

from the spiritual bhadrat or brotherhood, makes them most unhappy and particularly jealous of a child which appears to be well-fed and cared for. It is therefore dangerous for this child to enter their padd as they are apt to cause it to be possessed. If ever this happens they can only be driven out by a bhalat. Should there be a suspected case of possession, or should a child be attacked with convulsions, all the children in the vicinity are given old cloths to wear and their hair is left uncoiled and untidy, children remaining at home being immune. Sometimes, when driving out a chural the bhalat beats himself on the back with a chante. This is an iron ring about three inches in diameter, from which are hung two chains on the ends of which are thirty-six pieces of sharpened iron phala. The whole weighs two and a half seers. More often than not the back of the bhalat is not cut. He also cuts his tongue and spitting the blood into some liquor, drinks the lot.

Incest.--Mention has been already made of the severity with which incest is treated by the Bhantus. The commission of incest involves pa2. Should any member of a particular got be found guilty of incest in his own got, the whole got is debarred intercourse with the rest of the clan until the parties have been restored. In addition to a fine the culprits undergo a purification ceremony. Part of the fine is used in buying materials for a feast, which as a rule no adults but children alone attend. The culprits are kept apart from other members of the tribe in the charge of one of the Panchayat and must fast for twelve hours. The next morning the man and woman bathe and the Panch give them two pieces of khaddar. The man wears one as a dhoti and the woman the other in sari fashion. In front of the assembled tribe, the pair walk three times around a fire of kundi, two men (usually of the Mahes got) throwing the same burning kundis at them. These however cause no serious damage. Wine and the blood of either a goat or a pig is also sprinkled over them. The hair of the woman and the moustache of the man together with the eyebrows are shaved off and hung up in the village as a warning to others.

Religion.--The Shantu religion is a form of animism inter-mixed with ancestor worship. In a sense they are Devil worshippers and many of them consider themselves low-caste Hindus, but they neither visit Hindu temples nor use Brahmins in any ceremony.

The Bhantus believe that after death the spirits of the departed meet again as Shantu communities in the spirit world and that the spirit can only enter such communities after the prescribed number of feasts have been given to the tribe by the living members of the family. Until the whole of these feasts have been given, the spirit is said to be bhandha and is regarded as an outcast in the spirit world. Poor families often neglect to provide or else delay the provision of these feasts, so the spirit chafes at the delay and worries the family by causing some member to fall sick.

When any member of the tribe dies in peculiar circumstances such as in jail and the body is burnt by strangers, as soon as is possible an effigy is made of the deceased by his relations. This they proceed to bury or burn with all the customary usual incenses of death. In time of epidemics it is often