is in closer contact with Hinduism proclaims endogamy then the other moiety is automatically forced to be endogamous too. An already existing clan exogamy need not, of course, be directly influenced by such a development.

NIGGEMEYER devotes special care<sup>9</sup> to the study of three cases

<sup>8</sup> "Totemismus in Vorderindien." *Anthropos*, XXVIII, 1933, 407-461, 579-619. Cf. p. 419-423.

<sup>9</sup> P. 421 ff.

where in the place of endogamy we find at least exogamy of the different sections, which makes the possible existence of an older dual classification system easier to believe. One of these cases is that of the Korava of which we have already spoken (when treating of GHURYE's work) and which we set aside as too little solidly established. The other two cases are those of the Janappan in North Arcot in Madras Presidency and of the Bili Magga of Mysore. W. SCHMIDT<sup>10</sup> also was of opinion that the sociological structure of the latter tribe might contain traces of dual classification. NIGGEMEYER, after bringing fresh evidence to bear on the two cases, refuses, rightly as it seems to me, to recognize in them any reliable proof of an ethnological dual system. We need not, however, concur in the opinion, which he shares with GRÄBNER<sup>11</sup>, that the absence of matrilineal descent in all these parts (so far as is known patrilineal rights are everywhere established) can be considered further evidence that no ethnological dual system ever existed in India. It is quite admissible to assume dual class organisation under a patrilineal system (a supposition ignored by NIGGEMEYER) as also to recognize the possibility that it was the influence of Hinduism which had in all these cases already effected the change from a matrilineal to a patrilineal system.

Quite recently Baron EHRENFELS<sup>12</sup> published an article devoted specially to this subject of dual classification in India and it is only natural that we should discuss it in some detail in this connection. I value EHRENFELS' work and personally advocated the publication of his article in "Anthropos"; but the more or less positive conclusions at which he arrives differ substantially from the fundamentally negative results of my own investigations. I hope to make clear my reasons for differing from him in the part of this article which deals in greater detail with the phenomenon of the right-hand and left-hand system of classification so strongly stressed by VON EHRENFELS, and I venture to refer my readers to that later section for an analysis of my critical attitude to his work.

Before concluding our review of previous research in this field we might mention the peculiar note introduced into the discussion of the dual system by the fact that GRÄBNER, when elaborating his South Sea culture cycles (Kulturkreise), includes among them a special dual class culture (Zweiklassenkultur). I have no intention of here discussing this problem of dual class culture, the sole aim of this study being to examine whether, in the light of present-day

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<sup>10</sup> "Völker und Kulturen", p. 284 f.

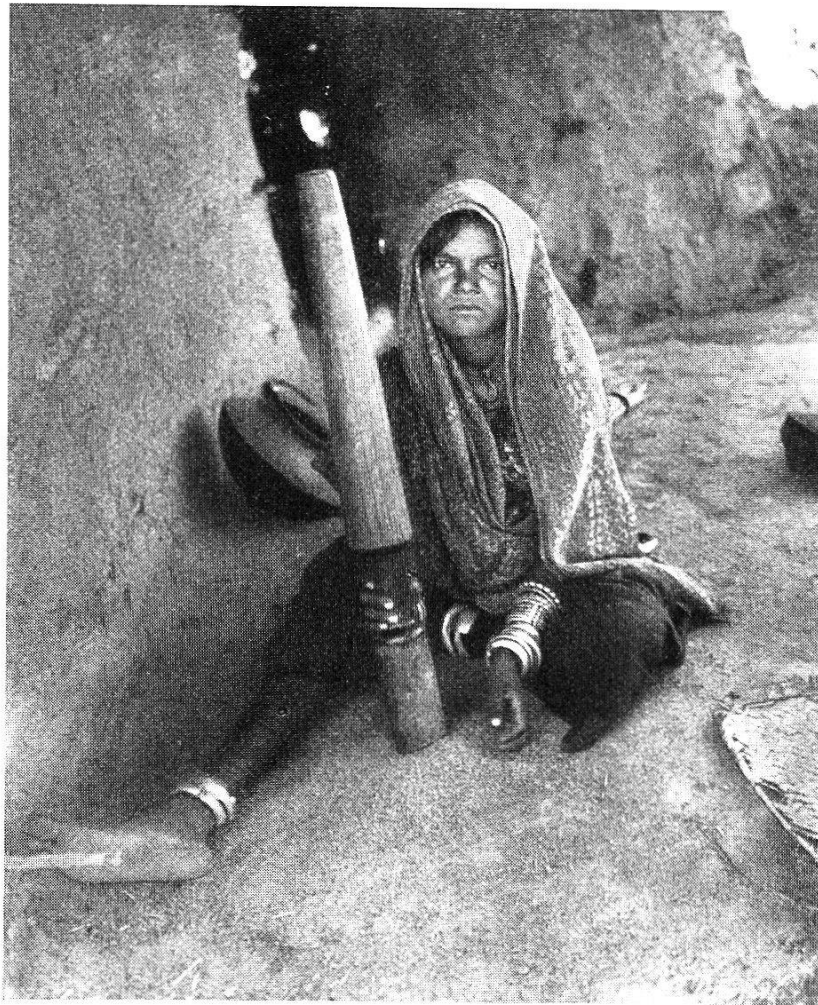
<sup>11</sup> "Ethnologie", p. 453 f.

<sup>12</sup> Anthropos, XXXV-XXXVI, 1940-1941, p. 655-680.

research, incontestable proof be forthcoming of the existence of an ethnological dual classification system in India.

## *2. The Principle of Dual Classification among the Bhils and Bhilalas.*

It was from personal observation that I was able to learn how dual classification works among the Bhils and Bhilalas<sup>13</sup>. In the



*Fig. 2.* "Impure" Bhil woman at work, shelling corn with pounder.  
Bhagor. Jhabua State.

(Photo Koppers.)

<sup>13</sup> Several publications, among others the following, contain reports of my research work in Central India: W. Koppers, "Meine völkercundliche Forschungsreise zu den Primitivstämmen Zentral-Indiens, 1938—1939. Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie XLI, 1942, 141-152; "Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils." *Anthropos* XXXV-XXXVI, 1940-1941, 264-325. "Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and other Primitive Tribes in Central India." *Annali Lateranensi*, VI, 1942, 117-206; "The Kolis in North West Central India." *Ethnos*, 1-18, Stockholm 1943; "Probleme der indischen Religionsgeschichte." *Anthropos* XXXV-XXXVI, 1940-42, 761-814. "Introduction and Additional Notes to Father L. Jungblut's 'Magic Songs of the Bhils'." *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, XLIII, 1943, p. 1-2, 120-129.

case of the former the line of demarcation separates the "pure" from the "impure" Bhils and the distinguishing features are the following: the use of, or abstinence from meat, especially cow's flesh; and the use or non-use of water vessels (*loti*) for cleansing after relieving nature. It can be seen at once that the degree of "purity" is determined by the degree to which the Bhil has come under Hindu influence. Where this influence is already considerable, as e.g. in certain districts of Rajputana, the "pure" Bhils form a regular caste, that is to say they no longer eat or intermarry with the "unclean". In other parts the process of Hinduisation is less advanced. The Bhils of the Malwa district, for instance, though regarding themselves as "pure" do not eschew inter-marriage with neighbouring "impure" Bhils such as those of the native state of Jhabua. That this dual division of the Bhils shows no signs or traces of ethnological dual classification needs no special proof.

During my visit to the native state of Barwani I became acquainted with the Bhilalas, who claim to be descended from Rajput men married to Bhil women. However this may be, the fact remains that the Bhilalas rank higher than the Bhils with whom they will not intermarry. The Bhilalas themselves are, however, subdivided into two endogamous groups: the "Greater" and the "Lesser" Bhilalas and here again the differences are to be attributed to the fact that one group has come even more strongly under the influence of Hinduism than the other. Strange to say, it is the "Lesser" Bhilalas who are the more hinduised, and rank higher in the social order than the "Greater" Bhilalas. Apparently the expression "Greater" has here the meaning of primal, or older branch; a use of the term which we shall, as a matter of fact, meet with in different parts of India. It is of course obvious that this division of the Bhilalas into two groups has again nothing to do with older ethnological classification systems.

### 3. *The Dual Classification and the Sociology of the Mundas.*

The publication of the *Encyclopaedia Mundarica*<sup>14</sup>, of which twelve volumes have already reached Europe, now makes it possible to examine the question of dual classification also with regard to this tribe. The twelve volumes (reaching to the letter R) appear to contain all the essential facts relating to our subject, so that no serious change in the facts of the case is to be expected from the perusal of the remaining volumes.

From the *Encyclopaedia Mundarica* we learn that there exist among the Mundas two separate systems of dual classification: the

<sup>14</sup> Edited by J. Hoffmann and A. van Emelen. Patna 1930 ff.



one dividing the whole people into two moieties, the other affecting only the population of each village.

The tribe as such consists of an elder and a younger branch: the *maraiṅ Munḍako* (Great Mundas) and the *huriṅ Munḍako* (Little Mundas). "The younger branch comprises the *Hos* and the *Kompât* \* *Munḍako* or ordinary Mundas, and the elder the *Tamḍiako* or *Mahali Munḍako*, settled for the most part in the Tamar district.



Fig. 3. "Impure" Bhil boys, carrying ceremonial plough, go begging.  
Bhagor. Jhabua State.

(Photo Koppers.)

It is to be noted that the elder and younger branches of the tribe do not intermarry (for the reason stated under *mahali*) <sup>15</sup>."

Of the *Mahali Munda* (the elder branch) the Encyclopaedia tells us: "They form a separate tribe with whom intermarriage is prohibited to the members of the younger branch (the *Kompât Mundas* and the *Hos*) though they may eat rice prepared by a *Mahali* provided the salt be served up separately. The reason for this ostracism is that the elder son of the original Munda couple, when still a child, having in the absence of his parents found the bit of cord

\* Throughout  $\hat{a} = \bar{a}$ ,  $\hat{u} = \bar{u}$ .

<sup>15</sup> l. c., VI, 1598.

fallen, after healing, from the navel of his baby brother mistook it for some kind of meat, and roasted and ate it. In this way he and all his descendants incurred a social uncleanness similar to that affecting a mother and child before the *caṭi* ceremony. Another version of this story refers it to the time when both brothers were already married. They were on a journey, the younger ahead, when the latter's wife became a mother. A piece of the umbilical cord left on the spot, was found by the elder brother and his family when in their turn they passed there. Thinking it was a piece of the guts of some animal killed by their relatives, they cooked and ate it . . . The Mundari they speak is characterized by a great number of vocal checks. They have practically all the clans found among the Mundas <sup>16</sup>."

The facts so far established with regard to the dual division of the Munda tribe as a whole can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. There exist two groups of Mundas: the elder Great Mundas as opposed to the younger Little Mundas.

2. The Great Mundas are considered of lower degree and are ostracised as being in some way religiously and socially "unclean". The alleged reason for this ostracism is given in a story telling how a member of this group ate a piece of the umbilical cord of a member of the other group; the real reason is to be found in the fact that this group has come less under the influence of Hinduism.

3. Both groups are exogamous; the Little Mundas in particular repudiating all intermarriage with the other group.

4. The Great Mundas have preserved an older dialect as is shown by their predilection for vocal checks.

5. There is no noticeable difference between the two groups as regards the clan system.

6. As has been pointed out, the division into these two groups clearly originated in unequal contact with Hinduism <sup>17</sup> and the contrast between them corresponds to the relation between the "pure" and "impure" Bhils or the Greater and Lesser Bhilalas as discussed above.

A fundamentally similar type of dual classification is to be found among a tribe related to the Mundas, the *Kharia* (or *Karia*) with regard to whom the eating of or abstinence from cow's flesh

<sup>16</sup> I. c., IX, 2756 f.

<sup>17</sup> The meaning of the word *bisi*, which may be regarded as a synonym of the above-mentioned *Mahali*, also points in this direction; *bisi* means "social or religious pollution or uncleanness contracted through actions or states, which do not necessarily constitute a guilt, by persons inasmuch as they are members of a family, sept, caste or race." (I. c., II, 586 f.) *Uhlenbeck* kindly drew my attention to the possibility of *bisi* being identical with Sanskrit *viṣin*, Nom. *viṣi* (= poisonous).



is expressly stressed as the chief criterion for distinguishing the two moieties. "There are two branches in the tribe, the elder and the younger. In the main the ground for the divisions comes to this, that cow's flesh is taboo to the first, whilst the other may freely partake of it. They do not eat together, neither do they intermarry<sup>18</sup>."



Fig. 4. "Impure" Bhil magician driving a disease away.  
Rambhapur. Jhabua State. (Photo Koppers.)

As regards dual classification within the village, the following facts can be ascertained from the Encyclopaedia Mundarica. Both moieties are known by the name of *khûṭ*<sup>19</sup>. One provides the vil-

<sup>18</sup> I. c., VIII, 2333 (taken from a good authority on the *Kharîa*, L. Cardon, S. J.).

<sup>19</sup> Might this word *khûṭ* be in any way connected with *kattâ*, the term used for 'clan' among the Bison Horn Maria of Bastar? (cf. W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, London 1938, pp. 203, 333).

lage priest and sacrificer, known as *pahâr* (= *pahanr*), the other provides the village headman, who has the title of *munḍa* and is responsible for the secular affairs of the community. With reference to this divided allocation of religious and secular authority the moieties are also known as *pahârkhût* and *munḍakhût*, the former supplying the village with its religious and the latter with its secular head. Each office is considered the hereditary prerogative of its own *khût*. The *pahârkhût* is also designated as the "elder", the *munḍakhût* as the "younger branch"<sup>20</sup>, the *pahâr* being originally considered higher in rank and the *munḍa* merely an assistant, as it were, to whom he entrusted the care of more mundane matters. This naturally presupposed a certain deference to the *pahâr* on the part of the *munḍa*.

Members of one *khût* are not allowed to take part in sacrifices offered to the ancestors by the other *khût* and still less to eat of the sacrificial foods (rice, rice-beer, meat). This division into *khûts* is purely local in character and has nothing to do with any clan system. The two *khûts* of a village belong to the same clan (or *kili*), have the same totem and avoid intermarriage<sup>21</sup>.

The division into *khûts* can, however, influence intermarriage with the members of definite *khûts* within other clans. "Let us suppose that a marriage has taken place between the *munḍa khunt* [= *khût*] of one village and the *munḍa khunt* of another (belonging to a different clan). In the same generation further unions may be arranged between them, but the next generations are debarred from intermarrying as long as members of the set of people who contracted relationship through these marriages, are alive, and even after the extinction of that first generation, as long as the two *khunts* remain on visiting terms. Meanwhile the *pahan* [= *pahâr*] *khunt* of one of these villages may freely intermarry with both *khunts* of the other. Similarly if a marriage has taken place between the *pahan khunt* of one village and the *munḍa khunt* of another, in the next generation these two *khunts* are not allowed to intermarry but unions may freely be contracted either between the two *pahan khunts* or between the two *munḍa khunts* . . . No restriction as for further marriage is incurred when one of the contracting families belongs to its *khunt* only by name, not by origin, having been admitted into the clan and incorporated into the *khunt* which granted it fields and in the hamlet of which it settled, without being allowed to take part in the sacrifices to the ancestors. Be it noted that the prohibition to name or touch each

<sup>20</sup> l. c., VIII 2380.

<sup>21</sup> l. c.

other, existing, on the one hand, between a man and all the elder sisters and elder female cousins of his wife, and, on the other hand, between a woman and all the elder brothers and elder male cousins of her husband, this prohibition does not distinguish between the *khunts* so that it affects practically the whole elder female population in one village and all the elder male inhabitants



Fig. 5. "Lesser" Bhilala: youthful herd at rest. Chikliya. Barwani State.  
(Photo Koppers.)

in the other. This being so, it is very strange that among the Santals the corresponding *Manjhi khil* and *Naeke khil* have become subclans and may intermarry.

In the Maguri country each village has a third *khunt*, the *mahto khunt*. There the *munḍa khunt* is said to be descended from the second son of the original founder, whilst his third, fourth, etc. sons gave rise to the *mahto khunt*. The office of this *khunt*, is to help the *pahanr* and especially the *munḍa*. Formerly when

a family died out, its fields reverted to the members of its own *khunt*, and could only be appropriated by the members of the other *khunt*, when no members at all of the first survived. In this matter no distinction was made between families belonging originally to a *khunt* and those belonging to it only nominally, viz., by adoption <sup>22</sup>."

"*Khût boîga*, a spirit who confines himself to harming the members of one of the two *khûts* in a village and leaves alone the members of the other *khût*."

Where the Encyclopaedia Mundarica describes the evolution of village authority under the influence of more recent developments we find a general tendency to diminish the authority of the religious head, the *pahâr*, while increasing that of the secular headman. Such changes have naturally called forth rivalry and violent discord between *pahârs* and *munḍas* together with their respective *khûts* and these feuds have contributed not a little to the disorganisation of social life among the Mundas. In this connection we are told that "the *pahanr khunt* was generally numerically superior, and, in the estimation of both the community and the *manki* [the headman of a *paṭi*, a group of ten to twenty Munda villages] it formed the socially superior element <sup>23</sup>."

The facts we have here reported concerning the dual organisation of the Munda village may be summarized as follows:

1. The normal Munda village is inhabited by members of one exogamous clan, who are, however, grouped into two non-exogamous *khûts*. One moiety provides the *pahâr*, or religious head, and for this reason is called the *pahârkhût*, the other provides the secular headman or *munḍa* and is called the *munḍakhût*.

2. The temporary rule of exogamy, occasionally enforced because of intermarriage between members of definite *khûts*, is unfortunately not quite clearly explained in the Encyclopaedia. The reference to being on "visiting terms" might suggest the existence of artificial kinships, such as are reported among the Santals, where they also lead to the rule of exogamy concerning people who are in no way related either by clan or by blood <sup>24</sup>.

3. The fact that members of a *khût* keep their ancestor worship strictly to themselves testifies to the antiquity of this system of classification, and the mention of a special *boîga* (spirit) in connection with the *khût* might well point to the same conclusion. Should we perhaps regard the *khûts* as old exogamous local groups which, owing to the development of village life on the

<sup>22</sup> l. c., p. 2381.

<sup>23</sup> l. c., p. 2395.

<sup>24</sup> P. O. Bodding, "Santal Folk Tales". Vol. I, Oslo 1925, p. 26 f.



one hand and the influence of totemic clans on the other, fused and later developed into the present village clans? Might not this historical development account for the fact that the *pahâr* (whose office is presumably the older one) and all his following, the *pahârkhût*, are held in higher esteem? Was it perhaps only at a later period, when organised village life was evolved, that the need of a secular head, a man who could represent village interests to the outside world, made itself felt and led to the institution of a *munda*? We might, in conclusion, also note the fact that, in the case of the *khût*, the moiety which ranks higher is at the same time described as older while in the case of the dual division of the whole tribe, as previously discussed, the opposite holds good, the older, less hinduised group counting as less "pure" and for this reason being less respected.

4. To a certain degree the *khûts* of the Mundas recall the *khels* of the Nagas and other tribes in Assam. Among the Konyak Nagas, for example, we find in place of the *morung* (men's club house) a *khel* or local group within the village and this group appears not to have been originally exogamous although it is sometimes so now. Here as elsewhere exogamy is in reality linked with the clan system <sup>25</sup>.

5. The reference to the *Manjhi* <sup>26</sup> *khil* and *Naeke khil* of the Santals is one which I am unfortunately not able to test further, not having the newest material on the sociology of the Santals to hand. It would, however, seem that this is a case of former subdivisions of the village clan having become autonomous.

6. The dual division of the Munda village shows no more tangible connection with what is known in ethnology as the dual classification system than did the dual division of the tribe as a whole.

That a real or pseudo dual classification system may at one time have developed out of such conditions seems, however, plausible. This is as much as can be said concerning the phenomena we have been discussing in connection with the Mundas. Only extensive research and the resulting enlargement of outlook can lead to a clearer discernment of the issue. For the rest we shall have a few more words to say at the end of this article on the subject of Austro-Asiatics and the Dual Classification System.

<sup>25</sup> Chr. v. Fürer-Haimendorf, "Das Gemeinschaftsleben der Konyak-Naga von Assam." *Mitteil. d. Anthropol. Ges. Wien*, LXXI, 1941, 1-101. Cf. p. 4 f., p. 100 f. The same author in *JAI*, LXVIII, 1938, 349-378.

<sup>26</sup> *Manjhi* — 'village headman' evidently corresponds to the *munda* of the Munda tribes. (W. Crooke, *ERE*, XI, 1920, 193).

#### 4. *The Dual Classification and the Sociology of the Bhūiyās of Orissa.*

In studying the sociology of the Bhūiyās we come across various forms of dual classification strongly reminiscent of those we met with among the Mundas. We shall base our arguments on the detailed and, in general valuable, monograph on the Bhūiyās published by S. CH. ROY<sup>27</sup> not very long ago.

The "Hill Bhūiyās"<sup>28</sup> and the "Plains Bhūiyās" correspond to the "Great" and "Little" Mundas, inasmuch as the difference between the two groups lies in the fact that the "Plains Bhūiyās" have come much more under the influence of Hinduism. Unfortunately ROY does not, so far as I can see, mention whether these two main groups practise exogamy or not. It appears to me unlikely that there exists any strict regulation in this respect, though group endogamy is probably the rule<sup>29</sup>. Here again there can, of course, be no question of dual classification in the ethnological sense of the term.

The sociological structure of the Bhūiyā village is essentially the same for both groups<sup>30</sup> but we are naturally primarily concerned with the more primitive "Hill Bhūiyās". Here, as with the Mundas, it is the village which forms the exogamous unit<sup>31</sup>, and, just as each Munda village has its priest and its headman, so each Bhūiyā village has its *Dihuri* (*Diuri*) and its *Nâek* (*Padhân*). "The *Dihuri* or *Diuri* is said to belong to the elder branch, and the *Nâek* or *Padhân* to the younger branch of the original village-family<sup>32</sup>." But it is the village as a whole which is exogamous and not by any chance the two subdivisions connected with the allocation of religious and secular authority. We came to the conclusion that in the Munda village the priest originally played the chief rôle. That ROY is also of this opinion may be gathered from the following remark: "Amongst the less advanced Munda tribes, the functions of the secular and the sacerdotal headmen are combined in one

<sup>27</sup> "The Hill Bhūiyās of Orissa." Ranchi 1935.

<sup>28</sup> l. c., pp. 43 f., 100 f.; 149, 164, 174, 304 f., 308, 311 f.

<sup>29</sup> Among the primitive Birhors S. Ch. Roy also distinguishes two groups: the *Jaghis* and the *Uthlus*. The latter are still nomadic, the former already tolerably settled and less primitive by reason of their "contact with the Hindus and Hinduised tribes of the valleys." The two groups are, however, not yet strictly exogamous, though *Jaghi* parents no longer approve of marriage between their children and *Uthlus*. (S. Ch. Roy, "The Birhors", Ranchi 1925, p. 47.)

<sup>30</sup> l. c., p. 101.

<sup>31</sup> l. c., p. 80, 134 f.

<sup>32</sup> l. c., p. 81.



and the same person, as, e.g., in the '*Naya*' of the Birhōrs<sup>33</sup>." That this division into an "elder" and a "younger" group as also the institution of separate secular and sacerdotal headmen shows no more tangible relation to ethnological dual classification in the case of the Bhūiyās than it did with the Mundas need hardly be stressed.

There exists, however, in the sociological organisation of the Bhūiyās a third form of dual classification. Within each Pargana

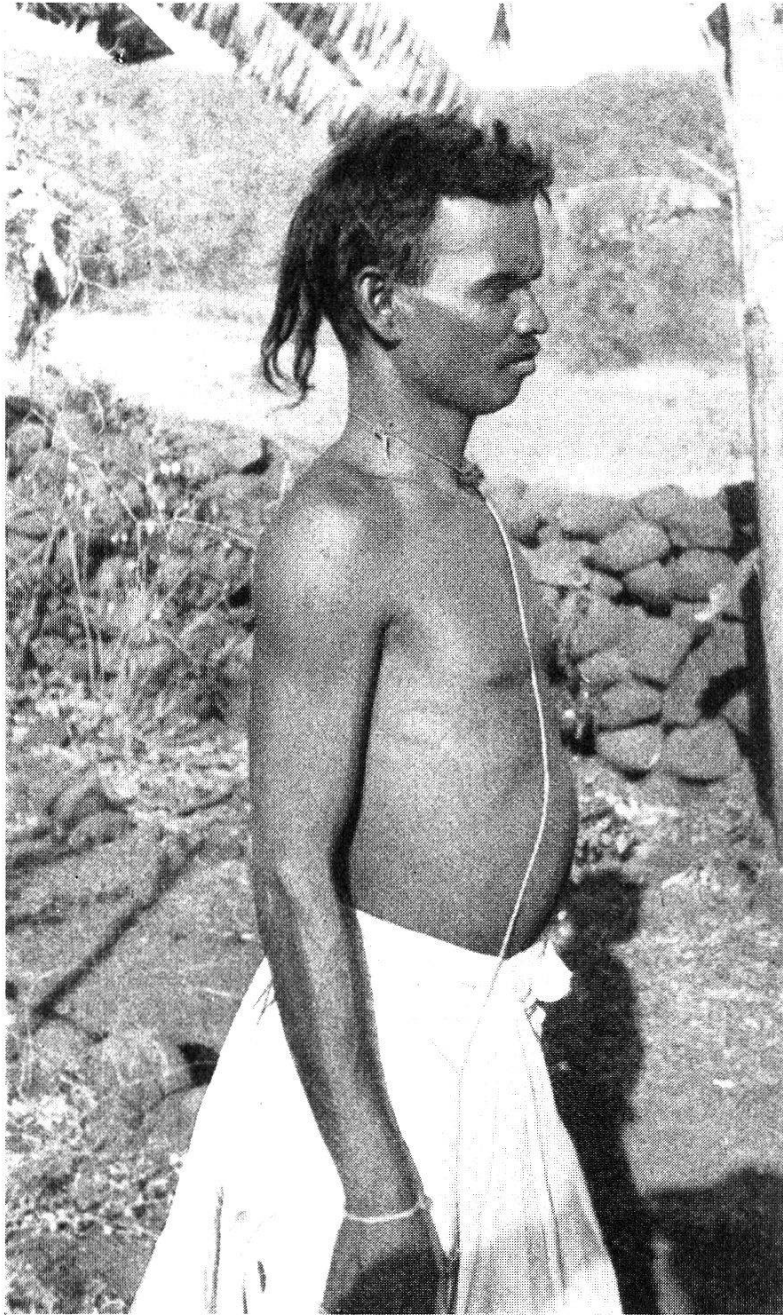


Fig. 6. "Pure" Hinduised Gond wearing Brahmin cord.  
Batondha. Maikal Range. (Photo Koppers.)

<sup>33</sup> S. Ch. Roy, "The Birhors", Ranchi 1925, p. 63 ff. — *Naya* is, of course, identical with Sanskrit *nāya* (= leader).

we find a group of *Kuṭumb*<sup>34</sup> villages opposed to a group of *Bandhu*<sup>35</sup> villages. The *Kuṭumb* villages look upon themselves as related and their inhabitants are consequently bound to exogamy. The group of villages from which they can choose their marriage partners are to them *Bandhu*. Is there question here of two classes in the ethnological sense? ROY unfortunately fails to inform us how the *Bandhu* villages (that is the group of villages considered as "*Bandhu*" by certain *Kuṭumb* villages) stand to each other. Do they present an unbroken front to the *Kuṭumb* moiety and are they also exogamous (*kuṭumb*) among themselves? The grounds against this assumption are twofold. First, there are the doubts which ROY himself expresses in regard to the antiquity and primal character of this classification. "It is doubtful whether the alleged common descent of all the Bhūiyās of one *Kuṭumb* group of villages is an actual fact or the result of deliberate arrangement and make-believe." In one of this footnotes ROY further explains himself and gives it as his opinion that the original form of exogamy among the Mundas was in all probability entirely local (!), village exogamy. "It may be noted that, like the Pâuri [Hill] Bhūiyās, their neighbours the Juāngs (one of the most primitive among the Mûndā tribes) also regard all the old Juāng families of a settlement to be descendants of a common ancestor and, as such, *Kuṭumb* or agnates among whom no intermarriage is permissible. But the Juāngs of a village in the Keonjhar State, unlike the Pâuri Bhūiyās regard all other Juāng villages as their *Bandhu* villages and may marry in any of those villages. This would appear to have been the original custom which permitted marriage in any settlement outside their own<sup>36</sup>."

A second argument against the *Bandhu* villages really forming an exogamous unit can be drawn from GRIGSON's book on the Gonds. *Kuṭumb* and *Bandhu* organisation so closely resembles that of *dadabhai* and *akomama* among the Maria Gonds of Bastar that some connection between the two is more than probable. We shall see presently that the hypothesis of a dual classification system cannot be maintained in the case of the Gonds and this inclines us to the same conclusion with regard to the Bhūiyās; the more so as S. CH. ROY informs us that the Bhūiyās have been considerably influenced by the Dravidas and, under the given circumstances, the Dravidas in question would in the first place be the Gonds<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> The word *Kuṭumb* is undoubtedly connected with Sanskrit *kuṭumba* (= 'in-mates of one house', 'family'). The question arises whether the *khûṭ* of the Mundas and the *kattā* of the Maria Gonds also belong to the same group.

<sup>35</sup> Sanskrit 'relative'.

<sup>36</sup> S. Ch. Roy l. c., p. 135.

<sup>37</sup> Roy l. c., p. 304 f.

We can therefore say that, on the whole, no dual classification system in the ethnological sense can be proved to exist, or even with any probability to have existed in the past among the Bhūiyās.



Fig. 7. "Impure" Bhil mother and son. Rambhapur. Jhabua State.  
(Photo Koppers.)

##### 5. *The Question of Dual Classification among the Gonds of Bastar.*

R. V. RUSSELL believed himself to have discovered the existence of dual classification among the Gonds of Bastar and of the Central Provinces<sup>38</sup>. GRIGSON<sup>39</sup> denied the validity of RUSSELL's conclu-

<sup>38</sup> R. V. Russell and Rai Bahadur Hira Lal, "The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India", III. London 1916, p. 62 ff.

<sup>39</sup> "The Maria Gonds of Bastar", London 1938.

sions, and with good reason, as it seems to me, though GRIGSON's own investigations cannot be considered entirely satisfactory or complete. The necessary supplementary information will probably be supplied by CHR. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF who, together with this wife, has been doing extensive fieldwork among the Gonds for several years.

Let us first consider the dual division of the whole tribe, similar to that which we have already met with elsewhere, for instance among the Mundas and the Bhils. In the case of the Maria Gonds the difference in question is that between the Bisonhorn and the Hill Maria. The former live in the plains, in fertile and accessible regions, whereas the latter, as their name implies, inhabit remoter mountain districts. The Bisonhorn Maria have consequently come more under the influence of the higher civilisation of Hinduism. Originally the Bisonhorn and the Hill Maria belonged together and intermarried as is still remembered by both tribes. Nowadays they are, however, *de facto* exogamous<sup>40</sup>. Even if such an explanation is nowhere expressly stated we can hardly be far wrong in concluding that it is the difference in historical development between the inhabitants of the plains and those of the hills which is at the root of the present division of the tribe into two exogamous parts. GRIGSON's book repeatedly refers to "modern" peculiarities which distinguish the Bisonhorn from the Hill Maria. Needless to say, this dual division of the Gonds of Bastar has nothing whatever to do with dual classification in the ethnological sense.

It is moreover the clan and the phratry which determine the sociological structure of the Bastar Gonds. The clan is known under the name of *katta*, the phratry under that of *kutmâm* or *tarr*. It is especially with regard to the latter that the question arises, whether RUSSELL was right in assuming traces of a dual classification system. There can be no doubt that it is the exogamous, patrilineal clans which must serve as a basis for this investigation. Among the Hill Maria the clan (which is frequently but by no means always totemic) forms not only a social but in general also a territorial unit, that is to say the members of one clan usually live together in the same village and the clan is considered the only real owner of the land. This means that clan exogamy is in most cases synonymous with village exogamy and may even be described as a local exogamy. As GRIGSON points out the Hill Marias also know a certain grouping of clans in phratries but the latter play so small a rôle that the members of the tribe are, for the most part, hardly aware of their existence<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> l. c., p. 51, p. 198.

<sup>41</sup> l. c., p. 238 f., p. 246 and *passim*.



With the Bisonhorn as with the Hill Maria the clan forms the basic social unit, but here it is no longer territorially compact. More advanced economic and cultural conditions as also a greater increase in population have led to considerable re-shuffling. The land has been divided up into minute portions, so that the members of one clan often live in widely scattered localities. This dis-

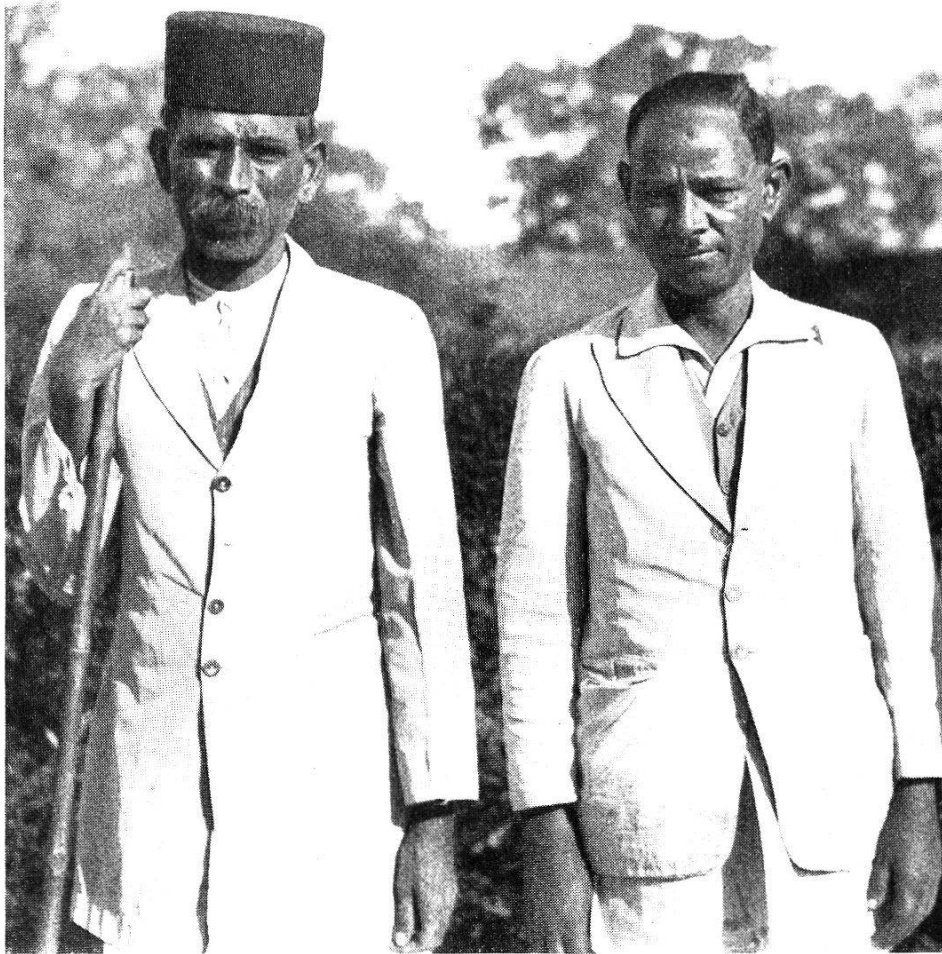


Fig. 8. "Pure" Bhils, Udaipur, Rajputana.

(Photo Koppers.)

persal of the clan is counteracted by the closer organisation of groups of clans, known as phratries. Among the Bisonhorn Maria there exist five such phratries, comprising altogether fifty-one clans. It is regrettable that GRIGSON, so far as I can see, gives no detailed information concerning the function of these phratries. It would be most important to know whether a phratry as such is exogamous. This does not appear to be the case<sup>42</sup>, a fact which,

<sup>42</sup> Grigson, it is true, repeatedly refers to the phratries in conjunction with the clans as marriage regulating institutions (pp. 240 and 244) but nowhere in his book have I discovered full particulars concerning this point.

taken in conjunction with the occurrence that the Hill Maria have almost nothing to do with phratries, leaves little doubt as to the relatively recent and secondary character of phratry organisation among the Gonds of Bastar. We cannot do otherwise than agree with GRIGSON who refuses to see any connection between a dual classification system and these phratries as presented to us <sup>43</sup>.

Besides the division into phratries there exists, however, among the Gonds another form of dual organisation which does, at least at first sight, strongly remind us of an exogamous dual classification. Apart from the usual clan exogamy, every Gond who thinks of marrying must when choosing his partner for life avoid certain other clans, known as "brother" clans. Marriage can take place only with the members of the so-called "wife" clans, i.e. those clans from which the male members of his clan are in duty bound to choose their wives. The name used for the "brother" clans is *dadabhai* while the clans from which a wife can be chosen are known as *akomama* <sup>44</sup>.

Unfortunately GRIGSON says little or nothing about the connection between this dual division and the phratry system. We are given the impression that no such connection exists. On the other hand GRIGSON shows by several examples that this division into "brother" and "wife" clans does not extend through the whole tribe, so that it is only to the superficial observer that it can appear as a regular dual organisation of society. The group of clans which are *akomama* (wife clans) for a certain clan are, for example, in no way *dadabhai* (brother clans) among themselves, as we should expect in a case of reciprocity. On the contrary they intermarry without further ado. We can therefore not speak of dual classification in spite of the apparently so clearly marked dual principle: "brother" clans on the one hand and "wife" clans on the other. We are rather somewhat reminded of the triple, circulative organisation of the tribe described by G. J. HELD <sup>45</sup>, who followed in the footsteps of HODSON. The "triangle" examples brought forward by GRIGSON <sup>46</sup> are indeed reminiscent of the "circulative system" of HODSON and HELD.

We can therefore hardly fail to agree with GRIGSON when, in view of the facts so far established, he refuses to speak with anything like certainty of the existence of dual classification among the Gonds of Bastar and of the Central Provinces. It is another question whether in the light of future research some of the frag-

<sup>43</sup> l. c., p. 235 ff. and passim.

<sup>44</sup> l. c., p. 244 f. and passim.

<sup>45</sup> "The Mahâbhârata. An ethnological Study." Amsterdam 1935, p. 58 ff.

<sup>46</sup> l. c., p. 237.



mentary evidence we have been discussing may not after all prove to be a remnant of a former dual classification system, which, in this case, need not necessarily have been indigenous to the Gonds. It is at all events interesting to note that even GRIGSON finds himself unable to reconstruct the earlier stages of social organisation among the Bisonhorn Maria on any other basis than that of an "original two-moiety system"<sup>47</sup>. From his general impression of all the material to hand GRIGSON considers himself justified in concluding that all the rest must have developed out of this. For the moment his conclusion can be regarded only as a hypothesis but it is one which may well contain a certain amount of truth.

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<sup>47</sup> l. c., p. 239 f.

(To be concluded.)