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# ORISSA TRIBES RESEARCH JOURNAL

Vol. I

No. 1.

*Tribal and Hillia Research cum  
Training Institute, Library,  
DHUBANEWAR.  
Acc. No. .... 1 .....  
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*Inaugural Number*

1955

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**Editor: Gananath Das.**

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Photographs—By Courtesy of Sri P. Pati and Sri A. Ray.

## A Word About The Cover Page Block

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It is composed of photographs of Saora wall paintings which were assembled to form the attractive gate to the Adibasi Museum at the State Exhibition held in Berhampur in May last at the time of the All India Congress Committee meeting.

The wall paintings are called "Ittalan" by the Saoras. Perhaps this has been derived from the Saora roots id-to write-and "talan" a contracted form of "kitalan", a wall. "Ittalan" therefore means literally the writing on the wall. The man well-versed in this art is called 'ittalan maran.'

Wall paintings are to be found in the house of nearly all the Orissan Tribes. These are also met with frequently in the houses of Non—Tribals in the rural areas, and may as some believe, have been adopted from the Tribals in the process of contact. The Saora, however excels in this art. For him these "are made for use rather than for display. They are for the eyes of the spirits, not of men."

In essence an 'ittalan' is a house for Saora spirits and gods, and it is prepared with a ceremony to appease them. Occasionally it depicts impotent Saora legends and customs.

*Editor*



## Messages

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**I** WELCOME the starting of English and Oriya journals in the Tribal Research Bureau of our State Tribal and Rural Welfare Department. Apart from recording the activities of the Bureau from time to time, these journals will serve as a forum for the useful discussion of many matters pertaining to Tribal Welfare and Tribal Research. The Government are doing a great deal nowadays for the uplift of all the backward sections of our population, promoting particularly their material well-being to make up for the long neglect they have suffered in the past. Though this section of our population have a culture of their own and also a long tradition of inherited skill in certain arts and crafts, there is obviously scope for further enriching and improving on that tradition. The tribals are already getting familiar with many techniques relating, among others, to matters like profitable uses of raw wool, better bee-keeping and better poultry rearing, etc. and the work of the Research Bureau is also particularly fruitful for promoting a better understanding of the various tribal groups and for scientifically studying their problems. The Bureau's utility is bound to increase with the passage of time, as we count on its labours for providing a dependable basis for better planning the advancement and welfare of the Tribal population. I congratulate the Bureau on having these journals to give permanent shape to its ideas and to disseminate information about the Government's policy relating to Tribal uplift.

I wish the journals every success, wide vogue and popularity.

RAJ BHAVAN  
CUTTACK

*The 22nd October, 1955*

**P. S. Kumaraswamy Raja**  
GOVERNOR OF ORISSA

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EDITORIAL

**I** AM glad to know that the Tribal Research Bureau of Orissa will publish a quarterly journal from this month.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many foreign Scholars and many in India have now taken up anthropological research in right earnest. I hope the Orissa Tribes Research Journal will have secured the services of some of these scholars. I am not aware whether all the necessary information has been collected for systematic research. The journal may also help in presenting information for the use of the scholars.

I welcome the publication of the journal and I hope it will create lively interest in many scholars to study the Tribes living in Orissa.

RAJ BHAVAN,  
POONA 7,  
13th October, 1955.

**Sd. H. K. Mahatab**  
Governor of Bombay.

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## EDITORIAL

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**T**HIS Journal is being Published under the auspices of the Tribal Research Bureau. The Bureau was constituted by the Government of Orissa in 1953. It is going to complete the 2nd year of its birth. It has been fortunate in having some well-known Scholars and Social workers like Shrimati Malati Choudhuri, Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Shri P. C. Bhanja Deo and Dr. N. Dutta-Majumdar, I. A. S., amongst its members to guide its deliberations.

The Bureau is now being re-organised, with an Assistant Director and two Research Officers. A Research Assistant is also proposed to be appointed. The Bureau is at present located in a hall with the Secretariat Training Class at the New Capital. It is in the process of being furnished.

Thus, although the Bureau came into being about two years ago, it has struggled to exist against odds. In the beginning for the pay and prospects offered it was difficult to find suitable persons to fill up the two Research Scholars' posts and the posts were being successively vacated and filled several times. In the result one of the posts remained vacant all the time. Shri Sahu, a trained man from the Tata Institute of Social Science was with us for a brief period. He left us on 11-8-53 as he found a better job else where. Shri Mohapatra was another of the Research Scholars, who also left us on 16-11-54 on better prospects. Our present Research Scholars, are Shri Ray, who joined on 24-5-54 and Shri Biswas, who came to us on 30-3-55 only.

The Bureau was set up with the object of studying the main tribal problems, for collecting data that would be helpful for formulating realistic welfare schemes and above all for making scientific study of the different tribal groups, with a view

- (i) to find out their special characteristics and problems,
- (ii) to study the process of culture change among them and to suggest ways and means of canalising it, if possible, in desired directions, and
- (iii) to evaluate the diffusion of culture and effects of culture contacts between tribal and non-tribal population of the State.

At present the Research Scholars are engaged in field work amongst the Juangs of Keonjhar and Bhuyans of Bonai for study of the problems of the "Reproductive life of Juangs and social, Economic and Religious Associations of shifting cultivation among Paudi Bhuyans of Bonai." In the mean time they have submitted a few reports on subjects like "Acculturation of the Shabaras in village Nuapali," "Eranga Kolhs of Bonai," "Problem of Shifting Cultivation in Orissa," and "Preliminary report on the Paudi Bhuyans of Bonai." Some charts, posters and maps have been prepared and a good number of articles have been collected for the tribal museum. With the reorganisation of the Bureau, it is proposed to intensify the work and to take up specific problems for scientific study. The first to be tackled will be the "Meria" or "Juro" practice of the Kondhs.

About 300 books, some of them rare and valuable, have so far been collected for the library of the Bureau. A few interesting magazines and journals are also being received. In the new house, where the Bureau is about to be located, a reading room is being organised. All those who are interested in tribal and social affairs are cordially invited to use it. They will be welcome to the museum too, where specimens of tribal dress, and ornaments, musical instruments and weapons of game will be on show.

This journal is being published under the auspices of the Bureau with two chief objectives. It will strive to bring to the notice of the public what the Bureau is trying to achieve. It will also offer to those who are interested in social affairs in general and tribal affairs in particular

a forum to express what they feel about these problems, what they have seen and experienced in these matters and what they consider would go to ease or to solve them. While thanking those who have taken pains to contribute the articles for this issue, we welcome them and all others who have the time and opportunity, to help us similarly in future. The response this time was indeed generous and for want of space we could not publish all that we received and have been obliged to keep a few for future issues. We have got a small request to make in this connection. Contributors may kindly arrange, if possible, to send photographs, charts and graphs to illustrate their articles for the benefit of the readers. Readers will also be greatly benefitted by references and bibliographies.

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## Social and Cultural Problems of the Adibasis in Orissa

(Shri Sonaram Soren, Minister, Tribal and Rural  
Welfare Department Orissa)

Now when there is a cry all over the country for an all-round development of the Adibasis I hope that the few words which I, as an Adibasi, would say relating to the development of the society and the culture of the Adibasis would be very timely.

While discussing about the Adibasi society and the culture of the Adibasis, it is generally assumed that their social life is most undeveloped and their culture is also not of a high order and that they have to be raised from their present state and brought up to the level of the modern society. This attitude towards the Adibasis originated from Europeans in the Western countries. The Europeans were forcibly taking away the simple-minded and innocent people of countries like Africa and Australia and were making slaves of them; but when good sense dawned upon them, the same simple-minded and innocent Adibasis appeared to them as very humble and poor and they began to pity the Adibasis. It is doubtful whether there was imperialistic motives under the cover of this pity. The ways of life of the Adibasis of Africa and Australia were completely different from those of Westerns. So it was not unnatural on their part to look upon the Adibasis as uncivilised and barbarians. It was their idea that the Adibasis would undergo development to the extent to which they could educate and civilise them. What the plight of the Adibasis has become as a result of the activities inspired by this belief and intention of the Westerners is well known. The Adibasis of America are rapidly becoming extinct. The Adibasis of Australia are also on the point of being completely extinct. The Negros and the other races were also going to be wiped out of existence in

Africa but they were fired with a sense of patriotism and now perhaps they may be able to march on the road of development. In our country also we find in the Purans and the History that the Aryans named the Adibasis as Asuras and barbarians etc, and instead of effecting their development in any way they systematically looked upon them with hatred and suppressed and persecuted them. What the condition of the so-called caste people of our country has now become as a result of their endeavour extending over 200 years to become civilised according to the standards of the Westerners is well known. The ancient culture of the country has been forgotten. Development in the natural process has become an impossibility and a death-blow is being given to the aryan society and culture. After the scholars of the country began to realise this state of affairs, some reformer contemplated to raise the Adibasis in the name of development by elevating their society and culture to that level to which the Brahmins, Khetriyas and Khandayats have risen during the regime of the British. Those among the Adibasis who have begun to see things in their proper perspective are looking upon this attempt of upraising the Adibasis with grave suspicion. I consider that much time, money and many lives will be wasted in vain if the same methods of upraising the Adibasis are followed as have been followed by the so-called higher communities to civilise themselves during the last two hundred years to their own regret in the long run.

Before attempting to bring about any improvement of the Adibasi society and the Adibasi culture one has to understand the Adibasis thoroughly and study their society and culture

very well. The Adibasis are the original inhabitants of India. Many scholars also hold the view that many of the depressed classes and the Harijans were originally included in the Adibasi community. It is just possible that due to extraneous influence or due to temptation in course of time many have got detached from the main stock. During the last 5 or 6 years the angle of vision among the Adibasis having changed a new line of thought has prevailed among them. Before this the Bhuyan considered it a glory to be known as a Khandayat. Many Khond and Gond Zamindars and Rajas have become Khetriyas and in the Agency areas of Ganjam the Sabaras are even today considering it a glory to be known as Sudhha Sabar or merely Sudhha.

✓ The religion, the society and the culture of the Adibasis are distinct from those of others. The Adibasi is a worshipper of nature and through this nature worship he realises the existence of God. Due to contact with non-Adibasis some classes of Adibasis are found to have been initiated into Hindu or some other religions but it is surprising that inspite of the persecution and chastisement extending over thousands of years the Adibasi has maintained the distinctive character of his society and culture. There is no caste system or Parda in the Adibasi society. Unlike the Hindu society the Adibasi society does not contain such separate castes as washermen, barbers or Brahmins attached to separate professions. In the Adibasi society a man may simultaneously work as an oilman confectioner, washerman and barber. The culture of the Adibasis has also influenced even the Hindu religion. As for an instance it may be said that the Sabar deity Lord Jagannath is now being worshipped in the Puri temple as the god of the Hindus and there is no caste distinction in that temple. From this it is clear that the culture of the Adibasis is the natural and original culture of India. The difference which one finds between the culture

of the Adibasis and that of non-Adibasis is due to foreign influence. So will the Adibasis be prepared to accept the culture of others when there will be prevalent an independent line of real and original thinking in India? This is a matter which ought to engage our serious attention. ✓

Not only the non-Adibasis have been victims of outside influence but being under different administrations from time to time the social condition and the culture of the Adibasis of different areas have also been revolutionised. As an illustration the manners and customs of the Adibasis of Eastern States are completely different from that of the Adibasis of the areas directly administered by the British. Yet these two sections of the Adibasis belong to one and the same community. Those in whose hands the all-round development of the Adibasis rests ought to determine what exactly the original Adibasi culture is.

The solution of the problem does not end there. ✓ A change in the social manners and customs and material conditions cannot be effected by orders or directions from above now-a-days. Those anthropologists who want to leave the Adibasis to themselves without bringing about any revolution in their original culture forget that now is the age of liberty of the individual. Now-a-days one cannot by force change the channel of thought of another. For this reason there is no other way of elevating social and cultural standards than by influencing thoughts by means of education and propaganda and in any society this is the work of the leaders and or well informed people. Before so influencing one should know the bright and dark side of a society and culture. Otherwise the confusion will be worse confounded. ✓

I have myself come in close contact with the Adibasi and the non-Adibasi society. There are certain distinctive traits of the Adibasis which are common to nearly all areas. Though certain

differences are found in different areas yet a common cultural bond seems to bind the Adibasis of those areas and this bond is their unity. Among the non-Adibasis of Orissa this <sup>social</sup> unity to some extent is to be marked in their social festivities. But among the Adibasis unity is an all pervading factor in their society. A group or even a village of Adibasis live as though in a family. They help each other in social festivities, in building houses, cultivating land and reclaiming waste lands and in all other material affairs. Not only this, they regard the work of one another as their own work and co-operate without any reservation in their mind that they are rendering help to an outsider. If by our effort of uplifting the Adibasis we, any way, affect this trait of their character, it will become harmful. Another trait of Adibasi character is their faith in God and their love for truth. Now-a-days people call this simplicity foolishness. Another speciality of the Adibasis is their love for beauty and love for dance and music. In many cases poverty and privation suppress this trait but a little change in the circumstances brings it to the surface again. It is a matter for serious thought how this love of merriment will be directed in the proper channel and how this love of beauty will not harmfully affect the body or the society. Besides these, the Adibasis are very hospitable and have a keen sense of self-respect. I have placed a few problems before those who are out to improve the social and cultural standards of Adibasis. Personally I hold the view that the few lapses which are noticeable either in the society or in the manners and customs of the Adibasis are due to their adverse economic condition. It would be proper for the reformers to give due emphasis on the removal of the poverty of the Adibasis and to carry on the

attempt to improve their social and cultural standards in a natural fashion by educating them to that end. The Adibasi culture will follow the right track by responding to the environment and the call of the age. The Adibasi society and the Adibasi culture have steadfastly clung to the tradition so long inspite of so many adverse influences from outside. I am not the least apprehensive that the same will be wiped out of existence suddenly.

There are now two distinct lines of thought regarding the solution of the problems of the Adibasi society. One is for abolishing the speciality or the distinctive character of the Adibasi society and to amalgamate it thoroughly with the so-called higher society and the other is that of the Anthropologists who say that the Adibasi is a child of the nature and he should be left to himself to effect his own development according to his will. In my opinion both these views are wrong. I am a strong advocate of the motto of "Unity in diversity."

Before I conclude, I am tempted to quote the views of our Prime Minister Shri Jawharlal Nehru and that of our Rastrapati Rajendra Prasad with regard to approach to solve the Adibasi problems.

In the year 1952, in New Delhi while inaugurating All India Tribal Conference Shri Nehru said "I am not all sure which way of living is better—ours or theirs. But in some ways I am quite certain theirs is better. If that is so, then it is absolutely presumption for any of us to approach this problem with an air of superiority to tell them how to behave or what to do and what not to do and try to make them a second rate copy of ourselves. The approach to the tribal people should be one of learning from them and having learnt, to try to help and co-operate."



In our relations with tribal people, it is again of the greatest importance to keep ourselves, as far as possible, free from emotional biases. We should neither raise the qualities, which they undoubtedly possess, to the skies in a fit of romantic admiration, nor pretend to atone for our past remission by an over-enthusiastic desire to 'do them good.' The one thing needful is to help in the creation of the feeling of self-help among the tribal people, as one important part of the total population which inhabits the Republic of India.

The science of anthropology has often been utilized by the government of various countries; but it cannot however be said that this has always been done with an altruistic motive. In places like Africa or the Pacific, the results of anthropological research have sometimes been

employed in order to keep down the tribal people more effectively under subjugation. A knowledge of the loves and hates of a people, of their fears and loyalties, may be of use in keeping them under subjugation, just as the same knowledge can be utilized for their emancipation. In the Republic of India, which has had the advantage of the moral leadership of a man of Mahatma Gandhi's stature, we can reasonably hope that the knowledge gained through scientific investigation will be employed for the development of self-rule among those who find a place in the scheduled lists of to-day. Let us hope that in the India of the future, these tribes and castes who are now reckoned as backward, will develop into, not the weakest, but the strongest links in the chain of an emancipated people.

## Saoras of Ganjam Scheduled Areas.

By

SRI UDAYNATH PATNAIK, O.A.S.

There are several ways of pronounciation of the name of this tribe in English and in the local vernaculars. The correct pronounciation in English is Saora and this is the way the Saora himself pronounces the word. In telugu the word is pronounced 'Savara' and in oriya 'Saura.' But neither of them is correct. The Saora is mentioned in the Ramayan as existing in the hilly areas of South India when Rama with his consort and brother was doing the 'Vanavas.' Plini and Ptolmi mention the Sauri and the Saora. There are several other authorities also who trace the Saoras to the period of Rug-veda.

The language of the Saoras is included in the Munda family, according to Mr. Grierson in his Linguistic Survey of India. According to him, the language has been influenced largely by telugu and is closely related to Kharia and Juang.

The Saora is light of build, generally short in stature and dark in colour. He has a wiry physique with a narrow fore-head and blunt nose. The women are dark in colour and are also lithe and wiry. The women have curly hair and blunt noses. The tribe is, therefore, capable of strenuous field work, exposed to the sun and the biting winter.

The Saora scoops out every possible depression alongside a nala or on the slope of a hill and converts it into a paddy field. In the former case, long and high embankments are

constructed along the nala side and the nala is choked practically. In the latter case, the Saora prepares a lay out of paddy area by terracing. He is very skillfull in this and so terraces the fields that there is never a fear of rapid drainage, water-logging or destruction of the bund of the terraced field. Without using any technical equipments and without any technical training, the Saora so lets out water from the higher fields to the lower across the contour terrace bund that water spreads out evenly in the field and passes down into the field next below in a smooth manner. The ingenuity of the Saora in terracing cultivation is simply admirable.

Next comes 'Podu' cultivation, known elsewhere as axe or Jhuming cultivation. This is condemned on all hands as pernicious and as tending to denude the natural forests growing on the hill-sides, and the hill slopes. The method of this cultivation is very interesting. The method of the Saora in this cultivation is different from that of the Khond. The latter raises a single crop or a small number of crops on the hill side and lives on this 'Bogodo,' as it is called, only for a short period to watch the crop when it is maturing, from the attack of the wild birds and animals. Hill-gram, Sua, Kueri and pumpkins are practically the major crops raised by a khond on the *bogodo*.

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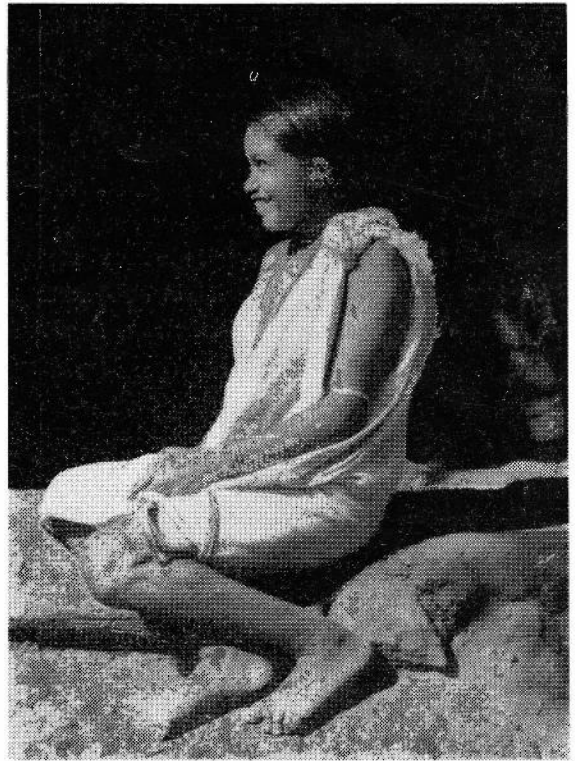


A Saora youth from Sandarba  
Ganjam.



A Saora grandmother with her  
grandson.

A Saora young belle.



To fetch water.

clean their teeth daily and do not have the other clean habits. The men, women use the oil pressed from the castor and mohua seeds by an indigenous wooden press. They rarely use oil or fats in their diet. Their wearing apparel is very scanty. The men use a loin cloth 8 to 10 feet long which is wound round the waist and across the seat covering the private parts. This loin cloth hangs down in the front and the rear and this leads us to the origin of the term 'Lanja Saora.' Even among 'Lanja Saoras,' there are two classes, the 'lanjas' and the 'lomba lanjas.' These two ends of the loin cloth hanging down on the front and the rear are embroidered in colours, and frills of embroidery adorn them. The colour adopted is the red. There is no apparel on the body of the saora male and on the head he invariably has a red turban, preferably of silk and into this turban thrusts a bunch of feathers of wild birds. Thus clad, with a bow and arrow in the left hand, a bamboo stick in the right, with an indigenous pipe protruding from the lips and gold noli on the ears with one or two necklaces across the neck makes the picture of a well-to-do typical saora.

The saora woman has just a loin cloth round her waist; has sometimes brass anklets on her ankles, brass or silver chains round her waist, bead or reed necklaces round the neck, a small nose ring on the nose, a peculiar ear screw in the ears with the lobeholes enlarged by a local process and with curly hair shining with castor oil. This sums up a saora woman in prosperous conditions.

The saoras, men, women and children, take to drink as a national habit. The solopo juice is partaken freely by the womenfolk but they do not take to mohua liquor so much. The 'londa-moddo' which is a preparation peculiar

to the saora areas is a very strong drink and all men do not partake of it. Drink is not taken to as a habit by the entire population. Only people beyond age of 45 or 50 years take daily doses while the others take it whenever they get it. Every ceremonial, the 'Anthra' system of cultivation, the podu, the marriage and death ceremonies, the 'nua-kia' are all occasions when drink is required to flow.

The saora has no business habits. He is the easiest victim of the businessmen of the area who are invariably the Panos, and the Oriya businessmen, next in order. The following few paragraphs will describe the business talents of the Pano and the exploitation the saora is subjected to. These paragraphs were the result of personal investigations carried on by the author in the later half of 1954.

"Heard the exploitation of Lazze Mondal by a Pano of Kethung. Had seen earlier the sale negotiations of a half-arm (shirt) for 2 baskets of turmeric worth about Rs. 6, fixed Rs. 2 in cash."

"It is also complained that a Pano purchases some standing crop like turmeric and harvested ragi and postpone payments till the next crop. The next crop is taken again by the pano on his assuring that he would pay for both. Some times he pays only for one crop and some times he just refuses to pay. The saoras are not bold to challenge the pano on account of the latter's superior intelligence."

"The Saora is completely dependent on the Pano and the only reason is that the Pano provides a market for the produce of the Saora. The Saora is shy of going to the nearest market and even there he is mercilessly fleeced if he ventures there. He goes to the



market with high hopes but there meets with a horrible combination from the purchasers. He offers to sell at the rate he is used to selling to the Pano and this the Oriya businessman takes advantage of and forces the Saora to sell at lesser rate. If the saora blinks or hesitates, the purchasers fix their own price, force it on the saora. The saora in the end finds that he would have been a gainer had he sold his produce to the Pano. The pano concentrations play another trick. One Pano offers a price, a second offers something less, a third lowers it further and the last one combines all the panos of the concentration and surrounding concentrations and all combined see to it that there is no purchaser for the produce. The saora is more afraid of the oriya and ultimately he sells the goods just for a song to the pano."

"xx Mondol purchased one pair of bullocks from one xx (pano). The maximum cost of the pair would be Rs. 200/. He mortgaged land with a seed capacity of 1 putti 16 mans i.e. 2 mds. 28 srs. which would cover land about Ac. 2-30. The annual out turn of the land would be about 20 puttis, i.e. 30 mds. Leaving the cost of cultivation at 10 mds. per year, the net out-turn is 20 mds. This is divided between the lender and loanee which works out to 10 mds. in each case. The Pano, therefore, get Rs. 50/- a year. He has already got crops at the above rate for 2 years and is to get 6 more crops, according to the contract. The total amount he could get towards principal and interest works out to Rs. 400/- in 8 years."

"The pano offers to sell fowls at a very small profit if it is in cash. The saora is invariably inclined to purchase it in kind and

the kind payment is to be in margasira when the Bogodo yields fruit. In such cases the price of a fowl is 7 manos of jonna, or sua or kamgu, ragi or gphantia. This may be given at the first harvest after the loan or at subsequent harvests.

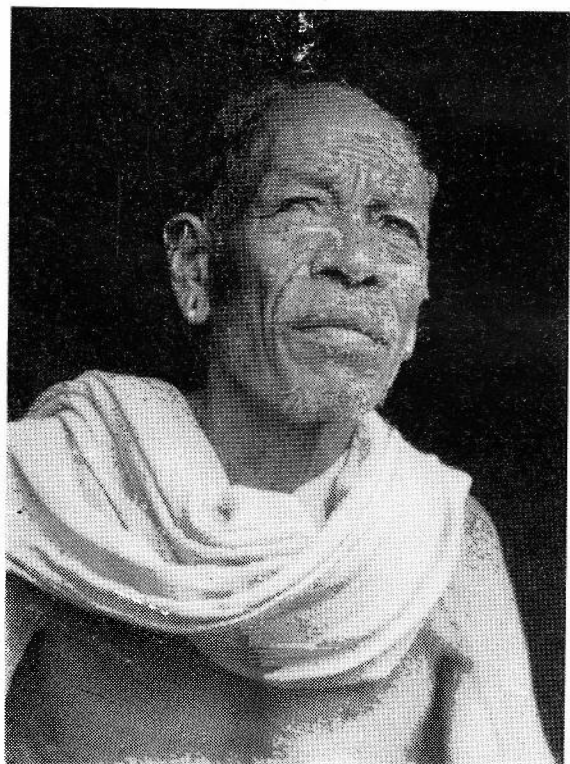
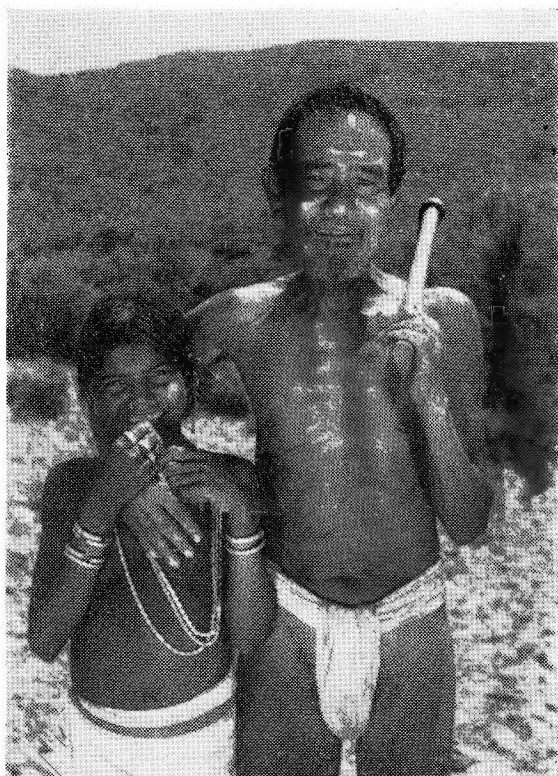
Pigs are sold not in cash but in barter. The payment is 1 putti of jiniso for a pig worth about Rs. 5/-. The payment is as in the case of fowls."

The Saora is shy of strangers and he is suspicious of every one. He is very secretive and even his own kith and kin do not get hints of what the man is up to even if it is a case of murdering another person. He is not easily vindictive and revengeful but once his blood is roused, it is difficult to control him.

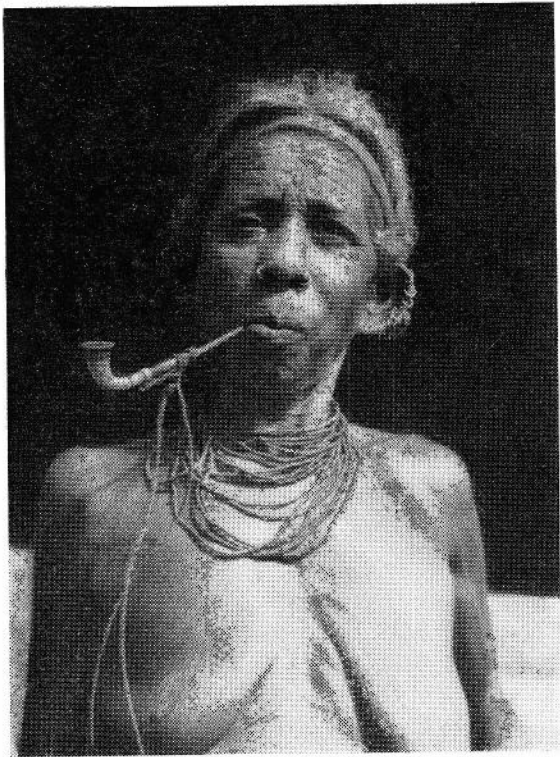
There are several classes of saoras which can be called more or less castes rather than tribal subsections. They are the following:

(1) Jada saoras (Highlanders). Their habitat is Gumma and Kolakota; (2) Mane saoras live in Ojaigodo and Serango (3) The Jathi saoras or the lomba lanja saora lives in Gumma, Ojaigodo and Serango; (4) The kindal Saoras or the Sorada saoras live in Rayagada and Jirango muthas. They are the people who do the basket weaving in the area; (5) the Luara saoras and Muli saoras are to be found in every important place in one or two houses. They are the black-smiths; (6) the Malla saoras are to be found at several places. They are agriculturists but at some places they do basket weaving, etc. (7) The Bhimo Saoras are to be found in Leobo, Engersingi, Jirango and the Mandasa malias. (8) The sudda saoras are to be found in Ramagiri and Udaigiri. They are not tribals in the strict

To the field with his daughter.



The Saora village Head.



The grandmother with her brass pipe,  
Sandarba, village, Ganjam.



A Saora belle from Sandarba, Ganjam.



sense of the word and they live on agriculture only. They have copied the oriya habits, customs and manners and also the oriya religion partially. (9) Kampu saoras live in the down hills of Parlakhimedi agency. (10) The Based saora is also a class which lives down-ghats in the Parlakhimedi taluk. (11) The mutha saora is practically the sudda saora down the hills. They are to be found in the plains muthas of Parlakhimedi agency.

The first three classes of saoras mentioned above, are the original saoras who have been able to retain their cult, habits, manners and customs without any ad-mixture. These three classes do not eat beef and they look down upon the castes and tribes which eat beef. They, on account of economic pressure, borrow money from the Panos. But this does not mitigate their hatred of the Pano whom they call 'Jum-tum-maram' (beef-eater). These saoras do not allow the pano to take up residence in their villages. The Pano, even though he is called the *bariki* of the village.

i.e. the choukidar or the village servant, has to live at a distance from the village and should appear in the village only when called or when business requires him. These saoras do not inter-dine with panos nor will they drink with them. The saoras live in families in a village and in some cases, they also invite relatives to a newly formed village. It is not unusual to find two to three families of saoras living in one house. The sons, after marriage, do not go to a new house as is the custom with the khonds but they prefer to live with the parents as long as it is possible. The cooking is done in common as well as dining. One of the reasons for this over gregariousness of the saoras seems to be that by such living, a man is able to get sufficient field hands for his fields.

That the saora has less sex vice and sex sensitiveness is apparent from the customary forms of abuses indulged in by the Saoras. The common abuses are 'Asunjuma' (eat night soil), Kinsod (dog) Vang Botham (may the tiger eat you).

## The Kisan—a little known tribe inhabiting the district of Sundargarh.

By

NITYANANDA PATNAIK.

The Kisan is one of the least known tribes of Orissa. No census report says anything about them. And no ethnographic study of the tribe is available in any report, except a few lines of Dalton written in his book "Ethnology of Bengal." He claimed them to have similarity with the Nagbansis of Chutia Nagpur. Thus he seemed to have included them in the Kolarian group. But from what I have gathered about the tribe especially the language, kinship terminology, birth rites, marriage customs and death rites, etc., they seem to be more akin to the Oraon who belong to the pre-Dravidian stock than to Kolarian group. Nevertheless more study of these tribes is essential in order to establish the theory of

resemblance of the Kisan with the Oraon. Not a detailed ethnographic research alone of these tribes is enough for this matter but the factors contributing to the causes of similarity are to be found out by the deep study of these little known tribes.

The comparative treatment of the Kisan culture and that of the Oraon on one hand and that of the Munda, Kharia and Ho on the other should certainly take a large space. Hence the comparative picture may be split into small sections which can be published in different instalments. Therefore the paper deals in general with two items of their culture, that is, language and the cross-cousin marriage on a comparative basis.

### Names of Different Parts of the Body :—

| <u>Kisan</u> | <u>Oraon</u> | <u>Names</u> | <u>Ho</u> | <u>Kharia</u> |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| Kuku         | Kuk          | Head         | Boa       | Bakab         |
| Chuti        | Chuti        | Hair         | Ub        | Uli           |
| Muhin        | Puin         | Nose         | Muta      | Ramang        |
| Hanu         | Khan         | Eye          | Med       | Mad           |
| Tatha        | Tatkha       | Tongue       | Lea       | Langa         |
| Palu         | Pal          | Tooth        | Thata     | Gone          |
| Thathana     | Bai          | Mouth        | Ao        | Mang          |
| Hanto        | Kheser       | Neck         | Serom     | Kanka         |
| Heka         | Khekha       | Hand         | Ti        | Baha          |
| Angtli       | Angali       | Finger       | Ganda     | Angri         |
| Ehu          | Chhati       | Chest        | Kuam      |               |
| Kul          | Kul          | Stomach      | Poda      | Lai           |
| Kadma        | Kadma        | Waist        | Majam     |               |

| <u>Kisan</u> | <u>Oraon</u> | <u>Names</u> | <u>Ho</u> | <u>Kharia</u> |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| Hedu         | Khede        | Leg }        | Kata      | Kata          |
| Pad          | Tarua Khede  | Foot }       |           | Pad           |
| Meta         | Metar        | Man          |           |               |
| Hanke        | Muka         | Woman        |           |               |
| Dihi         | Pada         | Village      |           | Pada          |
| Edepa        | Edepa        | House        |           |               |

The above list shows that there is enough similarity between the Kisan and Oraon words for different parts of the body whereas there is no similarity between the Kisan and Ho or Kharia words.

### Some important terms of Kinship Relationship :—

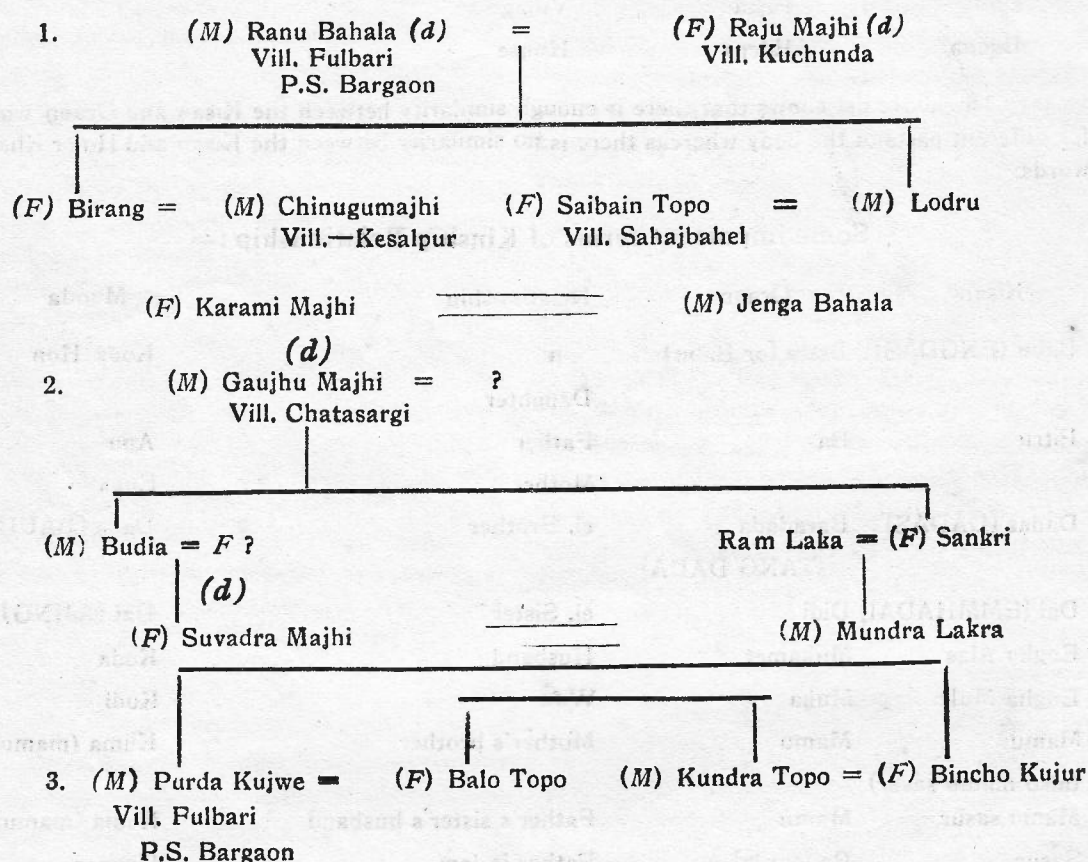
| <u>Kisan</u>      | <u>Oraon</u>    | <u>Relationship</u>       | <u>Munda</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Babu (ENGDAS)     | Betta (or Babu) | Son                       | Koda Hon     |
|                   |                 | Daughter                  |              |
| Pitru             | Ba              | Father                    | Apu          |
|                   |                 | Mother                    | Enga         |
| Dadas (DADAS)     | Baradada        | el. Brother               | Dada (BAUIN) |
|                   | (TANG DADA)     |                           |              |
| Dai (EMMHADAI)    | Didi            | el. Sister                | Dai (AJING)  |
| Engha Alas        | Mukamet         | Husband                   | Koda         |
| Engha Muka        | Muka            | Wife                      | Kudi         |
| Mamu              | Mamu            | Mother's brother          | Kuma (mamu)  |
| (also mamu sasur) |                 |                           |              |
| Mamu sasur        | Mamu            | Father's sister's husband | Kuma (mamu)  |
| Sasur             | Ba (sasur)      | Father-in-law             | Honyar       |
| Sas               | Ayo (ENGSAIS)   | Mother-in-law             | Hanar        |
| Tachi             | Tachi           | Father's sister           | Hatam        |
| Tachi             | Tachi           | Mother's brother's wife   | Hatam        |

**N.B.**—The terms which are written within brackets in block letters are terms of reference and those in small letters are terms of address, whereas the rest are terms of relationship.



## Cross-cousin marriage and marriage by exchange:—

Of different types of marriage prevalent among the Kisan, cross-cousin marriage and by exchange are widely traced in several genealogies collected among the Kisan from different villages. Three genealogies are given below to show concrete cases of those two types of marriage practised among the Kisan.



Explanations of symbols used in above genealogies:—

(F) Female; (M) Male; = Marriage; (d) death

? name unknown; | brother and sister

Vill. Village.

The children of Purda and Kunda are permitted to marry each other according to the custom of the Kisan society. The fact that the mother's brother and father's sister's husband are both denoted by one term called "mamu" and that the father's sister and the mother's brother's wife are described by a single term called "Tachi" is due to the prevalence of cross-cousin marriage with marriage by exchange among the Kisan. In cross-cousin marriage mother's brother becomes father-in-law. Hence the Kisan have borrowed the Hindu terminology "sasur" and have synchronised it with the term "mamu" and forming it into one word as "mamu-sasur."

Among the Oraon, similar terminology of relationship is used for mother's brother and father's sister's husband as "mamu" and father's sister and mother's brother's wife as "Tachi". But there is no trace of actual cross-cousin marriage and marriage by exchange in any genealogy collected among this tribe. However, a detailed study and collection of more genealogies among the Oraon in Sundargarh is necessary. But for the present until further data are available it may be taken as a point of dispute as to why the Kisan have been practising both the types of marriage whereas the Oraon who are found to be similar to the Kisan in many respects of their culture do not practise it now-a-days.

As regards the Munda, no concrete case of such marriage was found out in genealogies although the terminology of relationship indicates the possibility of prevalence of cross-cousin marriage and marriage by exchange in the past. But what is meant to show here is that by looking to the chart of terms of relationships the terms used by the Kisan and the Oraon for different relationships show to have originated from one language stocks, whereas those of the Munda from another language stock.

### Conclusion:—

It goes without saying that Orissa is the epitome of Adibasis, belonging to different stocks such as pre-dravidian, Kolarian, etc. They are present under different stages of economic condition. Some are in the out-of-the-way places up in the jungles without being affected by outside influences, some under the impact of outside forces, such as plain culture, factory, dam, Christianity and mineral quarries, etc., and the rest in transition of change. It would, however, be of great value to draw a map and write a short bibliography on each tribe with particular reference to the population, economic stage in which they live, racial identification and some hints of obvious problems faced by each tribe. Then the Province may be divided into several cultural zones based on the map from administrative standpoint and be then studied by different research scholars. It should be noted that by far the greater proportion of anthropological field work has been designed in terms of the study of a single community or a single culture. Research designs for field work on a cross-cultural or even multi community which includes Christian, Hindu, Moslem community also along with tribal community, are few. This comparative study of Adibasi and non-Adibasi communities will reveal a great deal of interchange of culture which might help answer some of the caste and traditional problems. The point that I am trying to make is this—that where changes are taking place or where changes are intended to be introduced the knowledge of the entire community and the different forces acting on it is essential in order to make those changes as much frictionless as possible. At least we can by our accumulated wisdom predict what sort of friction or difficulty might arise out of a particular situation and then try to devise ways and means to make the changes less brother-some.

## The Problem of the Aborigines

BY

LAKSHMINARAYAN SAHU

Servants of India Society, Cuttack

The problem of the Aborigines is the problem of our own; for the aborigines are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

In Orissa they are in large number and they have been existing from ages. The vast culture of Orissa has been absorbing the aborigines gradually. The process could have been quickened but for the intervention of British rule. The Britishers naturally looked with disfavour upon the mixing of the so-called high caste Hindus with the higher castes and try to upset the British regime. Besides, the Britishers wanted to make the aborigines converts to Christianity so that they might thus be alienated from the main bulk of the population. Secondly, the Britishers had another fear. They had suppressed the manliness of the aborigines by killing them, shooting them, and harassing them in many ways for their human sacrifice. Human sacrifice which was a faith with the aborigines for the growth of crops was an institution peculiar to them, handed down from ages, from father to son. They believed that unless a human being is sacrificed they would not have good turmeric with red colour inside.

They also believed that Mother Earth will be angry if a human being was not offered to her before tilling the soil. But this does not mean that the aborigines were sacrificing too many human beings for the purpose.

Again the person who would be sacrificed was given all the best things of life. The *Meriah* or the person who was sacrificed was the member in every family and he or she could eat the best things in every house. The *Meriah* was thus pampered to a life of luxury and plenty for several years until the day of sacrificing him came. For this human sacrifice the aborigines over the hills were massacred to death in large numbers—they were pursued in every corner. Thus the brave Kondhs were reduced to the status of abject slaves.

In the wake of this the aborigines were used as beasts of burden for carrying the loads of the Government officers who were touring in their areas. Out of fear the aborigines left the road-side and took shelter in jungles. Thus they were driven away from civilization, and there was a set-back in their upward progress.

A problem that is of besetting evil is the habit of drink with the aborigines. But who made them so? Formerly the aborigines were drinking the juice of the Salapa tree. They did not know distillation. Now with the advent of the British, distilled liquor was supplied to them and Salapa tree tapping was made illegal. By using distilled liquor the aborigines have lost their morals. They beat their wives and children at times when dead drunk.

Another evil that has entered the life of the aborigines was debauchery. The aborigines never knew what was debauchery. But to-day



they have been ruined by the contact of the so-called higher caste Indians and Europeans. Europeans created havoc among the aboriginal women. The aboriginals did not know what was syphilis but to-day most of them are afflicted with syphilis. The modern industrialisation has played havoc with their morals. The Ho girls who are so fine and sleeky and did not know debauchery are to-day vitiated at Jamshedpur by the so-called high caste people.

The reason is that in industrial areas there is not much facility for men to live with their families. Therefore they remain single and when they see these youthful free girls and women, they try to spoil them by force and with temptation of money and cloth.

The tribal should be made to learn the process of smelting iron and at some places they do it. They should be taught better processes. The aboriginals should be given lands for cultivation. Here co-operatives may be started easily with Governmental help. They traditionally work co-operatively and produce things in a co-operative manner. Here is the best opportunity for them as well as for the Government. Only if Government be up and doing and do things with faith and courage incessantly for some years it will bring about changes in the life of the aboriginals soon. That will stimulate the virtues of their life.

I think Basic Education will be most suitable to the aboriginals. Through crafts they can learn much more easily than through slates and pencils and from books. In mining they can be taught technique instead of employing them only for manual labour. But who will do it? The capitalist is generally a man who

has his whole eye on money-making. Therefore, Government must compel all capitalists to set apart some portion of their money for the development of the mind of the aboriginals.

Elephants are plenty in Orissa. These aboriginals may be trained further in the art and science of catching and training the elephants.

In the land of Jagannath who was the God of the aboriginals and who stands as the repository of peace and good will to all religious people since the second century B.C., it is a pity that the aboriginals are not helped forward in all possible ways as quickly as possible. Government is now awake to the problem but yet the vast area is not covered.

The medicinal herbs that the aboriginals are using should be studied by our doctors and use should be made of these for all people. The aboriginals must be hastened into civilisation and culture of our type. They should be allowed time to absorb the new culture. But they should not be forced any where. The Christians made the great mistake of punishing these aboriginals for Meriah.

Dr. B. S. Guha, has rightly said "The administration of the aboriginal people is a very difficult problem, for, on the one hand, it is a mistake to keep them completely isolated as isolation leads to stagnation and decay. On the other hand, indiscriminate contact is also harmful to the tribes as is shown by the rapid depopulation of the primitive tribes in Australia, Melanasis and U.S.A. The correct policy of administration should safeguard the tribal integrity and the Social organisation at the same time evolving ways and means of

gradual adjustment of the tribal population to changed conditions and slow intergration in the general life of the country without undue and hasty disruption. The healthy, vigorous and colourful life of the aboriginal population should not be substituted for a life of emesculation and stagnation in the name of reform and progress. (From the Journal of the Asiatic Society, Science Vol. XVII No. 1, 1951).

It is through contacts that the aboriginals are being slowly transferred. There is blood fusion through marriage between different communities, tribal people and Harijans. This is going as through nobody's intervention.

In Orissa, there is one aboriginal out of every five of the population. The population of Orissa to-day, as it is constituted is 140 lakhs and out of it 30 lakhs are aboriginals. The people of Orissa are surrounded by the aboriginal tribes on all sides. In Phulbani, the the Khondas by mixing with the Oriyas have practically become Oriya and they talk Oriya for all practical purposes. Outside the house, and even inside many families have given up Kui language of their own.

Thus slowly and silently, by natural process of Symbiosis the aboriginals will reform

themselves. Our duty is to help them in their difficulties, in their daily life, in their economic development.

We have much to learn from the aboriginals. Their women enjoy great freedom. They are treated equally with men. They are not subdued. Should not the so called more cultured people adopt their example? Of course we are now adopting their custom of dancing by our girls, which till now we were shirking from. Dancing is their noble pastime. In the society of aboriginals men and women are given a place of equality. When should we, so called more cultured people do so?

May the day come soon when the Brahmins and Hill Tribes will coalesce and make the Oriya race one, united and strong. May Vidyapati and the Sabari daughter be united in our homes and a casteless society be formed with real human kinship and relationship. May we sing and dance and give vent to our poetic feelings much better in a much natural way where words will flow, tunes will arise out of the gushes of the heart spontaneously joyfully. May there be no inhibition in our songs and poetry as is the habit now with our poets from ages past.

## DORMITORY (A DYING TRIBAL INSTITUTION)

By

SRI NITYANANDA DAS

Passing a few miles from the town of Ranchi one comes across small tribal hamlets. Covered with mudbricks, fashioned in an imperfect style the Oraons or the Mundas build their single roomed dwellings. That single room provides the sunumbonum of their dwelling.

In these there is a space for kitchen another for cow-shed and the middle portion is used for bed. These small hamlets scattered over the undulated surfaces resound with the sounds of drums and peels of music towards the approach of mid-night. Proceeding towards a village one can come across a happy and gay stock, sometimes tinted with sophistication in grades according to the distance from town. Except where disruption has been complete the rest of tribal configuration adhere to the general uniformity. One can come across harvest fields where men and women work with their bent gait. The untiring individuals get engaged from dawn to dusk in the pursuits of life. Boys from early childhood assist their parents and try to encounter the rigours of life which they have to bear ultimately. The disparity between the sexes or the formalities with the relationship are not well marked in their cultural patterns. The village headman and the priest still exercise their rights though with the advent of modern times their authorities have been restricted to a great extent.

Amidst all these pre-occupations the most romantic part of the day is often devoted for

recreation and merriments. After supper young boys and girls congregate at the village akhara situated at a central place. This akhara approximates the dormitory house (Jonkh Erpa-Oraon; Gitiora—Munda). This dormitory institution has got more than one contribution towards tribal life,

Catch-hold of a boy in teens and surround him with volley of questions. He will answer from his knowledge about his religion, beliefs in ghosts and spirits, the influence of the ancestors, the rule of the village, the myths and legends, and many other points of the observances. But, alas a single question pertaining to the dormitory will cause blushing. Do they blush due to the their own instinct? Or there is some thing else lurking behind it?

This institution has been deprecated by the missionaries who find in it a contravention of the gospels. Therefore, the converts seldom participate in the activities. On the other hand the Hindu brethren often go to the extent of imparting mind of the tribals there looms a fear that perhaps there is some thing wrong in the dances and songs performed at dormitories. Now with these ideas in view a keen observer if per chance he is an Anthropologist of modern times can visualise the tremendous contribution which the dormitory provides towards the solidarity of tribal life.

A brief description of dormitory institution will not be out of place. Pressed by the



paucity of accommodation at home grown up children are compelled to spend their nights outside in a more free and leisurely manner. Therefore perhaps this dormitory institution grew up in the tribal culture. However scholars like Dr. Majumdar ascribed a ten points criteria to the origin of dormitories giving the greatest importance on the factor of accommodation at home. Except tribes like the Gonds of Bastar, certain Naga sects of N.E.F.A. and many others spread over Africa and Oceania no other tribe builds a common dormitory house for both the sexes. In Chotanagpur the tribes usually maintain separate ones for different sexes. Usually the dormitory house is occupied by the boys to which the girls come occasionally and retire to their respective abode after the end of an occasion. The male dormitory house of Dhumkuria is usually the most pretentious structure of the whole village built up by collective labour of the youngsters, and kept neat and clean through deliberate attempts of all concerned. The girls usually do not have such a house. They sleep with certain lone old woman or a widow. Among the Oraons this dormitory house is better elaborated than the other tribes. There is regular administration, leadership, punishment, and compulsory training with the dormitory house.

After supper all the young men congregate in the dormitory house. The smaller boys who have entered their career as novices sampoo the body of the elder members. Moreover smaller boys are to do all types of errands and odd bits of job for the grown ups. After certain time beating of drums herald the starting of dances. They are different in different seasons and festivals of the year. With the beating of drum the virgins who by this time would be

reposing, proceed towards the dancing place (akhara). What a pleasure it is to see ones own sweet heart in her proper form without any anticipation of costly presents or extraneous decorations approaching the lover. Once the dances start even the married people and sometimes the old men and women at the far ends of their lives participate in them. The musical tunes fill the atmosphere.

Now coming to the real significance of the dormitory institution with the core of the tribal culture the most important role is the training of the youth. Not accustomed to the formal education in the schools, the tribal people from time immemorial have built up their own methods of training the youth. The most important consideration is to create men out of fluid state of childhood. It is also necessary to make young men and women understand the responsibilities of life.

Tribal life is one of constant strife for bread. Men and women and children working nearly for 8 to 10 hours a day gather food sufficient only for six months in a year. This amount of food is exhausted with the coming of rainy season. Therefore one has to acquire all the crafts and skill towards self-sufficiency. Even at the age of 25 our boys and girls rarely acquire the skills to earn their bread and they come out of the educational institutions more or less as they entered. Education is something different from the realities. But this is not the case with the tribals. In their case there is no difference between the reality and education and one learns through experiences. Unlike us tribal boys do not read of the Himalayan mountains or the oceans which they can not see through out their lives. They observe the

natural phenomena as the ripener of their crop, producer of their rain and yielder of their requirements-

Therefore from the very childhood all facets of life including the sexual desires are imbibed into the children. Among the young men and women of the civilized societies sexual perversions, deliberate prostitution, unnatural offences are increasing every day and sometimes inadequate sex knowledge is leading to frustration. Therefore eminent educationists are of opinion that sex education should form an integral part of adolescent education and in the U.S.A. it has been incorporated in the curriculum of studies.

But at the present juncture, the stationing of troops in the heart of the tribal areas, the opening of communications, and the expansion of the urban Industrial Civilization have led to the demolition of the dormitories. It is rather peculiar that in the suburbs of Ranchi one can hardly come across a dormitory house, while proceeding only a few miles from the town in any direction one can see this institution with all its ramifications. Cinemas have become very popular among the tribes living near the towns. Usually gay and pleasant, these people cannot refrain from enjoying leisure through Cinemas when their own dancing and singing have been cut-short.

## The Munda Gods

By

L. R. N. SHRIVASTAVA

The Mundas, it is generally believed, worship the malevolent spirits who are responsible for bringing evils in their life. They are said to be "animist" believers in supernatural beings as Tylor has defined it. In Munda religion an attitude of reverential fear is seen. To ward off the evils and calamities and to bring happiness the propitiation and conciliation of the gods of the pantheon are resorted to. The gods of the pantheon are immortal and impersonal and never have had been seen in any human or animal form. Prayers are said and sacrifices offered to establish harmonious relations with the gods.

If we penetrate deeply, we will find that there are several classes of gods with different status and function. We find Singbonga at the top of the list. He is the Supreme Deity who has created all the earthly beings. A marked degree of reverence is shown to him. Hatubongas or the Village-gods come next. Hatubongas are the gods residing in the village and looking after the activities of villagers regarding agricultural occupations and hunting expeditions. Next come the orabongas or the Household-gods. These Orabongas are none but the ancestors of the Mundas, who, after death, have occupied their seat in the Ading (a place in the corner of the room where the ancestor spirits are believed to reside). Occasions are there when sacrifices are offered and libation of Ili (rice-beer) is made to them. Nature-gods are believed to be another class of gods who are believed to reside on the various places in nature e.g. the river, the tree, the mountain

etc. and are in most cases, named according to their places of residence.

Bonga is a word very widely used by the Mundas. It seems to have been derived from the word 'Bano' or 'Banoa' which means 'no.' So the word Bonga may stand for that which is not (seen, heard or perceived). By this word such spirits, as endowed with super-human powers, may be conceived. This includes both benevolent and malevolent gods. Gods are named according to the place they reside or the duties they discharge. Malevolent spirits are, at times, named after the mischief they bring to the Munda life. They may change their name with the change of their profession, as for instance, Ikirbonga, Nasanbonga, and Tunduhankarbonga are one and the same god, bringing different evils. The world inhabited by the Mundas is called "ne-otedisum" while that occupied by the gods is called, "Paromdisum."

Singbonga is the Creator and Protector of this world. He has appointed all other bongas in different capacities to take care of the people. All the other bongas are directly answerable to Singbonga for their activities. It is believed in common parlance that Singbonga is the Sun-god. But the Mundas are not unanimous in identifying Singbonga with the sun. The nomenclature suggests that the daily rising and setting of the sun might have created a sense of reverence and awe in the minds of the Mundas and it might have been inferred that the Supreme Being would be as powerful as



the sun. Chandor (perhaps the corrupt form of the Sanskrit word Chandra), the moon, is said by a section of the people, to be the wife of Singbonga. Bradley Birt has also shared this opinion. In Asur Legend also it is mentioned that Singbonga has a wife and a child, the tending of which is in the hands of the Skylark. But among the Mundas no evidence regarding His wife or son is available. As He has created this universe He has to take care of it. He protects all living creatures from the lowest worms to the biggest animals. He is believed to be netural as He inflicts no harm to the people. But this is not to be confused with the fact that no sacrifice or offereing are given to Him. There is no question of reciprocity with Him. He is always propitiated especially at the time of crisis, epidemics and other calamities. White fowl or white goats are sacrificed in His name. Some Villagers believe that He takes His seat on a big banyan tree and drops a leaf in favour of every individual on which his fate is inscribed. During the offering of the sacrifices at festivals and other religious ceremonies we notice that three heaps of pearl-rice are placed before the Pahan the religious head of the village, and sacrifices of fowls or goats and libation of rice-beer are made to these heaps, which, perhaps represent the three classes of gods. Singbonga individually, is believed to accept no offerings though He is requested to accept all the offerings first on behalf of the gods and distribute them among the gods. Other classes of gods cannot accept the sacrifices offered to them unless Singbonga commands them to do so. Before all religious cermemonies and most of the festivals, the Pahan, or the person concerned utters long

and intricate phrases in His praise. He is the amalgamation of all the goods, is the divine king, and most powerful personality ever conceived in this world. The Deonras (the witchfinders) and the Matis cannot dare to neglect His propitiation before they begin divination. Singbonga has become a part and parcel of Munda life. He cannot remain detached from Him even for a moment. He is here, there, everywhere bestowing His fatherly blessings to his children.

Chandibonga may conveniently be placed in the group of the Hatubongas. It seems that the word has been directly borrowed from the Hindus where goddess Durga or Kali are identified with Chandi. Opinions clash in ascertaining the sex of this bonga. But Mahadeochandi, the other modality of Chandibonga is decidedly a male deity. Chandibonga is believed to dwell on the Sarna-the-sacred grove of the village, while others say it is the village fields where the bonga resides. This bonga is more or less, a malevolent and hence occupies no place in the ritual calendar of the village Pahan but is more or less a deity falling in the domain of the Sokha and the Mati.

Desaulibonga is still another bonga to be placed in the groups of the Hatubongas. He is also believed to reside on the Sarna. He is also a malevolent deity. When a Deonra finds in his divination that Desaulibonga is responsible for causing any disease he advises the family of the patient to offer sacrifices of fowl in the Sarna in the name of Desaulibonga. The head of the family if he is conversant with the pros and cons of the sacrificial formula, and if not the Pahan goes to the Sarna with all the family members of the patient. Fowl is beheaded there and drops of blood followed



by roasted fowl is offered to Desaulibonga. The head of the family or the Pahan, as the case may be, takes the first morsel and then the other members present there participate in the sacrificial meal. After they finish they return with the hope that as Desaulibonga has been offered sacrifices, the disease of the patient will be cured.

Orabongas are the second group of bongas. It is believed in the Munda Eschatology that after the death the Jiva (the life substance) of deceased goes to Singbonga and loses its identity and is transformed into another individual, while the personality of the dead hovers round the house until specific rites of Umbul Ader are not performed to make his entry possible into the world of the Orabongas. When he enters the world of the Orabongas he takes his seat in the Ading. As long as a Munda is living he is a man but after his death he becomes a bonga. Now special attention is paid to him. He is introduced into the world of the Orabongas. As there are no Shamans among the Mundas who can bring news from the world of the bongas, we are not in a position to state clearly what kind of life do the orabongas lead. But it is believed in common parlance that it is similar to the life led in this world. As these bongas are the ancestors they are not supposed to inflict any harm on their descendants. There are occasions when sacrifices are offered to them by the head of the family and not by the Pahan.

Ikirbonga is one of the most oft quoted bongas falling in the class of Nature-gods. He is supposed to reside in the river, stream or pool. It is believed that in days of yore Ikirbonga resided in the depths of water and protected people from drowning but now with the increasing influence of the wizard and witches he has turned to be a notorious deity who can be infuriated at the slightest provocation. He is at the beck and call of the

wizards and witches and they with his help inflict all sorts of harm on the people. He brings various kinds of evils in different modalities. Tunduhankarbonga and Nasanbonga are the different modalities of Ikirbonga. He is the source of all evils and may be aroused or appeased only with an offering of a fowl.

As Marang means Great, Marangbonga is a Great-god. He dwells on the mountain and on the hill-tops. He is noted for his sobriety and kindness. Long time of promises rarely to be fulfilled are given to him. When the period of promise expires it is renewed by another promise by placing an inverted pitcher in the garden or in the courtyard of the house.

Barambonga is believed to reside on the mountain and hill-tops, on the trees, in the forest in the fields and the like. He is the bestower of all sorts of disease to men and animals. When there is an outbreak of epidemic in the village, the Pahan takes the initiative and collects money from door to door and offers sacrifices to Barambonga. In case of an epidemic among the animals the villagers assemble at the Akhra and one of them takes out the wooden bell hanging from the neck of the animal and hangs it in his own neck. Then he runs towards the east and halts at the boundary of the village believing that the disease has taken shelter in the wooden bell and that is now it has been driven to another village. Then a sacrifice is offered to Barambonga and the epidemic is gone.

In the ultimate analysis, we note that there are gods-numerous and varied in the Munda pantheon. Each god has his different status to assume and different role to perform. And the mundas in their midst have been trying to lead a life-pure and simple, combating the evils of some and acknowledging the blessings of other gods.

## Life-way of the Juangs in Keonjhar

BY

AJIT RAY

### Introduction

In the following paper an attempt has been made to describe the life-way of Juangs of Keonjhar. The Juangs form one of the most important tribes in the pre-dravidian, central belt of Orissa. The cultural heritage of the Juang shows certain common elements which inspite of local variations, clearly indicate their historical relationship with the mundari speaking group of central India.

The Juangs are essentially a hillpeople and their home is in the high valleys of the hillranges, the slopes and spurs of the foot-hills and the narrow gorges of the river Baitarini. The Juang country is watered by streams and rivulets that flow off the slopes into the valleys below. It is an area of comparatively heavy rainfall ranging round 60" every year. The perennial streams exercise a profound influence on the life and movement of the people inhabiting these lands.

The tribe inhabits the central region of Orissa formed by the districts of Dhenkanal and Keonjhar ; they are most numerous in the latter, where they preserve their unique traditional customs till to-day. The warm and thinly populated valley inhabited by various castes forms one part of Keonjhar, while the surrounding hill-tracts are occupied by the Juangs and the Pauri Bhuiyas. Juangs from a large segment

of the tribal population in Keonjhar. They claim that they are the autochthones in Keonjhar and are the direct descendants of the first human beings created by God. They consider the village of Gonasiks (21' 30" lat. and 85' 37" E, Long.) as the place of their origin.

The geo-physical factors in the process of development of the Juang character must not be ignored, for they are of far-reaching importance. The natural diversity of the country has fostered a diversity in customs. The hilly character of the country and its ruggedness present a barrier to the easy social intercourse.

### Population.

From the census figures of the last sixty years, it seems that the Juang population has fluctuated rapidly, especially in recent decades. In order to determine the manner in which the specific biological elements that influence fertility have been, and are acting in the direction of its restriction, Government of Orissa have been carrying out a detailed study of the problem of biological growth and decay of this tribe. The census figures show that their population increased from 1891 to 1911 ; then there was a sudden fall in 1921 followed by period from 1921 to 1931 when the population grew again ; while there seems to have been sudden decrease between 1941 and 1951 as will be relevant from the following tables,

Table I

| Years | Population |
|-------|------------|
| 1951  | 12,559     |
| 1941  | 17,032     |
| 1931  | 15,024     |
| 1921  | 10,454     |
| 1911  | 12,823     |
| 1901  | 11,159     |
| 1891  | 9,173      |

Table II

| Period    | Variations: Increase (+) percentage |           |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
|           | Decrease (-)                        | %         |
| 1941-1951 | (-) 4473                            | (-) 26.26 |
| 1931-1941 | (+) 2008                            | (+) 13.36 |
| 1921-1931 | (+) 4570                            | (+) 43.61 |
| 1911-1921 | (-) 2369                            | (-) 18.49 |
| 1901-1911 | (+) 1664                            | (+) 14.91 |
| 1891-1901 | (+) 1986                            | (+) 21.65 |

### People and personality:

The Juangs as a whole are elusive and morose. They are shy and timid in the face of the strangers. Very few men and women seem to be unaffected by the general unfriendly atmosphere which surrounds them; particularly since the time when shifting cultivation has been restricted severely both by official and non-official agencies. In spite of this, many young people are very amiable, gay, cheerful and light-hearted when they are met alone. Before outsiders, they frequently change their attitude and relapse into sullen moodiness. Within the sphere of his own culture, the Juang observes accurately and acts rationally. But it is only when he is confronted by an entirely different atmosphere, that his cultural background does not any longer dictate the general line of his thinking. The Juang is simple minded and easily deceived or exploited. Crime is rare among these people.

They are honest simple and very innocent. They cut a poor figure beside the shrewd traders during the barter of goods and services. Though they live in the wild, they are a very in-offensive people, and even friendly people to those who are sympathetic towards them.

The predominating physical characteristics, from the observational point of view, are these. They are medium in stature with long-heads. The cheek bones are prominent and the nose is broad, with often concave depression at the root. The ridges over the eyebrows are moderate. The hair is black, coarse and wavy with a rich growth on the head, while it is scanty on the rest of the body. The skin colour varies from brown to light black. The shape of the face is oval or pentagonal, but square faces are also found. The eye slit is straight, but sometimes also oblique; the *epicanthic* fold is however absent. The body build is not so strong but well proportioned.

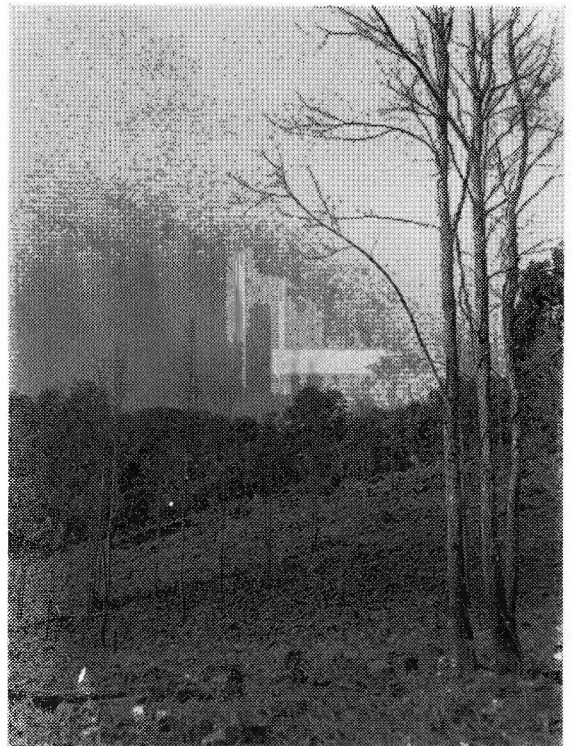
### Dress and ornament

The dress of the Juangs is of the simplest kind. Juang women's dress consists only of a Sari (Sāri Kāte) a small loin cloth which is woven by local weavers of the Pānā caste and bought from bazaars. Women wear saris, which they wrap several times round the hip, throwing one end over the left shoulder. Young girls generally see that the folds cover the breasts, but once a woman has had a child she frequently leaves her breasts uncovered, and it seems quite usual for a woman to work in the fields or in the hut with nothing but a cloth round the hips. Juang women wrap a very small piece of loin cloth, underneath the sari, as the saris they generally wear are very short and narrow. Juang men generally wear a piece of short loin cloth, but unmarried boys wear long loin cloths during dancing and other festivals. Boys and girls





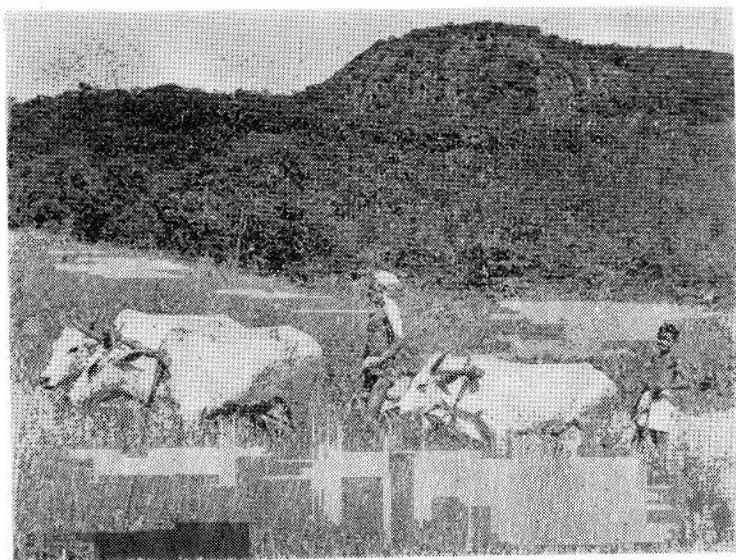
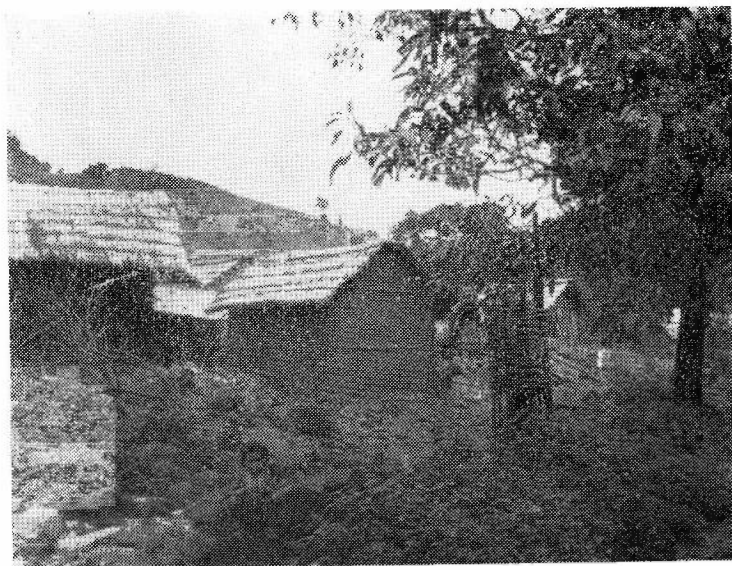
Landscape of Juang  
country.



Shifting cultivable Land.



Lands cape of a  
typical village.



Ploughing

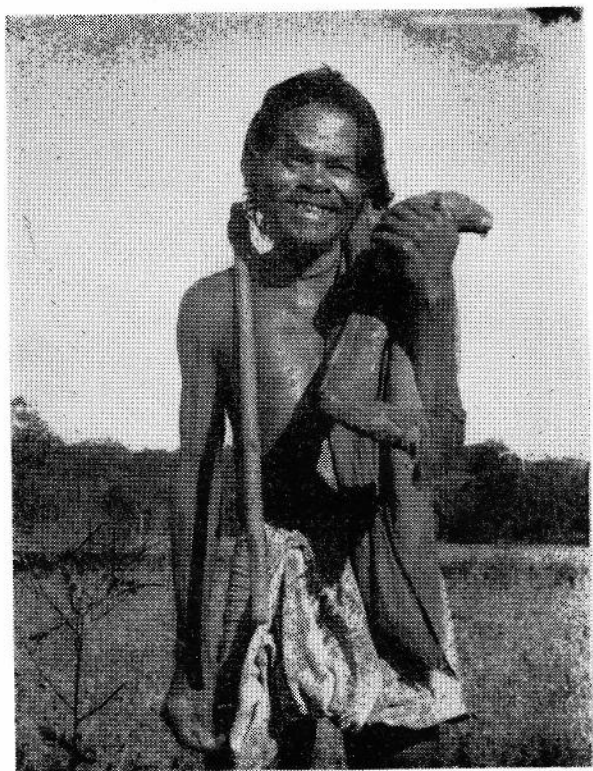
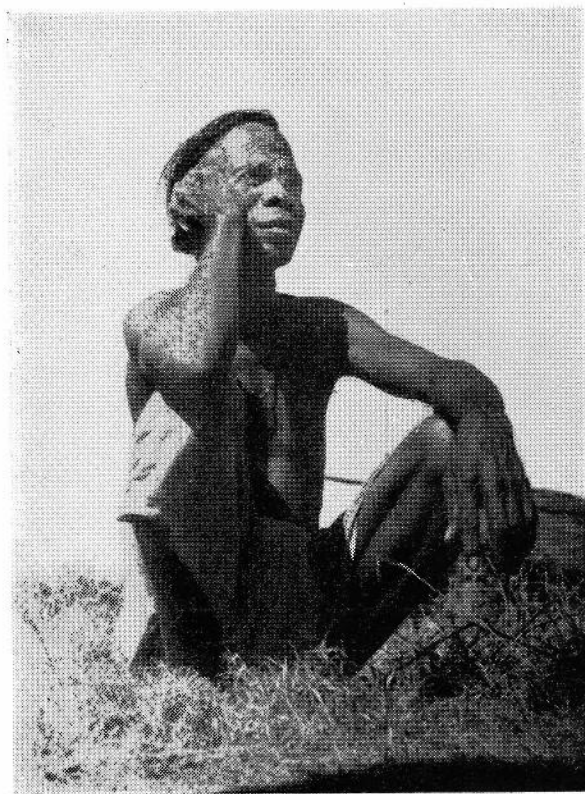


Cow-shed.



Bachelor's dormitory.

Guarding the field.



Off from the jungle.

upto the age of ten invariably wear a thin strip of cloth between the thighs. ✓

The custom of adorning the body with various ornaments is not uncommon among Juangs. Formerly the Juangs made necklaces (Kūnti) of earthen beads manufactured by themselves but to-day Juang women adorn themselves with multicoloured bead and brass ware necklaces which are purchased in the local bazaars. Young girls wear brass bangles (Thāda) on the arm, a number of brass bangles (Kharu) on the wrist, nose rings (Gūna), ear-rings Phirphirā etc.

### Village and huts:

The founding of a new village depends upon good water supply and suitability of cultivable land. Juangs shift their village sites from time to time when cultivable land becomes exhausted. The landscape of the Juang village is impressive and charming and has a character and distinction of its own. He prefers a landscape consisting of rolling downs, while here and there the ground rises higher in great masses of rocks. The Juangs choose the village site so skillfully that it merges in the landscape so as to be hardly visible from a short distance away. Juangs also try to give their homes the effect of concealment more inconspicuous by surrounding the village with thick cactus hedges, while the actual entrance to it is carefully concealed from the intruder.

There is no order in a Juang village. The huts climb up and down the hill-side in complete confusion and there is no arrangement of regular lanes and by-lanes. The huts face all directions according to convenience, and none of the huts is enclosed with fences, from which it appears that they do not encourage family exclusiveness and independence as among many tribes of

Chotanagpore. The *darbar* or village common house, is enclosed in the central portion of the village by lowly huts. The Juang village is democratic, it is very difficult to distinguish a rich man's house from one belonging to a poor man.

The hut of the Juangs was described by Dalton in 1866 in the following terms: 'The huts are amongst the smallest that human being ever deliberately constructed as dwellings.' Even to-day Dalton's observation seems to be true. The raw materials for the construction of the hut are gathered from the jungle. The form of the hut is rectangular, its breadth being about two-thirds of its length. There is only one entrance to the hut in the middle of the long wall. The roofs are low sloping bothways thatched with grass. The walls are made of posts or planks, plastered over with mud, both within and without. The plinth is often high and may be with or without a verandah in front. In many cases, two huts are joined together and the cow-shed, goat-shed etc., are also attached to the hut, but as a separate apartment. The hut is divided into three portions used for sleeping, cooking and stores. In the kitchen portion the oven is situated in one corner, and the Juangs believe that the ancestor spirits have their seat in that place. The store is a raised platform where paddy, rice, millets, maize, clothes and utensils are stored. The middle portion of the hut is also used for grinding, husking grain, clearing rice and millet and also for making mats.

With the transition to plough cultivation among them, domestic animals like cattle have recently gained in importance and have become virtually a necessity for the Juangs. Not the least important among the Juangs' domestic



animals is the fowl. In nearly all religious rites and ceremonies the sacrifice of chicken is indispensable and there is no deity to whom chickens are not acceptable. Though eggs are sometimes eaten, they are never offered to the gods. The Juang also keeps pigs and goats and they say that they prefer pork to any other meat. Pigs are not sacrificed, but goats are sometimes needed for that purpose.

### Land and cultivation

The Juangs are agricultural people, but their dependence on nature's wild produce is still very great; food gathering occupies a very prominent place in their economy.

No private ownership in forest and land suitable for shifting cultivation is recognised by the Juangs. Amicable settlement is the keynote of the distribution of cultivable land in Juang community. The village communities communally own tracts of land, the boundaries of which are usually marked by prominent trees. The members of the community who enjoy common ownership of the tract generally live in a common settlement. In some of the villages where wet cultivation is permanent, privately owned field exists side by side with shifting cultivation, and the individualistic trend seems to be on the increase with the spread of wet cultivation.

Besides ploughs, the main agricultural implements used by the Juangs are hoes, which is again of two types with or without an iron point. This is used for digging up roots and tubers.

The Juang life-way is inextricably bound up with shifting cultivation, which is carried out in a very crude manner. About the end of January when the undergrowth and creepers begin to wither and the jungle is dry and brittle, the Juangs select a hill-slope for cultivation, and start felling the trees, sparing only the big trees which are used as stalks for creepers like the beans etc.

Between February and March there is practically no rainfall in the Juang country, when the felled trees which have been cut down dry up. These are set on fire about second week of April. Then they deliberately kill the big trees which were left standing by heaping combustible materials round them. After the first firing, half burnt branches are collected in heaps and reduced to ashes which are raked and distributed over the soil. The preparation of the cultivable land begun in January is completed by the first week of May, but sowing has to wait until the first showers of the monsoon moisten the parched earth.

In the first year of cultivation, they sow oil-seeds and pulses while in the second year rice, and millets of various kinds are sown in the same land. Juangs cultivate a field according to their needs for one, two and three successive years, when the fertility begins to fail. Then they abandon the field and proceed to a new hills-lope.

The felling of the trees, is men's work while the brushwood is cleared by women. Both men, women and children work together in tidying up and burning the jungle.



Ornaments that adorn her.

On to the field.



Sardar of Kathua pirh.

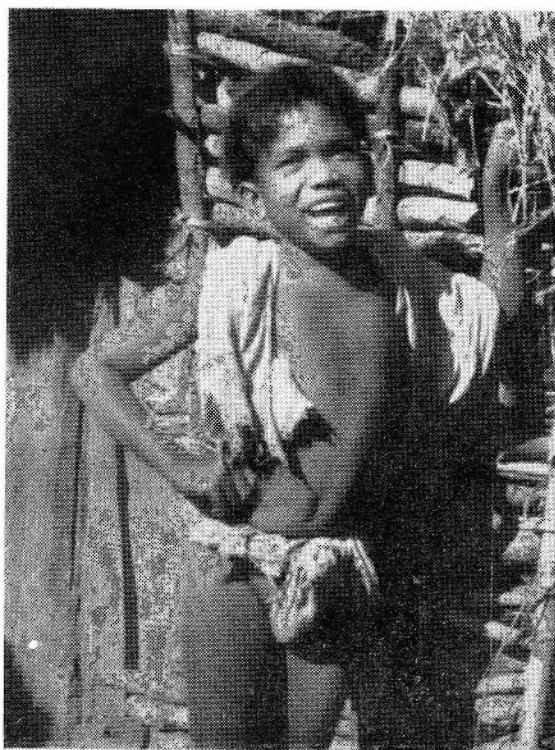


Goat-shed.



Young belle after day's toil.

A Juang boy.





A Juang Woman.



Women at leisure.

## EDUCATION

By

L. K. MOHAPATRA

### Old and New (in Siripur, near New Capital, Bhubaneswar)

It is instructive to recall the young days of Maheswar Behera about 60 years ago, when there was none in his village who could sign their name.

Past efforts: Hata Dehuri however informed me that 50 years ago there were 4 teachers for the village. Two of them were resident at Siripur. In those days only boys of both the hamlets were studying together. No girl was yet admitted to 3 R's. The teachers were 'Matibansha Abadhan' of the traditional caste of primary teachers. At that time there was no slate and pencil but palm-leaf and a scratcher pen. The Abadhans were beating the boys very often. Boys were often hiding.

About 40-35 years ago: Basu Sahara a teacher from Khurda side came and taught children of both hamlets. The place was usually the 'gadighar' of the village. Sulava Behera (50) and others of his generation were studying then. The teacher carried on the same traditions and was carrying on the school both in day and at night. About 30-35 years ago there was a night school in Siripur where Banchha Naik, Dadhi Dehuri, Bana Dehuri etc., studied from 'Mahanti' teachers from Barmunda village. Then about 15/16 years ago one Brahmin teacher from Bhubaneswar was kept at Uparsahi, 'Akhadaghar.' He was a leper. Talasahi people almost boycotted him. By this time many were going to Baramunda Day School.

Lakshmidhar, Hata's son (31) first read at Baramunda and then went to Bhubaneswar

for higher study. Nearly 14 years back, a Mahanti teacher from Jagmara was teaching 7 or 8 boys at Hata's place,

Also there was held Night School about 10 years ago. A teacher named Satyabadi Mahanti came from Baramunda to teach at night. Madhu Swain, Dukha Naik, Dhadia and Akrur were reading then.

Agnin about 7 years ago Talasahi people were considering to keep a teacher. But they could not succeed in the idea, as the 'Akhara' or opera affair occupied their attention.

The Present: The sevashram was started by the Government in 1950. For two months in the beginning the two teachers were fed by the villagers by raising subscription, just as they were feeding the old-time teachers. But in old days, they had to give him clothes and some pay, which however is not necessary now, thanks to the sevashram, observed Hata Dehuri. Now the school was at the door though he discounted the factor of distance in attending the school.

But, when I asked as to why some parents were unwilling to send their children to the school, Hata replied with a smile, I am not sure whether it was derisive, that only 'Murkha' (untutored) or (Blockheaded) fathers do not send their children—(apparently not understanding the benefits of a cheap education offered at the door).

To my surprise however he favoured girls' education. But this does not seem to be supported generally. At present besides, the

sevashram as the agency for spreading education there is a spontaneous organisation for Night School, Dukha Behera, son of Dama Behera, and Bilas Behera, son of Khatia Behera, are reading by themselves occasionally with the help of Bitabasa Behera, a student of the sevashram. I think it may be worthwhile to organise such spontaneous efforts to start literacy campaign among the working boys, who are too much busy in earning at day-time.

**Analysis of the Census data on education:** If we look at the chart on education appended herewith, find that in the third generation upwards or Gen.-3, there is not a single individual of either sex who can sign his or her name. Education of girls is not evident till the present generation. In the gen.-2, 40-60 years ago, we find 11 persons who could sign their names and they include also 6 persons who read below L.P. standard of the former days and could recite Puran even today. In the generation next to the present, we find the number of 'educated man was 19 including those who have forgotten what they had learnt. But the column 'forgotten' appears to be not comprehensive in either content or extent. It is however an appreciable increase, almost the double of the last generation. One man has read even above the L.P. standard.

**Sevashram;** Coming to the present generation we have 51 boys knowing how to sign their names or more and 12 girls in the similar position. It is heartening to note that 3 boys and at least 1 girl are found coming to the school who are at best 5 years old.

Now, out of 53 boys and 41 girls in the age-group of 6-15 at present, boys and girls standing on the rolls at the sevashram are :

| 1953-September: | Boys | Girls |
|-----------------|------|-------|
| Class I A       | 10   | 2     |
| Class I B       | 15   | 5     |
| Class II        | 8    | 3     |
| Class III       | 6    | 2     |

39      12 51 (including the above mentioned 3 boys and 1 girl below 6)

**1951-February:** There were 44 students including 9 girl from the earliest records available).

Let us consider the average number of pupils attending the school.

|             | <u>Total No.</u> | <u>Average</u> | <u>Percentage of average to the total.</u> |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 1951-March  | 44               | 33             | 75.%                                       |
| 1952-March  | 50               | 34             | 68.%                                       |
| 1953-March  | 57               | 37             | 65.%                                       |
| 1951-August | 42               | 39             | 92.%                                       |
| 1952-August | 42               | 31             | 73.%                                       |
| 1953-August | 51               | 35             | 68.%                                       |

So we see, though the total number of pupils has increased in the interval of two years, the average number of pupils attending the school has however progressively decreased. It seems, however that the initial enthusiasm and, may be coercion (from the side of teachers —I have reasons to suspect) had kept up the higher average attendance in the first stage. Although the consciousness of sending boys and girls has increased as indicated by the increase in total number of pupils, the inherent difficulties have, it seems, asserted themselves more and more.



It is also to be noted that during the rains there is comparatively smaller number of pupils attending the school.

|           | <u>Total No. of Pupils</u> | <u>Average</u> |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1953-May  | 55                         | 43             |
| 1953-June | 56                         | 39             |
| 1953-July | 48                         | 33             |
| So also   |                            |                |
| 1951-May  | 42                         | 41             |
| 1951-June | 42                         | 39             |
| 1951-July | 42                         | 39             |

As the figures for 1952 May-July are not available and hence out of consideration, we cannot be so sure about this aspect of our study.

As Shri Shrikanta Giri, the Sevak at Siripur Sevashram for about 1 year asserts, "It depends more on the capacity of the teacher to go to the village daily before two sittings of the school and to coax and threaten out the children of their homes." Though he opined that girls are as a rule more regular, it does not appear to be so always. In March, April last 16 were on the rolls while in May they came down to 12 only. But it is true that, education of the girls, in September 1951 they were 13, in 1951 July 10 and in August September 9, while after that they rose to 16 in 1953 March and April. Of course, they have again dwindled to 12 in September, 1953. The effects of the rainy season may be considered in this connection.

But as I have shown earlier some people are very enthusiastic and send their children (M. 3 and F. 1) even when they are about 5 years of age.

Some boys have been recorded to be hiding from the School for fear of the beating used to be given there formerly. I have also come to know that even now the practice is not discontinued.

When I pointed out to boys and girls of 6 or 7 not going to school, many Saharas have remarked, "What is the use of going to the school, when our children are going to sit there and gape? Better that they remain at home and keep the youngsters playing." It is, indeed, true that after about 6 months after the session has begun new slates have been provided to the boys especially in the class I.

But there is also a greater danger to the interests of the school. I have found Antarā, a student of class III and the chief executive (Pradhān Mantri) of the school absenting himself for 2 days for keeping cows and doing other aids for the home. So also Pitabāsa, a student of class III absented himself for watching the 'tailā' land in Bharatpur jungle. Girls of 12 and over invariably go to the jungle or tend livestock. Out of 41 girls in the age-group 6-15 only 11 go to school and 19 others sell fuel or tend livestock. This sort of economic encroachment on education is a very real danger to the school. It has been a very good practice to assign responsibilities to boys *e.g.* Executive for cleaning the paths and rooms of the school. But one does not know when a consciousness of personal cleanliness could be engendered in the pupils. It can not be thought apart from the cleanliness of the settlement, their homes and relatives.

The celebration of the Saraswati and Ganesh Puja at the sevashram has given the parents and the younger generation an opportunity to co-operate with the activities of the school. This year at least 3 youngmen have helped much in making the Ganesha Puja a success. About 40 men from the village were entertained. When the boys went in procession



with the image of Ganesha along the village path the women, men and children all gave hearty ovation. Conch shells were sounded with 'Hulahuli' sound. The youngmen of the village showed their acrobatic feats called 'Patakhela.' School boys also participated in it. Thus these celebrations are veritable media for bringing the village into intimate contact with the school. The boys at least have been given the chance to feel their rightful place in the village activities.

**Demand for Asharma School:—**When the Minister of Welfare attended a fair in last May, he was requested for converting the present Sevashram into an Ashram school (residential School of Upper Primary Stage) so that the poor Sahara boys could be provided with all their physical needs. This not only points to consciousness of the people for receiving education, it also reflects their mental alertness to take advantage of the facilities offered by the Government.

#### Learning of crafts and arts:—

(a) **Spinning**—The younger generation at the school are being taught how to spin. They are however never seen spinning at home. Nor there is a tradition of spinning among the Saharas.

(b) **Carpentry**—Though even in Maheswar Behera's days, say about 60-70 years ago, Saharas were themselves making the handle for their iron digger-blade or for bill-hook and axe or making the rafters or ridge-poles, a man could pick up the craft after some observation and practice.

But elaborate carpentry as Hota Dehuri now does, making benches, tables, chairs, almirahs and cart wheels, was out of the picture, even about 30 years ago. Hota Dehuri learnt the craft from Bidia Nahak of Deulipatna for 4/5 months and then emulated others. His son Lakshidhar has also learnt a good deal from his father though he cannot as yet make cart wheels.

(c) **Masonry and plastering**—Lokanath Naik of Uparsahi has travelled upto Assam. He had observed the work there. He had the opportunity to learn it directly when Gopi Behera built his own house in stone and plaster and engaged a Mistri. Lokanath has built his house in stone plinth and cemented the floor by himself. He has also plastered the walls.

(d) **Gymnastics**—About 30 years ago, one Musalman had taught 'Patakhela' to them. One Sahara of Siripur—now dead, was also training boys.

At present a Kumbhar (potter-caste) man trains the boys in 'patakhela.'

## The Santals and their astronomical ideas

by

BIMBADHAR PATNAIK

The number of persons speaking Santali as mother-tongue in the State of Orissa at the time of the Census operations in 1951 was 339,979 in the midst of a population of 14,645,946, constituting 2 P.C. of the population of the State. It may be noted here that the Muslims in this State number only 176,338. But 246,523, that is, 70 P.C. of the Santali speakers are concentrated in the Mayurbhanj district where they form 23 P.C. of the population. The Scheduled tribes as a whole number 504,679 in Mayurbhanj constituting 49 P.C. in the population of 1,028,825 of the district.

It should not be supposed that all these men are animists. At the Census of 1951, 99 P.C. of the population of Mayurbhanj returned themselves as Hindus.

The Santali-Speakers are the most numerous tribe in this State. Arranged next in order of importance from the point of view of numbers come the speakers of Kondh (280,316), kui (206,509), Savara (191,401) and Ho (181,598).

The importance of the Santals has another aspect. In the adjoining State of Bihar there are 1,720,529 Santali-Speakers, of whom 150,684 live in the Singbhum district, particularly in its Dhalbhum Subdivision (101,774) lying to the north of Mayurbhanj.

The early history of the tribe remains still to be explored. It is, however, generally accepted that they originally came from the east,

They advanced even beyond Benares but they turned back again to the east. The Chotanagpur plateau had become their strong hold by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The district of Santal parganas which bears their name was their later habitat, Hazaribag, Palamau and Singbhum were their original settlements. They have, however, spread far to the north, east and South, being found in large numbers in the districts of Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Bogra and Malda in Bengal and even the Cuttack district in Orissa.

What has been said above will make it clear how important it is that we should have a clear idea of the traditions, tribal organisation, religious beliefs, social customs and other characteristics of our Santal brethren. The attitude of mind to be brought to the subject should be purely academic and shorn of any complex, for, as we have seen above, the Santals have become Hindus for all practical purposes and Hinduism in its lowest base is hardly distinguishable from tribal manners and customs.

An attempt is made here to describe the astrological ideas prevalent among the Santals. To them, the Sun the Moon and the Stars are animate beings. The Stars are the Children of the Sun, the male and the Moon, the female. When the Stars clear their entrails the excrements are seen as shooting-Stars and obviously a comet is a tail-star. The rectangle of the plough formed by four stars in the constellation of the Great Bear is known as *budhi*

### The Akhara and incentives for Education.

For centuries the Siripur Sahara have come into contact with their Hindu neighbour in all directions. They have tried to adopt Hindu ideas, beliefs and practices, in religion, festival as also in a popular organisation of the village youth and some elders among the Hindu. The Sahara have tried to organise Akhara among them in Siripur for last 30 years or so. Before that, Keertan parties were organised in Siripur for some years. All these activities and especially Opera dialogues and music require some education i.e., mainly literacy. Also reading

Puran (or Hindu scriptures or mythology of rituals) is considered a gift at present and young men and elders who can read Puran or cite Puran anecdotes are given some social recognition. It is, therefore, highly probable that organisation of opera troupe supplied the main impetus, and tendency to show off achievements in this field as in others for gaining prestige among the Hindu neighbours and the Sahara brethren of the locality supplied the main incentive for great strides in education in the last 50 years or so.

### Distribution of Education by Generation and Sex

| Generation | Age-Group |        | Beginning and signing | Slight | Upto L.P. can read Puran | Above L.P. | For-gotten |
|------------|-----------|--------|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| 0          | 5-20      | Male   | 20                    | 18     | 13                       | 0          | 0          |
|            |           | Female | 5                     | 2      | 5                        | 0          | 0          |
| 1          | 20-40     | Male   | 5                     | 5      | 2                        | 1          | 6          |
|            |           | Female | 0                     | 0      | 0                        | 0          | 0          |
| 2          | 40-50     | Male   | 3                     | 2      | 6                        | 0          | 0          |
|            |           | Female | 0                     | 0      | 0                        | 0          | 0          |
| 3          | 60        | Male   | 0                     | 0      | 0                        | 0          | 0          |
|            |           | Female | 0                     | 0      | 0                        | 0          | 0          |