

impossible to deal with the dead according to custom, so it is permissible to get rid of the bodies as convenient and to perform the customary rites only when able to do so. The putli effigy may be made of old or new cloth or even of an old quilt. It is merely roughly shaped by being partly rolled at both ends. One roll makes the arms and the head, the other the legs, while the middle portion is gathered together to make the trunk. Occasionally a shirt and pants are stuffed with straw and serve the putli.

Ancestor worship plays a considerable part in tribal life. The spirits of the ancestors are supposed to be familiar with the doings of individual members of the tribe and in fact are regarded as a species of "guardian" spirit. Ancestors of three or four generations are known as Purkha or Pir Purkha while those of older generations are known as Devata.

Should there be a case of an individual committing an offence against tribal morality, the community show their displeasure by outcasting the offender from that family. These vent their displeasure on the living members of the family by causing some member to fall sick. Whenever a Bhandu falls ill, the question arises as to the cause. Certain members of the tribe are known as bhalats or mediums who profess to receive communications from the spirits, and the sick invariably seek their advice.

After squatting on the ground, the bhalat fills his huqqa and enquires as to the symptoms. When these have been described he sits smoking a while, then putting aside his pipe he commences the peculiar oscillations which appear necessary for him to get in communication with the spirits. The practice varies a little with individuals but it may generally be described as a rhythmical shaking of the head accompanied by forceful ejaculations of "Hu" "Hai" which gradually work up to a necessary frenzy. After a little while the sick one who is in front of the bhalat with clasped hands will say to him, "Ai Maharaj, main ne kya kasur kiya ki mih ko satata hai" "Oh Maharaj, what is my fault that you are troubling me?" Bhandus are not very clear whom they address, although they use a term which to them indicates God, they address themselves to the spirit of the departed but first take the God. The bhalat then replies in somewhat the following manner: "Main devta hun tu' ne hamare pula qabul kiye aur abhi dekhin kiya" "I am a godling. You promised to perform sacrifice for me, and you have not yet done so", to which the sick one replies "Main fulana din zarur kadunza" "I will certainly perform it on such and such a date" and receives in return that "Ab main tuihe chhor deta hun, meghe ainde khulna". When the message has been delivered, the bhalat abruptly and the bhalat takes to the huqqa. He does not receive any payment for his services but when the pula is celebrated are ascribed for a person taking ill, chief among them the failure to perform the yearly pula to Nagarajot or to a Pula to Parvati Devi as thanks giving for the safe birth of a child. The bhalat however is supposed always to trace the cause of sickness.