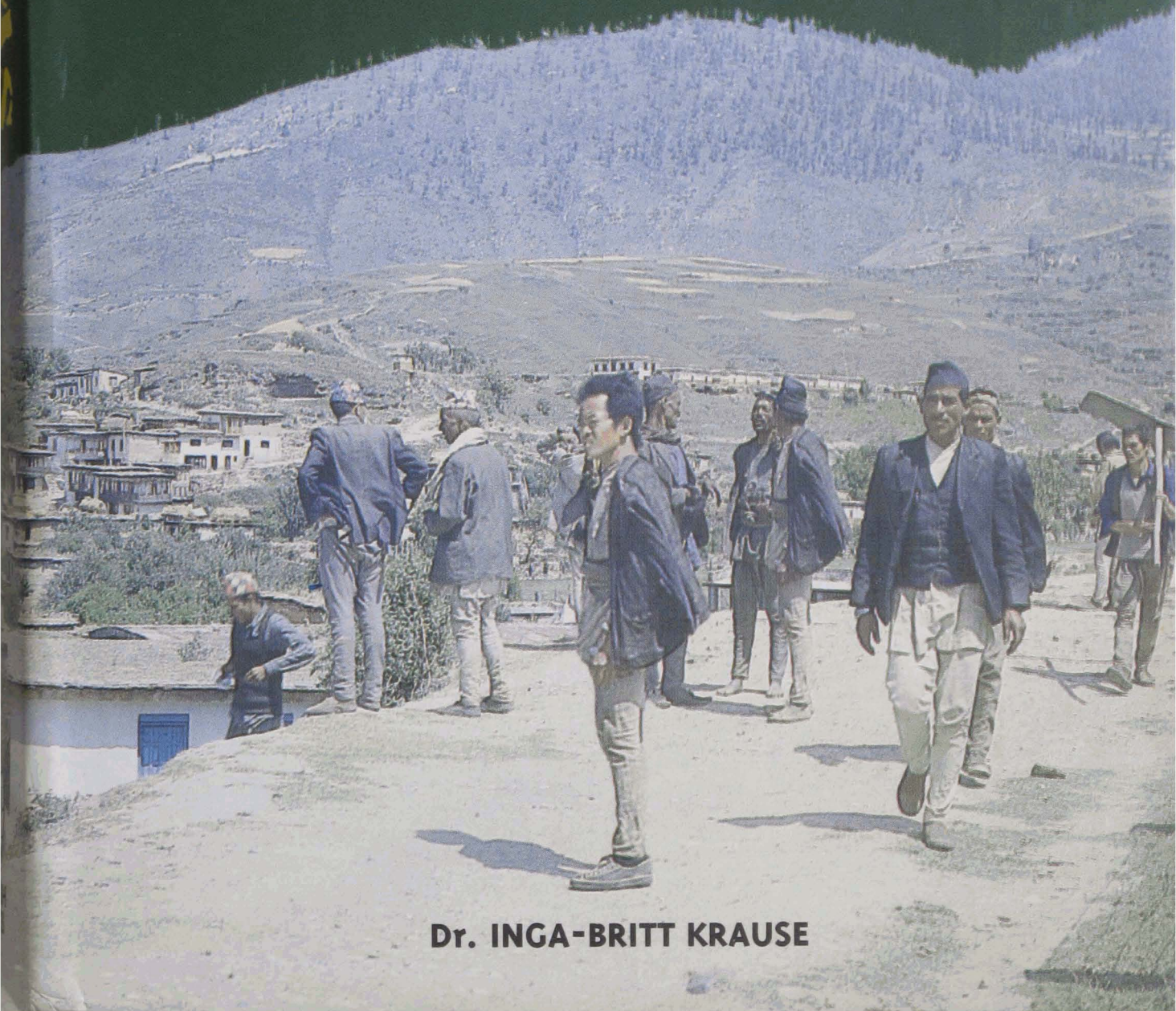


THE SHAHAS OF WEST NEPAL

POLITICAL AUTONOMY AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE
IN FORMER NEPALESE COMMUNITY

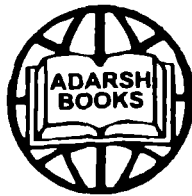


Dr. INGA-BRITT KRAUSE

THE SHAHAS OF WEST NEPAL

**POLITICAL AUTONOMY AND
ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE IN
FORMER NEPALESE COMMUNITY**

INGA-BRITT KRAUSE



**ADARSH
BOOKS**

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Political Autonomy and Economic
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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of this century Rārā village was inhabited by three castes: Shah Thakuris, Chetris and Doms. These castes were ranked and the Thakuris, as descendants of the Kalyal kings who used to rule the area before the unification of Nepal, were the tax-collectors of several villages in the area. They received tribute and labour from other castes. Since then the economic position of the Thakuris vis-à-vis the Chetris has declined and they have also experienced a loss of status in the eyes of other Thakuris. While formerly hypergamous marriages with prestigious Thakuris from elsewhere were common, nowadays the Shahs practice exchange marriages with Thakuris who used to be their wifegivers only. An analysis of the economic relationships and the kinship system of Thakuris and Chetris discloses an explanation of these changes.

At Rārā the notion that some work is polluting is extended to include agricultural work generally. The Shahs do not plough and must of necessity engage in extra-household relations of production as takers of labour. In the past they also recruited labour by virtue of their political position. Extra-household labour can also be recruited through usury and an analysis of extra-household economic relations reveals the existence of a process of differentiation between households. Caste status and political superiority are thus seen to result in

and to be sustained by differences in economic ability and it is argued that the decline of Thakuris' economic ability is a result of having lost command over the labour of others.

This decline is reflected in Thakuri marriage patterns. However, generally the kinship ideology has not changed, but has always allowed for differences in practice and emphasis. The differences between Thakuris and Chetris in marriage preference and practices, in ideas about joint living, in certain terminological distinctions and in the way they consider the relationship between cross-sex siblings are related to their different caste status. Caste status, on the other hand, is shown to be related to degree of material independence and command over labour.

INGA-BRITT KRAUSE

PREFACE

I chose to do fieldwork in Nepal for two reasons. Firstly I had, when I began work as a graduate student, a growing interest in the way inequality is generated in different social settings. This interest pointed me towards the Indian subcontinent and societies organised on the basis of caste. India itself, however, seemed to be too influenced by colonisation to provide a field for the study of the primal processes in which I was interested. Secondly, compared with India, there were at that time few in-depth studies of the economy, caste relationships and kinship organisation of Nepalese peasants. It, therefore, suited me well when Professor Fürer-Haimendorf suggested that I might undertake a study of high castes in Tibrikot, a relatively isolated area of north-west Nepal.

I set out for Nepal in June 1976, and planned to head for Tibrikot as soon as possible. However, monsoon and various bureaucratic changes delayed me and I did not manage to get to Tibrikot village until the end of October that year. After a four-week stay I returned to Kathmandu, only to discover that my official permits had been issued by mistake and that Tibrikot village was, in fact, inside an area restricted to foreigners.

With little time and money to spare I then had to find another area in which to conduct my research,

and decided on Rārā village. With its high status Thakuris, twice-born Chetris and untouchables, its remote situation, and manageable size this village suited my purposes well. I arrived there in January 1977 and spent the rest of that year there. When I left at the end of December, I felt that I had, after all, been fortunate to have experienced living in a place of such beauty and to have gained some insight into the life of people so different from myself. Except for a brief visit to Kathmandu in April, I spent most of this time at Rārā, but I also visited for shorter periods the villages at lower altitudes, where the Rārāls have land.

At Rārā I lived in a high caste house and although this did not prevent me from intensive work with other twice-born castes of lower status, it did make detailed work with untouchables difficult. Further, the small population of Brahmins in the area surrounding Rārā meant that my contacts with this caste too were limited. I endeavoured to acquire knowledge about all aspects of the personal relationships of the people who lived at Rārā. This meant that I did not limit my study to Rārā village itself, but also that I did not have time to collect much material about a wider area. I therefore do not claim that my data are valid for any other locality. However, I do believe that an analysis of all aspects of the relationships between particular individuals is useful and necessary, and this is what I have attempted to do.

I have used no pseudonyms. Firstly, I feel that I have said nothing about the village or the people which would incriminate them in the eyes of others.

Secondly, since most of the villagers were resettled in the Tarai at the end of 1978, I feel—and I think that they share this feeling—that their way of life at Rārā should be duly acknowledged.

I have used the conventional shorthand for kinship relationships. Thus, B = brother; Z = sister; D = daughter; F = father; M = mother; H = husband; W = wife; S = son; E = elder; Y = younger. All standard Nepali terms have been transliterated according to the system used by Turner (1931) and where dialect terms are used I have noted this and transliterated these myself according to this system.

Many people have helped during the research. Thus, without the hospitality, cooperation and patience of the people of Rārā and Chapru this study could not have been made. Many of them, who made specific efforts to help me, have taught me more than I realised at the time. Special thanks are due to Padan Bahadur Shah and Maha Laxmi Shah who provided living quarters for me and my husband and shared the ups and downs of domestic life with us. I am also grateful to Bhim Prasad Shrestha and his family for their hospitality during our stays in Jumla and to Bijaya Kattel for introducing us to Rārā National Park.

In Kathmandu, Kamala and Ambilka Joshi, Mr. and Mrs. Rishikesh Shah, Carolyn Lux and Alan Eastham provided constant support, encouragement and friendship, for which I feel especially thankful. I would also like to acknowledge Mr. J.M. Adhikari, Rector of Tribhuvan University, who facilitated the issue of a research permit.

I am also indebted to Maurice Bloch for inspiring my first interest in inequality and property relations, to Professor Fürer-Haimendorf for directing me towards a fascinating geographical area, and to Dr. D.J. Matthews for teaching me Nepali. My greatest thanks and appreciation, however, are due to my supervisor, Jonathan P. Parry, for his careful and patient guidance and for the seriousness with which he has always treated both my ideas and my problems.

Finally, I am grateful to C.J. Fuller for permission to refer to unpublished material, to Uder Bir Gurung for translating record material, to Jan Relf for typing the manuscript, and to my husband, Geoff, who helped me in many ways.

The research was supported financially by the Esperanza Trust, the Central Research Fund of the University of London, the Carlsberg Foundation and the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies.

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

In the text, RRS refers to Regmi Research Series, and NLTS refers to Nepal Law Translation Series.

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PART I

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of Rārā, a Hindu village in north-western Nepal. In particular it is a study of the economic relationships and the kinship ideology of two castes—the Thakuris and the Chetris—who constitute 92 per cent of the population of the village. The Thakuris are considered to be descendants of former local rulers, whereas Chetris are, and also used to be, cultivators. I compare the kinship ideas and practices of these two castes with studies carried out elsewhere (Berreman 1963, Mayer 1960, Parry 1979, Beck 1972, Madam 1965, Vatuk 1969, 1972, 1975). However, a similar comparison of the economic material with material from elsewhere is more difficult. Anthropological studies of economic relations have been carried out in India and Nepal (MacFarlane 1976, Caplan 1972, Breman 1974, Mencher 1978, Epstein 1962, Bailey 1957) but the area around Rārā is different from those concentrated on in these studies. Rārā has been relatively isolated until the establishment of the Rārā National Park in 1973 and in 1977, the year in which fieldwork was carried out, wage-labour and the growing of cashcrops had not developed in the area. Further, taxes have been paid

in cash since long before the unification of the present state of Nepal at the end of the 18th century, and the sale of other means of production for cash dates back at least as far. I shall show the significance of these circumstances for the ownership of property and the nature of the economy generally.

The kinship analysis is intended as an addition to the wealth of anthropological material from this area as well as from India and in this I have particularly been influenced by the work of Inden and Nicholas (1977), Schneider (1968) and Carter (1974). The economic analysis, on the other hand, and particularly the analysis of the relationship between kinship and economic spheres in a caste society, breaks new ground. Thus, I show how not only one but two systems of hierarchical relations exist at Rārā. One of these is the caste hierarchy, the other is the economic differentiation which exists between households. Inequality is generated in both these systems, and, despite the differences between economic and caste inequality, the two also coincide, for in both the giving and taking of labour is of central importance. Further, I show how the political position of the local rulers has changed as a result of their increasing inability to command the labour of others and that such changes have had implications for their economic relations with other castes on the one hand, and for their kinship relations with other Thakuris, on the other.

Labour is important in the economy in three ways. Firstly, the land/labour ratio of households is crucial for the independent reproduction of these units of production, and to show this I refer to the ideas developed by Chayanov (1966). Secondly, the

giving and taking of labour is a central aspect in extra-household relations of production and an analysis of these relationships reveals the importance of usury as a way of controlling labour. Here I refer to ideas put forward by Lenin (1967), but I also show that the approaches of Lenin and Chayanov do not exclude each other. Finally, the ownership and control over land implies the ability to control and command the labour of others. Thus, rather than being the ultimate landlord, the king is more accurately described as someone who is able to command some of the labour of all his subjects. In line with this I show how at Rārā the ownership of land comprises many different rights, including the individual rights of the cultivator. Here I have been influenced by the work of Habib (1963) and Neale (1962).

The command of the labour of others also plays a role in the caste hierarchy. Thus by virtue of his caste position the king or the ordinary house-holder relies on the labour of others to perform certain tasks which for him are polluting or inappropriate. At Rārā differences between castes are conceived in terms of what work they should or should not do, and the Thakuris distinguish themselves not only from Chetris and untouchables, but also from other Thakuris in the area by being prohibited from ploughing. This prohibition necessarily means that the Rārā Thakuris must engage in extra-household relations of production as the receivers of labour, and the process of economic differentiation does not operate in the same manner for them as it does for the Chetris.

This has implications for the relationship between king and brahmin at the conceptual level.

There are only a few brahmins in the area, and those who officiate in the lifecycle rituals of Thakuris and Chetris are sent for especially, usually a couple of days before the ritual is to take place. It may be argued that this absence of Brahmins has influenced the analysis so that the aspects studied are those of Kshatriyas and worldly life rather than those of Brahmins and ritual matters. While I do accept such comments, I also hope it will be clear that for the Thakuris in particular, but also for the Chetris, concern with purity and pollution is central to their caste and political position.

On the whole, Thakuris and Chetris share a common kinship ideology, but the way this kinship ideology is interpreted in practice varies for the two castes. Thus while both castes are divided into patrilineages of varying depth and these patrilineages again are divided into families or *pariwar*, there are certain differences between the Thakuris and Chetris in their marriage practices and ideas about the family. Thakuris are able to trace descent back as far as seven generations in some cases, and for them those descended from a common patrilineal ancestor constitute the exogamous unit. Chetris, on the other hand, are rarely able to mention the name of an ancestor more than three generations removed and for them the lineage named after a certain locality constitutes the unit of exogamy. Further, while Thakuris are divided into those who are Shah and who do not plough or work for others, and those who are Shahi, who plough and are considered inferior and while this division cuts across clans, the Chetris consider subcastes or lineages (*thar*) to be ranked,

although no hierarchy can be agreed upon by everyone. Finally, while Chetris consider the nuclear family acceptable and allow sons to partition from their fathers and brothers once they have married and have children, Thakuris emphasize jointness.

Marriage is generally isogamous, incorporating certain hypergamous tendencies such as the practice of *kanyā dān*, the gift of a virgin. Both isogamous and hypergamous tendencies are also expressed in the kinship terminology. Indeed, with respect to marriage and kinship terminology Thakuris and Chetris incorporate aspects of both the so-called Dravidian and the north Indian kinship systems. However, there are also differences between the two castes in the ideas about whom you should or should not marry, in actual marriage practices, in the relationship between affines and in the emphasis on the consanguinal and affinal aspects of the relationship between cross-sex siblings. Analysing all these differences I conclude that, despite the general idea of isogamy, Thakuris emphasize inequality between wifegivers and wifetakers. Indeed, the Thakuri genealogies reveal a regular practice of hypergamy in the past when their political superiority was solidly established. Thus, rather than adding fuel to the debate about the opposition between north Indian and Dravidian kinship systems, the data from Rārā points to the importance of local caste distinctions in the kinship ideas.

The study is divided into three parts. In Part One I describe the village, its setting and the administrative structures which affect it nowadays. I also provide a historical perspective on the position

of both Chetris and Thakuris in the area and question the theory that Thakuris are descendants of Rajputs who came to Nepal after the Moghul invasions of India.

Part Two concentrates on the economy, the division of labour and the relations of production. Chapter 4 considers households and their landholdings, and I conclude there that land is not a good indication of the economic position of households. Rather, it is the land/labour ratio of households which is important when considering the wealth and economic potential of such units. Thus Chapter 4 also considers the size and composition of households and a relationship between the Thakuri emphasis on inheritance by collaterals and their emphasis on jointness is established. Chapter 5 describes the economy, the agricultural cycle and the process of production and the economic relations between households of different castes are also analysed. In this chapter, the individualised nature of the economy is established and in Chapter 6 this aspect is further discussed. Here the extent of monetarisation of the economy of Rāṛā and Karnali generally is analysed, and this, together with the individualised nature of agricultural production and individual rights to land, is seen as a basis for the existence of usury and usurer's capital. Finally, the role of the state as the only landowner is questioned. On the basis of the analysis so far, Chapter 7 constructs a process of economic differentiation and it is shown how the ability to command extra-household labour is central to this process. The caste hierarchy is also examined from this point of view, and the superior position of the Thakuris at Rāṛā is shown to have been due to their

political and caste status as well as their former ability to command labour extensively.

Part Three deals with the kinship ideology of Chetris and Thakuris. Thus Chapter 8 explains the internal structure of caste and the differences between Chetris and Thakuris in this respect. Here, too, an analysis of *kuldevatā* worship is made, and the *kuldevatā* is seen as a link between patriline and the property owned by their members. Chapter 9 analyses the kinship terminology and it is argued that neither hypergamy nor cross-cousin marriage is directly “reflected” in the way people classify each other. Chapter 10 analyses ideas about marriage and the strategies of Chetris and Thakuris. Finally, Chapter 11 considers concepts of kinship and establishes the segmentary nature of these concepts. It is this segmentary nature of concepts of kinship and in particular, the duality in the relationship between cross-sex siblings and their children which permits me to argue that a kinship ideology is not one thing, but incorporates different aspects, thus allowing for different emphasis in different contexts.

Chapter 2

THE SETTING

1. GEOGRAPHY

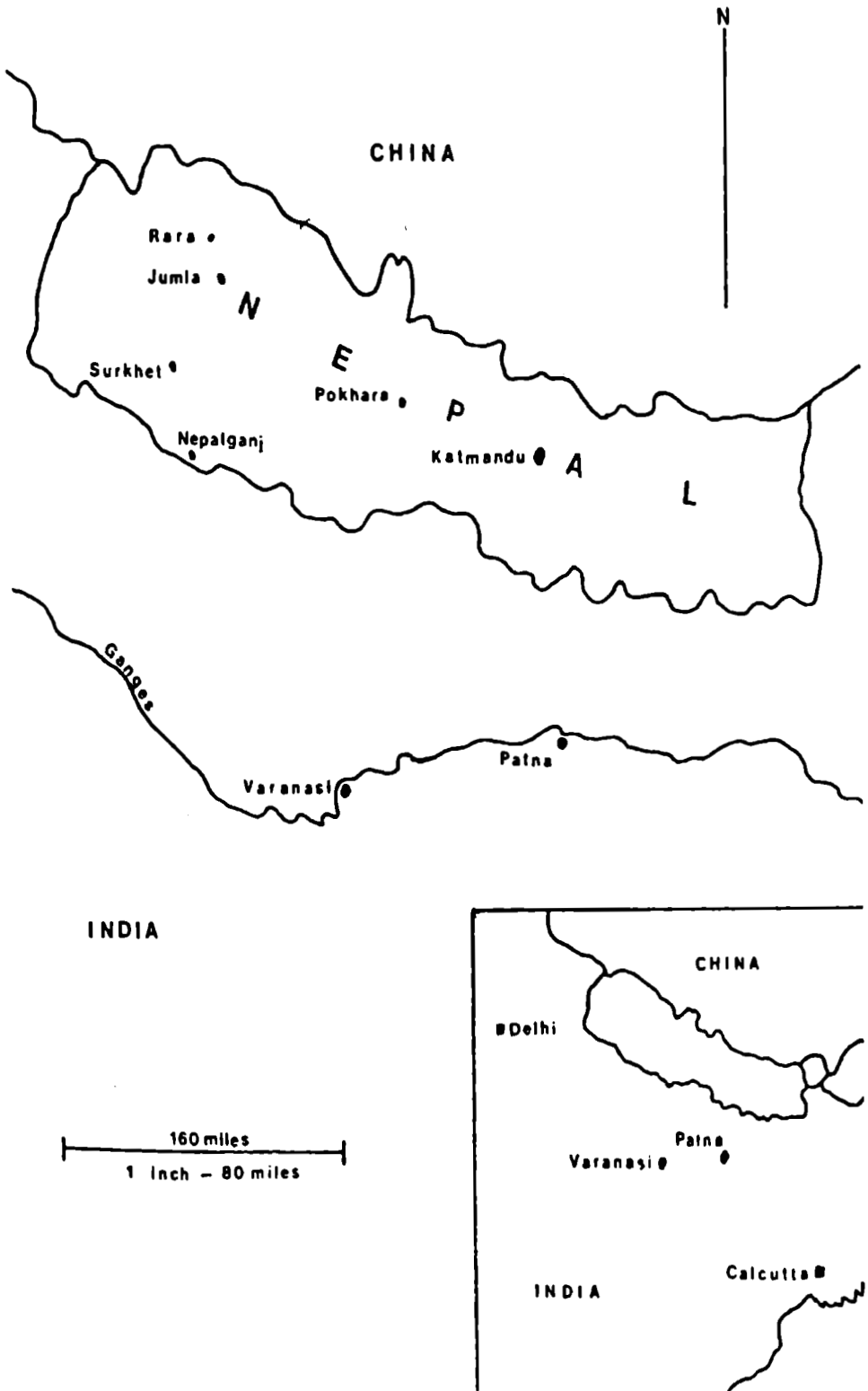
Rārā village lies at the northern shore of Lake Rārā¹ which is located in north western Nepal about 30 miles from the Chinese border at an elevation of 9,800 feet (map 1). The lake stretches over an area of almost four square miles (Bolton 1976) and is situated in a deep basin, the rims of which are covered with coniferous forests and pastures. To the north, where Rārā village and the village of Chapru are situated, the rim of the basin is mostly 1,500 feet above the lake and falls steeply down to the Mugu Karnali river valley. The eastern rim is lower, in places less than 200 feet above the lake and drops steeply about 3,500 feet on the eastern side to the Gum Gad, a tributary of the Mugu Karnali. To the south, the rim of the basin is constituted by the Chuchamara ridge reaching an elevation of about 13,000 feet. The slopes are here steep and densely forested, giving way to a belt of lush pastures at the lakeside. Finally, at the western end of the lake a narrow gorge provides a course for the Nisa Khola which is the outflow of the lake. The impression of the area surrounding Rārā village is that of being on

an elevated plateau surrounded by ridges beyond which the hillsides fall steeply down as much as 3-4,000 feet to the surrounding river valleys.

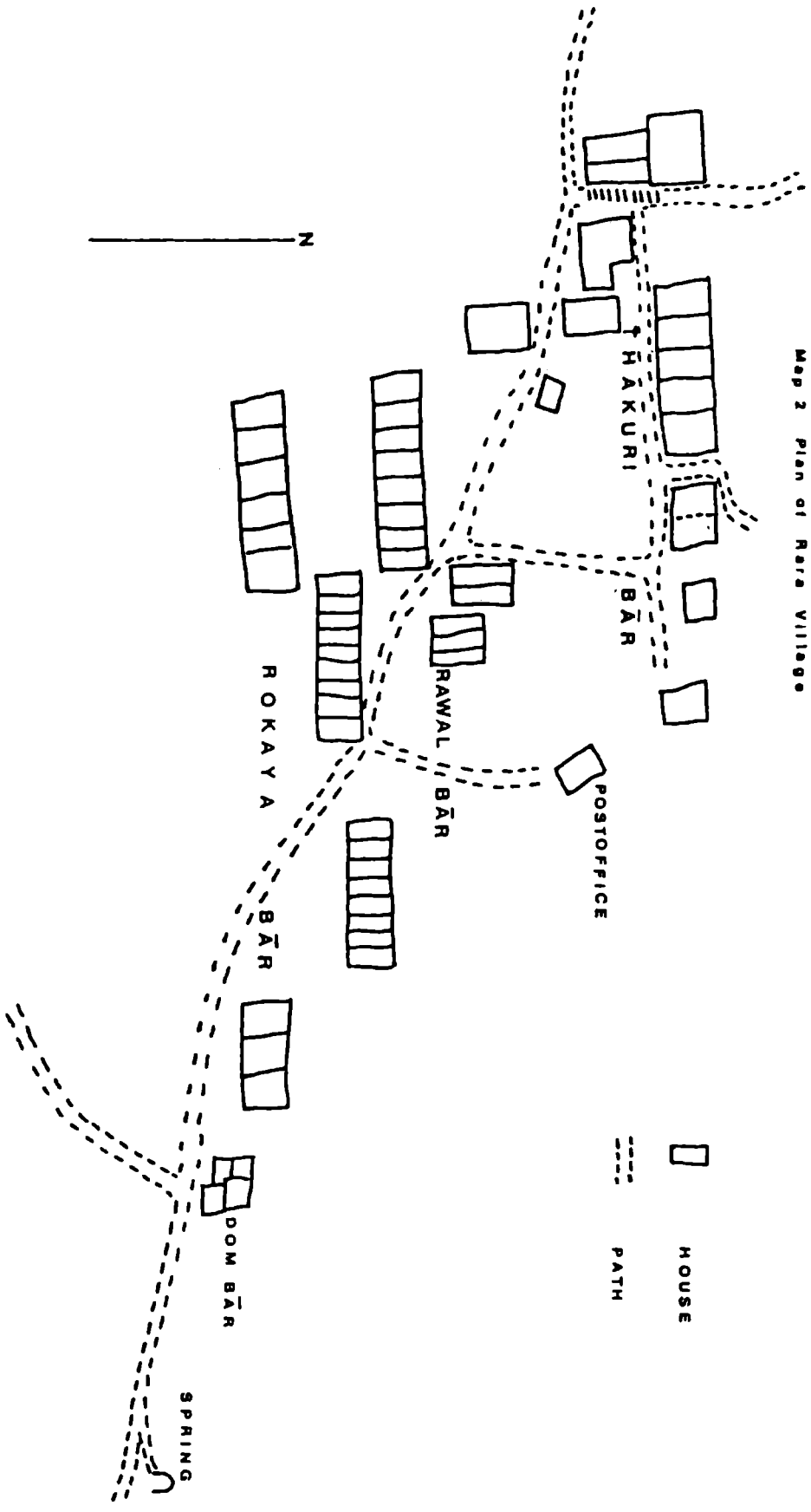
Rārā and the surrounding villages, both those in the immediate vicinity of the lake such as Chapru and Murma, and those further away such as Ashidara, Tum, Guira, Ruma, Kachya and Jhari (map 4) all belong to Mugu district, the headquarters of which are situated in Gum at the Mugu Marnali to the east of lake Rārā. According to the 1971 census (HMG of Nepal 1975) Mugu district covers 274,540 hectares and had then a population of 25,718. This produces a population density which is the fifth lowest of all the 75 districts of Nepal (ibid. vol. 1, Table 2). Mugu district is a subdivision of Karnali zone and of the 14 zones in the country Karnali as a whole has the lowest population density, namely 38 per square mile compared to a national average of 213 per square mile. The availability of land, timber and firewood and the endless stretches of alpine forests around the lake, however, is unusual even in Karnali and suggests that here the population density is probably even lower.

This secluded and relatively depopulated nature of the area around the lake is to some extent a result of its physical location. The high elevation compared with the surrounding valleys makes access difficult. The most used paths and routes for travellers run in the valleys and few, except the villagers themselves and those who have specific business at Rārā, climb up the 3,000 feet or so to the village. Nor has the area attracted new settlers. The hillsides are in places steep and barren and even the best land tends to be

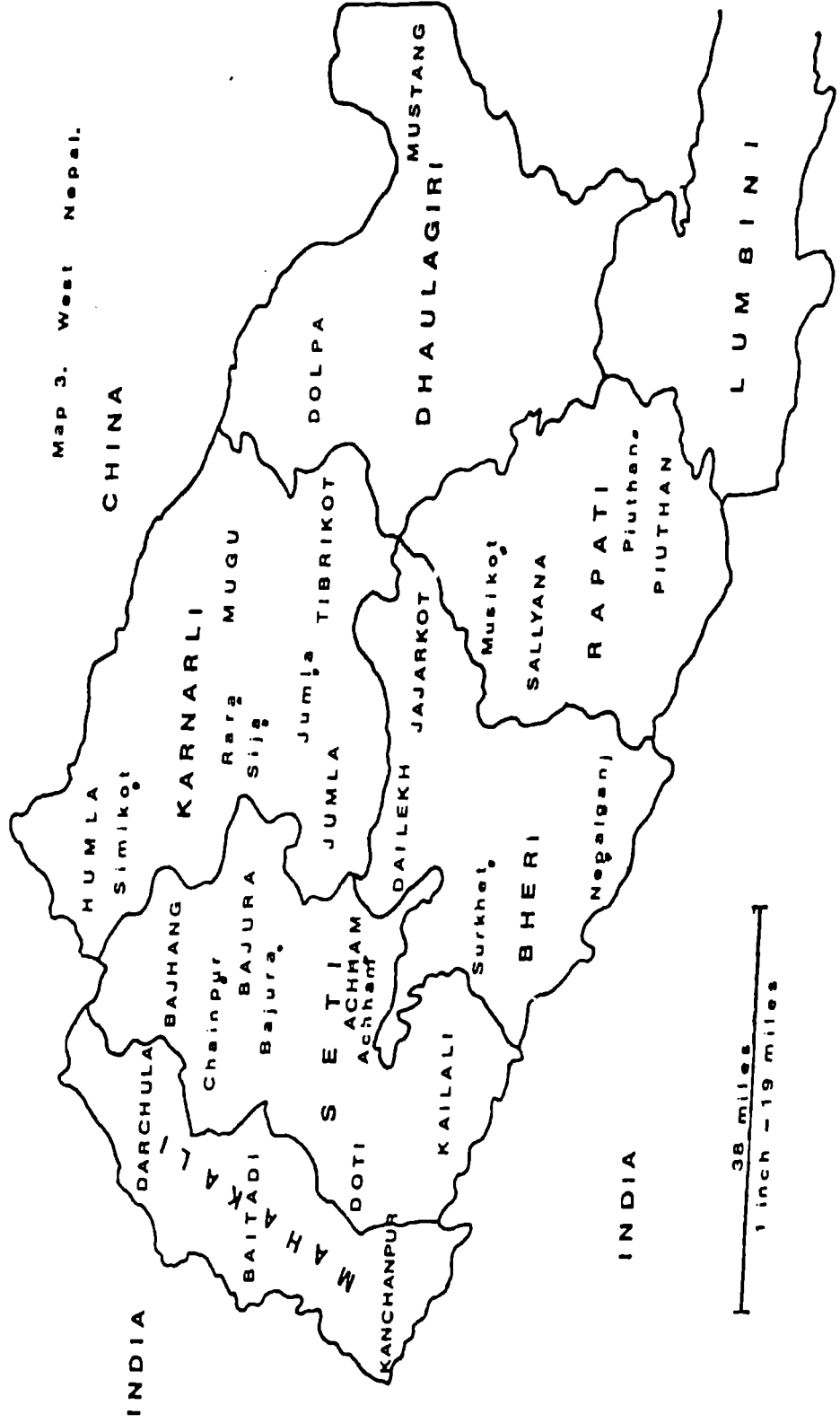
Map 1. NEPAL.



Map 2 Plan of Rara Village



Map 3. West Nepal.



38 miles
1 inch - 19 miles

N

rocky and infertile except at the edges of the lake. Where cultivation is possible this is done without constructing terraces and without irrigation. The main crops produced are wheat, barley and buckwheat. The growing season for these crops is ten months and does thus not allow for any extensive double cropping. Under these conditions the cultivation of rice is not possible either and in this respect the land at Rārā is different from the lower lying land. At lower altitudes most land can be double cropped and the main crops are rice, maize, wheat and various types of millet and the best land is, of course, irrigated.

The climate at Rārā is colder and perhaps drier (Bolton 1976) than that of the surrounding valleys. The cold season (*jārho*) which begins around October, is usually accompanied by some heavy snowfall during December, January and February. During these months snow covering the ground may be more than two feet deep and may stay for several days. Dispersed snowfall may continue right into May, and April is often cold and wet. The monsoon (*meg*, "cloud") usually starts sometime in July and lasts until the end of September. During this season, which at Rārā coincides with the harvest, it may rain continuously for several days, transforming paths and fields to pools of mud. Despite this, however, the effects of the monsoon at Rārā and in Karnali generally are light compared to places further east and south such as Kathmandu and Chitwan. In Jumla, 20 miles south of Rārā, the average is 18 ins. (462 mm) of precipitation per year.

The air temperature rarely exceeds 23-24°C at the warmest time of the year (June and July) whereas

it may be as low as -10°C during the cold season (December, January and February). At this altitude, however, day and night temperatures vary greatly at all times of the year. During the day the sun, if it shines, is strong and hot, whereas the nights are cold even during the warm dry pre-monsoon period. For most of the year a strong westerly wind rises about mid-day rippling the surface of the lake and blowing steadily until sunset.

2. THE VILLAGE

Rārā village and other villages, both at the lake and in the surrounding valleys are Hindu villages, and although some of the inhabitants of Mugu district are Buddhists, Mugalis or Bhotiyas, these constitute a minority. The majority of the population of the area belongs to one of the Hindu castes of Brahmin, Thakuri, Chetri and Dom. At the time of fieldwork there were 478 people in Rārā village including people who owned land there but who did not live there permanently. These people were divided into three castes, namely Thakuris 180 individuals, Chetris 265 individuals and Doms 33 individuals. Thakuris and Chetris are twice born, whereas Doms are untouchables. At Rārā village all the untouchables are blacksmiths (*kāmi*), but in the surrounding villages other Doms are leather workers (*sārki*), and tailors (*dāmai*). The nearest two villages, Chapru and Murma, are of similar size and inhabited by Chetris and Doms only. The size of these villages is typical in this region, but Rārā village is unique not just because of the presence of three castes instead of two, but also because of the high status claimed by the Thakuris who live there.

The villages are nucleated and separated from each other by stretches of fields, forests and pastures and built in such a way that the physical layout also reflects caste divisions. Thus Rārā village is divided into hamlets or clusters of houses (*bār*, “enclosure”, standard Nepali) inhabited by members of different castes and subcastes. The Thakuris live at the top end of the village, commanding a superior position overlooking the houses of Chetris and Doms. Beyond their houses stretch the fields. Below Thakuri *bār* is Chetri *bār* divided into three smaller clusters reflecting subcaste membership and at the very lowest corner at the eastern entrance to the village is a small Dom *bār* set well back from the path (see picture and map 2).

When in the village, people tend to stay in their own *bār*. Men and women sit in groups separately on the flat roofs of their houses or on the porches in front of the house entrances. Members of the same caste may visit each other and sit together sharing a pipe or bits of food, only moving to another *bār* if they have specific business there. This is somewhat less true of Thakuri men who may stroll through the village and stop to talk to Chetris and Doms. On the other hand, Thakuri men often simply call out from their own roofs to Chetris and Doms to come up to Thakuri *bār* in order to discuss a particular matter. In general, however, the Chetris and Thakuris emphasize their differences and their separateness from each other. They not only avoid interacting unless they have specific reason to the differences in their practices and attitudes is also a favourite topic of conversation. Thus, any subject for the discussion invariably encountered a statement about the contrasts

between the two castes. While the Thakuris tend to interpret such contrasts in terms of inferior and superior caste position, Chetris also emphasize the fact that they are different from, and not just inferior to the Thakuris. Most Chetris aspire to become wealthy and own enough land to be comfortably self-sufficient, and even to be able to give up working full-time on the land, but such aspirations do not entail becoming like Thakuris. On the contrary, Chetris tend to be proudly assertive of their own practices and ideas with regard to marriage, inheritance and religious worship.

People who live in the same *bār* consider each other *sākh* (“one’s own”, “dear”, standard Nepali). They assume each other to have a common male ancestor, but the actual genealogical relationships cannot be traced in all cases. Such neighbours of *bār* are in constant contact with each other. They borrow smaller items from each other daily and if a household for some reason is short of labour the *sākh* will be asked to help out. *Sākh* may also give or lend each other food and cash. To be *sākh*, however, not only implies that people live in the same *bār* and that they are assumed to have a common ancestor; it also indicates that they interact more frequently with each other than with the other inhabitants of the village and that they have certain ritual obligations towards each other at funerals, marriages and other important occasions. Thus for some purposes the *bār* may be seen as a corporate unit, but the intensity of the corporateness varies from *bār* to *bār* and never implies a rigid exclusion of non-*bār* inhabitants in daily affairs.

In this area the houses of all castes are of one basic type, but vary according to size, spaciousness and elaboration. A house (*ghar*) may contain more than one domestic group (*pariwār*) and more than one cooking fire (*chulo*), but this is more often the case for Thakuris than for Chetris and Doms. The houses are built with three stories and constructed from stone, timber and mud with bamboo and thatch replacing the stone in the walls of the poorer versions. Inside, the floors are of stamped mud and only the biggest houses have windows. There are no chimneys or smokeholes and in the smaller houses smoke simply escapes through gaps and cracks in the construction. The top storey consists of a storehouse (*bāro*, local term) built at the back leaving the rest of the flat roof free to function as a worksurface for various tasks. This is where the threshing, winnowing and drying of grain takes place. A ladder leads from the roof to the second storey where the living quarters are situated. The size of this part of the house varies. Most Chetri and Dom houses have two rooms at this level. A front room (*baithak*) which may contain a handmill and which is where strangers are received, and a backroom (*bhitra*, "inside") which contains the hearth and the grainstores. In front of these two rooms all houses also have a porch (*kotalo*, local term) which each house shares with neighbouring houses. In a Thakuri house there may be as many as six rooms at this level. In this case one of the better *baithak* rooms will be used as reception room for guests whose identity and purity is not securely established and generally there will be more than one kitchen. In particular, Thakuri houses are distinguished by a separate kitchen for the cooking of rice. This kitchen

is referred to as *bhānse kothā* and a together with *bhitra* constitutes the part of the house called *molghar*. Increasingly many of the Thakuris at Rārā do not use the *bhānse kothā*. On the groundfloor is the *goth* ("cowshed") where the livestock are kept. The *goth* may also be divided into a number of small rooms depending on the size of the house. The outer rooms are called *jāgri* (local term) and this is where the cows are milked and other activities such as the pressing of oil take place. The *goth* is also used by the women as a sleeping place during menstruation and after childbirth. Certain parts of the sacred thread ceremony (*bratabandha*) and of the marriage ceremony (*bihā*) take place here.

People move between the different storeys using outside ladders and, aside from the handmills, the grainstores and the hearth, most houses have no furniture. Some of the richer Thakuri men sleep on simple wooden beds but most people sleep on skins around the fire. The interior height of the rooms varies according to the size of the house. In the Chetri and Dom houses the ceiling is about 5 feet high allowing only the smallest adults to stand straight. The interior height of the Thakuri houses, however, tends to be about 8 feet and with several windows and doorways these houses give an airy and spacious impression. On the outside they are whitewashed with limestone twice a year and the woodwork, some of which is elaborately carved, is painted with red clay.

The agricultural land used by the people of Rārā village is situated in two different ecological zones. This situation is well-known in Karnali and indeed in Nepal generally. Most of the Rārā land is

located in the area around the lake, but most people also own some land at lower altitudes in the villages situated nearer the deep valleys surrounding the lake. For all castes, however, Rārā has been the main place of residence and the importance of lower lying land has increased during recent decades as the land at Rārā has become scarcer and increasingly exhausted. Nowadays some of the Chetris and Doms from Rārā stay for 4-6 months during the winter in these villages at lower altitudes (*aula*) which are all situated no more than half a day's walk from Rārā village itself. The Chetris from Rārā own such land in the villages of Ashidara and Guira whereas those from Chapru own land in Gilar (map 4). The Thakuris have most of their *aula* land further away, namely in Raunteri, Khater, one long day's journey west of Rārā. Their settlement pattern with respect to low and high altitude land has been different. Thakuris have tended to avoid dividing property between brothers and have instead opted for an arrangement whereby one brother, his wife and children live permanently on the *aula* land whereas the other brother(s) live permanently up at Rārā (*lekha*, "on the hill"). In 1976-77, however, except for some Thakuris and a few Dom who had decided to make a break away from Rārā, the land around Rārā and Rārā village itself remained the focus for Chetris, Thakuris and Doms.

The nucleated nature of the village, its division into *bār*, its three-storey houses, its relatively small number of inhabitants, and its dual emphasis on *aula* and *lekha* land make Rārā village typical in this area. In other respects, however, Rārā village is unique. It is situated at nearly 10,000 feet, where none of the

land can be irrigated or double cropped and it is inhabited by Thakuris of high rank who do not consider any other inhabitants in the whole of Karnali zone their equals.

3. ADMINISTRATION

Since 1962 when the late king Mahendra in a Royal Proclamation established a new constitution as the framework for Panchayat Democracy (HMG of Nepal 1963, Joshi and Rose 1966, 398), Rārā and the surrounding villages have been included in a national system of panchayats. Together with three other villages, namely Chapru, Murma and Kachya, Rārā village constitutes the smallest administrative unit in this system, namely Rārā village (*gāû*) Panchayat. According to the 1971 population census Rārā village panchyat included 1,049 people. This village panchyat is divided into seven wards and these wards are different from the village *bār* in which people consider each other *sākh*. Panchayat wards may include people of different castes and subcastes and Rārā village itself is divided into three such wards. Each ward elects its own representative (*sadasya*, “councillor”) and these plus a *pradhan panch* (“chairman”) and *up-pradhan panch* (“vice-chairman”) elected by the panchayat as a whole constitute the village panchayat. They are particularly responsible for development work such as building and maintenance of paths and public buildings, e.g. schools. The panchyat also has some judicial powers and can levy minor fines as well as settle small land disputes. The village panchayat also has an accountant who is not elected and who is not considered a panchyat member.

Gāû or village panchayats together constitute the district or *jillā* panchayat from which the *jillā sabhā* ("district assembly") is elected. The *jillā sabhā* consists of a *sabhāpāti* and *up-sabhāpāti* ("chairman" or "vice-chairman") and nine members. The secretary of the district panchayat is the Chief Development Officer who is appointed by the Ministry for Home and Panchayat and who thus tends to be a stranger to the area. although theoretically the C.D.O. has no influence in district panchayat matters and should act as an advisor, in Mugu during 1976-77 he seemed the most powerful person in the district without whose consent no decisions could be made. The districts panchayats together with elected members of various class organisations constitute the *āchal sabhā* ("zonal assembly"). The *āchal samitī* or zonal committee is constituted by all the chairmen from the district panchayats and district class organisations of the zone and five people nominated by the government. The *āchal sabhā* also elects from amongst themselves the same number of representatives as the number of districts in the zone as representatives to the *rāstriya panchāyat* ("national panchayat"). About 15 per cent of such national panchayat members are also nominated by the king.

In 1976-77 there were 9 village panchayats in Mugu district and 4 districts in Karnali zone, but reorganisation of the panchayats of Mugu were planned for 1978. Aside from the local village level, the district panchayat rather than the zonal panchayat is involved in the development and welfare of the village. However, even at this level involvement was limited in Mugu district and tended to concentrated

on the maintenance of law and order and the buying of food by district officials from the local peasants. The district headquarters are situated in Gum only 3-4 hours walk from Rārā village. Here are the offices of the C.D.O., the land records office, the development office, a bank, a health post, a police post and a secondary school. The arrival of the district administration in Mugu district dates back to 1966 and at first the offices were located at Rārā village itself. After three or four years the offices moved to Gum, but the post office, which had been established at Rārā at the same time, stayed in the village and is now one of the chief sources for regular salaried employment.

After the 1962 Constitution followed several Reform Acts (Regmi 1974: 197), notably the 1964 Land Act. This act introduced ceilings on landownership and on the amount of land tenants could hold. It also attempted to give tenants security of tenure, limit interests on loans to 10 per cent, reduce rents to a maximum of 50 per cent of their crop, construct compulsory savings schemes and introduced a number of measures designed to divert wealth from land to business, such as special long-term loans with low interest payments. In the district offices at Gum all these ideas are theoretically being enforced, but the Rārāls and the people from the villages surrounding lake Rārā have not benefited from these new measures. The high lying land *lekha* in Mugu district has not been surveyed yet and consequently land ceilings have been impossible to enforce. The compulsory savings schemes never really got off the ground in this area probably because

people generally have very little from which they can save and those who do have surpluses prefer to invest it in traditional ways. Although government loans had been given to 8 people in Mugu district in the period 1975-77 such loans had been given to people who already owned a large amount of land and nobody from Rārā and Chapru has applied for such loans.

There are no roads around Rārā, in Mugu district or in Karnali zone. All travel and transport must take place on foot or if possible on horseback. The distance between Rārā and Jumla, the zonal administrative headquarters and only town in Karnali, is only 20 miles, but the route passes over 13,000-15,000 ridges and takes 3-4 days when carrying a load, although local people without loads can do it comfortably in two. Jumla has a population of less than 5,000 (Population Census 1971) and is a budding provincial Nepalese town² with a hospital, a highschool, military headquarters, a main street with a daily bazaar, one hotel and a number of teashops and small restaurants. There is a large population of government officials and a growing number of people who either have immigrated permanently or who go there during the slack agricultural season in the hope of getting work. Since the beginning of the 1970s Jumla has also had an airstrip and in 1976-77 a once-a-week service to Kathmandu and a twice-a-week service to Nepalganj were in operation. The construction of the airstrip has increased the possibilities for development and growth, if not of Karnali as a whole, at least of Jumla itself. Items such as water pipes, corrugated iron, building bricks and tinned food are regularly airlifted into the area.

At Rārā STOL³ airstrip has been constructed on the south side of the lake below the Chuchamara ridge, but this has only enabled the very smallest aircraft to land and there has been no attempt at a regular service yet. Landing both of the airstrip at Jumla and at Rārā is impossible during the monsoon months and during the winter; when snow has fallen flights to Jumla often have to be cancelled.

Since 1973 the people at Rārā have been under the administration of the National Park and Wildlife Protection Office and the Ministry of Forests. After 1964, when the late king Mahendra visited Rārā for several days, tentative plans were made to create a National Park around lake Rārā. In 1972 the FAO Wildlife Management Advisor visited the area and in 1973 king Birendra accepted the plans. The Rārā National Park has been established in order to:

Conserve a representative example of the region's natural flora and fauna, to preserve the natural ecological and scenic character of the lake and, ultimately, to undertake some modest development of the area for visitors' recreational and educational pursuits.

(Bolton 1976:7)

This is in line with the establishment of other National Parks elsewhere in Nepal such as in Langtang and Khumbu and also with the increasing development of tourism in Nepal. However, Rārā National Park is different from other parks established recently, insofar as "the continued existence of the villages of Chapru and Rārā is totally incompatible with the purposes of the park . . ." (*ibid.*: 28). In other areas there has

been some attempt at securing the continued existence of villages by supervision of grazing, logging and cultivation.

The people who live in the villages of Rārā and Chapru have therefore since 1973 been aware that eventually they would have to leave. The main campaign has centred not on the wish to stay, but on the right to receive compensation in terms of land elsewhere rather than money compensation. The precise date of the settlement has been uncertain for years, but I received news after having returned from fieldwork that the villages had been evacuated in December 1978. When I left eleven months previously, no one knew the terms of the settlement but people believed that land would be made available in the western part of the Tarai. An article in the daily newspaper, *Rising Nepal*, in January 1979, described how people from Rārā National Park were living in sheds 5 km outside Jamuni in Bardiya district, "hoping to secure land for their settlement". (*Rising Nepal*, 1979, January 28.)

The effect of the establishment of the National Park on the daily life and economy of the people living at lake Rārā had been felt for years. A prohibition upon the making of new land had been made already in 1964 following the king's visit. Since 1973, a head warden and an assistant warden have been stationed in headquarters situated between Rārā and Chapru villages and these officials have been employing local men as guards in order to enforce provisional regulations for the National Park. For the villagers the most damaging of these regulations has been the prohibition on cutting down trees, on fishing,

on using certain traditional areas for grazing and on the killing of wild boar. Periodically during the warmer months herds of wild boar inflict considerable damage to the potato, wheat and barley crops and since the establishment of the National Park the number of boar has increased, constituting a considerable problem for cultivation. The loss of some of the best pastures has resulted in reduced milk production and health of the cattle as Rārā and Chapru and some of the lower lying villages have been totally deprived of their traditional summer pastures. Thus while the villages around the lake are involved in panchayat democracy, constituting the lowest division in the system, the establishment of the Rārā National Park involves the villagers in a relationship with other government departments and this has sometimes meant that local levels of the bureaucracy have been bypassed. At the same time the resettlement plans have received everyone's attention and have been the focus for political meetings and discussions for some years. Perhaps most importantly, the resettlement plans have blocked and made pointless any attempts at concrete development of the villages such as improving water supplies, schools and paths which might otherwise have provided the village with issues around which local politics could develop.⁴

Chapter 3

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. THE KHAS

The north western area of Nepal has been known in the literature as the land of the Khasas. The Khasa or Kasia are an ancient people referred to in the traditional Hindu texts, whose domain in the end of the 12th century covered the whole of western Nepal, Kumaon-Garhwal and stretched into south western Tibet (Tucci 1956, Pandey 1970). They even invaded the Kathmandu Valley, at that time known as Nepal, although they were unsuccessful in establishing sovereignty there. The domain of the Khasas referred to as the Khasiya Malla state of western Nepal was for some time ruled from Sija, now a small village situated between Jumla and Rārā (see maps 3 and 4). Grierson (1916) considers the language spoken by the Khasa to be of Indo-Aryan origin and classifies it as Pahari which he divides into three main groups. West Pahari, now spoken in Jaunsar-Bawar, Simla and in western Kashmir, central Pahari which is spoken in Kumaon and Garhwal and eastern Pahari also known as *khās-kurā* spoken in Nepal.¹ It is widely believed and endorsed by Grierson that the language today known as Nepali is similar to eastern Pahari or *khās-*

kurā. This suggests that modern Nepali originally was *khās-kurā* and an attempt was in fact made sometime during the 19th century to replace the word *khās* by the word *gorkhā* (Clark 1969: 251). Since then Nepali has sometimes been referred to as *gorkhāli*. In the western part of Nepal one does occasionally hear the expression *khās-kurā* even today, but *khās* is more often heard used by higher castes in a derogatory manner as in the expression *khāsiya* referring to Chetris and Dom.

Opinions on the origin of the Khas themselves have been divided. One view popular with the Victorian civil servants and travellers is that they were largely constituted by the offspring of unions between Rajput immigrants and the original population of this north western corner of the Indian subcontinent (Kirkpatrick 1811: 184, Hodgson 1864, vol. 6: 5, Temple 1887: 229). Manu (X 22) considers Khas as offspring of outcaste Khastriyas and points to their negligence in observing proper Hindu rituals and customs. Other Victorian writers such as Atkinson (1974: 269), Hamilton (1819: 281) and von Eickstedt (1926: 22) accept the Khas as having been an indigenous population of the area, whose customs and culture in later times have been represented by the Dom and certain types of Chetris. In this view north Indian Rajputs fleeing from both other more powerful and politically successful Rajputs and from Moghul invaders, infiltrated and sometimes even conquered Khas communities. The Rajputs established themselves as rulers over petty kingdoms and chieftainships. This view is also held by the Thakuri inhabitants at Rara and endorsed by the family genealogies collected from

Thakuris all over Nepal (Pandey 1971, 1971a). The difference in culture and conduct between Chetris and Dom on the one hand and Thakuris on the other, a difference which is very striking at Rārā, is explained in this way.

This version of Thakuri history can, however, be challenged. Firstly, the Khasa themselves were a migratory people constituted of different racial elements and did not settle in western Nepal until 3rd-5th centuries A.D. (Grierson 1916). Secondly, the Mallas who ruled west Nepal during 12th and 13th centuries A.D. and the Pallas before them were already established Thakuri dynasties at a time when the great political changes in the Indo-Gangetic plain led to Rajput emigration to the north. Thus it is likely, as Sharma (1972) suggests that, at least, some of the Thakuris of the area and of Nepal generally are not Indian Rajputs at all, but for various reasons have found it useful to distinguish themselves from others by claiming such origins (*ibid.* p. 15). In the Karnali region such processes of changing status are clearly taking place now, and involve Thakuris as well as Chetris.

2. THE MALLA STATE

The sources on the history of this area of western Nepal are few and obscure. The earliest historical data come from inscriptions on pillars, temples and landgrant plates and date from the time of the Malla state. After that followed a period of disunity in the area from which there is very little historical evidence. Written records begin to be available after the unification of the present state of Nepal at the end

of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century but few accounts of the social organisation and daily lives of people in Karnali have been discovered from this time. The European accounts of Nepal from the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century mostly derive from officials of the East India Company who were interested in establishing the possibility of the Company trade with and through Nepal. None of these officials themselves travelled as far as Karnali and their accounts of western Nepal were mainly derived from sources in Kathmandu. Not until the 1950s when the political climate in the country changed radically did it become possible for foreigners to travel relatively freely. Thus, Tucci, a Tibetologist was amongst the first western scholars to go to the Karnali region in order to study its history. Since then Nepali scholars themselves have become interested in the region and it is now possible to construct, at least, a preliminary framework of the history of the area and particular villages.

The area around lake Rārā was definitely incorporated in the powerful Malla state which existed in the 12th, 13th and part of the 14th century A.D. in western Nepal. The existence at Rārā village and at Gothichaur, a ridge to the south west of Rārā, of small temples which, according to Sharma (1972) were built over water-conduits, is evidence of this. Other constructions elsewhere in the area, attributed to the Mallas, include larger temples, water reservoirs and resting places (*dharamsālas*) and such constructions point to the strength of the Malla state. In describing this state, Tucci writes: "It was a large state, based on a feudal system which united the local

chiefs under the paramount power of the Mallas; a new aristocracy was also created under the paramount power of the ruler” (Tucci 1956: 130). The capital of this state was Sija, two to three days walk south-west of Rārā and from here horses were bred and traded, together with other goods, with neighbouring areas such as Humla to the north of Mugu. From the various temples it appears that Hindu and Buddhist ideas were present side by side, but towards the end of the reign of the Mallas, Hinduism became more prominent. Thus an inscription dated 1223 A.D. records the visit of a king to the Baleschwar Mahadeo² temple after the conquest of Tehri Garhwal (Pandey 1970: No. 12. 46) and by the time of Prithvimalla, the last Malla king of the dynasty, numerous documents testify to religious landgrants having been given to Brahmin pandits (ibid.: 50).

3. THE TWENTY-TWO STATES

The time after the fall of the Malla state in the 14th century is marked by fragmentation and disunity in the area. The formerly powerful state was split into a number of small principalities and chiefdoms. The notion that there was a definite number of such petty states has been predominant. Thus in the west of Nepal there is said to have been 22 such independent principalities at this time, and in the region further east between Kathmandu and Karnali a further 24 such states are supposed to have existed. The former have been called the Baisi or 22 states and the latter the Chaubesi or 24 states. Individual states in these two groups tended to be connected to each other in a pattern of alliances but no such alliances were made between the Baisi and Chaubesi

collectively. However, as none of the lists supplied by writers such as Kirkpatrick (1811), Oldfield (1880), Hamilton (1819), Hodgson (1864 vol. 11) and Regmi (RRS 1979: 11/7) are in accordance with each other and since states disintegrated and merged continuously, any attempt to produce a comprehensive list seems futile. The important point is that this period was characterised by extreme instability politically and probably by relatively fast changes in the status position held by certain groups of people.

With the Baisi states begins a period for which historical material is extremely scanty and most writers dealing with this period have been forced to rely heavily on chronicles and genealogies. The following account of the Baisi period does not differ in this respect.

After the collapse of the Malla state, Jumla became the biggest and most powerful of the Baisi. The nature of the superior position of Jumla was described by Hamilton in the following way:

The chief of Yumla was a Rajput . . . His power probably resembled that possessed by those who were called sovereign kings of India before the Muhammedan conquest, and consisted of three privileges. Each chief sent him an annual embassy, with presents; he bestowed the mark of royalty (Tikā) on each heir, when he succeeded; and he had a right to interfere in keeping the stronger from overrunning the weaker, and to exhort all chiefs to preserve the balance of power. Except for persuasion, however, no means seem to have existed to enforce cooperation.

(Hamilton 1819: 283)

Thus, while Jumla may have been the most powerful of the Baisi states, it is clear that the alliance the rulers there had made with the surrounding states was a tenuous one.

The independence of Jumla with its headquarters first at Chinasim³ and later at Tibrikot as well, coincided with the rise of a new dynasty in the area. This was the Kalyal dynasty and the first king of this dynasty has been known as Bali Raj. Bali Raj supposedly ruled 1404-45 A.D. but his origin is dubious. In one version of the story of Bali Raj⁴ Bali Raj himself was a Rajput. His mother was a Kshatriya princess of Chittor who on a pilgrimage to lake Masarowar in Tibet travelled through the west of Nepal. On the return journey from the lake she gave birth to Bali Raj in the house of a Rawal Chetri. The high status and ability of Bali Raj was immediately obvious to anyone who saw him, his "forehead glittering like a radiant lamp" (Pandey 1971, No. 12: 46). Sensing competition, the king of Jumla, Malaibum, wanted to kill Bali Raj. Malaibum's daughter fell in love with Bali Raj at first sight and informed him of her father's plot. Bali Raj fled to Sija where the king somehow was able to donate to him the Jumla valley (ibid.). Another version (Tucci 1956: 115) suggests that Bali Raj was the son-in-law of king Malaibum. According to this Malaibum, who is also referred to as Medinivarma, had no sons and therefore decided to marry his daughter to Bali Raj in order to keep his descendants on the throne. This version is supported by a copper plate which was issued jointly in the names of Medinivarma or Malaibum and Bali Raj as the kings of the region in

1404 A.D. Once established, Bali Raj is said to have given rise to the Kalyal dynasty. In line with other Thakuri dynasties in Nepal the descendants of this dynasty have been eager to establish their Rajput origins and their link with Chittor. In such attempts the origin of Bali Raj himself is obviously important. The various versions of the rise of Bali Raj, however, makes this connection extremely unlikely. One record dated 1686 A.D. (Yogi Naraharinath, *Itihasa Prakash* 2013) even names him as Bali Rawal and includes him in the genealogy of Rawal Chetris. In the Kalyal chronicle (*ibid.*) the writer Nar Bhupal Shah is content to simply state: “once a brave king ruled in Sisaudhagdh.⁵ Later in his dynasty, another brave king came. He was king Bali. His *gotra* was Ravi, Chandabamshi and *shākhā* Madhyannhi.” (Kalyal chronicle verse 1)

The rule of the Kalyal dynasty beginning with Bali Raj marks the definite beginning of a Hindu kingdom, and to some extent constitutes a break with the previous period and the Malla state. Thus one copper plate calls Bali Raj *Mahārājādhirāj*, “king of the world”, and other copper plates testify to the donation of land by the king to Brahmins and the lifting of all taxes from such donated lands (Pandey 1971, No. 12: 50). In the Kalyal chronicle Bali Raj is also praised for giving *dān* (“gifts”) to holy persons. According to this chronicle 16 kings of the Kalyal dynasty ruled the area independently until it was conquered by the Gorkhās in 1787 A.D.

The fate of the defeated king is not clear. Hamilton (1819: 290) reports that after his downfall this king escaped to Tibet, but the Kalyal chronicle

has a different version. About this king, who was called Nar Narayan, and his descendants, the chronicle states:

From Nar Narayan five generations (*pustā*) have come into being so far. All of them faced whatever came their way. The king's relations mostly remained at Musikot which falls under the administrative unit of Salyan.

(Kalyal Chronicle, verse 125).

In fact, one branch of the Thakuris at Rārā claim to have come to Rārā from Musikot sometime after the Gorkha conquest.

The chronicle gives a glimpse of the way in which descendants were allotted land. Apparently as far as the superior position of the king and the claim to the kingdom at large was concerned a rule of primogeniture was followed whereas, other male heirs received a much smaller share of the landed property. In only one case, namely Sudarshan Shah and his brother Subhan Shah are two brothers said by the chronicle to have ruled together. In all other cases when younger brothers are mentioned they are said to have been given smaller domains not containing more than a few villages. Thus the brother of Bahadur Shah, the 7th king in the succession from Bali Raj and therefore estimated by Pandey (1971, No. 15: 45) to have lived from 1636-65 A.D., received the villages of Rārā and Chapru. Similarly the younger brothers of the 8th king, Bira Bhadra Shahi (1665-75 A.D.) were given the village of Dunai, "for his brothers to spend their life happily" (Kalyal Chronicle, verse 107). Although the dates of the various kings and

their succession in many cases are uncertain and vary from genealogy to genealogy, a feudal type structure in which some members of the nobility became local rulers with some degree of autonomy was clearly present at that time. Primogeniture and patrilineal inheritance were structurally important features in the relationship between centre and periphery in states like these.

The chronicles and other sources from this period remain relatively silent on matters pertaining to lower castes. There are only a few suggestions about the nature of their lives in the records of land-grants and taxation. Sometimes members of these castes appear as witnesses in land transactions. In his introduction to the Kalyal chronicle, Yogi Naraharinath clearly implies that Rawals lived in the area before the Kalyal Thakuris, but there is no discussion or mention of the relationships which existed between the two castes. The information about other Chetris is even more sparse. Pandey, (1970, No. 12: 51) citing an inscription, indicates that Rokaya, nowadays a particular subcaste or *thar* of Chetris, was the name of the office of governor. The date of this inscription is 1450 A.D. and it also mentions that the Rokayas revolted on the eve of the coronation of the king and that the army suppressed them efficiently (*ibid.*: 50). Given the tenuous relationship between the centre and the periphery in these states it seems possible that the reign of the Kalyal dynasty, particularly towards the end, was marked by periodic revolts and unrest. Such protests may have been directed not just at the paramount ruler, but also at the local chiefs and no doubt areas and villages differed in the extent to which the peasants themselves were oppressed.

Before proceeding to the next period which begins with the fall of the Baisie states it will be helpful to relate the history of the Baisie states to the people living around Rārā lake. It has been mentioned that Rārā village is inhabited by Thakuris, Chetris and Doms, and that the Thakuris are Kalyal Thakuris, the Chetris Rokayas and Rawals and the Doms are Kamis. In Chapru, there are Burha Chetris and the untouchables there are leatherworkers, or Sarki.

The Kalyal chronicle mentions Rara and Chapru villages as having been given to a younger brother of a king, himself a descendant of Bali Raj. The implication of this landgrant was that the prince who received it could live off it at his own discretion. The Kalyals at Rārā consider each other as descendants from the same ancestor, namely Bali Raj, who is said to be their *molbāje* ("founding ancestor"). They are, however, divided into three branches who, so they say, arrived at Rārā at different times. One branch, now a relatively minor one, claims to have been the first to have arrived and also to have been the first to have had the right to collect taxes. This branch is referred to as *jetho* ("eldest"). The second branch to arrive includes by far the majority of the Thakuris in the village and this branch is referred to as *kāncho* ("youngest"). The last branch to arrive is also a minor one, now only consisting of two households resident at Rārā. Despite having arrived last, however, this branch is considered to be the descendants of an elder brother than the *kāncho* branch and is, therefore, referred to as *māilo* ("next eldest"). The exact time of arrival of all these branches is uncertain. The office of *jimwāl* ("the one who is responsible") to which is

attached the right to collect certain taxes, has for some time been held by the *kāncho* branch and members of this branch receive deferential treatment from members of the two other branches. The relative seniority, however, between the three branches is expressed at festivals such as Dasai.⁶ At this time the two junior branches present the *jetho* branch with the hind leg of a sacrificed goat and greet the members of this branch ceremonially using deferential gestures, *darsan garnu*. The relationship between the small *jetho* branch and the more numerous and nowadays prestigious *kāncho* branch is tense in many ways, and this situation will become clearer when more information about the village and its inhabitants has been presented in subsequent chapters.

The Chetris and Doms in Rārā and Chapru all agree that they were already living in these villages at the time of arrival of the first Thakuris. The Burha Chetris of Chapru are said to have been there first and in the beginning they did not wear the *janai* (sacred thread) They were *mātwalis* (drinking castes) drinking liquor, eating eggs and chickens and generally not observing Hindu rituals in an orthodox manner.⁷ They are said to have been given the *janai* by a Kalyal king, but the circumstances of this event are not clear. The Rawal Chetris are also said to have received their *janai* from a Kalyal king but, as I have shown, the myths about the origin of the Kalyal dynasty point to a different and perhaps closer relationship between Rawals and Kaylals. Today the Rawals of the area around Rārā lake share *gotra* (clan), *vamshi* (patriline) and *shākhā* (branch) with the Kalyal Thakuris, a fact which Thakuri informants

themselves explain by reference to the Rawals having received the *janai* from a Kalyal king.

Rokaya Chetris are said to have arrived at Rārā after the Rawals but before the Thakuris. Like the Thakuris they did not all arrive at the same time. Informants suggest that they came from elsewhere in the area and that at the time of arrival they were already *tāgādhāri* or *janai* wearers. Today some of them refer to the name of one of their ancestors who apparently held the office of *talukdār* (village headman) and collected the taxes before the Thakuris.

Dom are assumed to have been associated with the Chetris from very early times and there was very little comment by informants on aspects of their past.

It is, of course, not possible to say what really happened. Almost all the evidence about the people who inhabited Karnali in the period preceding the unification of the state of Nepal is uncertain and open to argument (Pandey 1970a, 1971, 1971a, 1972,; Tucci 1956 and Sharma 1972). Some scholars have been content to rely heavily on chronicles and in this way reconstruct a history of the past. Insofar as this study is concerned with the social relationships between people during the period of fieldwork in 1976-77, it is necessarily also concerned with the way people conceived of their past. Thus, while the chronicles and information given by individuals cannot be interpreted as being what really happened, such information has a relationship to the past insofar as it constitutes a background against which people act and think in the present. It is clear that the Thakuris imagine themselves as having emerged from a historical background appropriate to their position

as the nobility of the area. The notions of conquest and some form of natural superiority are central to this. Officially, such Thakuri ideas have largely been accepted and have remained unchallenged by the Chetri and Dom inhabitants.

4. UNIFICATION AND THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AFTER

The history of the present state of Nepal begins in the end of the 18th century with the successful conquest and subjugation of territories to the east and west of the Kathmandu valley by the Gorkha dynasty. The house of Gorkha, which had ruled Gorkha, a small principality situated east of Karnali but west of the Kathmandu valley, had been established as Thakuri rulers since the middle of the 16th century (Stiller 1973). Like other Thakuris, they attempted to establish their descent from Rajputs who had belonged to Chittor in Rajasthan and who supposedly arrived in Nepal following the Mohammedan invasion. The campaign for unification was initiated by Prithvinarayan Shah by the conquest of Nuwakot near Kathmandu in 1744 and Kathmandu itself in 1768. He also defeated the soldiers of the East India Company in 1767 and the latter were forced to retreat. After the conquest of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhadgaon, the three main towns in the Nepal valley, the campaign was extended to the west and during the reign of Bahadur Shah (1785-94), a younger son of Prithvinarayan, all of the Baisi and Chaubesi states were incorporated in the kingdom of Nepal. By the beginning of the 19th century the Gorkhas had even made conquests in Garhwal and Kangra (Parry 1979,

Sanwal 1976). By this time, however, a web of intrigues had already been spun around the succession to the throne. Bahadur Shah was deposed by Rana Bahadur, a grandson of Prithvinarayan, in 1794, and he was later assassinated by his half brother in 1806. Following this, one of Rana Bahadur's younger queens took over the regency. During its short life, the state of Nepal had already been ruled by a regent queen in two tumultuous periods. This time, however, the state was set for the emergence of Bhimsen Thapa. Bhimsen Thapa was a strong willed and self confident prime minister and ruled the country in the manner of a military dictatorship until his fall in 1837. For a time during his reign the Regent Queen and her successor stepped into the background, but emerged later when, together with the Pandey family, they engineered Bhimsen's fall.

As mentioned earlier, Jumla was attacked by the Gorkha army in 1787 and the Kalyal king who ruled there was defeated. He is said to have resisted with 22,000 men but finally had to surrender because of lack of support from his allies (Hamilton 1819: 288). According to the Kalyal chronicle the Jumla king fled following this defeat but his descendants settled down at Musikot and later some of them came to Rārā. Apparently Musikot was included in the Chaubesi alliance (RRS 1979 11/9, Hodgson 1864, Hamilton 1819). The fate of Jumla after the expansion of the Gorkhas was not shared by all other principalities in the Baisi and Chaubesi. Bajhang and Bajura, for example, situated further west than Jumla (map 3) succeeded in retaining a fair degree of autonomy. Bajura apparently declined to fight on the

side of the allies, joined the Gorkhas and was thus instrumental in the conquest of Jumla. In an order issued by the Gorkha raja in 1791 this support was acknowledged and a Singha raja of Bajura was granted a *rājya* (vassalage) in exchange for an annual payment of Rs. 500 (RRS 1974, 6/1: 17). This *rājya* was confirmed in 1887 and according to this arrangement the Bajura raja himself was entitled to various kinds of revenue such as judicial fines, custom duties, forced and unpaid labour (*jhārā*), and certain homestead taxes (*ibid.*: 20). Similar rights to land and overlordship were granted to the rajas of Jajarkot (RRS 1970: 2/1) and Bajhang (RRS 1974: 6/1) and the special status of these aristocratic families was acknowledged as late as 1962 when the Nepali Government converted these *rājyas* into a fixed stipend. Thus in 1976 the rajas of Jajarkot and Bajhang received Rs. 12,000 each annually from the Treasury without any further privileges to tax or other dues from the peasantry (R. Shah, personal communication; RRS 1977, 6/9: 169). It is possible that Musikot, too, received such special treatment, for the Musikot raja is said to have declared allegiance to the Gorkhas after relative weak resistance (RRS 1979, 11/9: 143). If the Kalyal chronicle is to be believed it seems that the manner in which the villages of Rārā and Chapru had been given to a branch of the Kalyal dynasty was similar to a *rājya* grant. The branch had been given to this area for their own enjoyment receiving the revenue of the villages situated there.

The landlord or overlord in these cases resembles the Indian *zamindar*. The term *zamindar* is

of Persian origin and means landowner (Wilson 1855: 562). According to Habib, *zamindars* could be both vassal chiefs, or the holders of land, or land proprietors paying a fixed amount of taxes to the state (Habib 1963: 140). The rights of such land proprietors extended over villages or persons rather than over fields and “the *zamindar* was therefore a right which belonged to a rural class other than and standing above the peasantry” (ibid.: 141). Although no records exist from Rārā referring to the years around the Gorkhā conquest of Jumla, there is evidence that *zamindars* existed in some parts of the Karnali region. Thus a royal order was issued in 1794 to one Naidan Kanwar in Jumla stating:

We hereby confirm the *zamindari* of Barhabise granted to you by the former king of Jumla. Collect revenues there faithfully, hand over the proceeds to the local administrator at Chinasim (the district headquarters) and have (the accounts) cleared off every year.

(Quoted in Regmi 1971: 33)

The *zamindar* in this region thus appear to have been a powerful revenue collecting authority between the state and the immediate cultivator and probably did not cultivate the land himself. This was the situation in Jumla or any of the smaller principalities in the area as well as in the unified state of Nepal.

At that time arable land was occupied and cultivated by individual peasants and their families on the condition that various taxes were paid to the state. Generally this form of landtenure in Nepal has

been called *raikar* (Regmi 1968, 1971, 1976 and 1978) and is similar to *ryotwari* tenure as practised in India (Baden-Powell 1896, Maine 1885, Habib 1963). This type of landtenure was common all over Nepal, but regions varied with respect to the presence and absence of other types of landtenure and tenure. In areas south and east of Karnali landgrants were sometimes made by the state to individuals or institutions.⁸ In such cases the state forfeited the right to collect certain taxes and some of the revenue went to an individual or institution, who in effect owned the land in question as private property. In Karnali such individual grants of land were rare in the period after unification and as far as can be discerned there have been no landgrants of this type in the area around Rārā.

Except in Karnali and other remote areas landtaxes were at this time paid in kind. In the period after unification such taxes were paid according to the *adhiyā* system. In this system—as the term itself suggests—the cultivator pays 50 per cent of the produce to the landowner, whether the latter be the state or an individual who has received a landgrant. In Karnali and around Rārā the payment of taxes was in cash and taxes were collected by officials. Such tax-collectors were never quite as powerful vis-à-vis the peasants as individual private landowners elsewhere in the country. However, since even private landowners were answerable to the state and held their land grants at the courtesy of the state, the crucial structural position of both, between the state and the peasants, was similar. Although not used as a system of tax assessment on *raikar* land, the *adhiyā* system

was not absent from Karnali. Around Rārā, *adhiyā* took and still takes the form of a sharecropping system in which the landlord, holding land on *raikar*, pays the tax on the land whereas the cultivator supplies the seed, plough, bullocks and labour. For this the latter receives 50 per cent of the total produce.

The character of the landtenure system and the nature of the relationship between the state and the peasantry in the Karnali region and the area around Rārā did not change significantly immediately after the Gorkha conquest. The tasks Prithvinarayan had set for himself were ambitious and the remoteness of the Karnali area made proper annexation unrealistic. The effect was mainly to substitute one set of rulers for another and for the villagers it did not make much difference who received the revenue. At the local level the agrarian relations remained the same (Regmi 1971). The main objectives of the rulers were to extract revenue, to administer the area in order to prevent and repress possible revolts and to make landgrants to military and administrative officials. These had also been the objectives of both the Malla and the Kalyal rulers (Pandey 1970a, 1970, 1971; Tucci 1956).

In order to achieve these objectives it was necessary for the Gorkhas to have administrative and military officials living in the different areas which had been conquered. In Jumla the most powerful official was the *subbā*. The *subbā* enjoyed far-reaching authority and was responsible for meeting the local and administrative expenses from the tax collections. He was surrounded by *bhārdārs*, members of the ruling nobility from Kathmandu, who had been

granted prominent civil and military positions. At the village level, there were usually a village headman *thāni*, *talukdār*, or *jimwāl*⁹ who was responsible for collecting the taxes from different households and passing on the payments to the district centre. Between these two levels in certain cases was a *zamindar*. The amount and kind of revenue paid by cultivators at this time is extremely variable from area to area even within Karnali. There were taxes to the government and to the Crown as well as to the local officials. In a revenue record recovered by Hodgson for 1837, the year of Bhimsen's fall, the following constituted the revenue from the villages of Rārā and Chapru: *pāte* tax was paid on rice fields, *sermā* tax was paid on homesteads and unirrigated land, *sāwan-phugoo* was tax levied in the Nepali months of *sāun* and *phāgun*, there was a tax on imports and exports and a revenue from judicial fines. The total amount for Rārā was Rs. 50 an. 8 pic. 3 and for Chapru Rs. 175 ann. 2 pic. 2 dam 3,¹⁰ (Hodgson 1864 vol. 8). No doubt there were other levies which did not reach the central Treasury.

This revenue record indicates that revenue was assessed in cash. This was not a new state of affairs, indeed taxes and levies had been paid in cash since long before the Gorkha conquest of this area. The Karnali economy was then monetarised to the extent of allowing for the mortgage of land as well as the sale of land and produce (Regmi 1971). From the Hodgson record it is, however, difficult to estimate the severity of the rate of taxation. A royal order issued to the peasants of Jumla in 1844 fixed the price at 8.1/2 *pāthis* of rice and 3 *pāthis*¹¹ of salt per rupee

in an attempt to limit the hardship suffered by the peasants as a result of arbitrary conversion rates between cash and produce (RRS 1971 3/3: 60). Another order was issued in 1841 replacing revenue officials "who have greatly oppressed the ryots" (ibid.: 61). Generally much of the record material indicates extreme economic oppression of the peasants. Thus as time went by and as under the Gorkhas the area under administration and the military expenses increased, certain contradictions inherent in the nature of this type of state organisation became more apparent. The growing administration and army necessitated extraction of an increasingly larger amount of revenue from the cultivators. The number of intermediary officials between the cultivator and the state, who were entitled to payment usually in the form of percentage of the revenue collected, also increased. The drain on the peasantry became even more serious as many of these officials frequently also extracted illegal taxes and tribute for their own benefits. In the early decades of the Gorkha expansion, when there was a surplus of land and labour was in short supply, such excessive taxation sometimes led to depopulation of certain areas and hence to a fall in revenue (Regmi 1971). The government's response was to increase taxation further. This whole situation was aggravated by the lack of uniformity in measurement and land tenure systems and by the inability of the Gorkha government to establish their own officials at the village level. For a long time, they relied heavily on local village officials and headmen.

In Karnali all these aspects of the Gorkha administration were intensified by the remoteness of

the region. The easiest way to realise levy was to extract taxes on a contractual basis, since any other system would have necessitated a much better knowledge of the productivity of the land, the size of plots and the nature of local measurements. Thus tax was levied in most of the western hills according to a system called *thek thiti*. The *thek thiti* system, which was still used at Rārā for unirrigated land during 1976 and 1977, is an ad hoc assessment fixed per unit of area under cultivation (Regmi 1963 vol. 1: 55). It bears no relation to productivity and the cultivators undertake to pay a fixed rate in cash, *thek tiro*. After the Gorkha conquest and during the 19th century, however, such contractual arrangements were not just made for individual cultivators, but also for entire villages without reference to the area (ibid.: 56). A 1830 document issued to an official of Jumla refers to Rs. 1551 assessed in a *thek thiti* arrangement on Mugu, Karan and Dolphu in Jumla district. A contract (*thek bandi*) for the collection of this revenue went to the highest bidder (RRS/71, 3/3, 3/9). From the point of view of the local peasants living in the villages and cultivating the soil it probably made little difference whether the tax collector was such a holder of a contract or a *zamindar*. In both cases intermediary officials were present and there was not necessarily any uniformity in the numbers or relationship between the different levels. In most cases the peasants suffered as evidenced in the numerous orders issued by various kings from Kathmandu attempting to limit and make illegal excess tax collection and the use of forced labour by lower order revenue officials (RRS 9171, 3/3, 3/9).

By the time of the downfall of Bhimsen Thapa, little had been done to consolidate the state of Nepal. The main objectives had been to collect revenue from the newly conquered territories and changes in the revenue collection system had come about to this effect. Mostly, however, such changes were ad hoc, allowing for a crude extraction of cash and produce without any consideration for the daily lives of the cultivators. The *thek thiti* and the enhanced status of local revenue officials, be they village headmen or other contractors, must have had a divisive and devastating effect on the peasantry. All this did not concern the elite in Kathmandu, who by now had become dependent on a vast income in order to maintain both the military and administrative machinery which kept them in power as well as their luxurious standard of living (Regmi 1978).

5. THE RANAS

After the fall of Bhimsen Thapa, there followed again a period of intrigues and counterintrigues. The rivals of Bhimsen, the Pandey family, held the post of prime minister from 1837 to 1841 and during this time persecuted the Thapas. The tables were turned in 1843 when Bhimsen's nephew was appointed Prime Minister and Commander in Chief. The royal household was also internally divided, with the king, a Junior Queen and the Crown Prince competing for authority. The Prime Minister, Bhimsen's nephew, was assassinated in 1845 on the order of the king. This assassination was carried out by Jnag Hahadur Kanwar, an up-and-coming official and general of Chetri status, who had become influential at the court. Jang

Bahadur also later assassinated an influential member of the council of state who was a favourite of the Junior Queen. Reprisals for these two murders led to the famous Kot Massacre in 1846 where 29 prominent nobles were killed, 26 fled the country and a further 25 were banished (Joshi and Rose 1966: 31). From this upheaval Jang Bahadur emerged unscathed, was given the title of Rana and became Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal. He became the most influential person in the history of Nepal so far and with him began a period of Rana rule, a period which lasted until 1951, when the Ranas were overthrown by a popular revolution. During this period succession to the Prime Ministership became hereditary, although at times departing from the rule of primogeniture (*ibid.*: 36). The branch of the Ranas who held this position was often allied by marriage to the Shahs who continued to occupy the throne. Jang Bahadur's own daughter was married to the Crown Prince in 1857 and two of his sons married daughters of the king.

When Jang Bahadur took over the post of Prime Minister in 1847 the relations between Nepal and the East India Company in India were fragile. Nepal had lost parts of the Tarai to the British in the Nepal-British War of 1814-16. Even so, Nepal had succeeded in keeping the Company out of its territories, hence limiting the extent of the Company trade in Nepal and with Tibet. This attitude to the British and the East India Company had already been laid down by Prithvinarayan Shah who himself had been interested in developing trade with Tibet in order to increase revenue. The Company, however,

did carry out a limited amount of trade in cotton, wool, mountain herbs, copper, borax and other goods (Hodgson 1864 vol. 6) inside Nepal, mostly through Indian merchants. From the time of the Nepal-British War, a Company representative had also been resident at Kathmandu and these officials had tried to influence both the King and the Prime Minister at different times. Mostly, however, they found their activities and movements restricted and their ability to gain knowledge about the country limited. On the other hand, the Company often became involved in intrigues around and at the court, and several times offered hospitality to kings in exile.

The continuous threat created to Nepal by the presence of the Company across the border from Nepal's most valuable land (the Tarai), particularly after the defeat in 1816, must have made it obvious to the Ranas that their survival to some extent depended upon their relations with the British Government. Jang Bahadur mastered these relations superbly. Not only did he help the British during the 1857 Indian revolt, for which the British returned parts of the territories conquered in the 1814-16 war, he also became the first Nepali Prime Minister to undertake a state visit to Britain in 1850-51. It was no coincidence that the Ranas only were seriously opposed after the British finally left India in 1947.

During the Rana regime, the administration became highly organised. All civil and military government employees became directly responsible to the Prime Minister and appointments were, as to some extent had been the case in the previous period, renewed every year. Ranas who originally were Chetris

now enjoyed a privileged position and members of those Rana lineages who had intermarried with the nobility now were preferred for military and administrative positions, both in the centre and in the hills. The Prime Minister also became the judicial head during this period and, inspired by the English system, Jang Bahadur compiled a book of law (Muluki Ain) and inaugurated a penal system. This was the first time an attempt was made to enforce laws uniformly all over the country. The Ain was based largely on the *dharmasāstras* (Adam 1949).

The Rana regime was centralised and oligarchic and succeeded in a much stronger control of the country as a whole including remote regions such as the Karnali, than had been possible for previous rulers. The motives of the Ranas were not different from those of their predecessors. The main aim was still to administer the country in order to collect taxes and revenue and to prevent decentralisation of power. However, the manner in which they did this differed. Rather than relying predominantly on local headmen as the previous administration had done, the Ranas attempted a supervision of officials at this level in order to limit the amount of revenue which escaped the coffers of the government. Thus there were repeated attempts during this period, not all of them successful, to limit the amount of authority local officials had over the peasantry.

The *thek thiti* system of revenue collection has already been described. However, not only was there a good deal of variation in the precise nature of the system, the amount of tax and levy extracted also varied from one tax official to another. In Karnali at

the village (*gāù*) level, the revenue was collected through a *mukhiyā* and under the supervision of *jimwāls*. Each *jimwāl* had several villages to supervise and these villages constituted a *dara*.¹² (RRS 1979, 11/5: 76; Regmi 1978). These revenue officials at the *gāù* and *dara* levels respectively could be local cultivators from the region or they could be landowners elsewhere. In an order from the king to the ryots of Jumla and Humla it is stated that “persons belonging to Bajhang should be removed from the position of *jimwāl*” (RRS 1971, 3/3: 57). Bajhang is now a district to the south-east of Rārā and was then a kingdom retaining a certain degree of independence vis-à-vis the Rana regime. This order thus indicates that those who were able could become tax collectors under the *thek thiti* system and in this way increase their income. However, it is not entirely clear whether these officials were entitled to collect levies for themselves. On the one hand, an order in 1844 states that “no *salāmi* (levy) imposed by *Amāli*, *Bhārdārs* or *jimwāls* shall be paid”¹³ (RRS 1971, 3/9: 211). On the other hand, another order published between 1834 and 1846 refers to the abolition and reinstatement of a fee for keeping records (RRS 1971, 3/3: 62). It seems unlikely that non-resident *jimwāls*, as those from Bajhang mentioned above, were not benefiting materially from their undertakings. Indeed later, when the government appointed specific contractors (*ijaradars*) who undertook a contract (*thekbandi*) to meet the demand of revenue officially claimed by the government, these contractors often resorted to irregular practices in order to make a profit (RRS 1979, 11/5: 76).

The *ijaradar* functioned at the level above the *jimwāl*, but it is difficult to determine whether all three revenue officials, i.e., the *ijaradar*, the *jimwāl* and the *mukhiyā*, were present everywhere in the area which formerly had been included in the Baisie states. Most likely the *ijaradar* was only present in some areas, whereas in other areas there were *zamindars*, as I have described. In yet other areas the *jimwāls* possessed the contract and handed the revenue directly to the *Amāli*, the official in charge of the revenue collection of the district. Whether there was one intermediary or three between the cultivators and the district level may, however, have made a difference both to the extent of exploitation the cultivators suffered and to the authority enjoyed by these intermediary officials.

The *jimwāls*, *zamindars* and other contractors commanded a certain amount of judicial authority in the villages in which they collected revenue. This authority was theoretically limited and under the supervision of the *Amāli*. Certain serious offences such as murder and cowslaughter were referred to him (RRS 1971, 3/9: 211). On the other hand, most of the less serious sexual offences and also property disputes could be heard at the local court at which the *jimwāl* or other contractors presided. In this capacity these local officials could impose fines and they were also in charge of forced labour (*jhārā*). Every cultivator was obligated to contribute a certain amount of unpaid labour to the government. Such labour was used to construct irrigation channels, paths, buildings, to break in new land, but most often *jhārā* was a method by which soldiers could be recruited and

provisions and equipment transported in wartime. This later became the *hulāk* system which exists in Nepal today and is used as a postal system. *Jhārā* was a system by which the government could organise labour relatively quickly and at short notice, but this system was ill defined and tended to be abused by government officials (RRS 1971, 3/3). The government's attitude to the abuse of *Jhārā* was ambivalent. This is demonstrated in an order issued in 1812 to stop the practice of forcing children to carry loads when no adults were available. The last sentence of this order reads:

Any person who beats the wives, son and daughter of the subjects for transporting his own supplies, other than those of the government, shall be awarded severe punishment.

(Quoted in Regmi 1971: 110)

The central dilemma for the government during the Rana period, as well as during the previous rulers, is reflected in this sentence. On the one hand the Rana objective of collecting as much revenue as possible necessitated a centralised system of finance. On the other, remoteness of certain areas and the lack of uniformity forced the administration to employ a hierarchy of officials, some of whom were local people. Such officials were sometimes paid in cash and sometimes assigned in land. In any case, the remoteness of the area made communication difficult and the transport of money impractical. Thus officials tended to deduct their salaries from the revenue before it reached the treasury and this helped them

acquire more authority vis-à-vis local people than the central administration approved of. The Ranas did not so much disapprove of the practices from which the peasants suffered, but rather of the fact that these practices sometimes benefited officials other than the Ranas themselves and in this way weakened the centralised system of administration. A delicate balance was needed between autocratic centralised rule and alignment with local rulers who, after all, had been powerful in the past. Thus in 1863, Jang Bahadur issued an order exempting Thakuris and Rajputs from *sermā* tax, levies in lieu of compulsory labour and levies payable to the *zamindar* or other local administrator. The order states:

You are directed to present yourselves whenever required by us and to carry out the tasks assigned to you.

(RRS 1970, 2/1: 19)

The many changes in the system and, at times, the arbitrary administrative decisions were no doubt the product of a strategy directed towards the achievement of a balance between the centre and the periphery of the state. Already in 1840 an order was issued from the government to the effect of abolishing all *jimwāls* since “the people had complained as a result of the authority of the *jimwāls*” (RRS 1971, 3/3: 61). Apparently nothing changed as a result of this order. Thus another order to the same effect was issued by the Rana government in 1851 and the idea was that the government should deal directly with the *mukhiyās* at the village level. This proved an impossible administrative task and in 1866 *dara* level

officials were reintroduced (RRS 1979, 11/5: 77). No doubt such changes were attempted in order to increase the amount of revenue reaching the government, but one effect of such one-sided political aims was to reinforce the *status quo* and hence the diversity with respect to taxation practices and political structures in various parts of the country. This diversity persisted until the royal coup and the instigation of Panchayat Democracy in 1962.

It would be wrong to give the impression that the political system did not change during the hundred years or so of Rānā rule. However, the changes which took place did not involve the people of the country as a whole. By and large, the oligarchic character of Rānā rule kept the country and its inhabitants isolated from the rest of the world (Shah 1975a). The country was virtually closed to outsiders and Nepalis were discouraged from contact with western and even Indian ideas. While the peasantry and the population at large was kept in ignorance about the international climate, the Ranas themselves were not as independent as their political attitudes suggested. The curious symbiosis with and support from the British in India continued. Indeed, it was largely under pressure from the British that slavery was abolished in Nepal in 1924. Previous attempts to abolish slavery had been made, but with no visible effect. When the Prime Minister Chandra Shamsheer Rana succeeded in 1924 he was not only pointing to the international (mostly British) disapproval of the institution, but also to certain change which had been taking place in the economy of Nepal. He pointed out that to keep a slave was more expensive than to hire a labourer who works

for a wage and that in the case of hired labourers productivity was higher as a result of absence of the paternalistic relationship which existed between slaves and slave-owners (RRS 1972, 4/11, 4/12 and 1973 5/1, 5/2). Whatever the state of the economy at that time it seems clear that the arguments put forward by Chandra Shamsheer in his speech for abolition were arguments which point to the beginning of development of a free labour force. The events of the following three or four decades did indeed confirm that political and economic changes were taking place.

The abolition of slavery in 1924 and the decision of the government to buy slaves from slave-owners at the rate of Rs. 140 per slave did have ramifications all over the country. At Rārā there had been slaves up until this time and after that only a few decided to stay on with their masters rather than make the best of their freedom elsewhere. It is not difficult to understand why such an offer of freedom might have been refused. After all the slave did not receive the money compensating him or herself, and if free labour really was cheaper from the landowner's point of view this also implied that life as a free wage-earning labourer was perhaps more miserable and insecure than that of a slave.

The abolition of slavery was a significant piece of legislation which affected Rārā and the surrounding villages. Otherwise, the period is surprisingly uniform. No change in the landtenure system or in the agrarian relations took place during this period. There were, however, for Thakuris some important changes in the administrative structure and these changes eventually resulted in a consolidation of the relationship between

Thakuris and the one hand and Chetris and Doms on the other.

It will be remembered that the Kalyal chronicle put the arrival of the first Kalyal Thakuris at Rārā back to the middle of the 17th century. Needless to say, just as the authenticity of the chronicle cannot be proven, so the actual descent of the Kalyal Thakuris who live at Rārā from these distant ancestors cannot be unambiguously shown. The only vague support for the chronicle is the relationship between the three branches of Thakuris in Rārā village, their separate arrival dates and the present hierarchical relationship between them. The first written record available from Rārā is the Hodgson tax record dated 1837. This record must be regarded with suspicion. It does not specify caste-membership, nor does it necessarily include all those resident at Rārā or Chapru villages. Further, it does not give any information about the administration of tax collection. Such information, however, is available in a decree or *rukkā* issued in 1904 to three prominent Thakuris living at Rārā and now in the possession of the present *jimwāl* (see appendix). All three Thakuris were paternal grandfathers of Thakuris presently living in the village. This document refers to two other dates, namely 1843 and 1868. In 1843 a grant had been given to the fathers of these three prominent Thakuris establishing the former's rights to collect revenue on behalf of *jimwāls* from four villages in the area. The four villages were Rārā, Chapru, Murma and Ruma, and for this work they received a portion of the revenue. Thus in 1843 some of the Thakuris living at Rārā acted as *mukhiyās* for the surrounding villages

and collected revenue, some of which they handed over to the *jimwāls* who functioned at the *dara* level. Whether the situation was structurally different in 1837 at the time of the Hodgson record or whether the revenue collection was in the hands of another branch of the Thakuris, as informants suggest, is difficult to establish. In 1868, however, during the time of Jang Bahadur Rana, the system changed in line with the attempts mentioned earlier to curb the power and material gain of local rulers and officials. In 1868 the Thakuris were deprived of their right to receive a portion of the revenue and do not appear to have had any officially recognised position. Indeed, the *rukkā* is a response to a complaint about the post 1868 situation and to a request for the reinstigation of the old privileges. The reaction of the 1904 Rana government, however, was to change the situation yet again. This time, however, the Thakuris had their privileges restored. Accordingly the new arrangement was that the Thakuris should collect the taxes from the four villages and were entitled to a portion of this revenue. The rest was to be handed over to the *amāli* at the district headquarters. In this new arrangement the Thakuris were the only intermediaries between the villagers and the government officials of the district, an arrangement which was very similar to the one enjoyed by the *zamindar* in this part of the western Nepal and perhaps also to the situation which existed at Rārā before and immediately after the Gorkha conquest of Jumla.

According to the 1904 document, none of the Thakuris at Rārā held any tax collecting position or enjoyed any privileges in the period from 1868 to

1904. However, since they did enjoy such privileges prior to this period and since it was conceivable to them that they could regain such privileges in 1904 by drafting the petition, it is reasonable to assume that all along they held some power and authority vis-à-vis the local Chetris and Doms. The information from earlier periods also confirms such political superiority.

The present *jimwāl* of Rārā village considers his right to the *jimwālship* to derive from this 1904 document. He still collects the tax from the villages of Rārā and Chapru whereas the tax from the two other villages is now collected by local panchayat officials. The three petitioners involved were all members of the *kāncho* branch of Thakuris and at least one of them, namely the father's father of the present *jimwāl*, is also reputed to have enjoyed a *jimwālship* in Pyuthan district, situated near Musikot (Map 3). However, the people of Rārā also talk about the *jimwālship* in the past as having been held by the Thakuri branch which arrived at Rārā first, and before that one branch of the Rokaya Chetris claim that they held the office of *talukdār*.¹⁴ There is no possibility of proving whether these claims are true. It seems clear, however, that not only has there been competition for such offices as *jimwāl* in the past, but the structural position of this office and its importance also varied at different times according to the nature of the link with the central administration. No doubt the Thakuris who managed to become collectors of the revenue enjoyed great authority with the local inhabitants, particularly when they were the only intermediaries between the local and the government level.

These observations are confirmed by a land-record written in 1916 and referring back to 1889. This land-record was filed in the local land-records office and was believed by the official there to be the only one available for the land around Rārā village. Since the development of the National Park, however, new land-records have been made in order to deal with the question of compensation. In the 1916 land-record three Thakuris are again mentioned as being in charge of the land around Rārā. They are in two cases sons, and in one case a grandson, of the three who wrote the 1904 petition and further, in this later document, they are referred to by the title of *zamindar*. This suggest that during the latter part of Rana rule some Thakuris enjoyed more authority than they had during the earlier period and that this authority must have been similar to the kind of authority enjoyed by some petty rulers during the period of the Baisi states and just after the Gorkha conquest. Why else should the term *zamindar* have been used? Further, in the part of this land-record which refers to 1889, i. e., to the period in which the Thakuris officially held no privileges, it is quite clear that the three lines which since 1843 have been involved in holding offices and enjoying privileges, were not taxed at the same rate as the rest of the village. Indeed an ancestor of one of these lines was in 1889 referred to as *mukhiyā* or tax-collecting official of the village level. In this land-record it also emerges that the tax and various payments which were made by the cultivators were in kind payments which the *zamindars* converted into cash.

The few documents available for the area around Rārā which refer to the situation during Rana rule suggest that the revenue collection from Rārā and

surrounding villages was in the hands of the Kalyal Thakuris who lived in Rārā village. Such positions implied privileges which were not very different from those which existed before when the Thakuris could claim membership, even if peripheral, of a ruling nobility. Thus for a long time there has been continuity in the Thakuri position at Rārā and their relationships to other castes there. This was always sustained by the character of the states which existed in the area, and was even strengthened in the latter part of the autocratic Rana period when the Thakuris clearly benefited from the delicate balance between centre and periphery which the Ranas had to achieve.

6. THE POST-RANA PERIOD

The situation which had developed during the Rana period appears to have persisted in Karnali until the inauguration of Panchayat Democracy in 1962. The change which took place in the period between the Popular Revolution and the fall of the Ranas in 1950 until the royal coup in 1961, mainly involved the twons, in particular Kathmandu and those situated in the Tarai region adjacent to India. Nevertheless, the Ranas' early attempt at Panchayat Democracy in 1946, the formation of political parties and budding industrialisation which had been taking place in the Tarai since the middle of the 1930s (Shah 1975) suggest that general changes were sweeping through the country, even though various regions developed at an unequal pace. Despite the attempts at isolation, the Rana regime was intricately bound up with India and the British there. The trade which passed between Tibet and India had for a long time been in the hands of Indian merchants (Hamilton

1819: 212). In 1923 a treaty had been concluded with the British in India permitting imports of goods free of duty into Nepal from overseas countries. This had led to the collapse of many local cottage industries and other small industries in Nepal. In 1934, the Rana government had created the Organisation for Development and Commerce. In 1936 the Nepal Companies Act was passed, and at this time Nepal's first bank, the Nepal Bank Ltd., was also established.

The industrial development which had taken place, however, had been the result of superficial growth widening the gulf between the more centrally located areas and the rest of the country. No doubt the opposition to the Ranas had been widespread, but the protests which were voiced after the Popular Revolution were marked by an absence of unity between the peasants, who even today constitute about 93 per cent of Nepal's working population (Regmi 1974: 1), and the workers, labourers and dissatisfied elements of the elite. Against this background the attempt at democracy which had begun in 1950 failed, and in 1960 King Mahendra, exercising his emergency powers, dissolved the elected government and in 1962 introduced the Panchayat system. The 1962 Panchayat system was declared with the realisation that the success of democracy in Nepal depended upon the agrarian relations within the peasantry. Thus the new Constitution concentrated on reforming the many diverse systems of land tenure in the country and emphasised the need for local development.

Despite this, change has been slow in such remote areas as Karnali. A district panchayat office did not appear in Mugu district until 1966 and it has already

been referred to the inefficiency in instigating the new reforms and measures in the area around Rārā. As late as the early 1970s, while panchayat democracy was being advocated from the district office in Gum, at Rārā, Chetris and Doms were still making payments in kind to one of the former *zamindars*. With the creation of the National Park, however, everyone at Rārā has come under closer scrutiny and such illegal practises have stopped. The inequality between former revenue officials and high castes on the one hand and cultivators and lower castes on the other was clearly discernible, however, in the fight for the best terms of compensation after resettlement.

To summarise this chapter, it can be said that despite several upheavals during the period discussed, there has been a marked continuity in the agrarian relations at Rārā. Such continuity at the local level was to some extent paralleled by continuity at the national level after unification, although the central areas of the state of Nepal began to change qualitatively before the area around Rārā. However, it can reasonably be located sometime in the first half of the 20th century. The states which developed in the period before this change were of the same type and similar in organisation and structure.

Thus in the various Hindu states¹⁵ which have existed in Nepal since the rise of the Mallas of western Nepal there have been striking parallels. In all of them, there has been the need for a military and administrative organisation in order to increase the area in which revenue could be levied and in order to ensure the payment of such revenues. In the earlier states the difficulty in administering peripheral areas was marked, but even today this opposition between centre and

periphery is present as the difference between Rārā and the more centrally located areas such as the Kathmandu valley and the Tarai shows. In all these states there has also been competition around the offices at various levels. Bali Raj was successful in claiming the throne from the previous king of Jumla. In Rārā the Kalyal Thakuris were competing for the right to hold the positions of *mukhiyā* and *jimwāl* whereas in Kathmandu the Shahs of Gorkha were competing for succession to the throne as later the Ranas were competing for the office of Prime Minister.

The area around Rārā and Karnali generally is distinguished from the rest of Nepal in various ways. Apparently there was here a higher degree of monetarisation and revenue was generally paid in cash rather than in kind. The area is also marked by the absence of private land-grants to individuals and institutions. Instead of donating grants of land and thus rights to revenue to individuals who held administrative and military offices as a form of payment for their assistance to the state, in Karnali the government relied on local officials or anyone who offered himself to collect the revenue. These officials were not paid by land-grants but usually had the right to charge a small fee. However, since such officials, such as the *jimwāls*, were given judicial powers as well as the task of organising the forced labour due to the government, they were able to exercise some power and authority over the local peasants. This constituted their real payment and since such power and authority was virtually unchallenged and not supervised from above the peasants of Karnali became the subjects of atrocious oppression as evidenced in the numerous orders issued from Kathmandu at various times.

PART II

Chapter 4

LAND TENURE AND HOUSEHOLDS

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of Rārā and the surrounding area indicates the extent to which the state was involved in the affairs of the village. The main objective of the rulers, whether they were Kalyal Thakuris ruling from Jumla or Ranas ruling from Kathmandu, was to extract taxes. The extraction of taxes was justified by the fact that the rulers in return offered protection to their subjects. Protection was needed, at least in the eyes of the rulers, against other rajas and local chiefs. Indeed, in this area, the expansion of petty states through conquest was commonplace. When acts of conquest involved smaller states, such acts tended to result in two shifts of power, which to some extent cancelled each other out. Firstly, the new rulers and conquerors claimed fees of obeisance (*salāmi*) as well as other levies and such payments were made at the expense of the old rulers, who now in effect became subjects like everybody else. Secondly, however, since the conquerors in the act of conquest usually had extended their territory, the need for local administrators and tax collectors arose. Such positions

were often conveniently filled by former rulers (Fox 1971) who in this way retained some of their power and authority. As described in Chapter 3 at Rārā this latter position was occupied by the Thakuris, who in this way held a position rather different from that of other castes in the immediately surrounding area. At the outset it may, therefore, be useful to consider the extent to which the caste composition of Rārā village is representative of villages in this area.

In Nepal and in the Himalayan region generally fewer castes tend to co-exist in villages than is the case in central and north India (Bailey 1957, Berreman 1963, Caplan 1975, Caplan 1972, Gaborieau 1977, Fürer-Haimendorf 1975, Mayer 1960, Parry 1979 and Sanwal 1976). The area around lake Rārā in which 22 nucleated villages is no exception to this. The term *jāt* (species) can be used to refer to both caste and subcaste. Thus, for example, Chetri is a *jāt*, but Rokaya and Rawal which are names referring to two different Chetri subcastes or *thar* (also species, clan), may also be referred to as *jāt*. Later I shall describe the main status distinctions between people who in a broad sense are members of the same *jāt*, but for the moment I shall distinguish the castes found in the different villages of the area by using a formal definition of caste. The castes are thus what people consider to be the main castes and are constituted by several subcastes (Mayer 1960). A description of the commensal hierarchy and the division of labour will be given later in Chapter 5 and the kinship relations between and within castes and subcastes will be considered in Part III.

In the 22 villages considered there are four main castes. These are Brahmin, Thakuri, Chetri and

Dom.¹ Bhotiyas, whose caste is considered by Hindus to be Tamang, and other *matwālis* (drinking castes) (Fürer-Haimendorf 1975) live outside the area under consideration. The term Dom refers to all untouchables (Sanmal 1976) and thus includes different artisans. From the point of view of other castes the different artisans are considered of equal status and they intermarry. While Chetris are of different *thar*² (species) and status differences between *thar* are to some extent expressed in patterns of intermarriage, no hierarchy between different *thar* is generally agreed upon. Thakuris and Brahmins, on the other hand, are internally divided and these divisions are recognised by Thakuris and Brahmins themselves as well as by other castes. Table 1 shows the number of castes found in 22 villages in the area, including Rārā village itself. From this table it is clear that while half of the villages are inhabited by two castes, villages inhabited by only one caste are not unusual and villages with three castes are fewer in number.³

Brahmins live in only one of the 22 villages, Thakuris in 10, Chetris in 18 and Dom in 13. The Brahmins are Jaisi Brahmins and officiate as astrologers. They are of low status and not acceptable as *purohits* (priests) to the Thakuris at Rārā, although they may officiate in Chetri lifecycle rituals. Thakuris use Upadhya Brahmins from Sija or the Khater valley or even from Jumla in rituals.

The Thakuris are of Bum, Kalyal, Chatyal and Malla clans, but some are also referred to as Hamal Thakuris. Hamal Thakuris are the descendants of unions between Brahmin men and Thakuri women and are considered of equal status to other Thakuris.

Between the Thakuris a further distinction is made between Shah and Shahi or Hitan Thakuris. Shah Thakuris do not plough themselves, and do not allow widow remarriage or divorce (*jāri*), whereas Shahi or Hitan Thakuris plough and allow both these marriage practices. Shah Thakuris are considered of higher status than Shahis and the two should not intermarry. All Thakuris in the area, except those at Rārā, are considered and consider themselves Shahi Thakuris but some of these Shahi Thakuris are also Kalyals and thus of the same clan as the Rārā Thakuris. In Pina village, one day's walk from Rārā, there are Kalyal Thakuris who are Shahis and who, as do the Shahs at Rārā, consider that they have descended from Bali Raj.

Table 1: Number of Castes in 22 Villages

| <i>Number of Castes</i> | <i>Number of Villages</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 11 |
| 3 | 5 |
| Total Number of Villages | 22 |

The Chetris are of Rawal, Burha, Rokaya, Karka, Banari, Bista and Oidi *thar* or subcaste and in the area under consideration all Chetris, except the Oidi, wear the *janai* (sacred thread which is six-stranded coloured in yellow and red). Elsewhere in Karnali (Fürer-Haimendorf 1971, 1975) however, Burha Chetris do not wear the *janai* and are considered *matwālis*. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Rawal and Burha Chetris around Rārā are said to have received the *janai* from a Kalyal raja sometime in the past.

The Dom of the area include Bhyals (leather workers, local term), Lohars (blacksmiths, local term), Damais (drummers and tailors, standard Nepali), Labhras (basketmakers, local term), Tiruwas (stonemasons) and Tumaro, who are cultivators. There is also a small number of Sunards (goldsmiths). In most villages Doms are represented by only one group of artisans and Lohars, Bhyals and Damais are the most numerous. The Labhras and Tiruwas include only a few households and serve the area as a whole.

The villages in the area around the lake Rārā are relatively small and generally inhabited by only a few castes. While the castes of a village may be constituted by two or more subcastes, the general impression is one of little caste differentiation. The typical village includes only one *janai*-wearing caste and a few households of Doms. Thus Rārā village itself is somewhat atypical. Firstly, Rārā is inhabited by three castes, namely Thakuris, Chetris and Doms. Secondly, although the residence of Kalyal Thakuris at Rārā is not particularly unusual for the area, Rārā is distinguished from the other 21 villages and from the village in Mugu district generally by the fact that the Thakuris there claim a superior status. Thus, Thakuris of Rārā claim to be Shahs when the other Kalyal Thakuris are considered by themselves and others to be Shahis. To a casual observer the Thakuris and Chetris in many of the surrounding villages are often indistinguishable. They perform similar agricultural activities and marriage practices. In contrast, the differences between the Chetris and Thakuris at Rārā is striking. This difference must be seen in relation to the past and present political

position of the Shahs at Rārā. Although their political authority may not have been extended far outside the area immediately surrounding Rārā itself, their authority there was solidly established. The following chapters examine the extent to which this politically superior position of the Thakuris has been sustained and strengthened through economic relationships. The present Chapter, describes the system of landtenure. This description necessitates an understanding of the land holding units and hence of the pattern of household composition. An analysis of this as well as a discussion of laws of inheritance and partition are therefore also given at this early stage. In Chapter 5 it is analysed the organisation of production and the agrarian relations which exist at Rārā. Chapter 6 considers monetarism and usuary and Chapter 7 analyses the extent of economic differentiation and the role of labour in the economy. In Chapter 8 the internal structure of the cast in detail and Chapters 9, 10 and 11 describe and analyse the kinship ideology of Thakuris and Chetris. In general, it is an attempt to show the importance of labour in the economy and how an increasing loss of control over the labour of others has led to a deteriorating status for the Thakuris at Rārā.

2. LAND

The agricultural land at Rārā is situated between 10,000 and 11,000 feet. Within this range the quality of the soil varies marginally with the altitude, but all the land cultivated at Rārā is *pākho* (unirrigated, standard Nepali) and of poor quality compared to land situated at lower altitudes. The cultivated plots

are clustered around and above the village. Below the village the plots reach the shore of the lake and on all other sides fade into the densely wooded jungle (*ban*) where firewood, building materials, wild roots and vegetables are abundantly available. In places and always at the shores of the lake, trees and vegetation give way to meadows where the villagers graze their livestock. All the cultivated land at Rārā is referred to as *lekha jaggā* (land which is situated at high altitudes). Most Thakuris, Chetris and Doms, who live at Rārā have land at lower altitudes as well. Such land is referred to as *aula jaggā* (land situated at lower altitudes), and can be either irrigated (*khet*) or unirrigated (*pākho*). This distribution of land between different ecological zones is typical of villages in Karnali. Since many villages in this region are situated on steep slopes, *lekha* and *aula* land tends to be situated above and below a village. This is, for example, the case with villages such as Jhari and Tuma (map 4). The situation at Rārā is different. Here *aula jaggā* is situated further away from the village in the valleys surrounding the lake and the different castes and subcastes have *aula jaggā* in different places. Some of the Thakuris have their *aula jaggā* as far away as one long day's walk from Rārā, but everyone else can reach theirs in about half a day. Most people have built houses *aula* and have either created a small village there or become part of a village which already existed.

Due to the differences in altitude, the busy agricultural seasons for *lekha* and *aula* land do not coincide and when there is work to do *aula* some members of each household tend to stay there. In

some cases a whole household may spend about half the year *aula* and particularly old people who feel that the journey to Rārā and the cold weather there is too strenuous, stay *aula* all year round.

In Rārā village there are 13 households of Thakuris, 48 households of Chetris and 7 households of Doms (all Lohars) and all these households own some land there.⁴ In addition all these households, except 7 Chetri households also own some land *aula*. Ancestors of these 7 Chetri households are said to have owned *aula* land but to have lost it through sale or mortgage.⁵

The Thakuris own *aula jaggā* in several different places and in some of these places such land constitutes very small amounts. The Thakuris who arrived at Rārā first and who are considered to be the *jetho* (eldest) branch own land at Sigari, a village situated half a day's walk south west of Rārā. This land is *pākho*, but of a better quality than the *pākho* at Rārā and allows for some double-cropping. This branch also owns land at the village of Kalai (map 4). All the land at Kalai is *khet*. The origin of the rights of these Thakuris to land at Kalai and Sigari is not clear. One informant suggested that these rights date back to the time when the land at Rārā and Chapru was donated to their ancestors. The *māilo* (next eldest) and *kāncho* (youngest) branches have most of their *aula jaggā* in the Khater river valley situated one long day's journey to the west of Rārā lake. Originally this land consisted of only a few fertile plots in the bottom of the valley. These plots are said to have been given to the ancestors of these two branches by a Brahmin who lived in Khater and the

date of this grant is assumed to be sometime after the arrival of the *kāncho* branch at Rārā. All this land is *khet* and must always have been suitable for rice cultivation and double cropping, but in the past it was mainly used as a place to keep the livestock during the winter months. More recently some of these Thakuris have bought more land in and around Khater and in the last 40 years or so some of them have also started to live there permanently. Nowadays the Thakuris who live there constitute a small hamlet called Raunteri.⁶ Most Thakuris who have *aula* land at Raunteri, however, either move between Raunteri and Rārā at different times of the year or have an arrangement by which some members of the households live permanently at Raunteri. I shall return to this when I discuss the pattern of household composition towards the end of this chapter.

Aside from the land at Khater members of the *kāncho* branch also own *aula* land elsewhere. They all own land at Gilar, the village at which the *aula* land of many of the Chetris from Chapru is situated, at Kalai, and at Karkibara, a village situated close to the district headquarters in Gum east of Rārā (map 4). The land at Kalai and Karkibara owned by this branch is very little and is said to have been acquired by their ancestors and has subsequently been divided as households have partitioned. The same is generally true for the land at Gilar, although there some households have bought additional land and thus acquired sizeable landholdings. In addition to these landholdings a few households also own land elsewhere. Thus one household owns land at Jumla, one at Tuma village and one household has invested

a sizeable amount of money in land at Rajapuri in the Tarai near Nepalgang.

In this way the pattern of Thakuri *aula* landholdings is scattered and to some extent reflecting the separate arrival of the three branches. Aside from the land owned by one household in the Tarai the largest proportion of *aula* holdings is concentrated at Khater, and whereas most Thakuris also own smaller amounts in villages closer to Rārā village itself, the *aula* land of the *jetho* branch is concentrated in one of these nearer villages. This pattern is not new, but has existed for four or five generations, although in many cases, households have acquired more land adjacent or near to the old plots.

The Chetri *aula* land is concentrated in two villages. Most of the Rawal Chetris own land at Guira village, a couple of hours walk east of Rārā. This land is all *pākho*, and none of the Rawals own *khet*. This land is said to have been given by a Bista Chetri as a dowry (*dāijo*) to his daughter, who married a Rawal, but there are no records referring to this. The *aula* land of the Rokaya Chetris is situated at Ashidara, half a day's walk to the north of Rārā. At Ashidara there is *khet* as well as *pākho* and the acquisition of this land is thought to have taken place at the time when the Rokaya Chetris settled at Rārā. The Rokaya Chetris claim that the land at Rārā was granted to them by the raja, who ruled the area before the Kalyals and that a *tāmeā-patra* (a copper plate on which a deed of this gift is inscribed) exists to this effect. This document, however, was never shown to me and the time and circumstances of the Rokayas' arrival at Rārā, remains uncertain. The rawals claim

that they were at Rārā before the Rokayas and that the land there was granted to them by a Brahmin. Whatever the precise circumstance of the presence of the Rokayas and Rawals at Rārā, it seems likely that they held the land there as well as *aula* at the time of the Thakuris' arrival.

The Lohars who live at Rārā own *aula* land at Ashidara as well as at Guira. All their *aula* land is *pākho* and constitutes small quantities. Their *aula* as well as *lekha* land at Rārā is said to have been given to them by landowners for whom they worked as artisans. The Chetri and Dom pattern of *aula* land-tenure is thus more uniform than that of the Thakuris. The *aula* land of the Chetris and Dom is divided between two villages, namely Guira and Ashidara and this division represents the division of the Chetris into two different subcastes or *thar*.

Within the area under consideration the measurement of land is not uniform. The traditional measure of *pākho* land is *hal*. One *hal* is equivalent to the amount of land one man using two oxen can plough in one day. Since the size of one *hal* varies, not only according to the eagerness of the ploughman and the strength of the oxen, but also to the texture of the soil and hence the weather conditions on any particular day, *hal* is an extremely inaccurate unit of measurement. In this area *pākho* landholdings have not been surveyed, but a standardisation of the measurement for *aula pākho* land has been attempted by the government. This has been done by calculating the average amount of seed needed for one *hal*. Since the amount of seed varies according to the type of crop sown, the highest yielding crop on *aula pākho*,

namely *kodo* (a type of millet) has been used to establish a standard measure. Generally the amount of seed needed for the cultivation of one *hal* with *kodo* is 2 *māna* (approx. 2 lbs.) and accordingly the measurement for *aula pākho* is 2 *biumāna* ("mana of seed") for each *hal*. At Rārā, where *kodo* cannot be cultivated and where the soil is poorer, the amount of seed needed for one *hal* is much larger. For the cultivation of wheat and barley, which are the main crops there, one *hal* generally needs between 12 and 16 *māna* (approx. 12-16 lbs.) Finally, *aula khet*, which has been surveyed, is measured in area, *māto* ("earth") rather than seed. The unit of measurement on *khet* is thus *muri māto* and refers to an area of 1,024 sq ft⁷ (personal communication of J.K. Gurung, head of the land reforms office in Gum 1977). Although many people suggested that there are 2 *muri māto* in one *hal*, in fact the conversion of one of these units to another is not generally agreed upon.⁸

The amount of land owned by 13 Thakuri households, 28 Chetri households and 7 Dom households is presented in Table 2. In this Table, the distinction between Rārā *pakho*, *aula pākho* and *aula khet* has been retained. The total amount of land owned by the three castes is 2630.25 *hal*, 117.17 *muri māto* and 18 *bighā*⁹ in the Tarai. The 18 *bighā* are, as I have mentioned, owned by one Thakuri household, and this household is in the process of moving permanently to the Tarai. The 18 *bighā* are, except in terms of supporting some members of this household all year, outside the economy of Rārā and have therefore been excluded from the Table and the economic analysis generally. As Table 2 shows, the Thakuris, who

constitute 19 per cent of the households, or 31 per cent of the population, own 40 per cent of the total amount of *pākho* at Rārā and *aula*. Chetris, who constitute 71 per cent of the households and 61 per cent of the population own 56 per cent, and the Doms, who constitute 10 per cent of households and 8 per cent of the population own only 4 per cent. The Thakuris also own 72 per cent of the total amount of *khet*, whereas the Chetris own 28 per cent and the Dom own none. On the other hand, whereas only 6 per cent of the *pākho* owned by the Thakuris is *aula pākho*, 25 per cent of the *pākho* owned by Chetris is situated *aula* and 31 per cent of the Dom *pākho* is *aula pākho*. On the average, the 13 Thakuri households own 82 *hal* of *pākho* at Rārā, 2 *hal pākho aula* and 6.4 *muri mato* of *khet*, whereas on the average, the 48 households of Chetris own 31 *hal pākho* at Rārā, 10 *hal pākho aula*, and 2 *muri mato khet aula*. The Dom own 14 *hal pākho* at Rārā and 6 *hal pākho aula*, on the average.

From Table 2, as well as from the figures on the average landholdings per household, some differentiation in terms of landownership between the three castes is discernable. Not only do the 13 Thakuri households own 40 per cent of all *pākho* land, they also own nearly three quarters of the best land, whereas the 7 Dom households clearly are the poorest. These figures point to some degree of correspondence between caste and amount of land owned although the scale of the differences between Chetris and Thakuris, particularly when one considers landholdings in relation to population rather than households, is unexpected. For a group of people who claim status close to that of a nobility and who held prominent political positions in the area in the past, one would expect a much heavier

concentration of landholdings as well as a more widespread distribution of land.

The Thakuri *aula* landholdings are indeed more scattered than those of the Chetris and there is evidence that some Thakuris have sold such *aula* land in recent decades. However, since the Thakuris were never granted political office and rights extending over more than a few villages, the power and authority, which they could and did yield, did not extend to the area as a whole. Although I have no data on the extent of the landholdings of Thakuris or Chetris in any of the surrounding villages, my impression is that Thakuris living in such villages as Pina and Srinagar, who all claim to be Shahis, are in fact in many cases richer in landholdings than the Shah Thakuris at Rārā. In conversation, such Shahi Thakuris, although upholding the Shah and Shahi distinction in other ways, claimed that in terms of reflecting differences in wealth, it has no validity. Thus, while the caste differences between Thakuris, Chetris and Doms at Rārā is reflected in the

Table 2. Landholdings of the Three Castes *

| <i>Caste</i> | <i>House-holds</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Popula-tion</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Rārā pākho hal</i> | <i>Aula pākho hal</i> | <i>% of total</i> | <i>Khet</i> | <i>% of total khet</i> |
|--------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Thakuri | 13 | 19% | 133 | 31% | 1064.25 | 28.0 | 40 | 83.79 | 72 |
| Chetri | 48 | 71% | 262 | 61% | 1466.5 | 364.5 | 56 | 33.38 | 28 |
| Dom | 7 | 10% | 33 | 8% | 99.5 | 30.5 | 4 | - | - |
| | 68 | | 428 | | 2630.25 | 423.0 | | 117.17 | |

* This Table only includes those households for whom I could obtain the relevant economic information. Thus, aside from 15 Thakuri households who live outside Rārā and have stopped cultivating land there, 2 Chetri households who lived at Rārā are not included because the total amount of land they owned could not be ascertained with any certainty.

figures for the landholdings of these castes, in terms of landholdings the Thakuris of Rārā appear less wealthy than one would expect from their claims to superior status and this is confirmed by the economic position of other, in terms of caste, inferior Thakuris of the area.¹⁰

3 INHERITANCE

Land and other property can be legitimately acquired in three different ways. Firstly, land can be inherited (*ansa pāunu*, “to get a share”), and this is still nowadays, as it was in the past, the way most people obtain the fields they cultivate. Secondly, land can be donated as a gift (*dān dinu*). I have mentioned how, in the past, gifts of land were sometimes made to religious persons such as Brahmins or Jogis, but land can and could also be given as *dān* to other people.¹¹ The Chetris consider the giving of land to be as prestigious as the giving of a daughter, but no one could recall that any such gifts had been made in their lifetime. The third manner in which land can be acquired is to buy it (*kinnu*). In Karnali land has been alienable through sale during the whole period of Gorkha and Rana rule and probably before (Regmi 1971) but at Rārā there have always been restrictions on such sales. Land is divided into *bābuko bhāg* (“father’s share”, standard Nepali) or land which is patrilineally inherited, *pākhā bajārko* (“*pākho* land which has been stamped or knocked together”, local term), or land which has been newly made and *mat* (“aim”) land, which has been bought. *Mat* can be freely sold or given away by the person who owns it. Land which is *bābuko bhāg* and land which is *pākhā bajārko*, on the other hand, cannot be sold to

non-kin without first consulting one's nearest agnates. If any of the agnates wish to buy the plot of ancestral land offered for sale they have first right to do so. Full brothers have a right before more distantly related kin. If none of these people wish to buy, the land is offered to other households of a different caste or subcaste in the village and finally to strangers. None of the land at Rārā was bought by strangers in this manner, whereas some of the land *aula* was bought by Rarals from strangers. I will return to the question of land sales when discussing the extent and nature of monetarisation in Chapter 6. For the moment, I want to concentrate on the way in which land can be obtained through inheritance. In 1963 a new Legal Code was introduced and theoretically, at least, this has changed the rules of inheritance. Particularly, the amendments introduced in 1975 have improved the rights of women and cemented the rights of individuals to alienate ancestral as well as both types of self-acquired land in any manner they wish (NLTS 1976, vol. 16: 16ff). At Rārā, however, people still adhere to the rules laid down by customary law.

Upon a man's death all his legitimate sons are entitled to a share of his property (*sampatti*, "wealth") including moveable goods as well as land. The shares received by each son should be equal and it is regarded with serious disapproval if a legitimate son is deprived of his right to inherit. As heirs having rights in the ancestral estate brothers from the same father are equal and indeed they all continue their father's line of descent, passing physical substances as well as land on to their own sons. In other contexts, however, brothers are not considered equal and only

the eldest son (*jetho*) succeeds to the political office or title of his father. The eldest brother commands the respect of his younger siblings and if the household includes more than one brother and their families, the eldest brother as *mukhi* (head) is theoretically entitled to have the final say in important decisions. In this way the eldest of a group of brothers is like a father to his younger siblings.¹² In customary law position of the eldest brother is reflected in his right to receive the payment of *naigalo* (local term) at the time of partition. The nature and size of the *naigalo* is agreed upon by all the brothers concerned and set apart before the actual division of the property. The rest of the property is then divided equally between all the brothers. The size of the *naigalo* varies according to the amount of property in question and it never constitutes a particular proportion of the total. Rather, it is a matter of agreement between the brothers. In one case of partition, the eldest brother had received one *hal* as *naigalo*; in another, a share in a waterbuffalo. It would be considered despicable if the eldest brother was not happy with the *naigalo* he received, and the custom of giving *naigalo* by itself does not result in any economic differentiation between brothers. The *naigalo* is mainly a symbolic gesture acknowledging the superior position of the eldest brother and his proximity to the father.

If a man has had sons by more than one legitimate wife, all the sons are considered legitimate heirs, but the inheritance is divided differently according to whether or not the two wives live together or successively in the same house. If a man lives in a house with two or more wives (*sautābār*,

“the compound of co-wives”) and they all reside amicably together, his property will be divided equally between all his sons. Such a per capita division will also be made when a widower marries again and has sons from this new, as well as from a previous marriage. If, on the other hand, wives do not get on together and find it impossible to live under the same roof, separate houses are built or a partition of the old house is made. In this case, the property will be divided according to the number of wives or per stirpes. Thus, if there are two wives and one wife has had one son only, for example, whereas the other has had three, the property will first be divided into two halves. The son of the first wife will get half, whereas the three sons of the second wife will share one half of the property equally. The per capita and per stirpes division is equivalent to the *pagbandh* and *chundabandh* known from parts of northern India (Parry 1979: 165). But although both principles of division are known to both Chetris and Thakuris, in practice these two castes show different preferences. When a Chetri marries a second wife he automatically builds a separate house for her. Thus his sons inherit per stirpes. Thakuris, on the other hand, who express a dislike for any partitioning or splitting up of households, claim that the two wives have an obligation (*kar*) to get along and should stay in the same household. Consequently, the sons inherit per capita, just as they would if they were all sons of the same mother. The Thakuri emphasis on the per capita division is significant, as I shall discuss below when examining the household composition of the different castes at Rārā. For the moment, however, I want to point out that the emphasis on *pagbandh* by people

who consider themselves of high status is not unusual. In Kangra, Parry reports that *pagbandh* was followed by some royal Katoch sub-clans.

If a man dies without descendants, his property will first go to his widow for use during her lifetime, but after her death or remarriage the property will revert first to his father if he is still alive, and then to his brothers. A widow cannot inherit from her husband; she does, however, have rights to maintenance while she is alive and if her children are still young she may be the trustee of the property until these children grow up. In this case the situation differs for Chetris and Thakuris. Since amongst Thakuris a daughter does not have a right to a share of ancestral or self-acquired land, a widow can only become a trustee if she has young sons. Even in this case it is more likely that a brother of the deceased takes this role. Amongst Chetris, however, where daughters can inherit land in the absence of sons, a widow takes the role of trustee whatever the sex of her children. If, on the other hand, a Chetri woman remarries, she herself loses all her rights to the property of her husband, whereas her sons and, in their absence, a daughter retain these rights. If a childless Chetri widow remarries, the property reverts to either the father or a brother of the deceased. In the case of divorce (*jāri*) the rules are the same; a woman only has right to maintenance through the man of whom she is currently considered to be the wife. The Thakuris do now allow either widow-remarriage or divorce, and thus for them these rules do not apply. A Thakuri widow is either cared for by the brothers of her husband to whom the property ultimately reverts, or she is the trustee of the property until her sons grow up.

If a man's son dies before him, then his son's son will inherit directly from the grandfather. In the case of this man having more than one son and all of them dying, then their son's sons will inherit on the basis of the shares their fathers would have received. If the son's son also dies then theoretically the son's son's son will inherit. In this case of this great-grandson being too young to take over the inheritance, his mother, i.e. the wife of the deceased son's son, will look after the property until her son becomes an adult. The lineal male descendants of a man thus cannot be denied the right to a share of his inheritance, but whereas sons inherit equal shares of their father's property, descendants of the second and third generations inherit according to the shares their fathers have or would have received, i.e. *per stirpes*. Even in the case of unpartitioned land, there is no question of regarding all the descendants of an original founder or maker of property as having equal or *per capita* rights to this property.¹³ Upon partition, a man can never deny a father's brother's son, a brother's son, or a brother's grandson or any other relevant agnate their right to a share of the land—a share which might be larger than the one he himself will receive.

In the absence of sons, and for Chetris daughters, a man's property will eventually be divided equally between his brothers from the same father. However, brothers also have rights to the land if the sons of the deceased are still children. Despite the widow's right of maintenance and role as trustee of the property for her sons, she and her children frequently become members of her deceased brother's

household. In this case this brother becomes the trustee of the land and the guardian of his brother's children. To some extent he holds this position even if his sister-in-law chooses to stay in a separate household, for a widow cannot herself alienate any of her deceased husband's property. As I have mentioned, such rights of agnates are also evident in the restrictions on alienation of land which is *bābuko bhāg* and *pākhā bajārko*. In a sense then, although brothers only have rights of inheritance to each other's land in the absence of lineal descendants, they retain certain rights in the land of their father regardless of the presence of such lineal heirs.

I have already indicated how the Thakuris and Chetris differ respect to the rights of daughters to inherit. Thakuris exclude daughters from the inheritance of ancestral as well as self-acquired land, for as they say *chori gharma chaldeyna* (the daughter has no place in the house). Unmarried daughters have rights of maintenance, but only until they marry when they are given a dowry (Tambiah 1973). Daughters do not have a right (*hak*) to a dowry; rather it is given because of the love a father feels for his daughters (*khusibāta*, "from happiness"). A dowry (*dāijo*) consists of moveable goods such as livestock, cooking pots, jewellery, cloth and, in some cases, small amounts of cash. The *dāijo* is given to the daughter and once given it becomes her property (*pewā*). While her husband can use it, this property eventually is inherited by a woman's son and his wife. With respect to inheritance of land, therefore, Thakuris consider only men, to be eligible. If the deceased had no direct descendants down to the third generation then the

heirs in order of priority are his father, brother, brother's son, brother's son's son, his father's father, his father's brother, his father's brother's son, his father's brother's son's son, his father's brother's son's son's son, followed by his father's father's father and his descendants. This preference for close collaterals at the expense of daughters and daughter's sons is also reported for north and central India (Mayer 1960: 142, Parry 1979: 168).

The Chetris and Doms too, prefer male heirs; thus ideally if the deceased has sons, they should inherit landed as well as moveable property. Unmarried daughters have rights of maintenance and when they marry they also receive a dowry, which consists of the same items as Thakuri dowries, except that in no cases was cash given. According to the Chetris this *dāījo* also becomes the woman's property (*pewā*), but if she dies her husband inherits it. If a Chetri or Dom man has no male heirs, however, it is perfectly acceptable and in accordance with customary law (Joshi 1929: 23cff) that he designates a daughter to this position. In this case the husband of this daughter resides uxorially in his wife's father's house and is called *ghar-juwāin* ("house-son-in-law"). Eventually the sons who are born to this daughter can again inherit if her husband agrees to become *ghar-juwāin*. Since unmarried daughters cannot be appointed in this way, in fact the *ghar-juwāin* accedes to the management of his father-in-law's property. If his wife should die the *ghar-juwāin*, if he stays in the household, inherits his wife's property before his own sons and his wife's father's collaterals. If his father-in-law is still alive, however, the property reverts to

him, but upon his death the rights of the *ghar-juwāin* to the inheritance cannot be refused. As long as he stays in the household of his deceased wife, he may even remarry without losing these rights. The practice of bringing in a *ghar-juwāin* is far more common than that of adopting a son or a daughter (*dharma-putra chora* or *chori*).

Theoretically, men who become *ghar-juwāin* forfeit their rights to inheritance from their own father and this is usually the case. Sometimes, however, a *ghar-juwāin* exercises his right to the property of his father as well as that of his father-in-law. As far as I could tell such cases were not considered to be against the rule. A son has a right (*hak*) to inherit property from his father, and if the father agrees and the son can manage to take part in the agricultural work of both his father's and his wife's father's household, then he has rights to land in both places. It depends on where he lives and, as my Chetri informants pointed out, the pattern of land-tenure, including *lekha* as well as *aula* land, necessitates residence in two places anyway. Indeed, some Chetri households who had no *aula* land have acquired such land in this manner. In such cases the group affiliation of the *ghar-juwāin* and his descendants is ambiguous (Berreman 1972: 184-186). I have come across one case where a Rokaya Chetri has divided his property equally between a son and a daughter and brought a *ghar-juwāin* into the household. The *ghar-juwāin* looks after his own ancestral land as well and calls himself by both his own and his wife's father's clan-name.

Chetris and Doms, like the Thakuris, consider that son of the deceased should inherit his property. If there are no sons or son's sons, however, a married

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daughter should inherit her father's land. Should she die, her husband, who after their marriage must have agreed to become *ghar-juwāin*, inherits, if the couple has had children. When he dies, the heir is first his son and in the latter's absence his daughter. If the deceased has no direct descendants, then the heirs in order of priority are his father, his brother, his brother's son, his brother's son's son, his brother's daughter, his brother's daughter's son, his brother's daughter's daughter, his father's father, his father's brother, his father's brother's son, his father's brother's son's son, his father's brother's daughter, his father's brother's daughter's son, his father's brother's daughter's daughter, followed by the father's father's father and his descendants. The wife of the deceased does not, have a right to inherit, but if her children are small, she becomes the trustee of the property. In this case, as with the Thakuris, she is to some extent under the authority of her deceased husband's brothers, but she has more extensive rights to sell, give away or mortgage her husband's land than do Thakuri women. If she remarries, she forfeits these rights as well as her rights to maintenance, and the property will be inherited in the manner indicated above.

It is not entirely clear how far the principles which are the basis of these rules of inheritance can be extended. In the case of Chetris and Dom, it is unlikely that such extension ever went very far. Since an heir could be either a daughter or a son, he or she could always be found within the circle of close kin. If not, there was the option of adopting a son (*dharmaputra choro*). A son was usually adopted

from close agnates and thus did not involve change of group affiliation or place of residence. It is perhaps significant that for the Chetris adoption tends to take place if the couple is childless. If there is a daughter present, people are more likely to get her married and to bring in a *ghar-juwāin*. The Thakuris, too, claim to practice adoption, but there was not one such case in the genealogies I collected. This may be related to the fact that Thakuris tended to think that, theoretically at least, the principles of inheritance could be extended to include lineal as well as collateral agnates.

4. THE IDEAL OF THE JOINT FAMILY

The main differences in the principles of inheritance outlined above is that whereas Chetris and Doms emphasise “the rule of lineal before collateral heir” (Tambiah 1973: 79), Thakuris only accept this rule for male agnates, thus excluding daughters from rights to a share of their father’s wealth. Even the dowry is not considered to be such a share since it is not given as an obligation (*kar*) but according to the father’s wish (*icchā*). One implication of these differences between the castes is that collaterals inherit more often amongst the Thakuris than they do amongst the Chetris and Doms. This is in accordance with the much greater emphasis placed on the ideal of the joint family by Thakuris than by the two other castes. The importance of this ideal with respect to rules of inheritance and Thakuri attitudes and behaviour was made clear to me when I started asking my informants questions about patterns of inheritance. At first they categorically stated that collateral agnates

of the same generation inherit before lineal male descendants. That is to say, they insisted that a man's brother would inherit before his son. This puzzling piece of information only became comprehensible to me when I realised that they were talking about the ideal that particularly brothers but also first cousins should stay together (*sansarga*, "together") as a group of co-parceners in the landed property of their father and father's father. According to this ideal, the partitioning (*chutyāunu*) of land between close agnates such as fathers and sons and brothers should be avoided. In particular, the idea of brothers dividing the household and the land while their father is alive is found distasteful. A son has a filial duty towards his father and the latter continues to command the respect of and authority over his sons even when they are grown-up and have children of their own. A son, preferably the eldest son, also has obligations as the chief mourner (*kiryā basne mānche*) upon the death of his father. Indeed, if the deceased has no sons, whoever is the nearest heir is also expected to be the chief mourner in these rituals.

The relationship between this religious aspect of the filial relationship and the son's right to inherit his father's property has been pointed out by the Dayabhaga school of law, where this principle takes on a certain significance (Kane 1946, vol. III: 561). At Rārā, the duty of a son towards his father does not cease after the latter's death. For the rest of his life the son must make offerings to the spirit of his father at *śrāddha*. This ritual takes place in the Nepali month of Saun (mid-July to mid-August) and involves fasting and bathing and the making of a *sameru* ("a

small mound of soil personifying the dead person", local term) and the offering of *pinda* (balls of rice flour). The ritual requires an Upadhya Brahmin to officiate and is also the time when the Thakuris put on a new *janai*. It is sufficient if one son performs this ritual and he should preferably be the eldest son. If, however, the eldest son is absent, any of the other sons can make the offering. It is important that the ritual should be performed at the shores of lake Rārā where the deceased was cremated. The *śrāddha* is mainly performed by Thakuris, but Chetris too may decide to make the offering. When the *jimwāl* performed the *śrāddha* for his father, a Jaisi Brahmin and a Rokaya Chetri performed offerings to their fathers, using the same Brahmin as the *jimwāl*.

For brothers to divide the property and the household while their mother is alive is by the Thakuris considered with equal disapproval. Towards her, too, sons have a filial duty and while the relationship between a mother and her sons is not as deferential as that between a father and his sons, a son should show love (*māyā*) towards his mother and has a duty to care for her just as she cared for him when he was an infant. A son should also be the chief mourner for his mother and offer her spirit *pinda* at *śrāddha* for the rest of his life. Ideally the mother should stay as part of the joint family of her sons until she dies.

The Thakuri ideal of joint living, however, does not only include the joint living of sons with their father and mother. After the death of the parents brothers should stay together, and ideally the household should not divide (*chutyāunu*) even when

their children marry and have children of their own. As co-parceners to the land, brothers and their male descendants should hold their land jointly under the authority and direction of the eldest agnate, who as I have mentioned succeeds to the father's position. As the head of the household (*mukhi*) he commands the respect of and authority over his younger brothers, their wives and children. Despite this superior position of the elder brother, all co-parceners have a right to the property and as long as they hold the property jointly as co-parceners, they have a right of survivorship to each other's share. It is this right of survivorship which was foremost in the minds of my Thakuri informants when I first began to discuss their rules of inheritance with them.

The Chetris and Doms do not consider the family in which brothers reside together with their wives, sons and grandsons an ideal situation to live in. While the same notion of filial duty towards both father and mother exists, for the Chetris the joint family ideally should never include more than three generations. Brothers may decide to stay together while their parents are still alive. Upon the birth of children, and particularly when children become marriageable, such a household, however, should divide. If several brothers stay together after the death of their father, but while their mother is still alive, they should divide the household regardless of when their own sons marry. Before the division the eldest brother is the *mukhi* parallel to the situation for the Thakuris and after partition the mother is most likely to be included in the household of this son. Although I have no detailed knowledge of the situation

amongst Dom, my data points to their ideal being close to that of the Chetris. To summarise, it can be said that, while the Thakuris point to the joint family including at least four generations, but if possible more, as the ideal, the Chetris and Doms consider a joint family of more than three generations undesirable. The Chetris regard the family which includes a man, his wife and children and both or either of his parents as the most ideal situation of joint living.

Despite the ideal of joint living, which as I have indicated, results from the central position of the relationship between father and son (Derrett 1962) the possibility of partitioning is always present. For the Thakuris and Chetris as well as for the Doms, a father, adult son or brother can demand partition of the joint estate at any time. When this happens, the household, which includes all those who live together in the same house and share a cooking fire (*chulo*) is divided.¹⁴ If members can afford it, they will arrange for the building of a separate house usually adjacent to the original one. In many cases, however, particularly amongst the poorer Chetris and Doms, the old house is literally divided into two or more new units, each with its own *chulo*. If a partition takes place between brothers while their father is alive, the latter will usually decide which of his sons he would like to live with. It is considered more appropriate that he should live with his eldest son since this son is an heir as well as the principal mourner and successor to his father. The father receives an allowance (*jiuni*, "enough to live on") of money, land and moveable property to cover his expenses for the rest of his life. The *jiuni* is added

to the property of whichever son the father chooses to stay with, but if one son decided to partition from the joint estate of his father and brothers, a *jiuni* will also be subtracted from his share of the inheritance.

Partitioning is a long and arduous process involving lengthy consultations (*sallā*) and arguments. Once the decision to partition is made the property is said to be closed (*banda*) and the shares (*bhāg*) are drawn up. Everything which constituted the wealth (*sampatti*) before partition is divided into the appropriate shares. If such shares of the land become cumbersome small or scattered, the heirs may afterwards between themselves commute or reorganise them (*bhāg milāunu* "to adjust shares"). Land and other wealth which have been acquired by heirs after the closing (*banda garnu*, "to close") of the ancestral property are not subject to partition, but become the property of the individual heir and devolve to his lineal descendants. This is in accordance with the fact that after partition each heir becomes the head of his own household. Thus, whereas before partition heirs jointly are co-sharers in the ancestral estate and new wealth which they jointly acquire is added to the estate, after partition the household and land of each heir is separate (*chutto-chutto*).

The question of whether or not the descendants of man should be considered to be co-shares in the ancestral property is the basis of the difference between two principles of devolution set out by medieval commentators on Hindu Law. The two principles are represented by the Mitakshara School on the one hand and the Dayabhaga School on the other (Mayne 1883, Karve 1965, Kane 1946, Derrett 1962). The Mitakshara

School holds that man's heir has rights in the ancestral property from the moment of his conception. The implication is that a man and his heirs hold the ancestral property in common as co-sharers and any one of them can demand partition at any time. Although the head of the group of shareholders occupies a special position of authority over the rest, he is a trustee rather than an absolute owner of the ancestral estate. He cannot alienate parts of it and hence reduce the shares of others without their permission. All co-sharers succeed each other by survivorship and as long as they remain together have a continuing interest in the estate. They can, however, acquire property themselves and such property is considered separate from the ancestral estate.

In the Dayabhaga system, a man's heir only acquires rights to his property after his death. The relation between the religious duties of an heir and his right to inherit property is clearly pointed out by this school. Accordingly there can be no co-parcenary between a man and his sons. During his lifetime a man can sell or give away his land without consulting his sons or heirs. Sons only receive a defined share upon the death of their father when the latter's ownership ceases. When brothers choose not to partition after the death of their father, each of them is also entitled to dispose of his property as he chooses without first formally partitioning or even consulting each other. In this system there is no distinction between ancestral and self-acquired property.

Commentators on Khāsā customary law cannot agree on its relation to either the Dayabhaga or the

Mitakshara School. The avoidance of partition between fathers and sons led Lall (Joshi 1929) to believe that sons did not have a right to a share in the Property until their father's death and that therefore the fundamental principle was that set out by the Dayabhaga School. Joshi, on the other hand, noticed the restrictions on a man with respect to alienating his property and the definite rights of his sons and heirs in this property. Joshi did not, however, consider Khāsā law identical to the principles laid down by the Mitakshara School. Influenced by Maine (1895), Joshi stated:

It is true that the rights of a son among the Khāsā are obviously not the same as under Mitakshara, but the reason is that their family law discloses even more ancient juridical thought and practices.

and later:

In the static Khāsā society the growth of individual rights within the family has been retarded. The individuality of the son is not fully evolved. So he has no right to seek partition against the wishes of the *paterfamilias*, the land is not liable for his separate debts, and he has no right to sell it in the lifetime of his father.

(Joshi 1929: 210-211)

By contrast with Berreman's data from the hill Rajputs of Sirkanda the inheritance rules practised by the Chetris and Doms at Rārā do not support the notion that collaterals inherit before some of a man's direct lineal descendants.¹⁵ (Berreman 1972: 78) The Chetri and Dom rule is similar to that of the Thakuris,

namely that a man's sons, his son's son or his son's son's sons inherit before his brothers. Therefore, it is hard to see that the notion of the individuality of the son or of any other heir is different or less developed than in the principles laid down by either the Mitakshara or the Dayabhaga School. To my mind, Joshi is right to suggest that neither the Thakuri nor the Chetri rules of inheritance conform to either of these schools. On the one hand, heirs can command partition of the ancestral estate at any time and clearly have rights to this estate from the time of their birth. On the other hand, the filial duty of a son, the ideal of joint living with the father and the superior authority of the latter is emphasized by both castes. The division of the property into ancestral and self-acquired which does exist perhaps settles the latter. However, as I have shown with respect to the type of self-acquired property, which has been made by bringing new land under cultivation (*pākhā bajārko*) the rights of the owner are subject to restrictions.

As my experience and the debate about the two schools of Hindu Law show, a consideration of inheritance rules cannot be made without reference to notions of the ideal family and its partition. As a result of the importance of the relationship between father and son the joint family consisting of a man and his married son or sons creates a different predicament than that consisting of a group of brothers, their wives and their children (Madan 1965: 168, Parry, 1979: 160). As Tambiah has pointed out, partitioning may have different effects in the two cases. Tambiah writes:

My thesis is that in India this frequent separation and partition between siblings displaced the emphasis, when a co-parcener has no male issue, away from survivorship and reversion (i.e. from inheritance by collaterals) and on to inheritance by lineal descendants even by females directly and indirectly. It is this tendency that culminates in the institution of the appointed daughter, the uxorilocal son-in-law and adoption, which guard against property devolving on collaterals in preference to lineals.

(Tambiah 1973: 78)

If partitioning moves the emphasis from collaterals to lineal descendants, then in individual cases, the presence of lineal descendants also affects partitioning. The possibility of a daughter inheriting her father's land in the Chetri and Dom ideas of inheritance should be seen in relation to their ideal of a joint family including lineal descendants of no more than three generations. Conversely, the Thakuris' emphatic exclusion of daughters as heirs is in accordance with their ideal of a joint family constituted of several generations of collateral and lineal agnates, their wives and their children. I shall return to this difference between Chetris and Thakuris in Chapter 8 when I offer an explanation for it.

5. THE COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLDS

In the past, undoubtedly, some form of Joint living was the ideal for most Hindus. More recently, contrary to some expectations (Bailey 1957, Epstein 1962), this ideal has generally remained intact (Orenstein and Micklin 1966, Kolenda 1970). The Rārāls show no

indication of having changed their attitude to the joint family, but nor is the ideal always possible. The joint family, whatever its constitution, cannot exist forever; sooner or later partition is inevitable. Despite the possible uprooting effects on the people concerned and despite resulting in a state of affairs rather less pleasing than the ideal, partition is a normal occurrence (Fortes 1949). However, partitioning is not automatic. Aside from the need and wish to live up to an ideal there are other factors, demographic, economic, individual desire, etc., which influence decisions about whether or not to partition. These circumstances complicate the analysis of household composition and such analyses have been permeated by problems relating to the definition of the family and the household.

One of the central issues in the debate about the definition of the joint family has been the extent of "sharing" between the members and hence the extent to which the joint family can be defined as a group of co-parceners or as a group of people related to each other by virtue of a kinship principle. The discrepancy between these two definitions refers to the fact that, as Madan puts it, "kinship ties are not severed upon partitioning" (Madan 1962: 14). Thus, some writers (Bailey 1957, Madan 1962) emphasise the joint ownership of land as the basis of the joint family, whereas others place emphasis on the joint family as a residential unit, the members of which share a cooking hearth (Mandelbaum 1949, Karve 1953, Epstein 1962, Rao 1968). The difference between the residential unit and the unit in which the members own property in common has been reported from many places in India and Nepal (Mayer 1960,

Berreman 1963, Caplan 1975, Caplan 1972 and Parry 1979) and the choice of either of these two principles as the basis of the definition of "jointness" obviously affects the analysis. Further, since the circumstances of partition vary somewhat from one individual case to another, it is difficult to avoid this sort of ambiguity. While in one case, people may be content for a while to live in separate residential units, but still own and cultivate the land collectively, in other cases partition of the residential unit is also accompanied by a division of the property.

In view of these ambiguities, it is important to consider people's own ideas on the subject. In Rārā the joint family in which members live together in one residential unit, owning land and property together, is the ideal for Thakuris, Chetris and Doms. On the other hand, the division of landholdings *aula* and *lekha* often necessitate more than one dwelling (*ghar*) and as a family (*pariwār*) grows it is common that some members are in charge of the managing of the land in one place whilst others are in charge of the land in the other place. This often means that members of the *pariwār* live separately for at least some of the time and some families, particularly Thakuris, have gone as far as to arrange for some members to live permanently *aula*, whereas others live permanently on the *lekha* land. Even when a Thakuri *pariwār* includes several couples with their children who all live in one house (*ghar*) it is common that the house is divided into several kitchens (*bhitra*) with several hearths (*chulo*). Such an arrangement may be the beginning of the process of partitioning, a process which culminates with the division of the land.

For the people of Rārā, the idea of being joint (*sansarga hunne*, “to be together”) involves holding, managing and cultivating together the joint property. It implies that this property has not been divided into shares (*bhāg nabanāeko*, “shares have not been made”) and that in the *pariwār* the agnates have not separated (*chutea cheyna*, local dialect) from each other. Any situation short of bringing about such a division of the most important agricultural land is considered as *sansarga*. On the other hand, the partition of the property is not necessarily clear-cut. Some property and land can be held together, whereas other property can be divided, allowing agnates to separate their own wealth (*āphno sampatti*) from that of their co-sharers (*bābuko sampatti*, “father’s wealth”). This situation corresponds well with the *aulalekha* division, but it is not viable unless the *pariwār* in question contains more than one couple. In such a case, while the agnates can acquire new wealth to which their lineal descendants have a right prior to that of collaterals, all members of the *pariwār* have a right to the ancestral property and to food and upkeep in whichever house they stay. After partition of the ancestral property such a right disappears and food and upkeep may be enjoyed only as a result of kinship obligations or *khusibāta*. Between the situation in which all the property is held jointly, and that in which only ancestral property is held in this manner, there are variations and each *pariwār* solves the problem about agnates’ individual contributions in different ways. Finally there may also be some ancestral land which has not been divided for generations. Such is the case with the land owned by the Kalyal Thakuris at the villages of Kalai and Karkibara. This involves a very

small amount of land and all of it is leased out collectively to tenants, a situation which I will describe in Chapter 5.

At Rārā only when the land which constitutes the basis for the households' consumption and production has been divided are independent households considered to emerge. Such households continue to share kinship ties, commensality and household gods, as well as rights to the jungle and pastures around the village. The dual pattern of landhold *aula* and *lekha* is in accordance with this, for this pattern often means that members of households, who own property jointly, reside in different dwellings. Despite the difficulties noted above with respect to the definition of the joint family, I here use the same definition as do the Rarals. I therefore define a joint household as a property holding unit and the data presented in Table 3 have been based on this definition. In this Table I have used the twelve-fold classification suggested by Kolenda (1968) in order to present my data on the household composition of the three castes at Rārā. The incidence of the different types of households for the three castes is shown in this Table.¹⁶

For Rārā as a whole 21.1 per cent of the households are joint. This means that 36 per cent of the population live in some type of joint household. Of the total number of households 31.8 per cent are nuclear and 23.2 per cent of the population live in such households. The rest, namely 40 households, constituting 47.1 per cent of the population can be classified as other types of households; supplemented nuclear, single person and supplemented sub-nuclear

in Kolenda's terms. These households include 45 per cent of the total population. Generally this distribution falls well within the medium range of Indian societies with respect to jointness (*ibid.*: 47).

However, in view of the different ideas held by Thakuris, Chetris and Doms, the breakdown of the different household types for the different castes is more interesting. Of the 28 Thakuri households considered, 21.4 per cent are joint households of various types, 25 per cent are nuclear and the rest fall in between. On the other hand, 24 per cent of Chetri households are joint and 34 per cent are nuclear and finally none of the Dom households is joint, but 42.9 per cent are nuclear. The households in which non-lineage kin are residing are, as would be expected, all Chetri and Dom households. There are only 12 such households, 8 of which include an uxorially resident son-in-law, two include a wife's mother and another two include a sister's child.

Thakuris have a smaller percentage of nuclear households than both Chetris and Dom and this difference between them is even more marked when one examines those nuclear Thakuri households more closely. All these 7 Thakuri households have emerged from the partitioning of joint estates no more than 15 years ago. Further all these households have severed their economic ties to Rāṛā and are not considered landowners there.¹⁷ Six of these seven nuclear households were established after a partition of a large joint family, and this case demonstrates that if the ideal of the joint family is followed, as it seems to have been, then periodically there will be a tendency for the proportion of nuclear families to be larger than it is at

other times of the developmental cycle of households. The households involved in this partition can be seen in Fig. 1. The partition took place 15 years ago, and was the first partition for three generations. At the time, Dip Bahadur Shah, the present *jimwāl* at Rārā was a member of a joint, although not residential unit, including, aside from himself, his wife, son and two daughters, his three younger brothers, their wives and children, his halfbrother and halfsister, three of his father's father's brother's sons, their wives and children. This large joint family split into seven separate units living in separate houses. All the ancestral property was divided, but only four households, namely Dip Bahadur and his full brothers, effectively retained property at Rārā. One household went to live permanently in Raunteri and has since partitioned again. One household settled in Jumla and since then this household has also separated as one agnate (Gajendra Bahadur) has taken a job in Nepalganj. Finally, one household, namely that of Dip Bahadur's halfbrother Dhan Bahadur, moved permanently to the village of Gilar where he received a small proportion of the ancestral land, and where he now also looks after the *aula* land of his halfbrothers, Krishna Bahadur and Mangal Bahadur. The households who settled in Khater and Jumla respectively have since partitioned between themselves. The overall division of the property after the first partition was arranged so that those who stayed at Rārā exchanged their shares in other places, notably Raunteri, with those households who settled there (*bhāg milāunu*). The partition happened 17 years after the death of the *mukhi* of the former joint family, Jaya Bahadur, who was the father of Dip Bahadur. This example shows not only that upon division of a joint family the composition of the new households may

Table 3 : Household Composition of Thakuris, Chetris and Doms

| Household type | Thakuri | % | Chetri | % | Dom | % | Total HH | % | Total Pop. | % |
|--------------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|------------|------|
| Nuclear | 7 | 25.0 | 17 | 34.0 | 3 | 42.9 | 27 | 31.8 | 111 | 23.2 |
| Suppl. Neuclear | 9 | 32.1 | 8 | 16.0 | 3 | 42.9 | 20 | 23.5 | 134 | 28.0 |
| Sub. Neuclear | 4 | 14.3 | 4 | 8.0 | 1 | 14.2 | 9 | 10.6 | 25 | 5.2 |
| Single Person | 2 | 7.1 | 1 | 2.0 | — | — | 3 | 3.5 | 3 | 0.6 |
| Suppl. Sub. Nuc. | — | — | 8 | 16.0 | — | — | 8 | 9.4 | 33 | 6.9 |
| Coll. Joint | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Supply. Coll. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Joint | 3 | 10.7 | 3 | 6.0 | — | — | 6 | 7.0 | 73 | 15.2 |
| Lineal Joint | 3 | 10.7 | 4 | 8.0 | — | — | 7 | 8.2 | 53 | 11.1 |
| Suppl. lin. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Joint | — | — | 2 | 4.0 | — | — | 2 | 2.3 | 21 | 4.4 |
| Lineal Coll. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Joint | — | — | 1 | 2.0 | — | — | 1 | 1.2 | 13 | 2.7 |
| Suppl. lin. | | | | | | | | | | |
| coll. joint | — | — | 1 | 2.0 | — | — | 1 | 1.2 | 11 | 2.3 |
| Other ¹ | — | — | 1 | 2.0 | — | — | 1 | 1.2 | 2 | 0.4 |
| Total | 28 | | 50 | | 7 | | 85 | | 479 | |

1. This is a Chetri, who lives with his sister's daughter.

change radically, but also how such a division may facilitate a totally new orientation of different members. Some land at Khater and Jumla was owned by this family before partition, but partition made it easier for different agnates to pursue their own interests.

The households who now have no direct economic interests at Rārā are not included in the analysis of the agrarian relations, nor is the land owned by such households in Nepalganj, Jumla and Khater included in Table 2. Thus, none of those Thakuri households who have economic interests at Rārā and who have therefore been included in the economic survey are nuclear.

Aside from this difference which is not immediately obvious from Table 3, the most remarkable difference between Chetri and Thakuri household composition is the proportion of supplemented nuclear families¹⁸ amongst the Thakuris. Thus, for Thakuris joint households combined with supplemented nuclear households constitute 40 per cent of the total. With respect to these types of households Thakuris almost reach what Kolenda has defined as a high range, whereas Chetris barely fall into the medium range (Kolenda *ibid.*: 375). Further, if one looks closer at the type of relations who reside in these households, the difference between Thakuris and Chetris in this respect becomes clearer. In 7 of the 8 Chetri households classified as supplemented nuclear, the additional relation is a widowed parent. In one case, the household is polygynous. In the case of the Thakuris, on the other hand, 6 households include relatives, who are collaterals and who could be a subnuclear household.

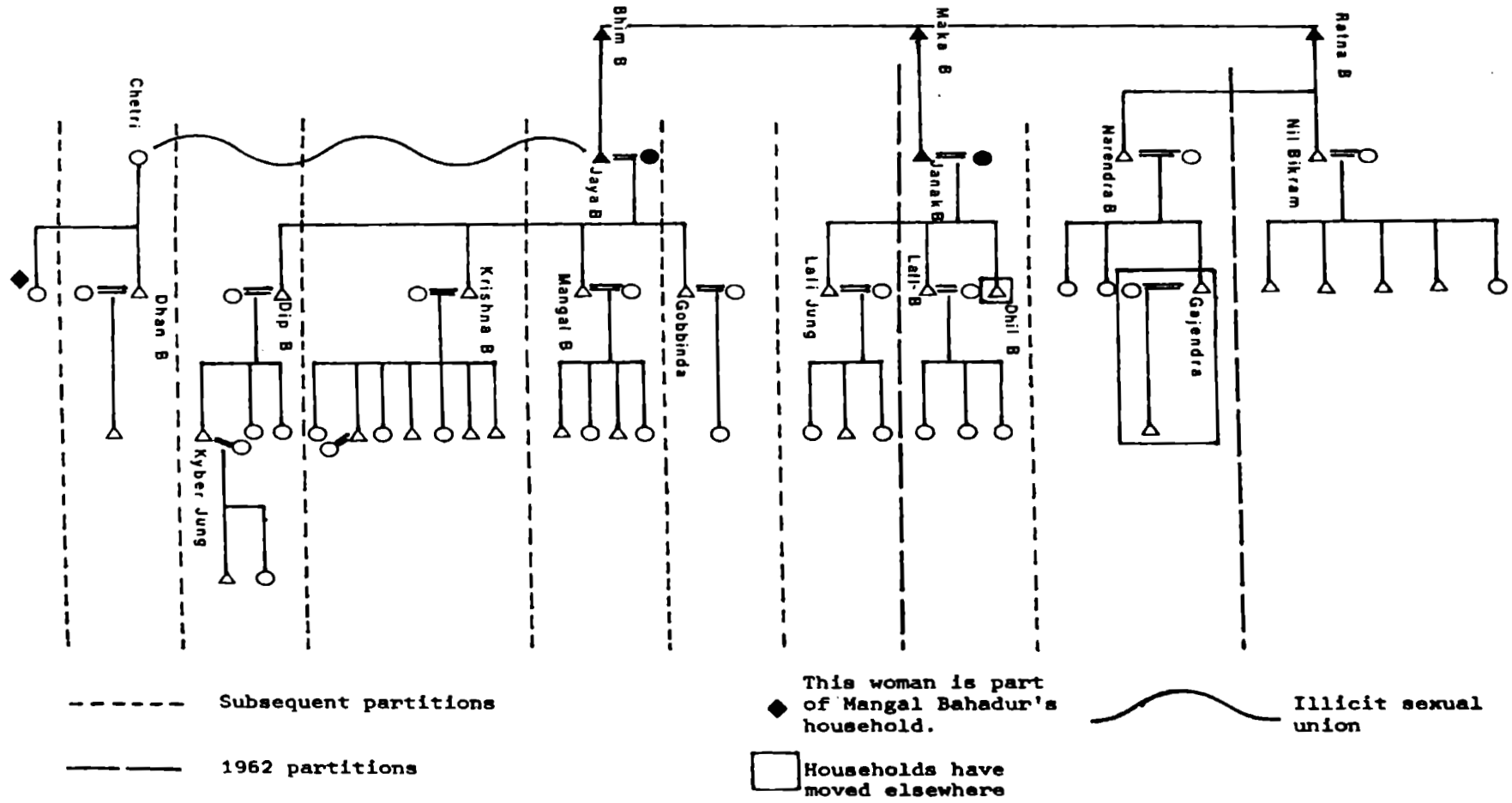


Fig. 1: Household of Dip Bahadur and his Agnates

The household of Nar Bahadur Shah is an example of this (Fig. 2). Nar Bahadur is the *mukhi* of this household which includes his two unmarried daughters, his only son, Bira Jung and the latter's wife and four children. In addition, there are in this household the wife of Nar Bahadur's deceased younger brother as well as the latter's two daughters and one son. No partition has taken place between Nar Bahadur and his brother and since his brother's son is not very bright and has not married yet, no one expects this household to partition in the near future. The three other cases of Thakuri supplemented nuclear households include both a widowed parent as well as unmarried siblings. Thus Thakuris appear to be more likely to include collaterals in the supplemented nuclear family than do Chetris.¹⁹

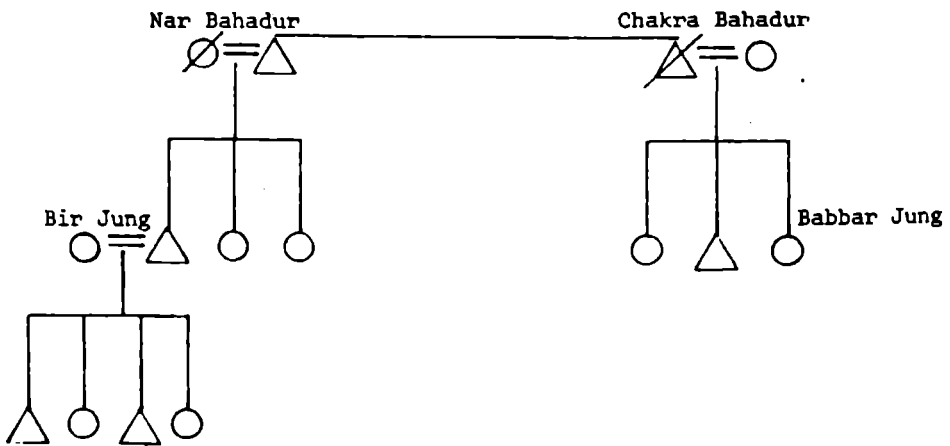


Fig. 2. The Household of Nar Bahadur Shah

The absence of collateral joint households both among Thakuris and Chetris is striking. For the Chetris this is not so remarkable, since their ideal of the joint family is a lineal one including father and son or son-in-law. For the Thakuris, however, this is puzzling, but can perhaps be explained by the fact

that none of the Thakuri households is at this particular stage of the developmental cycle. Further, since the ideal for them is a family which includes more than three generations, it is less likely that only collaterals will be present. The absence of this type of household may also be due to the fact that my sample is small.

Finally, the Chetri joint households require comment. The total number of such households is 11, and of these 8 include a lineal relationship. The simplest of such households is the lineal joint one and the household of Gara Rokaya is of this type (Fig. 3). Aside from Gara, who is the *mukhi* of this household, the household includes his wife, his son and the latter's wife and daughter as well as two younger sons and an unmarried daughter. Relations within this, household are becoming tense, so much so that Gara and his wife decided to stay at Rārā permanently with their younger children and let their married son take care of the *aula* land. People were beginning to talk about how Gara's wife and his eldest son, who is, in fact, the son of a previous marriage, did not get along and it seemed the stage was set for partition. It is perhaps significant that in none of the other Chetri households of this category had the younger couples had any children.

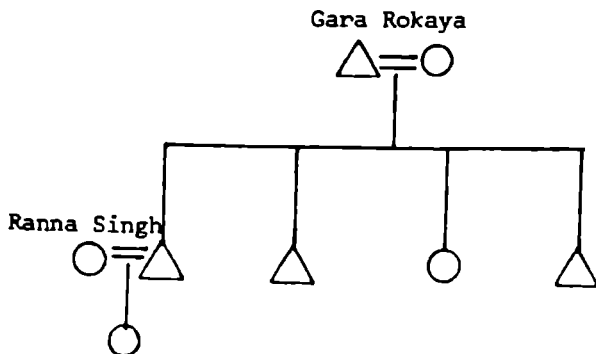


Fig. 3. Household of Gara Rokaya

The two households classified as supplemented lineal joint in both cases include a widowed parent. In one of them, the youngest couple has had three children. This household is also economically very successful and the married son holds a salaried position at the post office.

The two Chetri households classified as lineal collateral joint and supplemented lineal collateral joint are both interesting in that they are very large households by Chetri standards and they are also both becoming ready for partition. Pancha's household (Fig. 4) includes his wife, a married daughter, her husband and their three sons and one daughter, an unmarried daughter, Pancha's younger brother and the latter's wife and two daughters. Pancha has already been preparing for partition by bringing in a very capable son-in-law. Further, Pancha is also the manager of the property and a lender of grain to households who cannot make ends meet. His younger brother spends most of his time looking after the livestock. The tension between them was made public at Kartik puny²⁰ when Pancha's younger brother, who made his debut as *dhāmi* ("spirit medium", standard Nepali), spoke of the bad consequences of Pancha's absence from this festival.

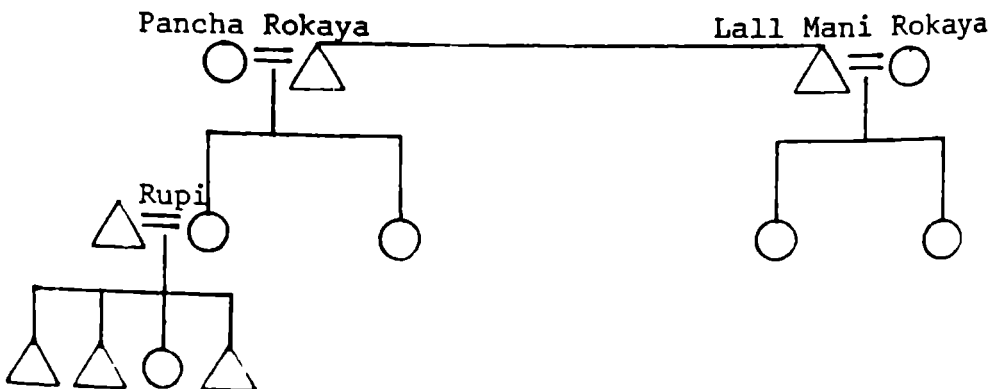


Fig. 4. Household of Pancha Rokaya

The household of Dhan Mal Rokaya consists of himself as the *mukhi*, his wife, two married sons and their wives, one son's daughter, two unmarried sons, an unmarried daughter and Dhan Mal's mother (Fig. 5). In this household, the tension has been growing since *jāri* (divorce) money was paid for a wife for Ser Singh, Dhan Mal's next eldest son. The price was Rs. 1800, and this household is just managing economically. By the time I was leaving Rārā there were rumours that the next eldest son was going to separate from the rest of the household.

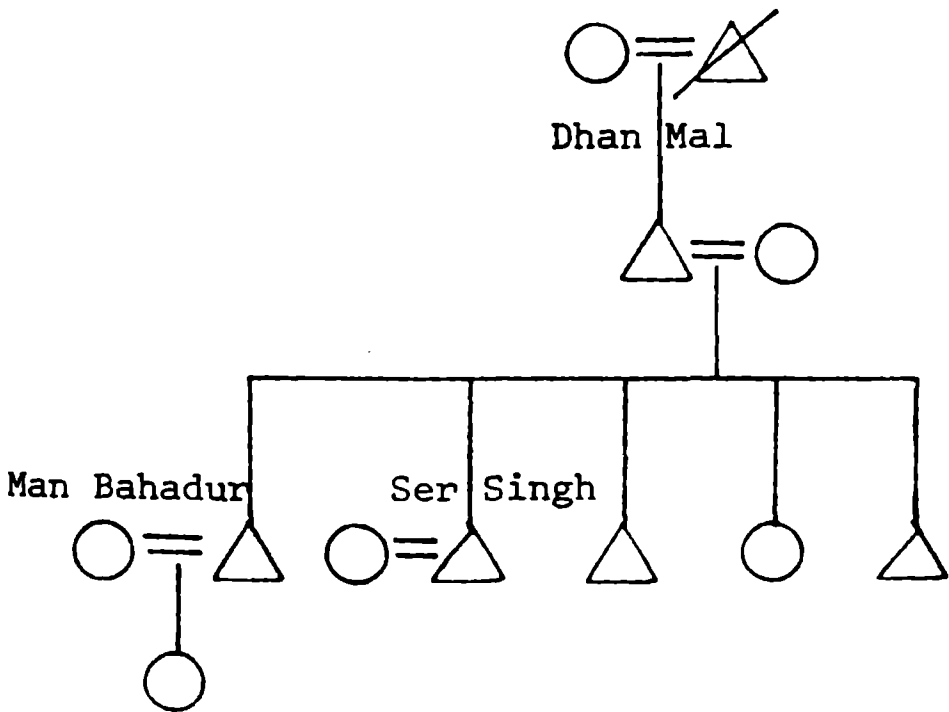


Fig. 5 Household of Dhan Mal Rokaya

Finally, all the three Chetri households which are classified as supplemented collateral joint, included a widowed mother. In two of these cases a brother had already separated from the main household.

Generally the household composition of Chetri and Thakuri households is in accordance with the

different ideals of the joint family voiced by members of these two castes. In a large proportion of the Chetri households which are joint of one type or another, the current arrangement is becoming a strain and a majority, namely 60 per cent of Chetri households are nuclear, sub-nuclear, supplemented sub-nuclear or single-person households. Thakuri household composition, on the other hand, indicates a tendency to include collaterals as well as lineal descendants in the *pariwār*. The joint family is defined in the same terms by both Chetris and Thakuris, namely, as the people who own and manage property together, but whereas Thakuri agnates often live in separate houses without partitioning their joint property, this rarely happens amongst the Chetris. When the members of a Chetri *pariwār* stop eating and cooking together, they also partition the property. Thus, when comparing the Chetris and Thakuris at Rārā the ambiguity which permeates the discussion and definition of the joint family cannot be avoided. All that can be said with confidence is that with respect to property Thakuris place more emphasis on jointness than do Chetris.²¹

6. CAUSES OF PARTITION

There are many causes of partition (Madam 1965, Parry 1979). In Rārā the inability of women and children to get along is most often considered by Chetris and Thakuris alike to be the cause of the breakdown of the joint family. Sometimes this may be true, but as indicated in the cases mentioned above, behind the arguments between women and children may be disagreements between the men which go much deeper. The contribution of individual

members of the joint unit to the common wealth is the concern of men as well as women. Thus, when Dip Bahadur and his agnates (Fig. 1) decided to partition, this decision was reached not only because two of his father's brothers had acquired salaried jobs outside the area, but also because at that time, Dip Bahadur together with another Thakuri, a more distant agnate, had started a village shop. Later Dip Bahadur withdrew from this venture, but he acquired some wealth from it, which he did not have to share with his agnates. In particular, Dip Bahadur was glad to rid himself of an obligation to contribute to the maintenance and wedding of four daughters, who already at that time had been born to one of his younger brothers.

However, disparity of contribution of individuals in the joint household does not necessarily prompt a smooth partition, for one household's gain is another's loss, and in some situations strong pressure can be brought to bear on anyone who is dissatisfied with the ideal. Thus opinion was divided on the correctness of Gara's son's wish to separate from his father. On the one hand, it was understandable that he did not get along with his stepmother, whom everyone found difficult to swallow; on the other, it was considered mean of him to separate from his ageing father while his brothers were still young.

The conception of ideal behaviour is clearly relevant to when and why households partition. While a Chetri son has a moral duty to look after his father, this duty to some extent conflicts with a son's own ability to become a father. For Chetris, partition is acceptable once a son has married and has had a son

of his own. For the Thakuris, on the other hand, not only is it a man's duty to look after his father, but a man also has a moral duty to live together with his agnates and look after the ancestral land. For a Thakuri it is virtually unthinkable to partition while his father is still alive. Partition should only take place when the number of agnates has become so great that management is seriously impaired. For Thakuris partition is a bad thing; not only does it divide the group of brothers and equals, it also divides the ancestral property, the land as well as the livestock, into smaller shares, some of which may not be manageable. There may not be sufficient livestock for ploughing and breeding for example. These differences in the ideal for Thakuris and Chetris have more than superficial effects on individual decisions. Since Thakuris are more likely to remain joint with several agnates the decision and procedure of partition is not as straightforward as for Chetris who, perhaps, only have to divide the property into two or three shares. Nor is the animosity likely to be as unilateral, when there are several, perhaps, senior agnates. Indeed, the Thakuris show a remarkable tendency to avoid partition as much as possible. Jit Bahadur Shah's household is a case in point (Fig. 6.) Jit Bahadur is in his eighties and he now lives permanently with his next eldest son in Raunteri. His eldest son, Raj Bahadur Shah, is the *manānia* for Mugu district and lives with his wife and children permanently in Kathmandu, although he visits Rārā and Raunteri a couple of times a year. Direndra Bahadur, the next eldest son lives permanently in Raunteri with his wife and two children and he manages all the land there. Aside from the ancestral land the family has bought

more *khet* and Birendra Bahadur also works for the Khater post office. Kalla Bahadur, the third son, lives permanently at Rārā with his wife and three young children. He is the Pradhan Pancha for Rārā Gau Panchayat and manages the land there. The youngest brother is now the agent for R.N.A.C. (Royal Nepal Air Corporation) in Jumla and also looks after a small amount of land which the family owns there. These brothers have not divided the property and consider each other *sansarga*. They stay in each other's houses and treat them like their own property; they travel easily on the aeroplane to and from Kathmandu and those who receive a salary supply the others with the goods they need. Nobody minds that Raj Bahadur does not share equally his considerable income as a Member of Parliament. They all benefit from the prestige which such a political position has brought to the family.

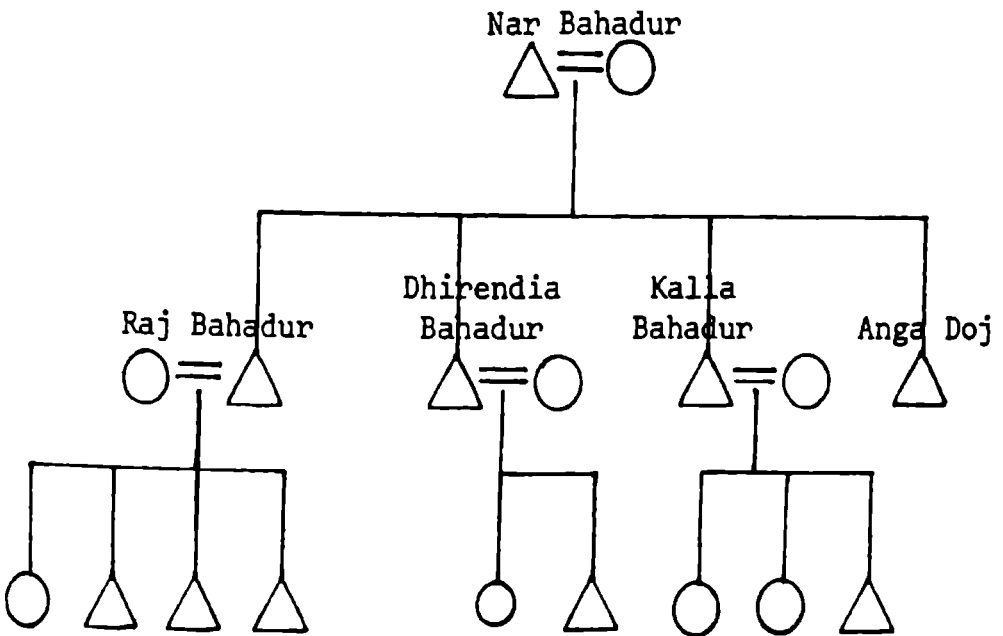


Fig. 6. Household of Jit Bahadur Shah

At Rārā there are other such similar Thakuri cases which bring into question the argument put forward by Bailey (1957) about the breakdown of the joint family when brothers pursue diverse economic interests. As I shall show in Chapter 6, almost all Thakuri families at Rārā have one or several members in salaried jobs, without this by itself having resulted in a breakdown of either the ideal or the occurrence of the joint family. While there are some individuals who have left Rārā and taken up residence elsewhere, and who as far as I can tell live in nuclear families, most people consider that having a member who earns a salary a welcome addition to the joint family budget, particularly as nowadays cash from sales of grain is hard to come by. This is to some extent true for Chetris as well. Fewer Chetris have salaried employment, but many of those who do earn cash regularly also live in joint families. Thus, the arrangement in which a father and a son staying together, the former cultivating the land and the latter bringing in some regular cash income, is considered highly desirable. Younger Chetri men have generally attended school for, at least, a few years, whereas most of their fathers are illiterate and by staying together both can benefit.

In her analysis of two Mysore villages, Epstein (1967), as does Bailey, considers the breakdown of the joint family a result of economic changes. However, for Epstein the most important economic change is not diversification as such, but rather the extension of the cash economy to the villages in question. The peasants of Rārā are not involved in the production of cash crops and are perhaps not an appropriate case

for the consideration of Epstein's thesis. However, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Rārā and the surrounding area, and indeed the whole of Karnali region, have for long been involved in an economy in which cash has played an important role. While the main emphasis has been, and is now, on production for subsistence, cash has been used to buy livestock, land and grain as well as to pay taxes and dues. This is not to say that cash in the economy of Karnali played and plays a similar role to that of cash in the economy of the two Mysore villages started by Epstein. In Mysore, the cash economy referred to by Epstein involves the production of a cashcrop and production for subsistence is becoming more marginal. There is thus a difference between these two economies but Epstein does not argue that it is involvement in wider capitalist relations which causes the joint family to break down. Further her argument that "a cash economy will necessarily produce competition between the component families and lead to the breakdown of wider kinship ties" (ibid.: 178) does not take into account of the fact that even in the joint family which is the traditional Hindu ideal, competition is not absent. Precisely this competition causes many joint families to partition in the normal course of events.

Even the argument that the increasing penetration of capitalist relations in India has caused the joint family to disappear is open for reappraisal. Studies of joint families in urban areas of India, such as those conducted by Sarma (1964) and Vatuk (1972 a) indicate that under such conditions of diversification and involvement in a cash economy, the proportion of joint families does not necessarily

decline. No doubt industrialisation has a profound effect on people's lives and attitudes, but this effect is also modified by ideal conceptions which may in part be derived from the past. Further, in any context, as Owens has pointed out, what is perceived as economically rational varies widely from individual to individual and from group to group (Owens 1972). The joint family is no necessarily more or less viable in the industrial context than it was before.

A rigid conceptualisation of the opposition between the past and the present in terms of "traditional" and "modern", "subsistence economy" and "cash economy", "joint" and "nuclear" has proved fruitless in providing an explanation of household composition generally. On the one hand, since partition is bound to take place sometime during the developmental cycle of households, any group of households studied is likely to contain joint as well as nuclear households, and we can only compare two points in time if we have rates for both of these. Such a comparison has been carried out by Kolenda (1970) and shows that joint family living has not declined. On the other hand, the diversification, which is often said to go hand in hand with the so-called cash economy, has been shown by several writers (Madan 1965, Rao 1968, Owens 1971 and Parry 1979) to have the opposite effect, at least on some households, than the one anticipated by Bailey and Epstein. As I have reported from Rārā as well, under such circumstances it may, in fact, be economically advantageous for agnates to refrain from partition.

While I do not agree with the arguments put forward by Bailey and Epstein, I do believe that

economic factors are relevant to the composition of households and the structure of the family. At Rāṛā, as in other agricultural communities, people live, produce and consume in households. The household headed by a senior agnate is the landowning unit, all members having some rights either of ownership or to maintenance. Members work together on the land and also pool any other income they may have. The land/labour ratio is crucial and often influences decisions about partition one way or the other.

A recognition of this importance to the household of the ratio of labour to land has led some writers (Mandelbaum 1949) to suggest that the joint family is more prevalent amongst rich superior castes than amongst poor inferior castes. However, conducting an extensive survey of the literature covering many areas of India, Kolenda (1968) has concluded that generally there is no correlation between high caste rank and proportions of joint families, nor is the joint family more prevalent amongst people with landed wealth.

The picture of the Hindu joint family and the role it has played in the past as well as in the present is thus confused. While some writers assume that the joint family was the norm in the past, and that this norm has broken down more recently, Kolenda in the articles referred to above, has shown firstly that the proportion of joint and nuclear families varies in different regions and is not in accordance with either caste status or landed wealth, and secondly that this pattern is not likely to have been different in the past. If Kolenda is right, which seems likely given the depth of her analysis, then our thinking on the causes

of household and family composition needs to be refined.

In the rural situation the economic function of the household as a property holding unit and as a unit of production and consumption is unquestionable. However, the broad comparison of many regions and castes does not elucidate this aspect. It therefore seems appropriate to turn our attention to an analysis of the relations which exist between particular castes. While the ideal of the joint family may be widespread and shared to some extent by all Hindus, the articulation of this ideal may vary from caste to caste, according to local and historical conditions. In this chapter I have discussed the differences in landholding, inheritance, household composition and ideal conceptions of joint living between the three castes at Rārā. In this the discussion of the differences has centred around the Thakuris and the Chetris, the Dom having been excluded partly because the sample is small, partly because my work with them was not as intensive as with the other two castes. While there are differences in the average landholdings of Thakuri and Chetri households the more striking differences between them are to be found in the rules of inheritance and in the composition of households and such differences are, to some extent, also reflected in their ideal of the joint family. Superficially, then, the Thakuris fit the picture of the wealthy high caste with an emphasis on jointness and, compared to Chetris, a relatively high proportion of joint families. These observations, however, amount to little more than a description of the situation; they do not by themselves explain it. To reach an explanation, I

believe, one must enquire into the economic, kinship and caste relations which exist between the people concerned. In the remainder of Part II (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), I examine the economic relations between the Thakuris, Chetris and Doms at Rārā. In Part III, I examine their ideas about kinship and the way these are articulated. Only when the analysis has been extended thus far can the composition of households and the difference between Thakuris and Chetris with regard to their ideals be comprehended.

Chapter 5

THE ORGANISATION OF PRODUCTION

1. THE AGRICULTURAL CYCLE

I have described the dual pattern of landholding *lekha* and *aula* and how the land situated in these two ecological zones is different. Whereas the *aula* land can be double-cropped and irrigated, the land around Rārā can support only one major crop of grain annually. Further, at Rārā only dry cultivation is possible and rain and snowfall at appropriate times is crucial for a good harvest there. Cultivation on the land around Rārā is, therefore, much less labour intensive than cultivation *aula*. However, since most households own land *lekha* as well as *aula* most people are, in fact, busy with agricultural tasks all the year round.

Aula khet is the most highly valued land. This is not only due to its fertility, but also because it is suitable for the cultivation of *dhān* (paddy, standard Nepali). Rice cannot be cultivated at all on the *lekha* land surrounding Rārā and the type of rice cultivated on *aula pākho* (*dahro*, stiff, local term) is considered to be an inferior variety. Thus people depend on their *khet* for rice, but only 44 per cent of all households

own such land. The rest either buy rice, exchange other types of grain for rice or go without rice altogether. The absence of rice from the diet is notable and often commented upon. The daily meals consist of barley or more rarely wheat bread (*roti*, standard Nepali). *Bhāt* (cooked rice) is eaten on special occasions only and even then is more often substituted by fried wheat bread (*puri* or *tatea*, local terms).

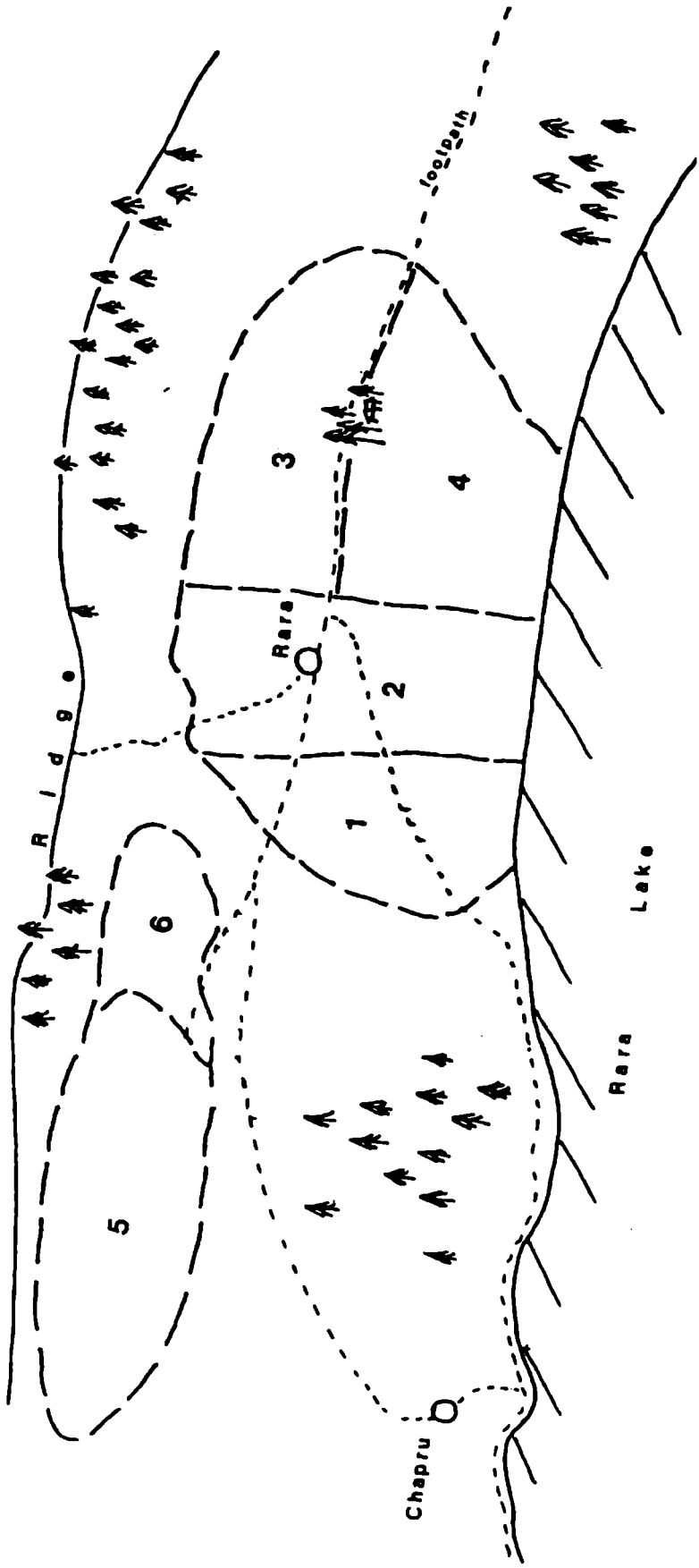
Generally any type of food is scarce at Rārā and in the surrounding villages. In 1977, the crops failed as a result of hail in May and people then said that it was four years since they had had a decent harvest. The precarious nature of cultivation on the *lekha* land is not only due to unreliable weather conditions. Agricultural techniques and soil erosion are also responsible for declining yields, but most serious is the large proportion of the crops which are annually lost to predators such as birds, grasshoppers, wild boar and bear. The damage done to the wheat and potato crops, particularly by wild boar, has increased manyfold since the establishment of the National Park, and the ban on hunting of wild animals. As a result of this, as well as the prohibition on making new land, yields have seriously decreased in the last decade.

This chapter is concerned with yields and the process by which they are produced. It is also concerned with the relations between people who take part in this process, but I shall start by describing the agricultural cycle.

The oldest crops at Rārā are wheat (*gaii*, standard Nepali)¹, barley (*jaü*, standard Nepali),

buckwheat (*pāpar*, local term), lentils (*dāl*, standard Nepali,² mustard (*torea*, local dialect, and potatoes (*ālu*, standard Nepali). More recently beans (*simi*, standard Nepali) and peas (*kolā*, local dialect) have also been introduced and in the last 15 years people have been persuaded to plant apple trees as part of a development project for Jumla and Mugu generally. Various types of radishes (*mulā*, standard Nepali), spinach (*sāg*, standard Nepali), pumpkin (*pharsi*, standard Nepali) and tobacco (*tamākhū*, standard Nepali) are also cultivated in gardens (*bāri*). Aside from the gardens which are situated in front of or behind the houses, the land around Rārā is divided into 6 divisions (*dhāl*, shield). Divisions 1-4 are situated around the village and referred to as *ghara jaggā* (land at the house) whereas divisions 5 and 6 are situated at a higher altitude and referred to as *lekha jaggā*³ (map 5).

Division 1, which is by far the most fertile land is sown with barley every year. Most of the land in this division is fertilised either with animal manure or dried pine needles. Divisions 2, 3 and 4 are incorporated in a system in which beans, wheat and barley are planted in rotation (*ghumtibāli*, crops that move around, standard Nepali). If in one year the plots in division 2 are planted with beans, wheat will be sown in division 3 and barley in division 4. In the following year wheat will be sown in division 2, barley in division 3 and beans in division 4 and so forth. Since beans are sown and harvested later than wheat and barley this system allows such plots to lie fallow (*bājho*, standard Nepali) for some months. As a result of this, the sowing of beans has been



Map 5: Crop division on Rara Land.

particularly affected by the resettlement plans. Because the villagers have not known when the resettlement was going to take place, for a couple of years many of them have decided not to sow beans, thinking that they would not be able to harvest. Thus, recently two divisions of the *ghara jaggā* have been sown with barley every year and the land has not been fallow at all.

Divisions 5 and 6 are both situated well above the village and the land there is extremely poor. One of these divisions lies fallow each year while the other is sown with wheat. The fallow division may also be sown with a mixture of buckwheat and mustard as these crops ripen together during the summer months. In that case wheat will be sown on this land when the buckwheat has been harvested. In the past this was also how newly made land was cultivated at first. After having cut down the biggest trees and burnt off the smaller ones together with the scrub, buckwheat was cultivated. Then the land was left fallow for a year or two and subsequently ploughed and sown with wheat.

Most households own land in all these divisions, and most people reckon that the system outlined above is the best in terms of maintaining the maximum fertility of the land. On *aula* there is no systematic attempt at crop rotation, and land is not left fallow. On this land, however, manure is applied much more extensively and more time is spent weeding. Further, the best *aula* land is, of course, irrigated.

At Rārā the sowing of wheat and barley begins at the end of September (mid-Asoj). The seeds are broadcasted and *lekha* land is sown before *ghara*

land. Wheat is sown by itself, but barley is often sown together with lentils or peas. Sowing usually lasts until mid-October (beginning of Kartik) and this signals the beginning of a period of little agricultural work at Rārā. Those who apply animal manure on the land near the village do so at the end of November or beginning of December (Mangsir), but other than this there is no further work in the fields at Rārā until the middle of April (beginning of Baisakh). During this period, and particularly during December, January and February (Pus, Magh) small amounts of rain and snowfall are crucial for the germination of the seed and the first growth of the young plants. Little green shoots appear in the fields as early as the beginning of January, but they do not really start to grow until the end of February or the beginning of March. During these winter months, those who are not busy on the *aula* land or with other tasks collect firewood, wild vegetables and roots from the jungle. This is also the time of the year when most of the spinning and weaving of blankets takes place. The Thakuri women spin the *janai* from cotton (*kapās*, standard Nepali) grown in some of the *aula* villages.⁴ Thakuri women are the only people in the area surrounding Rārā who spin the *janai* and many of the *janai*-wearing Chetris as well as the Shahi Thakuris receive their annual supply of *janais* from the Thakuris at Rārā.

At Rārā work starts again slowly at the beginning of March (*Phagun*) with the preparation of gardens in which garlic, coriander and various types of radishes and spinach are sown. At the end of March (beginning of Chait) some fields are ploughed for potatoes and by the middle of April potatoes as well

as beans should be in the ground. During this time a little maize, pumpkin and tobacco are also sown in gardens. The busy season, however, starts in mid-May (Jeth) and by this time the barley and wheat plants in the fields are well grown, although still green. First the high land is ploughed and sown with buckwheat and mustard. Simultaneously, all livestock are brought up to Rārā and are either herded daily to pastures (*maidān*) in the jungle or fed with grass which is cut daily mostly by women and children. At this time gardens are also weeded and the potato plots are hoed. In 1977, the harvest proper began on the 23rd of June (9th of Asar). This was a Thursday and had been identified by the astrologer⁵ as an auspicious moment to start the harvest. In fact, the grain was not considered ripe and most people harvested only a token on this day, just enough to be able to perform the ritual (*pujā*) for the *kuldevatā* (lineage or clan god) which also marked the beginning of the harvest. People did not really start to harvest seriously until about a week or ten days later and at this time tobacco plants are transplanted into some of the plots which have been newly cleared of the previous crop. The harvest of barley, wheat, lentils and peas was complete by mid-August (beginning of Bhadau). By this time, buckwheat and mustard are also harvested, leaving all fields empty for ploughing and sowing, which takes place during August, September and at the beginning of October (Saun, Bhadau and Asoj). Finally, the biggest task during Asoj while the sowing and ploughing is being finished is the cutting and drying of grass. Each household aims to collect enough grass to feed the livestock until the end of May when

cutting of fresh grass can begin again. Most households cannot, however, collect enough grass for all their livestock and some livestock is sent *aula* to be looked after by relatives or people with whom a specific contract has been made for this purpose.

The months from the end of June to the end of October are thus by far the busiest at Rārā and the early part of this period coincides with the monsoon. As a result of rain and humidity, the harvest and particularly the drying and threshing of grain are at times extremely difficult and time-consuming. Generally labour is in short supply during these months. Most people work 16-18 hours a day, and some households employ a ploughman (*hali* from *halo*, plough) or other help during this period.

The main crops cultivated *aula* are rice (*dhān*), various types of millet (*kodo*, standard Nepali; *kauni*, local term; *cinu*, local term wheat (*gaiū*), barley (*jaū*), buckwheat (*pārpar*), beans (*simi*), maize (*makai*), and lentils (*dāl*). In gardens people grow tomatoes (*golbênrā*, standard Nepali), cucumbers (*kākro*, standard Nepali), chillis (*khursāni*), spinach (*sāg*) and aubergine (*bhanta*). Generally there is some agricultural work to be done all the year round, but to some extent the very busy periods there fall before and after the busy periods at Rārā. Rice, which is the most labour intensive crop, is sown in May and transplanted at the end of June just before the harvest starts in earnest at Rārā. The various types of millet which together with rice constitute the main summer crops on *aula* land, are sown at the beginning of April. The harvest of millet begins in early October at the time when the last ploughing and sowing is

being completed on the Rārā land and rice harvested a little later, finishing by mid-November. Buckwheat is cultivated on *aula* land and is sown in July and harvested in October. Maize and beans are sown in March and July respectively, and harvested in October, but these crops are of relatively minor importance, and are cultivated only when people feel they have the space. Wheat and barley the main winter crops and are both sown at the end of November, immediately after the various summer crops have been harvested. Similarly, they are harvested in April-May, before the summer crops are sown. Sowing, transplanting and harvesting are thus relatively easily accommodated in the Rārā agricultural cycle, but since *aula* plots, particularly those planted with rice, are also weeded extensively, there is in this respect too a high demand on labour during the summer months. During August some households move between Rārā and their *aula* land frequently often spending one day *aula* and the next at Rārā. Alternatively, some members of a household may stay *aula* for few days whereas the rest carry on with the tasks at Rārā.

The choice of crops grown on different plots is influenced by various factors. Such choices are not only made according to knowledge about the nature and the fertility of the soil. Other circumstances, such as the amount of land available and the usage to which yields are put also influence these decisions. Since different crops vary with respect to yields, households who have just about enough land to support themselves tend to choose, as far as they can, the highest yielding crop. Millet is a popular crop on *aula* land sometimes yielding double that of rice and

wheat. In terms of labour input, then, millet is cheaper than any of the other crops. If plots can be manured, buckwheat can also be a high-yielding crop, but buckwheat grows best on very high-lying land and since this land is stony and situated some distance away from the villages, cultivation is difficult. On Rārā land, buckwheat is often cultivated as a replacement for other crops. By the time buckwheat is due to be sown in May, villagers can already judge what sort of harvest they are going to have. If yields of barley and wheat are likely to be low, more buckwheat is sown than would otherwise have been the case.

Millet and buckwheat are both considered to be low-prestige crops, whereas the most highly desirable crop is rice. No-one, however, has enough rice for daily consumption and *bhāt* is only eaten on ritual occasions. Wheat and barley are acceptable as daily foodstuffs, but most people eat more barley than wheat. Finally, although millet is the least desirable of all, many households rely exclusively on this crop for some months of the year. In these preferences there are differences between Thakuris and Chetris. Thakuris, who have very little *aula pākho*, cultivate only small amounts of millet, and this millet is not specifically for their own consumption. Thus, a couple of Thakuri households who cultivate millet on some of their land at Raunteri, use this millet mainly to pay day-labourers or to lend out in the season before the harvest when many households have emptied their own stores. On the other hand, even those Chetris who have substantial landholdings cultivate millet for their own consumption as well as for other purposes.

Aula as well as *lekha* land are crucial to the existence of the Rārāls. While *lekha* landholdings tend to be more extensive, *aula* land is double-cropped and therefore more labour intensive. Only those without any *aula* landholdings have no agricultural work to do during the winter months. The rest are relatively busy all the year round, the peak months being from June to October. In the area as a whole this is also the time when labour is in particularly short supply.

2. THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION

In an agricultural community like Rārā the means of production employed in the process of production are land, plough-animals and tools.⁶ The manner of ownership of land, plough-animals and tools, and the manner in which these are employed and shared between different units of production is crucial to the analysis of the relationships between such units (Terray 1977, Sahlins 1974). The position of the household as a landowning unit has already been established, and in this section it can be analysed the extent to which the household remains a discrete unit in the process of production generally.

The tools employed by the peasants at Rārā are, even when compared to elsewhere in Nepal (Caplan 1972, MacFarlane 1976), characterised by a low level of development. Thus the *dhiki*, a wooden husking device and the oil press, known from other areas of Nepal, are absent at Rārā. The main tools used in agricultural production are the wooden-tipped (oak) plough (*halo*, standard Nepali) drawn by two oxen, a mattock (*bauso*, local term), an adze (*bāso*,

local term), a pair of bamboo sticks used in harvesting (*nigālo*, standard Nepali), a sickle (*āshi*, local term), a weeding tool (*kumā*, local term), baskets for carrying produce from the fields to the village (*tun*), the flail (*jhyallauro*, local term), winnowing baskets (*suppo*, local term) and the handmill (*jāto*, standard Nepali). There is one water-powered mill (*ghatta*) situated at the outlet of the lake, but this mill belongs to another village and is rarely used by Rārā inhabitants. In each of the *aula* villages where Rārāls have land, there are water-powered mills, which are used while people stay there and people may also send grain to be ground in these *uala* villages. At Rārā, however, in most households, grain is ground by hand daily.

Land is ploughed by one man on foot driving the oxen. In this manner, land is ploughed before and after broadcasting the seed and is finally flattened with a wooden board (*bārha*, local term) also drawn by oxen. This last procedure is to prevent the seed from staying on top where they easily get eaten by birds. The poorest and hardest land may also be worked by hand with a mattock.

At Rārā the crop is harvested by pulling individual plants, 5-6 at a time, between two bamboo sticks, 1½-2 feet long, and cutting the ears off the stalks on a sickle which is fastened in a cotton sash worn by the person who is harvesting. This method not only leaves stalks standing in the fields where they are left unused, it also allows weeds to flower and reseed. The ears are carried in baskets to the village, where, weather permitting, they are spread out to dry on the flat roofs. *Aula* the stalks of the plants are cut with the sickle and threshed together

with the ears. Here the stalks are fed to the livestock. At first, this difference in harvesting technique at Rārā and *aula* was puzzling to me. However, a couple of afternoons spent harvesting convinced me that there is no point in using the cutting technique on Rārā land. Firstly, plots are, as mentioned before, much larger at Rārā than they are *aula*, and in fact if the crop is thick, the Rārā technique is surprisingly efficient. Secondly, the harvest at Rārā coincides with the monsoon and the crops are often wet when they are being harvested. The drying of the ears is frequently interrupted by showers and thus the task of processing the ears, let alone the stalks, is arduous enough. The dried ears are threshed with the flail and finally winnowed and stored in clay containers (*dhāro*) inside the kitchens and storerooms.

None of the tools used require any cooperation; they can all be worked single-handed by one person. People may work together or side by side, and it is common to see women go in parties of 5-10 individuals to the fields to harvest. Similarly, threshing may be done by two or more individuals, thus speeding up the process. However, none of the tools employed in agricultural production by necessity requires the cooperation of two or more individuals or households. Nor is such cooperation an integral part of the work-process. Women's harvesting parties break up when land belonging to different households is not adjacent and households thresh their own grain on their own roofs. Communal threshing floors do not exist. Thus when members of a household are engaged in agricultural production on land which is theirs, the tools and the techniques used do not result in

cooperation between them and members of other households. However, not all land at Rārā is owned in this way. As mentioned briefly in Chapter 4, aside from land which is cultivated there is at Rārā extensive pasture and jungle.

Pasture and jungle may be characterised as communal land. It is called *Rārāko jaggā* (land of Rārā), and is land which every household in Rārā village has a right to use and inhabitants of surrounding villages are excluded from such a right. This land has always belonged to the state and more recently it also belongs to the National Park. Such communal land is used in three types of production: (1) grazing of livestock; (2) gathering of wild fruit and vegetables; and (3) hunting of animals, mainly birds and wild boar. Since plough-animals are necessary for agricultural production, the manner in which livestock in general is maintained and looked after is relevant to the analysis of the extent of cooperation between households in such production.

Livestock includes cows (*gāi*), oxen (*ghoru*, local usage), water buffaloes (*bhāisi*, standard Nepali), sheep (*bhera*, standard Nepali) and goats (*khasi*, *boku* or *bhakri*). Sheep and goats are kept at high altitude pastures during the summer months and during the winter they are herded out of the village daily. In the summer those households who own large numbers of sheep and goats usually have one member living more or less permanently in a small dwelling (*goth*) on the summer pasture. Not all households, however, have enough labour at hand for this to be possible. Some households make arrangements with owners of large herds and *goths* so that the latter looks after the

animals return for all or some of the lambs. During the winter a shepherd (*gothālo*) may undertake to herd the sheep and goats collectively in return for small payments of grain.

Cows, waterbuffaloes and oxen are kept in the village during the summer months, but some households send them *aula* for the winter. In these cases the livestock is either being looked after by the *aula* branch of the household, as is common for the Thakuris, or by affines or more distantly related kin, and this is more common for Chetris. Some households also have an arrangement whereby the livestock is "lent" out during the winter. The borrower gets the use of the oxen and the milk from the milking cows and waterbuffaloes in exchange for looking after both the grown cattle as well as any calves born in the meantime. When kept in the village the livestock is either driven to communal pastures daily or kept at a particular pasture for a few days at a time. This latter arrangement is only used by those who have a large herd, who have access to a *goth* and who can afford to have one member permanently busy with the livestock in this way. These households also tend to be those who have good milking cows and a surplus of milk.

Although pastures are owned communally, the actual herding of the livestock during the summer months at Rārā and during the winter months in *aula* does not take place on a communal basis. Generally, each household is expected to supply the labour for herding their own livestock, but households in which none of the members can be freed from other agricultural activities may make arrangements with other households to look after their livestock in return

for some sort of payment, either in grain or cash. Frequently during the busy season many households give up altogether trying to herd their one or perhaps two cow in any organised manner, and cows and water-buffaloes are at this time often found wandering around unattended, causing damage to field and garden crops. During the harvest, hardly a day goes by without an argument about whose cow has eaten whose unharvested crops. Thus when households actually share means of production, as they do in the herding of livestock on communal pastures, the herding itself is not a communal activity any more than is the harvest on individually owned land. The livestock itself is individually owned in the manner of tools, land and any other property and cooperation in herding is minimal and a cause of friction.

Finally, some hunting and gathering takes place on communally owned land. Birds are hunted individually by men either by throwing stones or by using a shotgun. Such hunts usually take place when there is nothing else to do, or when people are travelling from one place to another. The hunting of wild boar, on the other hand, is a major undertaking involving two parties of clappers and the use of bamboo spears as well as a shotgun. The clappers drive the boar through the jungle towards a slope into which bamboo spears have been placed, the sharp ends pointing up in the direction from which the boar is expected. At the bottom of the slope one man waits with a shotgun to catch any boar which might not have been killed in the descent. This type of hunt cannot be arranged without some cooperation between men and households, but such hunts are now illegal

and therefore rare. No such hunt was successful during fieldwork, and I did not have a chance to discover how the catch would have been divided. When individual wild boar are killed in the jungle by single persons, the *jimwāl* is always presented with a piece of meat, whether he was involved in the catch or not.

Wild growing fruits and vegetables constitute an appreciable amount of foodstuffs to the diet of the Rārāls. This is in contrast to the situation *aula*, where the land is much more deforested than at Rārā. Thus collecting and gathering is a regular undertaking. During January and February various types of wild spinach and ferns are collected. Cooked together with potatoes these make tasty vegetable dishes. In June several days are spent gathering *datelo*, a small purple bitter tasting berry. The skin and the meat of these berries is discarded and the pits are ground and dried and subsequently used for the making of oil. In a similar way oil is produced from the seeds of hemp (*bhāgo*), the stones of peaches (*āru*) and the shells of walnuts (*okhar*). These three crops are gathered and processed in late August and September. Finally during November leaves and pine needles are collected for manure and also used as winterbedding for the livestock.

Gathering and collecting may take place anywhere on Rārā land. However, in the case of such valuable crops as peach and walnut, people only pick fruit from trees which are standing on their own land. Most households who do not have such trees manage to get permission to pick a portion of someone else's crop. This type of picking and gathering takes place

in work parties. Every individual collects for his or her own household, but it is common practice to distribute some of the foodstuffs collected in this way to households who have not been taking part in the expedition. This is somewhat more true when the object is the collecting of delicacies such as wild strawberries and hazelnuts. When it comes to the important oil-producing crops households are generally expected to collect their own.

There are two other productive activities which should be mentioned here. One is fishing. Rārā lake is fairly deep. The water is clear and very little grows or lives in it. The only fish known to use this habitat is the snowtrout (*āslā*). The Rārāls catch this fish from the shore using spears and, like most gathering and collecting this is an individual activity. People may go fishing in parties, but each individual catches fish for his own household. Such fish may be given away as special gifts and delicacies. The other is the collection of honey (*maha*). Some houses have wooden beehives built into the wall of the house so that bees can reach them from the outside and honey can be taken from the inside. Such honey belongs to the household who owns the hives and for some people the production of honey may become a large-scale activity. Honey is the only sweetening agent which can be obtained at Rārā⁷ and some people specialise in selling it. Fishing is done by Chetris and Doms, whereas all castes are involved in the production of honey. Keeping bees, however, is a relatively new activity for the Thakuris. Many of the Thakuri informants who had hives had, in fact, learnt the necessary skills from Chetris.

The various labour processes involved in the production of food at Rārā can thus be characterised by an absence of cooperation between households as well as individuals. All the tools can be worked single-handed and do not necessitate further cooperation. In cultivation the unit of production, i.e. the unit in which members produce and consume together, owns property or rights to property in common and members pool their resources. In cultivation such units do not share means of production. When households do share means of production, as they do in the herding of livestock on communal pastures, cooperation between them is minimal and difficult to organise. Nor is the communal ownership of land reflected in the gathering and collecting of wild fruits and vegetables. Such activities are carried out by individual household members for their own households. Food produced in this way may be given away as a sign of friendship or as items of exchange between kin or between people related in other ways,⁸ but the actual production of such foodstuffs does not in itself necessitate any cooperation between members of different units of production. When cooperation in the labour process does occur, as in the hunting of wild boar, it involves a task on such a scale that it cannot be undertaken by individuals or individual households alone, and is of minor importance in the economy.

Thus, households do not only constitute units as far as the ownership of agricultural land is concerned. Households are also the units in the various processes of production which involves this land as well as communally owned land. Furthermore,

within households individual members perform individual tasks and there are virtually no tasks which necessitate cooperation between individuals at this level. In this sense the labour process as well as the general organisation of production is individualised—a point which I shall elaborate in Chapter 7. Having now established the role of households in the process of production generally, the focus is to a more detailed analysis of the agricultural wealth owned by the 68 households of Thakuris, Chetris and Doms who constitute the economic sample for Rārā.

3. THE AGRICULTURAL WEALTH OF HOUSEHOLDS

The pattern and extent of landholdings was described in the previous chapter, and it will be remembered that the figures suggested some degree of correspondence between caste and economic position, although the difference between Thakuris and Chetris was small. However, the amount of land may not be an accurate indication of the wealth of households. At Rārā this is so for various reasons. Firstly, the land at Rārā has never been surveyed, so whereas the size and extent of the *aula* landholdings is fairly accurate, Rārā land is measured in *hal* and no attempt to standardise amount of seed sown on different *hal* has been made. The *hal* at Rārā are, therefore, of varying size. Secondly, yields vary for different crops and in terms of households' ability to produce enough food for their own survival; figures for area landholdings are not useful in comparison. Thirdly, land can only be used if enough labour is available for its cultivation. At Rārā there are, in fact, some households,

most of them Thakuris, who do not use all the land of which they are the registered landowners. For such households the total amount of land owned is irrelevant in terms of their day-to-day survival. Finally, the resettlement plans have had a profound effect on the registration of land. Claims to the ownership of more land than is actually owned cannot be checked by the authorities and some households have undoubtedly registered as agricultural land plots which are, in fact, useless for cultivation and which have not been cultivated for years. Thus, while the actual amount of land owned is important for the overall analysis, in terms of day-to-day or year-to-year survival and reproduction the yields available to different households is a more accurate measure of their wealth.⁹

The total yield of all the land owned by the Rārāls and the amount and percentages produced by each caste and the averages per household are shown in Table 4. Despite owning less land per household, the total yield from Chetri land is substantively higher than the yield from Thakuri land, and this is partly a reflection of the fact that many Thakuri households do not cultivate all their land and that some cultivate as little as 50 per cent. The column indicating average yields of households in Table 4 continues to suggest that in terms of yields as in terms of ownership of land, on the average Thakuri households are wealthier than Chetri households. Neither in this Table nor in Table 2 is there any suggestion of the degree of differentiation between households of similar caste status. Caste status and economic status may coincide, but in order to show that in fact this is so, it is necessary to look at the yields produced by households in more detail.

Table 4: Yields

| | <i>Yield in muri</i> | <i>% of Total</i> | <i>Average per Household</i> |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Thakuri | 1182 | 35 | 91 |
| Chetri | 2087 | 61 | 43 |
| Dom | 131 | 4 | 19 |
| Total | 3400 | | |

Table 5 is an attempt to do this. Here households have been divided into three categories according to how far they can manage their own reproduction from the yields they produce. In this Table only the main staples such as wheat, barley, buckwheat, rice and millet have been included. Lentils, beans, maize, potatoes and peas are only used as garnish to the main meal which invariably consists of bread or cooked rice. The exclusion of the minor crops does mean that the household yields in Table 5 are slightly lower than they are in reality, but since the Rārāls themselves think of grain as their main food and calculate their total yields in this way, and since some households grow very few of the secondary crops, the exclusion of these crops is acceptable to this analysis. The different staples are comparable in so far as people eat much the same quantities of each. Thus, one *māna* of wheat makes the same number of *roti* (round flat bread) as does one *māna* of barley and millet, whereas rice stretches slightly further. Category 1 contains those households whose surplus after cost of seed and household consumption¹⁰ have been subtracted amounts to more than 5 *muri* of grain.¹¹ Category 2 contains those households for whom this surplus is less than 5 *muri* and whose deficit is not more than 5 *muri*. Category 3 contains those households

Table 3. Household Composition of Thakuris, Chetris and Doms

| | Category 1 | | | Category 2 | | | Category 3 | | | Total |
|---------|------------|----------|--------|------------|----------|--------|------------|----------|---------|-------|
| | > 5 | % of all | % of C | < 5 to >-5 | % of all | % of C | >-5 | % of all | % of C. | |
| Thakuri | 7 | 32 | 54 | 4 | 18 | 31 | 2 | 8 | 15 | 13 |
| Chetri | 15 | 68 | 31 | 17 | 77 | 35 | 16 | 69 | 33 | 48 |
| Dom | - | - | - | 1 | 5 | 14 | 6 | 23 | 86 | 7 |
| Total | 22 | 32 | - | 22 | 32 | - | 24 | 36 | | 68 |

C. = Caste

who, when the cost of seed and household consumption for one year have been subtracted, have a deficit of more than 5 *muri* of grain. The households in each of these categories have further been divided according to caste.

Table 5 shows that the 68 households studied can be divided into three categories of about the same size. Thus while 32 per cent of all households fall into Category 1, another 32 per cent fall into Category 2, and 36 per cent of all households fall into Category 3. While the size of these categories is a function of the way, it is clear that not all households manage to exist independently and in a self-sufficient manner from the land they cultivate. On the other hand the three categories should not be taken as an indication of the same economic situation for all the households included in each. Later when looking at these categories with respect to other variables it will be seen that there is some variation between households grouped together in this way.

The position of the three castes in the three categories is interesting. While 54 per cent of Thakuri households fall into Category 1, 31 per cent fall into Category 2 and 15 per cent fall into Category 3. The point to note is that some Thakuri households fall into Category 2 and Category 3. For the Chetris the distribution into the three categories is more even; 31 per cent in Category 1, 35 per cent in Category 2 and 33 per cent in Category 3.¹² The Dom occupy an extreme position. There are no Dom households in Category 1 and only 5 per cent in Category 2, whereas the majority of Dom households, namely 86 per cent are found in Category 3. Thus Dom and

Thakuris occupy extreme positions; there is a tendency for Thakuri households to be wealthy and for Dom households to be poor. While this is so for Rārā, I must warn against placing too much emphasis on these conclusions for Dom generally. The number of Dom households in this sample is small, and therefore, not very representative, and it is heard that villages in the area where Doms are rich money lenders and grainlenders. Accordingly what is said here about Dom only refers to Rārā.

Table 5 reveals a situation which could not be discerned from Tables 2 and 4, where averages per household of the three castes were shown. From Table 5 it is clear that not all Thakuris belong in Category 1, nor do all Chetris belong in Categories 2 and 3, and Dom may not always belong to Category 3. Caste and economic categories are even less in accordance with each other when yields of grain are considered.

It has been described that how ownership of or access to oxen is crucial for households to be able to cultivate the land. Indeed, all livestock are productive property used either directly in the process of production on agricultural land or kept for consumption. Thus cows and waterbuffaloes are kept for milk (*dudh*), cowdung (*gobar*) and cow-urine (*gaut*). Sheep and goats provide meat (*māsu*) and wool (*un*) and their excrements are used as manure. In this way the number of livestock owned by households constitutes productive property and adds to the household wealth. The livestock owned by the three castes is presented in Table 6.

In total the people of Rārā own 702 head of livestock. Of these 98 are oxen, 129 cows, 47

waterbuffaloes and 428 sheep and goats. Thakuris own 35 per cent of the oxen, 24 per cent of the cows, 32 per cent of the waterbuffaloes and only 9 per cent of the sheep and goats. Chetris own 64 per cent of the oxen, 71 per cent of the cows, 62 per cent of the waterbuffaloes and 91 per cent of the sheep and goats. Lastly, Dom own 1 per cent of the oxen, 5 per cent of the cows, 6 per cent of the waterbuffaloes and none of the sheep and goats. Chetris thus own the largest percentage of cows, sheep and goats. Some Chetri households specialise in the production of milk and yogurt (*dahi*) for sale. Further, most Chetris spin and weave their own clothes as well as various types of blankets, and in this way sheep and goats constitute an important asset.

Table 6: Livestock

| <i>Caste</i> | <i>Oxen</i> | <i>% of</i> | <i>Cow</i> | <i>% of</i> | <i>Water</i> | <i>% of</i> | <i>Sheep &</i> | <i>% of</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Cat.</i> | | <i>Cat.</i> | <i>Buffaloes</i> | <i>Cat.</i> | <i>Goats</i> | <i>Cat.</i> |
| Thakuris | 34 | 35 | 31 | 24 | 15 | 32 | 39 | 3 |
| Chetri | 63 | 64 | 92 | 71 | 29 | 62 | 389 | 91 |
| Dom | 1 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 6 | - | - |

Oxen are the most important animals for agricultural production. Without oxen the plough cannot be drawn and the fields are not cultivated. Thus, in order to estimate the economic position of households in production the ownership of oxen is crucial. On the average, Thakuri households own 2.6 oxen, Chetri households 1.8 oxen and Dom households 0.1 oxen. To plough successfully the plough must be drawn by two oxen. The average figures indicate that only Thakuri households plough using their own

oxen, but if the number of oxen owned is broken down according to the three economic categories established in Table 5, a more precise picture emerges. This is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Ownership of Plough Animals

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Caste</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>More than 2</i> | <i>Total Households</i> |
|-----------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | T | — | 1 | 3 | 3 | — |
| | C | 1 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 22 |
| | D | — | — | — | — | — |
| 2 | T | — | — | 2 | 2 | — |
| | C | 5 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 22 |
| | D | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| 3 | T | — | — | 1 | 1 | — |
| | C | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 24 |
| | D | 5 | 1 | — | — | — |
| Total | | 20(29%) | 13(19%) | 25(37%) | 10(15%) | 68 |

According to Table 7, 82 per cent of all households in economic Category 1 own two or more oxen and 33 per cent of these are Thakuris, whereas 67 per cent are Chetris. In Category 2, 50 per cent of households own two or more oxen and there 73 per cent are Thakuris, whereas 27 per cent are Chetris. In Category 3 only 24 per cent own two or more oxen, 33 per cent of these being Thakuris whereas 67 per cent are Chetris. While in Category 2, 50 per cent of the households do not plough their land using their own oxen, in Category 3, 75 per cent do not do so. Thus Table 7 indicates a relationship between economic category and position and ownership of plough-animals. In Category 1, the bulk of the

households are to be found in the column indicating two or more oxen, and in economic Category 3 most households fall in the column indicating zero to one oxen.

From Table 7 it is clear that only one Thakuri household owns less than 2 oxen. This household is the otherwise wealthy household of Jit Bahadur Shah referred to in Fig. 6, and at the time of the survey this, household had recently lost an oxen. The ploughing was done by borrowing an ox from a close agnate. Generally Thakuri households own at least two oxen and this is not only a reflection of the fact that Thakuris are wealthier than Chetris and Dom. On the contrary we have seen in Table 5 that Thakuris do not necessarily belong to Category 1. The fact that the Thakuri households at Rārā generally own two or more plough-animals has to be seen in relation to their claim to and justification for their status as Shahs. Contrary to the Chetris and the Dom, the Shah Thakuris do not plough the land themselves. Whether they are poor or rich, Thakuris contract other people to perform the ploughing for them and in these arrangements the landowner supplies the means of production, such as the plough, the seed and the oxen. Consequently no Thakuri household is able to cultivate their land independently without using some extra-household labour. Tables 6 and 7, however, clearly show that this situation does not only hold for Thakuris but also for some Chetris and Dom. Those households who consistently produce a deficit need to make up this deficit somehow, and to do this they become part of extra-household economic relationships. Similarly not all households have oxen

and in order to get their land ploughed they must engage in economic relationships with members of other households. Thus, whereas households constitute the units of production, only some households can, in fact, manage in a self-sufficient and independent manner. However, involvement in economic relationships with members of other households is not only a result of the amount of land owned by households and the size of their surplus; it is also a result of notions of caste status and the division of labour. To this I shall return in the last section of this chapter, but first these extra-household economic relationships have to be analysed.

4. RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION

Such relations are best characterised as relations of production. The household constitutes the basic unit of production. As indicated in the discussion of rules of inheritance and partition some members of a household, particularly senior agnates such as a father or an elder brother or a husband, have a certain amount of authority over the rest. However, all members are related to each other as kin and no co-parcener can be denied his right in the property. In this sense, therefore, the position of the household as a unit of production is closely tied up with its position as a kinship unit. As such it reflects a general ideology and general ideas which also provide the basis for kinship relations between households. This will be discussed in Part III. For the moment it suffices to note that whereas the economic relations which exist within the household are inseparable from the kinship relations there, the economic relations

which exist between households are different. While kinship attitudes and kinship behaviour may still be expressed and upheld between households, the difference between intra-household and extra-household economic relations results from the fact that the household is the landowning unit. Thus by relations of production that the relations which exist between members of different households when they are involved in the same process of production. In the following section it shall be considered the division of labour and thus also touch on the economic relations which exist within households.

At Rārā there are some households who have enough land to support themselves, enough labour to cultivate the land and, at least one, yoke of oxen. Such households are able to engage in the process of production largely without economic ties to other households. This situation is considered the ideal for every Chetri household, but as pointed out with respect to participation in the labour process Thakuris and Chetris are in different positions by virtue of their different caste status. The Thakuris do not plough or perform manual labour generally. Thus in the agricultural labour process Thakuri households are dependent upon employing someone or getting someone outside the household to plough their land. As a result of this all Thakuri households enter into the *hali-riti* relationship. *Riti* (master, local dialect) refers to the landowner and *hali* refers to the man who ploughs. Nowadays, a *hali* ploughs or labours generally during the three busiest months (July, August, September) on the land of the *riti* using the latter's plough, oxen and seed for which he receives

a wage varying from Rs. 90-120 and two daily meals as long as the work lasts. There are two variations on this arrangement, both of which are also referred to as *hali-riti* relationships. In the first, the *hali* receives less money, but seed for his own land and also the use of his *riti's* oxen. In the second, the *hali* receives no wage, but meals, seed, use of oxen and enough grain to make up his own annual grain deficit. Thus, while at one extreme the *hali* might be an occasional wage-labourer agreeing to a temporary contract with his *riti*, at the other he might be dependent on his *riti* for his survival not just for the period of work, but for the whole year. In this case the *hali* is indebted to his *riti* and the labour he provides is payment of this debt. Some Chetri households also employ *halis* but in none of these cases, do the *halis* receive a wage. They are all of the type described in variation 2.

Although Chetris also employ *halis*, for them *sākhī* (local dialect)¹³ is a more common economic relationship between members from two separate households. *Sākhī* is a relationship between two men (usually heads of households) in which one owns, at least, one yoke of oxen whereas the other owns none. The latter receives the use of the oxen in exchange for ploughing the land of the former. In this relationship too, there is some variation. Thus the household which does not own plough-animals may also receive grain as a loan from the wealthier household. In this case the *sākhī* relationship, far from being a relationship between equals, which is how it is described by informants, is a relationship between two households one of which is in an

economically superior position. While the economic data was collecting it happened occasionally that the two households who had entered such an arrangement referred to the relationship using different terms. In such cases the superior household claimed the relationship to be a *hali-riti* relationship, whereas the inferior household insisted on *sākhi*. The point is that the *sākhi* relationship may, in fact, disguise a certain inequality in the economic status between the parties concerned, whereas ideologically the relationship is considered to embody an equal exchange, i.e. labour for the use of plough-animals. *Sākhi* suggests a relationship between equals in which one party owns means of production needed by the other. The relationship is never described as a way of getting someone to plough your land as is the *hali-riti* relationship. For this reason Thakuris cannot be on either side of the *sākhi* relationship; to be *sākhi* implies that both parties may plough.

A third type of relation of production involves reciprocity. This subject has already been touched on this when describing the redistribution of gathered foodstuffs. Such reciprocity may also take place in the production process on agricultural land. People from different households sometimes help each other with the harvest. Some households cultivate more land than they can manage in terms of the labour available in the household. In such cases members and particularly women of other households may be asked to help for a day or two when they have finished their own harvest. When a request of this kind is made it is understood that the household requesting the help would return the labour to the helping household

should it be needed. This type of labour reciprocity is called *madat dinu* (to give help) at Rārā and is well-known from elsewhere in Nepal and Northern India (Borgström 1976: 65, Seddon 1979: 105, Hitchcock. 1966, Berreman 1963: 77). In reality households who need such labour tend to be the same ones every year and usually such favours are acknowledged by gifts of special foodstuffs such as yogurt, honey and milk. Women involved in such reciprocity tend to be related as kin and amongst the Thakuris the relationship between the women involved is often that of father's sister and brother's daughter, i.e. women who have been given in marriage to the same *bansa* (local dialect).¹⁴ When requests are made to households who are unrelated in terms of kinship and perhaps of different caste, the help is rarely conceived as a reciprocal exchange between equals. Rather in these cases the helping is either paying off a debt (see Chapter 6) or returning a favour of a different character. The difference between labour given as an equal exchange and labour exploited by a creditor is thus slight and depends to some extent on how the exchange is conceived by the two households in question. In one case, labour is given as a result of economic necessity, whereas in the other as a result of the existence of a kinship tie. A wealthy household can draw on both these types of labour, but whereas in the one case labour costs very little, in the other the cost is expected to be amply repaid in material terms. Some Thakuri households just manage to cultivate enough land to survive using labour given in the name of shared bone, flesh and blood (see Chapters 8 and 11).

A similar type of reciprocity is open to those households who do not own a full yoke of plough-

animals. Households owning only one oxen may agree to use each other's oxen in ploughing. In this case each household ploughs its own land. Such arrangements may be short term, lasting only a few days after which households may borrow (*māgnu*, ask for, standard Nepali) another oxen from elsewhere. Such *māgnu* relationships involving an exchange of the use of oxen generally occurs between households of equally fairly low economic status.

Another possibility if households have land but neither oxen nor labour available for its cultivation is to let out the land on a sharecropping basis. Such arrangements are called *adhiyā* (from *ādhā*, half) and the sharecropper is called *sājhā* (partner)¹⁵ but such arrangements are virtually non-existent on Rārā land. A couple of Thakuri households had a Chetri *sājhā* for the cultivation of buckwheat. In these cases the arrangement involved this one crop only. The Thakuris in question could not find a *hali* at a relatively late stage of the agricultural season and the Chetris who agreed to the arrangement did so reluctantly and only if they would receive part of the crop. The *sājhā* uses his own oxen and plough and provides all the labour. The landlord, also in this case called *riti*, provides the seed. Each receives 50 per cent of the yield. Some Thakuris have their *aula* land cultivated in this way. This is particularly the case with some of the land at the villages of Gilar and Karkibara. This land is *khet* and thus yields two crops annually and in these cases the *riti* receives the whole of the summercrop (rice) whereas the *sājhā* receives the whole of the wintercrop (wheat or barley). The land at Kalai is given out on tenancy rather than sharecropping and

yields a rent called *kut* (Regmi 1963, 1971). This rent is fixed and has been fixed since the arrival of the youngest branch of the Thakuris at Rārā. It yields 24 *hāt* (length of a hand) of *tetua* (white cotton cloth, local dialect) a year. Nowadays this is divided eight ways according to the partition of the original households involved. The total amount of land involved in this tenancy is 18 *hal* of *aula pākho*. None of the Chetris or Doms have land on *adhiyā*.

On *aula* land the hiring of daylabourers, *kām garne mānche* (a person who works) for a payment in grain or cash is much more common than at Rārā. Much of the transplanting, weeding and cutting of rice on Thakuri *aula* land is done by day-labourers. Such labourers are often women and older children and the payment is Rs. 4 plus food or 8 *māna* of grain a day. A *kām garne mānche* may refer to his or her employer as *riti* and there are variations in this relationship along the lines described for the *hali-riti* relationship. Thus a *kām garne mānche* may work as a day-labourer on his or her *riti's* land in order to pay back a debt. This, however, is more often the case on Chetri *aula* land than it was on the *khet* owned by Thakuris. Nearly all the Thakuries pay their *kām garne mānche* the stipulated wage.

Thus households plough their agricultural land in four different ways. If Chetri and Dom households have enough plough-animals they plough independently. If they have only one oxen they borrow (*māgnu*) oxen from other households in the same position. But if they have no plough-animals they either enter into the *sākhi* or the *hali-riti* relationship since their caste position forbids them to plough or

perform any other form of manual labour. In fact, only 17 per cent of all the households in the sample plough independently, whereas 83 per cent rely on other arrangements. Of these 13 per cent borrow, or *māgnu*, oxen in a short-term manner, 33 per cent are involved in *sākhi* and 54 per cent are involved on either side of the *hali-riti* relationship. In Table 8 this information is presented for the three economic categories.

Two interesting points emerge from this table. Firstly, none of the households in Category 1 borrows oxen whereas most borrowing is found in Category 2, namely 24 per cent of all households belonging to this category. Secondly, *hali* relationships are contracted mainly by people in Category 1 (48 per cent of all Category 1 households) and Category 3 (54 per cent of all Category 3 households). However, Table 8 does not allow for any clear conclusion about the *hali-riti* and the *sākhi* relationships due to the fact that the two sides of these relationships, namely the lenders of plough-animals and the givers of labour are not distinguished. Thus, the *māgnu*, *sākhi* and *hali* columns in the Table group together households owning plough-animals with those who do not. This can be seen from the distribution of oxen in the 3 types of relationships. Of the 7 households who *māgnu* oxen for ploughing, 1 household owns no oxen, 5 own 1, and 1 owns 3 (only one of which was at Rārā in the summer of 1977). Of the 18 households who enter *sākhi*, 8 own no oxen, 4 own one and 6 own two. Finally, of the 30 households who are involved in the *hali-riti* relationship, 9 own no oxen, 4 own one and 17 own two or more.

In order to consider the relations of production with respect to economic category it is therefore necessary to make a distinction in the *sākhi* and *hali-riti* relationships between households owning plough-animals and households supplying labour. This has been done in Table 9 where the *sākhi* who owns oxen has been distinguished as *sākhi* (1), whereas the *sākhi* who supplies the labour is specified as *sākhi* (2).

Table 8: Relations of Production¹*

| Category | Caste | Hali | Sākhi | Māgnu | Self | Total Household |
|-------------------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|-----------------|
| 1. | T | 7 | — | — | — | 23 |
| | C | 4 | 7 | — | 5 | |
| | D | — | — | — | — | |
| % of 1. | | 48 | 30 | — | 22 | |
| 2. | T | 4 | — | — | — | 21 |
| | C | 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 | |
| | D | 1 | — | — | — | |
| % of 2. | | 33 | 29 | 24 | 14 | |
| 3. | T | 2 | — | — | — | 22 |
| | C | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 | |
| | D | 6 | — | — | — | |
| % of 3. | | 54 | 23 | 9 | 14 | |
| Total house holds | | 30 | 18 | 7 | 11 | 66 |

* There are two households in the survey about whom this information could not be obtained, namely HH 44 and HH 61 (see appendix B).

Table 9 shows that 89 per cent of Category 1 are either *riti* or *sākhi* (1). In this category no households provide *halis*. In Category 2, 62 per cent are *riti* or *sākhi* (1) and 38 per cent of households provide the labour in these relations of production. The *sākhi* relationships involve slightly fewer households than the *hali-riti* in this category. In Category 3, 88 per cent of the households enter these relationships either as *hali* or as *sākhi* (2) and only 12 per cent, namely 2 Thakuri households, are *ritis*. In this category no one belongs to *sākhi* (1). This Table thus shows a clear correspondence between economic category and the positions of households in relations of production. Those from Category 1 are most likely to be at the topside of such relationships, whereas those from Category 3 are most likely to be at the bottom. Although there is some accord with caste position in this caste position by no means determines to which category a household belongs. The interesting category in this Table is Category 2.

Here the most diversity is found within one economic category. The number of households in this category taking a superior position in relations of production is slightly larger than those occupying inferior positions. Whether this is due to the small size of the sample or a definite trend is hard to say. It could be that downward mobility which starts off in this category relatively rapidly brings households to fall into Category 3.

Table 9: Hali and Sākhi Relations of Production

| Category | Caste | Riti | Hali | Sākhi(1) | Sākhi(2) | Total household |
|-------------------|-------|------|------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| 1. | T | 7 | — | — | — | 18 |
| | C | 4 | — | 5 | 2 | |
| | D | — | — | — | — | |
| % of 1. | | 61 | — | 28 | 11 | |
| 2. | T | 4 | — | — | — | 13 |
| | C | — | 2 | 4 | 2 | |
| | D | — | 1 | — | — | |
| % of 2. | | 31 | 23 | 31 | 15 | |
| 3. | T | 2 | — | — | — | 17 |
| | C | — | 4 | — | 5 | |
| | D | — | 6 | — | — | |
| % of 3. | | 12 | 59 | — | 29 | |
| Total house holds | | 17 | 13 | 9 | 9 | 48 |

In this section described how the *sākhi* and *hali-riti* relationships are relations of production outside the household and how *sākhi* starts off with the need of one household to have access to plough-animals in exchange for which the household in question agrees to undertake some ploughing. The statistical data presented in Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 show that there is a tendency for households of the lowest economic category to have an inadequate supply of plough-animals and to be supplying the labour in the *sākhi* and *hali-riti* relations of production. Ideologically an identification with inequality is made

with respect to the *hali-riti* relationship, whereas the *sākhi* is seen as a relationship between equals and the exchange of labour for the use of plough-animals as a fair and equal one. In these two types of relationships there are variations and sometimes the *sākhi* and *hali-riti* may be used to describe the same situation. Further, the correlation found in the statistical data for economic Category 3 refers not only to *hali-riti* relationships but also to *sākhi* relationships. Despite ideological representations both these relationships embody a certain amount of inequality between the parties concerned.

5. DIVISION OF LABOUR

The special position of the Thakuris with respect to the work they do and do not do has been referred to several times. I now turn to consider the division of labour at Rārā and the different work done by the three different castes there. I shall begin by considering the sexual division of labour and the way this differs for Thakuris, Chetris and Doms.

Amongst Chetris and Dom, men plough and sow whereas women harvest. Both sexes thresh, winnow, transplant seedlings and weed as well as cook and grind flour. Similarly the collecting of firewood, gathering of wild fruit and vegetables and the herding of livestock may also be performed by either men or women, although when herding takes place on distant pastures and involves staying overnight in a *goth*, this activity is undertaken by men. The milking of cows and buffaloes also tend to be a man's job. Generally there are few agricultural activities which exclude either sex. While never saw any Chetri

women plough and sow, Dom women do so. Harvesting is an urgent matter most of the time and if men have finished the ploughing and sowing they help the women harvest and they also carry most of the crop from the fields to the village. During menstruation Chetri women are prohibited from cooking and entering the kitchen, and if there are no women in the household the cooking is done by men during this time. Pollution, resulting from menstruation is referred to as *chui* (standard Nepali). Dom of both sexes are in a permanent state of pollution (also referred to as *chui*), and women's menstruation makes no difference to the normal pattern of activities.

Thus amongst Chetris and Doms the division of labour between the sexes in agricultural activities is fairly loosely defined. Only a few tasks are restricted to either sex and generally men and women work side by side in the fields. In the house the cooking and the preparation of food is the job of women, but periodically they are prohibited from performing this task. In these cases, men take over, unless there are other women available in the household. However, I never saw Chetri men clean, press oil or dry vegetables. Such household activities are performed by women. At the same time, there are no prohibitions on men performing such female tasks as grinding flour or husking rice.

Although the same basic principles apply for the Thakuris, the situation is different. The most important difference between Thakuri and Chetri men is that the latter should not do any heavy manual labour on agricultural land. Specifically, they should not plough or carry loads. The effect of these

prohibitions on the division of labour within the household is significant. Nowadays Thakuri women perform all the agricultural and household activities performed by Chetri women. Thus they harvest, thresh, winnow, weed, transplant, grind flour, cook and prepare foodstuffs. They also collect and gather and herd the livestock on village pastures. Young unmarried Thakuri women even sometimes stay overnight in the various *goths* owned by Thakuris, while usually the milking of cattle in the house is done by men. Thakuri men sow and sometimes work in the fields and gardens by hand with a mattock, thresh and winnow and cook rice and bread when the women are *chui*. The *chui* period is observed much more strictly by Thakuri than by Chetri women and usually lasts for four days. Contrary to the situation amongst the Chetris, rice in particular may only be cooked by either married women of the household or by *janai*-wearing men. *Bhāt* may not be cooked by any person considered a *matwāli*. For the Thakuris, unmarried women and youths who have not yet put on the *jani* are considered to be *matwālis*¹⁶ Thus in a Thakuri household if the senior women, usually the wife of the most senior male agnate, is *chui* and there are no other eligible women such as a wife of a brother or a son, the senior male member himself cooks the meal for the whole household. Even in this case, however, Thakuri men would never be seen either grinding flour or husking rice and other grain. Being *chui* only prohibits Thakuri as well as Chetri women from cooking food or being in contact with cooked food, with respect to all other food preparation including harvesting and threshing they can carry on work as usual.

As a result of the prohibition on manual work for Thakuri men, Thakuri women generally work much harder than do Chetri women. Although the prohibition on carrying of loads, at least in theory, also extends to Thakuri women, they do not and cannot observe this prohibition. They do most of the carrying of crops and firewood. As often as they can, Thakuris try to persuade Chetris and Doms to carry such loads for them and if the *hali* employed by a household has finished the ploughing or the oxen are resting (*bisintalu*, local dialect),¹⁷ the *hali* carries out this type of work for his *riti*. Quite often, however, there is no one other than the members of the household available, and the crops must be dried and threshed as quickly as possible. Thakuri men proudly uphold the ideal of what work they should and should not do, but sometimes they simply must carry something from the fields to the village. When this happens they make a detour, entering the village by the path which leads directly to their own houses, thus avoiding being seen carrying their loads through the village. While it does happen occasionally that Thakuri men carry loads of firewood and crops in this manner, they never carry manure. Thakuri men and women consider the carrying of manure (*mal*) particularly degrading and if no one else is available or can be persuaded to perform this task, they would rather refrain from applying manure altogether than carry it themselves. As a result, much of the Thakuri land is nowadays not manured. *Aula*, where the landholdings are not so extensive, this task is more easily overcome by using extra-household labour.

Thus, whereas the basic principles of the division of labour within the unit of production are

the same for Thakuris, Chetris and Dom, the prohibition on certain economic activities for Thakuri men results in a much more extensive use of female labour in Thakuri households. The emphasis on the joint family expressed by the Thakuris, while not a result of this situation, is certainly in accordance with it. Since female labour is absolutely crucial for the reproduction of the Thakuri households, the more women members the better. During the busy months Thakuri men are often, together with small children and old folk, the only people in the village. They can be seen sitting on the porches or in the *baithak* (outer room of house) smoking and playing cards, waiting for the women to bring in the crops to be dried and threshed. For the Thakuri household with a nuclear composition and no other labour available, this practice and habit of Thakuri men may prove particularly.

The division of labour between the sexes and within the household cannot be seen in isolation from the general division of labour, and in a society like Rārā this general division of labour cannot be considered separately from the caste hierarchy (Dumont 1970). In Hindu societies different types of work are prohibited for different castes and some types of work are considered polluting and degrading. This division of labour is commonly referred to as the "*jajamāni* system" and generally this term is applied to the system corresponding to the prestations and counter-prestations by which the castes as a whole are bound together in the village and which is more or less universal in India. (ibid.: 97). Here I shall describe how this system works for Rārā and the surrounding villages, but a general appreciation

of the “*jajamāni* system” and a discussion of the literature will be presented in Chapter 7.

The different castes present in the area have already been described in Chapter 4. These different castes engage in different types of work or pursue different occupations. I have already pointed out that at Rārā no one is landless and that this is true of the area as a whole as well. The amount of land owned by households may not be enough to support a household all year around, but this does mean that occupational groups such as the different artisans cultivate land as well as practice their occupational crafts. The type of work done by different castes reflects status in the caste hierarchy. Such work as leatherwork reflects low status because the work with cow and buffalo-hides is highly polluting. On the other hand, the work of the Brahmin is considered ritually pure.

Compared to northern India, in Nepal and in the area around Rārā the absence of many types of caste occupation is notable. At Rārā there are no barbers, washermen, potters or weavers; nor are there any special funeral priests. Cultivators, therefore, perform many of these tasks themselves. Particular individuals are known to be clever at shaving and cutting hair and such people may be requested to perform this service by agnates. The service is acknowledged by the recipient doing a brief *namaste*¹⁸ and contact with the shaved or cut-off hair is avoided. The women of the household wash all the clothes and sweep the area around the house and the porches. Village paths are not swept. The pots used at Rārā are all metal pots made by blacksmiths or goldsmiths

and men generally do all the spinning, weaving and knitting. The priests used at funerals are the same as those who perform marriages and other life cycle rituals for the household.

The different occupational castes at and around Rārā are Uphadhya Brahmins, who are the household priests (*purohit*), Jaisi Brahmins who are astrologers, Lohars (blacksmiths), Bhyāls (leatherworkers),¹⁹ Damāis (tailors and drummers) and Labhras (basketmakers). Whereas Jaisi Brahmins, Lohars, Bhyāls and Damāis live at Rārā or Chapru or in the immediate surrounding villages, Upadhya Brahmins live further afield and have to be called up to Rārā for specific purposes. Labhras arrive at Rārā twice a year. Some Damāi and Lohars have immigrated permanently to India and the Tarai, but most people in the area pursue their caste-specific occupation in one way or another.

Thakuris and Chetris are cultivators and as such their work is not caste specific. The differences in the work they willingly perform, however, reflects the differences between them in terms of caste status. While this difference is not denied by either caste, the extent to which it reflects varying degrees of purity is not agreed upon. There are several terms which indicate pollution, but the term most commonly used in this context is *chui*. *Chui* refers to the polluted state of some people. Thus women during menstruation are *chui* and so are Doms. But *chui* can also be used to refer to a relative state of pollution. Thus Shah Thakuris may refer to Shahi Thakuris and Chetris as being *chui* compared to themselves. Thakuris see themselves as landlords and warriors and consider the

Chetris to be cultivators. One of the Thakuri informants volunteered to interpret this into *varna* (Dumont 1970: 33 and 66). While the Thakuris are Khastriyas, he said, the Chetris are Vaishya. Chetris, on the other hand, consider that in terms of occupational status, Thakuris and Chetris are the same (*ekai ho*) but consider that the difference in caste status between them is reflected and justified by the different types of agricultural work they consider it appropriate to perform. Thus whatever the cause of the caste hierarchy at Rārā, the notion that different types of work carry with them different degrees of purity and pollution is prevalent. This notion is in some cases justified by direct reference to the (in Hindu terms) actually polluting (*chui*) character of the work. In other cases such as the Thakuris' refusal to carry loads or to plough, the particular activity is degrading because it normally should be carried out by inferiors who are more *chui* than the Shah Thakuris themselves.²⁰ In such cases, however, the notion of honour (*mān*) and the idea of the honourable man par excellence being the king whose command of labour is total is also present. However, for the Rārāls the brahmanical ideal of "purity" and the king's ideal of "honour" converge precisely because to them the type of work people perform is considered to be one aspect of caste distinctions.

Another term which indicates a state of pollution is *pāni nāchalne* (not to use water) referring to castes from whom water is not accepted. This term only refers to Dom and as such Dom are opposed to all other castes referred to as *pāni chalne* (to use water) (Sharma 1979). The *pāni chalne* castes can again be divided

into *matwāli* (drinking castes) and *tāgādhāri* castes. *Matwāli* generally refers to people who do not wear the *janai* and the category includes unmarried women as well as men for whom the *janai* ceremony (*bratabandha*) has not yet been performed.²¹ Although water can be given and received by anyone who belongs to the *pāni chalne* castes these castes do not share food generally. The restrictions are on cooked food in particular, whereas uncooked food is accepted from anyone, even from Dom. Cooked food is either *jutho* (standard Nepali), food which is polluting, such as millet bread, certain types of lentils, roots and wild vegetables, meat²² and eggs²³ or *jhoko* which refers to pure foods. Most permeable to pollution is *bhat* and the giving and taking of *bhāt* is subject to the strictest prohibitions. No one should accept *bhāt* from anyone except their nearest agnates. On the other hand, all other castes accept *bhāt* from them. Rice cooked by a Jaisi Brahmin is not eaten by the Shah Thakuris at Rārā but other Thakuris as well as Chetris accept such rice (Fürer-Hagmendorf 1971: 11). *Bhāt* cooked by the Thakuris or Rārā is eaten by Jaisi Brahmins as well as Chetris and Doms, but not by Upadhya Brahmins. In the same way *bhāt* cooked by Chetris is accepted by other Chetris and Doms, but not by Thakuris or either caste of Brahmin. The Thakuris at Rārā, however, accept and eat all other foods cooked by the Chetris and Jaisi Brahmins, although they would not do so if such food was cooked by *matwāli* Chetris.

The same hierarchy and attitudes are expressed with respect to the sharing of the pipe (*hulphā* local dialect). In theory everyone except Dom may share the same pipe if those of higher caste status use their

own cloth. In practice, however, few actually change the cloth when the *hulphā* is passed around. I have seen Thakuris sitting on the roofs of Chetri houses sharing a pipe with Chetris without using their own cloth. The Chetris are even more relaxed, sharing pipes and little bits of food with their Dom friends. Only the Brahmins, who came to Rārā to perform various rituals and ceremonies observed these commensal rules strictly, using leaves or bits of grass if a clean cloth for the pipe was not available.

Members of inferior castes are strictly prohibited from entering the kitchens of the houses inhabited by superior castes. The Chetris are allowed inside the *baithak* of Thakuri houses, but Doms must stay outside on the porch or may sit immediately inside the entrance. Doms who are fed in the houses of Thakuris and Chetris must bring their own eating utensils and food is passed to them avoiding physical contact. If a person by accident comes into physical contact with a Dom, or if a Dom by accident touches the cooking utensils of a higher caste household, the pollution which has occurred is obliterated by a small ritual referred to as *chito hālne* ("to sprinkle a drop of water"). An unpolluted person pours water from a small brass pot (*gāgo*) over the hands of the polluted person or over the object which has been touched by the Dom.

Both the Jaisi and the Upadhya Brahmins are allowed into Thakuri kitchens, but when both these Brahmins came to Rārā and Chapru they were never accommodated in Thakuri houses. This was even the case if the ritual they had come to perform was for a Thakuri household. The Brahmins always stay in

Chetri houses where they cook their own meals. Outside ritual contexts such Brahmins greet the Shah Thakuris with *dhok garnu* (touching one's head to another person's feet). Thus, while the caste hierarchy and the commensal rules in particular reflect the superiority of the Upadhya Brahmin, at various non-ritual occasions the Shah Thakuris are considered superior by all other castes in the area. This lack of coincidence between the ritual and political hierarchy has been described for India and Nepal generally (Dumont 1970a, Burghart 1978). It is also discernible in what has been referred to as the "*jajamāni* system".

At Rārā the people involved in caste-specific occupations are placed at two extremes of the caste hierarchy. They are either Brahmins or Doms and their relation with other castes is different according to the nature of their occupation. At Rārā the "*jajamāni* system" includes two different types of relationships, that between a *jajamāni* and his *purohit* and that between a *riti* and his Dom.

The term *jajamān* is used by the Rārāls to refer only to the employer of a Brahmin. This is in accordance with the etymological meaning of *jajamān* as "the master of the house who employs a Brahman to perform a sacrifice" (Dumont 1970: 97). The Brahmin is a *purohit* (standard Nepali) or a *thāni* (local term) to his *jajamān* and as such performs the main life cycle rituals for him and his household. He either performs such rituals or cooks the ritual meals (*bhoj*, feast) which accompany them.

Upadhya Brahmins live some way away from Rārā and the *purohit* is, in fact, only used at important occasions such as *bratabandha*, *srāddha*, *bihā*,

*gaidān*²⁴ and for *bhoj khānu*.²⁵ He may also be called for special rituals such as *rudri*.²⁶ Smaller life cycle rituals such as *nwāran* (the 6th day after birth), the *annaprāsan* (the first rice-eating ceremony) and the first haircutting are performed by household heads individually.

In theory, the relationships between a *jajamān* and his *purohit* is inherited from previous generations. Particular lineages of Chetris and Thakuris have a fixed relationship with their *purohit* (*āphno purohit* own priest) whom they can name. Only the Thakuris require their *purohit* to be of Upadhya status, whereas the *purohit* of some of the Chetris is a Jaisi Brahmin. Dom have no *purohit* as no Brahmin will agree to serve them. For Dom rituals are performed by a mother's brother or a son-in-law. Generally Dom do not perform many life cycle rituals but marriage is performed by such a relative. When a Thakuri *jajamān* meets his *purohit*, the *purohit* will touch the former's feet (*dhok garnu*). In rituals, however, this is reversed and the Thakuri *jajamān* performs *dhok* towards his *purohit*. Whenever a Chetri *jajamān* greets his *purohit*, on the other hand, he performs *dhok*.

Although the relationship between a *jajamān* and his *purohit* is thought of as permanent, under certain circumstances this relationship can be broken. Two generations ago the Thakuris changed their *purohit*, who at that time was an Upadhya Brahmin from Gum. Descendants of this Brahmin are alleged to have practised widow-remarriage and by doing so became Jaisi Brahmins. After this the Thakuris at Rārā did not accept him or any of his descendants at their *purohit*. Nowadays, one Thakuri household, in fact,

continues to use descendants, of this Brahmin, who are indeed Jaisi, but all the other Thakuri, have not for two years used an Upadhya Brahmin from Sija. This Brahmin is not considered as good and knowledgeable as their former *purohit* and the Thakuri, are still looking for a more suitable candidate.

The Rokaya and Rawal Chetris, too, use other Brahmins than their own *purohits* and such Brahmins are also referred to as *purohit*. The Brahmin who performed the *śrāddha* rituals in 1977 was the Brahmin from Sija, who is not the hereditary *purohit* of any of the Chetris. Even so he performed all the *śrāddha* rituals which took place in the village and also subsequently a Chetri marriage.

This flexibility in the relationship between the *jajamān* and the *purohit* is apparently not challenged by the *purohit*. The *purohit* is employed for each ritual and ceremony separately and receives payment immediately after the occasion. The payment takes the form of a gift (*dān*) given by an inferior to a superior (Parry 1979: 65) and there is no question of bargaining or haggling as one might do over a commercial payment. On the other hand, the donor acquires merit proportional to the amount given. More specifically the *purohit* is paid in different ways. At rituals he receives *dacchinā* (standard Nepali) which usually consists of a few rupees, although at major rituals such as weddings the *dacchinā* may be more substantial. The *dacchinā* may include various types of *dān* such as land (*bumindān*), clothes (*basradān*), livestock (*gaidān*) or cooking pots. The *purohit* is also given specially cooked food (*sanpun*, food which is used in rituals local term). Finally after

occasions such as *śrāddha*, and Kartik Puny where the *purohit* in a sense has officiated for the village as a whole, he receives a quantity of wheat and lentils (usually one or two *māna*) from each household. This payment is referred to as *gera* (grain) or *bāli* (crop). Judging by the difficulty with which the Upadhyā Brahmin from Sija collected this part of his remuneration he was at a disadvantage as a result of his fairly tenuous relationship with his *jajamāns*. Some households did not contribute at all at this time whereas others clearly gave unacceptably little.²⁷

Ideally the relationship between a *jajamān* and his *purohit* should be hereditary and permanent between two lineages or subclans. The *gera* or *bāli* payment which in a sense represents the *purohit's* right to a share of the produce may reflect this ideal. In reality, however, neither *purohit* nor *jajamān* is by obligation tied to the relationship. The Brahmin who performs the ritual receives the prestations which are due to a *purohit* and he is referred to as *purohit*, but this Brahmin may be a different person and of a different lineage from year to year or from ritual to ritual. Both Thakuris and Chetris are ready to use any Brahmin who is available and able to perform the rituals in question, although for the Thakuris the Upadhyā status of the *purohit* is important. At Rārā, then, the *jajamān-purohit* may be a short-term relationship between a Thakuri or a Chetri and any Brahmin of appropriate status who agrees to officiate in life cycle rituals (Gaborieau 1977).

The other type of relationship between a cultivator or landlord and a service caste is that between *riti* on the one hand and Dom on the other.

Dom is the collective term for untouchables, but not all untouchables pursue a specific occupation. Thus the group of Dom called Tumaro are cultivators but there are none of these in the area immediately around lake Rārā. *Riti* is the term for landlord or master and is used in other contexts.²⁸ At Rārā all the Chetris and Thakuris are *riti* in this sense and each household has a personal relationship with a particular *lohar* (blacksmith) and *dhyāl* (leatherworker). Households also employ *dāmiys* (from *damāhā*, kettledrum) (Gaborieau 1977: 35) as drummers and tailors, but this relationship is different from that between a *riti* and his *lohar* and *bhyāl*. Further the village as a whole is served by one household of basketmakers (*lābhra*) and one household of stonemasons (*tiruwa*). These latter two service castes live further away and come to Rārā once or twice a year.

Collectively these service castes are called Dom, but individuals are addressed by their specific caste names, *lohar*, *bhyāl*, etc. They in turn address their *riti* as *hajur*²⁹ and the serving of a *riti* is referred to as *riti mānne* (to obey a *riti*). They are expected to supply each *riti* household with one of each of the agricultural tools a year and also to be available for repairs. At festivals and major rituals Dom are fed and given cooked leftovers. At such times they have a right to ask for (*māgnu*) special foods. Indeed, on some such occasions their presence as receivers of *sanpun* is obligatory. Pancha Rokaya, the wealthy Chetri described in Chapter 4, Fig. 4 performed a ritual referred to as *dān garne* (to make a gift) for his *kuldevatā*, Mahadev. The ritual was performed in

order to receive future riches (*dān hunnokolagi*) and in theory he should have given a Brahmin, a *bhyāl* and a *lohar sanpun* and given them all *achetā* (blessing, local term). However, no Brahmin was available and Pancha was content to feed a *bhyāl* and a *lohar*, neither of whom were his own (*āphno*). The ritual was performed for Mahadev, not only because he is Panchal's *kuldevatā*, but also because in this capacity Mahadev is the god of the land owned by Pancha. At other occasions such as Saun Sagraṭi (the first day of the month of Saun) the *lohars* who live at Rārā provide a service for all Thakuri households. On this day the Thakuris enact an event described in the Ramayana where Hanuman burns down Lanka. They light big fires on their roofs and hurl big sticks of *jhora* (sticks taken from the inside of pine trees, local term) which are saturated with sap and therefore burn well, from the roofs down towards the lake. The *lohars* provide the *jhora* for all the households regardless of whether they are attached to them or not and in return they are entitled to beg (*māgnu*) *sanpun*. At festivals such as Dasai Dom may also be fed but they are also expected to help out with all sorts of menial tasks which are not necessarily relevant to their occupational work. Particularly, in Thakuri households Dom would be lucky to get away without first carrying several loads of crops or firewood.

The relationship between a *riti* and his *dom* is conceptualised as a contract (*mel*, standard Nepali). A *riti's* right (*hak*) is a *dom's* obligation (*kar*) and vice-versa. The *riti* for his part has the right to efficient service and also to a reasonable amount of manual labour. The *dom* on the other hand has a right

to a certain amount of grain annually as well as the help and support and patronage of his *riti*. The relationship is hereditary and clients are divided between brothers along with the rest of the ancestral property.

The *lohar* and the *bhyāl* of a *riti* are paid *anna* (from *anāj*, food). This payment is generally 3-4 *pāthis* of wheat or barley a year, but *ritis* stress that each household pays according to their means (Hitchcock 1966). A certain amount of haggling and bargaining takes place over the exact amount. None of the *dom* can survive solely on the amount of grain they receive from their *ritis*. *Anna* is usually paid after the harvest but some *ritis* also pay this in smaller instalments throughout the year. Particularly during the month of Saun when the artisans are busy repairing and making new agricultural tools, they may receive a couple of *mānas* of wheat or barley. A *riti* may also give his *dom* land to cultivate. This was more common in the past and the *lohars* who live at Rārā received their land at Rārā, Ashidara and Guira in this way from their Chetri *ritis*. In Raunteri some Thakuris households have recently given their *dom* land in this way, but in these cases the *riti* has remained the registered landowner and the *dom* are in effect tenants whose payment to the landowner (*jamindār*) is in the form of labour, both as a craftsman and as a *hali*.

Despite the hereditary nature of the relationship between a *riti* and his *dom* the relationship can be terminated by either side if the contract is considered to have been broken. In reality, however, the relationship between a *riti* and his *dom* rarely ends

abruptly. More often the relationship ceases slowly, the haggling and bargaining over payment and the amount of work done becoming more and more vague and unconcerned. When this happens the *riti* does not necessarily initiate a relationship with a new *lohar* or *bhyāl*. He may decide that it is easier to buy (*kinnu*) his tools piece by piece. Since the artisans only undertake to supply a household with one of each tool annually, those households who need more pay for these tools separately. Thus the price of each tool is fixed in grain as well as money and it is possible for a household to acquire tools without having a personal *bhyāl* or *lohar*. In fact, although almost all households at Rārā consider a particular *lohar* and *bhyāl* as theirs (*āphno*) most of them also use the service of other artisans regularly. This is particularly true of the not so wealthy Thakuri households, and for some of these households this is undoubtedly a step in the process of severing more permanent ties. For the Thakuris who see themselves as landlords and aloof from manual labour, however, the personal relationship between a *riti* and *dom* is particularly important. I happened to be present when an elderly *lohar* who some years back had moved permanently to a village nearby paid one of his Thakuri *ritis* a visit. The *riti* had several times sent word to this *lohar* about axes which needed sharpening and sickles which needed replacing, all to no avail. Finally, the exasperated *riti* had the work done by another *lohar* and paid the latter for this work when his own *lohar* showed up and asked for *anna*, however, he did not lose face. Instead, he gave him a small amount of grain and told him to bring a new axe. The axe never arrived but still the *riti* did not consider that the relationship was terminated.

The *tiruwā* sell millstones piece by piece and do not consider their buyers as *riti*. The *lābhra*, too, sells his brushes, ropes and baskets piece by piece but the relationship between him and the people of Rārā is a long-term one which, has lasted for generations. This *labhra*, who comes from the Karnali river valley north of Rārā, also brings red soil (*rāto māto*) at Dasai. The Thakuris use this red soil to paint their wooden window and door frames. This relationship between the *lābhra* and the Thakuris is a result of a *kartheg* (contract) made between their ancestors and for this the *lābhra* receives one *māna* of wheat or barley from each Thakuri household. The *lābhra* considers the Thakuris as his *ritis* whereas it never heard him refer to the Chetris in this way.

In his capacity as a tailor, the *damāi* arrives from a nearby village in October just before Dasai and Kartik Puny in order to sew new clothes. At this time most Thakuris and many Chetris and Doms acquire a new set of clothes. Each piece of clothing has a price fixed in grain and in cash, although the *damāis* prefer payment in grain. They sow everything by hand and only men undertake this work. As a tailor the *damāi* is addressed as *master* and he has no long-term contractual relationship with the Rārāls. He makes the garments they ask for in the same manner as the *lohar* may make and sell a sickle or an axe. On the other hand, the same *damāis* tend to come up to Rārā every year and they may be asked, particularly by the Thakuris, to do other work.

When the *damāi* comes before Dasai he starts by sewing clothes; however, during Dasai and Kartik Puny he is employed as a drummer. In this capacity

damāis usually work in pairs and beat large kettledrums with wooden sticks. During rituals such as *bratabandha* and *bihā* the same *damāis* usually drum for the processions and for the sacrificing of goats and sheep as well as sew new clothes. For this the *damāi* is paid separately by the end of the ritual. He receives food and *sanpun* while he is working and at the end of a quantity of grain (*bāli*). When the drummers have been employed by a lineage or a subcaste as a whole as at Dasai and Kartik Puny they receive a specific payment from each household. At Dasai when the drummers were employed by the Thakuris to drum during the sacrificing each Thakuri household paid 2 *māna* of flour, one spoonful of oil, a handful of salt and red peppers as well as Rs. 2. At the Kartik Puny which is mainly a Chetri festival in which the Chetri *kuldevatās* as well as the village *devatā* are worshipped, the drummers drum each night during the seances of the mediums (*dhāmi*) and also at the final seance and sacrifice at the main village temple (*Mahādevatāko thān*, the temple of the Mahadev). For this they receive a share of the food contributed by each household for the final feast. This food is referred to as *sikh* (local term).³⁰

The relationship between the *damāi* and those for whom he performs the tasks of tailoring and drumming is not conceived of as a relationship between a *riti* and a *dom* in the specific sense. In the past some households apparently did have a relationship with a *damāi* in the same way as they now have relatively permanent relations with a *lohar* and a *bhyāl*. This relationship, however, seems primarily to have been with the *damāi* as a tailor. The

drumming which such a *damāi* would undertake to do was also then paid separately. Thus, while *damāis* are dom like *lohars* and *bhyāls* they stand in a different relationship to their clients than do the latter. The relationship is not permanent and the *damāi* both as a tailor and as a drummer may be employed on a short-term basis to perform a specific task. He either sews garments for people generally or he is employed for a ritual to sew the clothes needed and to drum. For the former he is paid piece by piece; for the latter he is not paid a fixed payment, rather he receives some of the ritually cooked food (*sanpun or sikh*). In this context he also receives a quantity of uncooked food. As a tailor the *damāi* performs a menial task and may be tied to a household. In this case he receives *anna* and calls his master *riti*. As a drummer, however, the *damāi* performs a ritual role and in this capacity he does not refer to his employer as *riti*. The *damāi* who drummed during Dasai and Kartik Puny addressed the *jimwāl*, who was in charge of their payment, as *bābu sāb*. This term is less deferential than *hajur* which is the term generally used by *dom* towards their *riti*. The ritual role of the *damāi* is more important. Thakuris as well as Chetris sew their own clothes, but they cannot provide a substitute for the *damāi* in his role as drummer.³¹

Thus while the cultivator's role as a *jajamān* must be distinguished from his role as *riti* those who provide a service must also be distinguished into two main categories.³² On the one hand, the *purohit* or *thāni* provides a ritual service for which he is paid an unspecific amount referred to as *dacchinā* and *dān* and he also receives a quantity of grain referred to

as *gera* or *bāli*, but bargaining does not enter the relationship between a *jajamān* and his *purohit*. Despite the Thakuris insistence that they used to have a permanent *purohit* both they and the Chetris accept as *purohit* any Brahmin who is able and willing to perform the rituals in question. On the other hand the *lohar* and the *bhyāl* perform an economic service for their *riti*. The work they do is paid regularly either by annual payments of *anna* or for each task which has been completed. Contrary to the *jajamān/purohit* relationship, the relationship between a *riti* and his *lohar* and *bhyāl* is a personal one. More Thakuris and Chetris maintain relationships with their *lohar* and their *bhyāl* than they do with their hereditary *purohit*. This is the case despite the fact that the tools made by these *dom* can be bought separately from unrelated *dom*. The *damāi* occupies an intermediary position. As a tailor he is like the *lohar* and the *bhyāl* except that nowadays all his work is paid for piece by piece. As a drummer, however, the *damāi* provides a ritually indispensable service parallel to that of the *purohit*. Accordingly he is not given a specific or regular payment, but receives a portion of the food used in the ritual as well as a quantity of uncooked food.

This division of the relationships between occupational castes and their clients into two main types of relationship is known from elsewhere in Nepal and north India (Berreman 1962, 1963; Caplan 1972; Pocock 1962; MacFarlane 1976; Hitchcock 1966, Sanwal 1976 and Parry 1979). However, the nature of these two relationships varies from place to place. At Rārā the relationship between a *riti* and his *dom* is personal and fixed and usually a long-term

contract, conceptualised in terms of rights and obligations. Those whose work has direct religious connotations, on the other hand, such as the *purohit* and the *damāi* in his capacity as a drummer, are not tied to their clients in a long-term relationship, and payment is made according to the generosity and religious aspirations of the *jajamān* and employer. Thus those who provide a direct agricultural service in terms of making and repairing tools are more closely tied to their clients than are those who provide a religious service. The ritual service of the *purohit* and the *damāi*, however, cannot be dispensed with since these specialists have jobs which the ordinary householder cannot perform. This is, of course, to some extent true of all the occupational castes in the hierarchy. As *doms*, *lohars* and *bhyāls* also perform ritual services. The *bhyāls'* work with cattlehides is considered polluting as a result of the generally prevailing ideas of purity and pollution, and the presence of *dom* as receivers of *sanpun* on ritual occasions *re-enacts* and confirms the caste hierarchy. At Rārā, however, it is significant that when *bhyāls* and *lohars* perform such "ritual" services they represent *dom* generally, rather than the *āphno lohar* of the householder. The caste hierarchy, thus, has these two aspects: it represents a ritual hierarchy in which castes are ranked according to their purity, but their position in this hierarchy is also influenced by the nature of the work carried out by different castes. These two aspects are intricately related. However, while some occupations are more ritual, others are more secular. The relationship between a *riti* and his *bhyāl* and *lohar* represents the more secular aspect

of the hierarchy, but as *dom* the *bhyal* and the *lohar* may also provide a ritual service for their *riti* or any other household. Conversely their ritual position as *dom* is instrumental in maintaining their more secular and economic relationships to their *ritis*.

The *purohit* performs a purely ritual service for his *jajamān*. While the *bhyāl* and the *lohar* perform specific occupational tasks and are also asked, especially by the Thakuris, to perform agricultural work, the nature of the caste hierarchy is such that a Brahmin is removed from manual labour generally and therefore could never be confronted with such requests. The difference in the nature of the relationship between householders and the *purohit* on the one hand, and the *lohar* and the *bhyāl* on the other, can be understood in this way.

In this chapter, I have considered the organisation of production generally. While the division of labour is organised according to the ideas of purity and pollution, caste relations are not directly reflected in the relations of production. This is to some extent a result of the fact that there are no landless castes or groups of people at Rārā and in the surrounding area, and thus that the low caste position of some households does not necessarily indicate that they supply the labour for others. Further, the *jajamanās* and *ritis* are both Thakuris and Chetris and, these two castes do not occupy the same position in the caste hierarchy. At this stage of discussion on two hierarchies, which to some extent have been described separately. One is directly economic and households are ranked according to the amount of surplus and deficit they produce annually.

The other is a caste hierarchy where households occupy particular positions according to the degree of purity and pollution they can uphold or are seen to uphold. Indirectly, however, this latter hierarchy also involves notions about occupation and the kind of manual labour castes of different status should perform. These two hierarchies interrelate, but in order to demonstrate this, it is necessary first to describe other aspects of the economy. In Chapter 6, an analysis of usury and the extent of monetarisation at Rārā. The final analysis of the interrelation between the division of labour and the relations of production is presented in Chapter 7, where analyses the crucial importance of labour in the “*jajamāni* system” and in the Rārā economy generally.

Chapter 6

MONETARISATION AND USURY

1. THE STATE AS LANDLORD

In this chapter discussed the use of money at Rārā. The extent to which labour, land and other means of production can be converted into cash necessarily affects the nature of the economy. In particular, such conversions are dependent upon the existence of individuals' rights to alienate property. At Rārā conversions of cash and kind into means of production and labour has long been possible and the economy at Rārā is an example of a general situation, which with some variation existed in India and Nepal before the area became colonised or otherwise involved in capitalist relations of production. A study of these aspects of the economy at Rārā suggests the existence of private property as a basis for the process of economic differentiation of productive units or households.

In this first section, discussed some of the characteristics of the Hindu state as it existed in India before the British arrived and in Nepal until the beginning of this century. The discussion has pointed to various contradictory elements which have led to much confusion in the debate about these states. In

particular, the notion that the state is the ultimate landlord is too simplistic. This is confirmed when one considers such aspects as monetarisation, landsales and usury. In the rest of this chapter analyses these factors as they existed at Rārā and when appropriate also make references to Nepal as a whole. Finally discusses on the nature of the economy at Rārā and in the Hindu state generally. The activities of the East India Company and later the involvement of the British Government in Indian affairs precipitated a need for an understanding of the institutions found in India. Since the British in the first instance replaced many different sovereigns as the chief collector of the revenue (Habib 1975), an understanding of the traditional land tenure system was of particular importance. In their assessment of this problem Company officials and British civil servants were influenced by the philosophical and economic tradition in which they were trained. Central to 19th century economic theories was the idea of ownership and private property. Land in England was owned as private property and the owners or managers of estates were attempting to maximise output and production for the market. The reasons behind the presence of the Company in India was primarily mercantile and Company officials and administrators came to India with ideas about rent, tax and profit; ideas which had originated in western Europe (Neale 1962). In order for these ideas to be put into practice, however, ownership of the land in India had to be identified and understood.

Embree has pointed out that in Europe the belief that the communities which existed in Asia were, despotic, allowing little individual freedom, had long been prevalent (Embree 1969: 43). A central

notion in these beliefs was that the despotic ruler was the owner of all the land. This ruler extracted tribute in return for which large-scale centrally administered waterworks were built and military protection provided.¹ In accordance with these already accepted ideas, as well as with the commercial interests of the Company, it was only natural for the British to consider the state as the sole owner of the land. If the state was considered landlord, the land revenue could be considered rent. In 19th century capitalist theory, rent from land could legitimately be maximised, whereas tax, the payment from private landowners to the state, should be minimised. In this way the acceptance of the position of the state as landowner ensured that the Company could maximise its revenue. This solution to the problem of landownership adopted by the British in the early days of Company rule opened up a debate about the difference between tax and rent, and the extent to which the Indian situation had been misunderstood is confirmed by the conclusion drawn on this subject by Maine. Maine wrote:

We may lay down, I think at least provisionally, that in the beginning of the history of ownership there was no such broad distinction as we now commonly draw between political and proprietary power, between the power which gives the right to tax and the power which confers the right to exact rent.

(Maine 1881: 228-29)

This point was also emphasized by Marx (1972, vol. 3, Chapter 47: 791). Thus the issue of landownership

in India was confused by the British because they attempted to adopt their own economic principles and because within these principles, which had originated in capitalist theory, the question of ultimate ownership of land was central.

However, while it is clear that the British had their own reasons for solving the problem of ownership in land in the manner they did, these ideas could hardly have had such force if nothing in the actual situation confirmed them. Referring to the position of the king, Dumont states:

In the Arthashastras the king exerts a complete hold on everything and in the first place the soil. His share of the crops (so often called *bhaga*) far from appearing a mere retribution for his service in protecting the agriculturalists, is clearly analogous to the share (*vibhaga*) he levies on the produce of the mines he leases out by virtue of a right of ownership (which is not open to question anywhere in the literature).

(Dumont 1970a: 84)

In line with this, in Nepal the king is considered to be the incarnation of Vishnu, to be Lord of the Land and entitled to *salāmi* or fees of obeisance (Burghart 1978: 522). Upon conquest such fees were transferred to the new king.

Whether this payment was a recognition of the king's right of ownership of the soil however cannot be inferred from the fact that such payments took place. On the contrary, the *salāmi* paid to the Lord of the Land indicates primarily that the king was a

political authority. As such he had certain interests in the land and in the produce from it. This is confirmed in Nepal by the fact that *salāmi* was also sometimes paid to other political authorities such as *amālis*, *bhārdārs* and *jimwāls* (RRS 1971, 3/8: 211). This relationship between political authority and control of land in Hindu thought has been emphasized by Maine (1881) and Neale (1962, 1969). In the Hindu state it was not so much ownership of land as control over people labouring on the land which was an important element in the notion of kingship. The king was the political authority par excellence (Burghart 1978: 520) but the position of other lesser political authorities was also modelled on that of the king and it was in the interests of all rulers that land should be cultivated. Only if crops were produced could revenue be exacted. It was therefore paramount that cultivators were either tied to or had interests in the land they were cultivating. All this has been summed up by Neale:

... the question of whether the land was owned by the raja, the *talukdar*, the cultivator or the king of Oudh was not the real question. Each had claims based upon custom or upon grants by the king or raja, or upon grants made by a *talukdar* or *zamindar*. But in addition to these claims each did or did not have the power to enforce his claim or to enlarge his claims.

(Neale 1962: 37)

This notion that different individuals and groups all had interest in the land has also been emphasized by other writers (Embree 1969, Habib 1963 and

Gopal 1961). Indeed, Gopal in referring to the Smirti texts states that the peasant's right to cultivate land was an individual right to the fruits of their labour. Further, the practice of giving land grants both to religious institutions and to individual officials was common in India as well as Nepal and the grantee sometimes became virtually the private owner of the land granted, as well as the political authority over the peasants cultivating it. Thus, the idea that the state was the exclusive landowner is at best inaccurate. In the Hindu state authority and control over people was more important economically and politically than the ownership of land. The interest in the land was different for the different individuals or groups of individuals involved. No-one had exclusive rights. The state and the king had a right to claim revenue and fees of obeisance. Other officials who held political authority had rights to claim fees of obeisance as well as allowances from each household. Landlords had rights to claim a share of the produce by virtue of being the registered landowners of particular plots of land and tenants and cultivators had rights to a share, although often unjustly small, of the produce. A single owner cannot be located but the rights of the actual cultivators to the land, be it as registered landowners or as tenants, were individual rights, resulting from the fact that they were labouring on the land. This state of affairs resulted from the emphasis on land as the political area over which a political authority or sovereign holds power rather than on land as the area to be farmed and owned (Neale 1969: 9ff), a point which the British administrators at first failed to understand.

Apart from being of importance to colonial administrators, these issues are also important for an understanding of the economic and social situations which prevailed in the Hindu state. The most forceful point which emerged from the debate about landowners and which has been emphasized by such writers as Maine, Baden-Powell, Marx, Dumont and Neale was that in these states economics and politics cannot be separated. In other words, the various rights held by individuals and groups to the land and to the produce from it, are a result of particular political and social relationships and individuals cannot easily break away from such relationships. More specifically, the manner in which social relationships are "embedded" in the landholding pattern arrests the development of capitalist relations in agriculture. This is indeed an advance on the position taken by the early administrators.

A further point which has emerged more recently from analyses of the landownership question is to some extent in contradiction to the point first noted. The peasant's right to the cultivation of the soil although not absolute, is best seen as an individual right. The extent to which individuals could exercise such rights varied according to the particular economic and social relationships in which they were involved. In many places such individual rights included rights to sell, give away and mortgage land. This point is made by other writers (Kumar 1965: 29; 85, Chandra 1966: 327; Habib 1964: 395) for pre-British India, was also the case in western Nepal before and during the Gorkha period. The fact that in some places the right to alienate land went as far as to make an

outright sale possible, is thus an indication of the extent of individual, if not private ownership. Further, the sale of land could only take place if there already existed a cash nexus in terms of which land and produce, if not labour, could be converted. Again the existence of a money economy, both in Moghul India and in Nepal, is well documented (Chandra 1966: 322; Kumar 1965: 144; Habib 1975: 25; Neale 1962: 27-34; Regmi 1971: 26ff and RRS 1970, 1971, 1972 and 1974). Trade of luxury goods was already flourishing by the time the East India Company became involved in Indian affairs in Nepal Prithvinarayan Shah had been interested in developing such trade with Tibet (Sanwal 1965; 72). The revenue received by governments had also in some areas for a long time been paid in cash rather than produce, and in order to raise such cash the cultivators had inevitably been dependent on the market for the sale of grain. The sale of grain, on the other hand, also co-existed with usury and moneylenders (Habib 1963-64). In Moghul India as well as in Nepal this meant that the lending at an interest was well established and that such loans were taken by peasants to meet their own subsistence needs, by craftsmen to meet their own requirements of raw materials or indeed by ruling dynasties to maintain their luxurious ways of life. Indeed, Hindu law permitted usury although restricted usuary activities to certain castes (ibid: 411).

All these economic and social elements were present in Nepal and in Moghul India and were to some 19th century writers irreconcilable with and in contradiction to the traditional ideas about asiatic society. On the one hand, Indian and Nepalese society

was based on a subsistence economy in which no one had absolute rights to the land, in which the state was the ultimate political authority and in which political, economic and social position and status was intricately linked. On the other hand, in these societies individual ownership of land, money as a universal means of exchange, trade and mercantile wealth and usury were already in existence. Those who emphasized the first aspect (the early Marx and Engels) saw a static society based on communal rather than private property changed ruthlessly by the intervention of the British. Those who have emphasized the second aspect (the late Marx, Kumar, Gopal and Habib) whilst not disputing the disruptive influence of British colonialism point to the presence of already existing economic mechanisms, which presupposed and facilitated economic as well as social inequality.²

The nature of the social system in Moghul India is central to the debate about the extent to which the Indian economy and society was changed by the presence of the British there (Patnaik, 1972, 1972a, 1973; Ram 1972; Chattopadhyai 1972 and McEachern 1976). However, in this thesis the nature of the "traditional" system rather than the changes inflicted by the colonial power is at issue. Nepal was never colonised by the British and as a result the latter's relationship with and interest in the Nepalese state was more commercial than directly political (Sanwal 1965). For this reason, the situation in Nepal can, perhaps, provide important clues about the role of the state and the nature of society in pre-British India. M.C. Regmi has considered *raikar* landtenure in Nepal as a case of state landlordism. He points out

that the sale and transfer of *raikar* land in Nepal generally only became recognised in law at the beginning of the 20th century, and this led to the emergence of an increased number of tenants and sub-tenants on *raikar* land. On much *raikar* land the payment of tax or rent had been according to the *adhiyā* system; namely 50 per cent of the produce, but with the recognition of *raikar* as private property these payments were also increasingly made in cash (Regmi 1968, vol. 4: 126).

The situation on *raikar* land may be described as state landlordism. However, if one considers the landtenure system prevailing in Nepal as a whole, it is equally clear that this system shares many features with the one which existed in areas of Moghal India. This is particularly true of the area which concerns this study, namely Karnali. I have already described how *raikar* tenure is common in this region and how taxes and rents to the government have been paid in cash rather than kind since before the Gorkha conquest. Further, contrary to *raikar* elsewhere in Nepal, in Karnali there was also, since before the extension of Gorkha rule, a market for land. As long as the rules about alienation described in Chapter 4 were observed, land could be bought and sold freely in this region.

2. MONETARISATION

The existence of a cash nexus is often considered an indication of the extent to which a society or an economy has been penetrated by capitalism (Bailey 1957, Epstein 1962, Parry 1979, Breman 1974). Money circulated and was used as a means of exchange in the Hindu state. Capitalism thus cannot

be said to be responsible for the introduction of money or even commercial activities in these states, although the role of such economic mechanisms undoubtedly changed after the arrival of the colonial power. The nature and extent of monetarisation has thus too frequently been overlooked, resulting in an over-emphasis on the isolated nature of the village economy.

The existence of money, trade and markets in Nepal is not a recent occurrence. On the contrary, trade in wool and salt can be dated back to the most ancient times, and during the Lichchavi period (400-900 AD) some Nepalese towns are already said to have become prosperous commercial centres (RRS 1971 3/9: 201). Copper coins found in Nepal have been identified to date from this period and there is evidence that later in the 16th century commercial activities were undertaken by most of the small Nepalese states in order to gain profit (RRS 1973 5/5: 96). Mining and minting of coins were at this time already profitable activities. In Nepal the mines, although present, have been relatively few and contain mostly copper. Some copper was also mined in Mugu (RRS 1972 3/9: 218). The mint in Kathmandu, however, also minted coins for those with whom the Nepalese traded. Thus in the 16th century a commercial treaty had been concluded with Tibet to the effect that Nepal would mint coins for the Tibetans with silver supplied by them, and in this process receive a certain percentage (RRS 1973 5/5: 96). Indeed, at this time as well as later under the rule of Prithvinarayan, the rulers in Nepal attempted to introduce their own coins for circulation in Tibet. Such attempts were related

to the fact that Tibet was the main supplier of gold, and that Nepal was the main commercial centre for trade in precious metals between India and Tibet. In 1756 Prithvinarayan's men were offering Rs.18 a *tolā* (10g.) for gold from Tibet and during his campaign to unify Nepal this king paid some of his troops salaries, the money for which he had obtained through trade in such precious metals (RRS 1971, 3/12: 282; 1972, 4/1: 4ff).

However, the market was not only for exchange of precious metals and luxury goods. There is some indication that in exchange for gold the Nepalese also exported grain to Tibet (*ibid.*) and in 1836 grain and other food could be bought for money in Jumla. At that time Re. 1 could buy 8 *pāthi* of rice, 12 *pāthi* of millet, 16 *pāthi* of barley, 2 *dhārni* (approx. 6lbs.) of ghee, and 3 *dhārni* of oil. Copper was Rs. 2½ for a *dhārni* (RRS 1971, 3/9: 218). The cultivators in Jumla and Mugu must at this time already have been able to convert produce into cash, for officials of the bureaucracy were repeatedly reminded by orders from the central government that they should purchase foodstuffs at current prices and not take such items forcefully (RRS 1971, 3/3: 59).

It has been already discussed how *raikar* land in Karnali was exceptional because the main payments to the state had even before the Gorkhā conquest been made in cash. In Nepal generally the amount of taxation and the different kinds of levy exacted by the state and other lesser political authorities have always been numerous and the rates of such payments were often increased and decreased in an arbitrary manner according to the needs of these political

authorities. Thus, most households in Nepal paid taxes, fines and other levies in cash as well as in kind (RRS 1975, 7/11: 217), and the total amount and type of levy paid varied from one locality to another. In 1837 the payments made by the peasants from the area around Rārā was constituted by different categories of revenue (Hodgson 1864, vol. 8). *Pate* was the revenue paid on *pākho* land, *sermā* was a proportion of the newly harvested crops, *sāun-phāgum* were smaller payments made in the months of *saun* and *phagun* and in addition revenue was provided from fines collected from individual households and from taxes on mills. Further each household regularly had to provide the government with *rakam* and *jhārā*³ (types of unpaid labour), and to pay *salāmi* to local political officials as well as *sirto* (tribute) to local *jimwāls*.⁴ A levy could be paid in lieu of *rakam* and was called *bethi* (RRS 1975, 7/11: 217). The payments made to the government were stipulated as cash payments but the payments made to local officials were probably more often made in kind. The collection of revenue based on a fixed rate (*thek thiti*) probably made little overall difference to this revenue system, although it did make it possible for the cultivators to pay everything in kind and for the *thekbandi* holder to commute some of these payments into cash.

The existence of money and the central role which it played in the lives of the cultivators of Karnali is beyond doubt. Taxes were paid in cash and produce could be sold freely in the market. This was not a result of a new situation.

Most of the older people at Rārā can remember when rupees were silver rupees, and when 1 rupee

could buy 2 *pāthi* (8 *māna*) of *dhān* (unhusked rice), or 8 *pāthi* of wheat and barley. Nowadays, 1 *māna* of *dhān* costs between Rs. 2 and Rs. 4, depending on the season; 1 *māna* of wheat costs Rs. 1½ and 1 *māna* of barley Rs. 2. Similarly, people can remember when a cow could be bought for Rs. 40 and a waterbuffalo for Rs. 70. Nowadays people pay about Rs. 800 for a good milking cow, and as much as Rs. 1,200 for a waterbuffalo.⁵ Thus, in the lifetime of the older people a certain amount of inflation of prices has occurred. Whether inflation was absent before the 20th century is difficult to say since no systematic records of prices from western Nepal exist. Neale has pointed out that despite the existence of a monetary economy in the asiatic state, prices were largely determined by custom and varied from one valley to the next (Neale 1962: 65ff). It is possible that prices have always varied according to changing local conditions, and that the price variation recorded for Rārā is a result of such variation. Nepal has become more involved in the international market economy⁶ since the downfall of the Ranas, and undoubtedly this has had profound effects on the price of land and agricultural produce, but the role of Karnali and the area around Rārā in this wider market economy is limited. The area provides no cash crops and nothing which is sold to other areas of the country. On the other hand, Karnali has not been unaffected by political and economic changes which have taken place in the country as a whole, but the involvement of the Rārāls in this larger economy has been limited to the purchase of some manufactured goods such as cloth, shoes and cigarettes, and to some seasonal

wage-labouring in the Tarai and in India. Such seasonal labouring has so far been restricted and most of those who have decided to undertake the journey have not come back to Rārā.⁷ There was only one Chetri household who regularly undertook such seasonal migration and this household has a very small amount of land at its disposal and all members (two adults and one child) work for others while at Rārā as well.

However, there is no doubt that nowadays most people are short of cash and willing to work for wages whenever possible. Opportunities to work in salaried jobs have increased after the downfall of the Rānās. The post office (*hulākghar*) which is situated in Rārā village provides such opportunities. There are currently 6 officials at the post office, all of whom, except one, are residents at Rārā. Four of these are Thakuris and one is a Chetri, and they are all literate. In addition, there are 3 runners (*hulāki*) who carry the mail a specified distance and two of these are Chetris from Rārā. The salaries range from Rs. 225 a month for the highest paid job to Rs. 137 a month for the *hulākis*. One Thakuri also holds such a salaried position in the post office in Khater.

The village schools in the area also increasingly provide an opportunity to earn a living mainly for the Thakuris. Thakuris place great emphasis on the education of their children and if they can possibly afford to do so, they send them to highschool in Jumla. From there, some of them go on to a teachers' training college either in Nepalganj or in Kathmandu. Chetri children nowadays have a right to receive primary school education, which is provided in the

village schools. Many of the teachers in these schools are Shah Thakuris who have been to highschool or more recently to teachers' training college. A school-teacher receives Rs. 175 a month.

The establishment of the district headquarters (which are now situated in Gum, 3 hours walk from Rārā) has also provided job opportunities. Thus, some Thakuris have secured jobs as servants or accountants for officials in the district administration. One has even managed to pass the appropriate examination and become the local Health Assistant. Such jobs are paid between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300 a month. Finally, three Thakuris hold higher level jobs, one as a Member of Parliament (*manānia*), another works for the Royal Nepal Airline Cooperation in Jumla and a third works for the Ministry of Education, also in Jumla.

Since the establishment of the National Park at Rārā, it has become possible for some people to work as manual labourers on a day-to-day basis. Thus the quarters of the Park Warden were built by people from Chapru and Rārā receiving Rs. 7 a day, and at the time of fieldwork the barracks for the soldiers who are going to police the Park were under construction. However, the number of people interested in performing such work far exceeded the actual amount of labour needed and only a few Rārāls were lucky enough to be employed. This type of work was only undertaken by Chetris.

If the cultivation of the land allows, most Chetris and Dom are also keen to get portering work during the slack agricultural season. Such work is paid Rs. 7-10 a day when it is carried out for local

people such as local administrators and shopkeepers. For tourists, of whom there were only a few in 1977, the rate is Rs. 20 a day. Most Chetris and Doms at Rārā are, in fact, too busy with agricultural tasks to be able to count on portering as a regular type of employment.

Within the village there are various ways in which cash can be earned. The fact that the services of a *lohar* and a *bhyāl* may be paid for in cash. Similarly, the *hali* or a day-labourer may be paid in cash. In addition, some households specialise in the sale of milk products, livestock and honey. These are always paid for in cash and whereas the sale of honey is a minor commercial activity, the sale of milk, yogurt and ghee can provide a sizeable income. Some households, mostly Chetris, have clearly chosen to emphasize animal husbandry at the expense of agriculture and they sell their products regularly to those households who can afford to buy and who do not have a sufficient supply themselves. Milk and yogurt was, in 1977, sold for Rs. 1½-2 a *māna*, ghee made from waterbuffalo milk for Rs. 10 a *māna*, and ghee made from cowsmilk for Rs. 12 a *māna*. Households who engage in animal husbandry to the extent that they can produce a surplus are generally large, containing more than one adult male. Since the herding and looking after the livestock is time-consuming, it is only possible for those households in which one member can undertake this task on a full-time basis.⁸ Only a few Thakuri households produce enough ghee themselves and the Thakuris are the main buyers of ghee and milk. In accordance with their status Thakuris consider that they should

have a higher standard of living than both Chetris and Doms. Indeed, in my experience Thakuris would rather buy rice, milk and honey if they can than eat such unprestigious foods as millet and buckwheat.

Finally, there are two shops (*dokan*, standard Nepali) in Rārā and two in Raunteri. These are all owned by Thakuris. In these shops such goods as cigarettes, sweets, turmeric, bangles, cloth, hats, sugar and occasionally kerosene and tea are for sale. The goods are brought from Nepalganj once a year and the shopkeepers usually either hire porters or use their influence to get people to porter these goods up to Rārā. Minor items such as cigarettes, bangles and turmeric are paid in cash and mostly bought by Thakuris. Chetris and Doms prefer to buy these as well as other items they need in Jumla where the prices are lower. Only a few, however, manage to get to Jumla even once a year and many purchase bigger items such as cloth and hats needed for weddings and funerals in the local shops. Such items are often paid in kind rather than in cash, and the shopkeepers willingly give credit. Shopkeepers are also often lenders of money and grain and on such loans as well as on the credit given on items purchased from their shops they charge an interest of 25 per cent. The shops tend to be the places where particularly Thakuri men meet. They sit around there smoking and chattering when there is nothing else to do. One of the shopkeepers owns a radio and it is here that news from the rest of Nepal is first received and discussed.

The number of households involved in earning cash incomes in the different ways outlined above is presented in Table 10. In this Table the division of

households into economic categories established in Table 5 has been retained. This allows for an appraisal of the extent to which cash earnings may supplement agricultural incomes. Since 14 of the 24 households who have an annual grain deficit of more than 5 *muri* also have some other income, not all households included in this category are as badly off as indicated in Table 5. Five of the 68 households derive their cash incomes from two different sources and are therefore counted twice in Table 10. Three Thakuri households are in this position. In all three cases the household jointly runs a shop while one member also receives a regular salary. Two Chetri households also have such double cash incomes. In both these cases the households sell milk products and livestock and also have one member employed in a salaried job.

Table 10 shows that 50 per cent of all households—that is 8 households of Category 1, 14 households of Category 2 and 12 households of Category 3—are engaged in agricultural production only. Of the rest, 25 per cent of all households receive regular wages, 6 per cent own shops, 6 per cent sell ghee and livestock, 10 per cent do portering and other labour such as construction work for the government and 3 per cent are paid *halis*.⁹ It is significant that employment outside agriculture is not necessarily a function of being poor. Thus over half of the households in Category 1 also receive cash through some form of economic activity. This situation is in accordance with the fact that no one in the sample is landless and, therefore, solely dependent upon selling their labour power for a wage. Cash earnings remain a supplement to, rather than a substitute for agricultural income in all three economic categories.

At Rārā there is no group of landless labourers 10 who are dependent solely on the sale of their labour power for their existence. On the contrary, households who through their cash earning have been able to enlarge their landholdings have not necessarily been able to increase their yields accordingly, and this has been partly due to the fact that labour is not easily available for hire. Thus cash earnings, although influencing the economic position of households, does not significantly change such positions. Category 2 is the least involved in earning cash regularly, and this is probably due to the fact that many households in this category can just manage independently. They tend to have neither surplus land which is not being used, nor surplus labour within the household.

Table 10: Other Income

| <i>Cate- gory</i> | <i>Cast</i> | <i>Regular Shops Wages</i> | <i>Ghee & Livestock</i> | <i>Portering & other Labour</i> | <i>Paid Hali</i> | <i>None</i> | |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 1. | T | 6 | 3 | — | — | — | 1 |
| | C | 4 | — | 3 | 2 | — | 7 |
| | D | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 2. | T | 2 | — | — | — | — | 2 |
| | C | — | — | — | 5 | — | 11 |
| | D | — | — | — | — | — | 1 |
| 3. | T | 2 | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| | C | 3 | — | 1 | 4 | — | 9 |
| | D | — | — | — | — | 3 | 3 |
| Total | | 17 (25%) | 4 (6%) | 4 (6%) | 11 (10%) | 3 (3%) | 34 (50%) |

On what, then, do people use cash? I have already indicated that certain items necessary for

agricultural reproduction and ritual occasions can be bought for cash as well as produce. Thus, tools may be paid for in cash. Cloth and shoes may be paid for in grain if they are bought in the village shops. However, if these items are bought in Jumla or Nepal-ganj they have to be paid for in cash. Tax is nowadays always paid in cash. The amount of tax paid by households is minimal. In 1977 the rate for *khet* land was Rs. 0.45 per *muri* (20×8 *māna pāthis*, i.e. the official measure) of grain per year. On *aula pākho* holdings the rate was Rs. 0.11 per *māna* of seed sown whereas on *Rārā pākho* which has not been surveyed, there was no tax on land as such, but a tax on houses. The rate per house was Rs. 2. There was no tax on livestock although there has been such a tax in the past; nor has there been any tax on grazing land since the establishment of the National Park. The tax for *Rārā* village was still collected by the *jimwāl*, although strictly speaking under the new panchayat rules this should be the job of the *sadasya* (the elected ward representative). As a fee for this collection the *jimwāl* received Rs. 5 per Rs. 100 he collected (*bāki phukāuni* what is left untied).

For these purposes all households need at least small sums of cash, but in fact the amount of cash spent per household varies widely.¹¹ Generally Thakuris spend more cash than do the Chetris. Not only do some Thakuri households pay cash payments to *halis*, ritual expenditure is also higher for Thakuris than for Chetris. The Thakuris also buy many items such as blankets and carpets, ploughs and carrying baskets from the Chetris whereas the latter make these themselves. Some cash may also be spent by Thakuris

on dowries, but generally Thakuris do not give large sums of money to the family of the groom as they have heard people do in Kathmandu and elsewhere in Nepal.¹²

Although in some circumstances grain can be bought for cash, people are reluctant to make such conversions directly. This is mainly due to the general scarcity of food in the area. While certain items can be paid for in either cash or grain, within the village, except in the shops, people prefer payment in grain. Even the shopkeepers and money and grain lenders are reluctant to convert one of these mediums of exchange into the other. A loan taken in grain should generally be paid back in grain. This presents a difficulty for those households who have no access to cash incomes. Such households rely on the money- and grain lenders to convert small amounts of grain into cash, usually at an unfavourable rate. Aside from this, such households do without cash and thus rely heavily on the shops and relationships within the village for the items they need to buy.

3. USURY

Money and grainlenders thus play an important role in the convergence of cash and produce. At Rārā a money- and grainlender is referred to as *sau* (rich man, local term), and the loans he gives are called *pāico* (loan, standard Nepali), irrespective of whether they involve grain or cash.¹³ Such loans are forwarded at varying rates of interest (*byāj*). Most people agree that if a loan is given to someone who is unrelated and from a different village, the rate of interest is higher than the rate charged from people who are kin

or living in the same village. The interest for the former is 5 *pāthi* for every *muri* borrowed or 25 per cent on cash loans. Inside the village the rate is said to be 3 *pāthi* per *muri* or 15 per cent, and between close relatives such loans are said to be given without interest. These rates are considerably higher than the maximum official rate of interest on loans, which in the 1964 Land Act was fixed at 10 per cent. Indeed, although money and grainlending have always been approved of by the government, attempts have often been made to limit the amount of interest charged by moneylenders and thus the impoverishment of the cultivators. Thus, Ram Shah, who was king of Gorkha, 1606-1636 AD, made such attempts (RRS 1970, 2/2: 49) and in 1844 king Rajendra set the rate of interest on money loans in Jumla at 10 per cent whereas the interest on loans of grain were then at the present rate of 5 *pāthi* per *muri* (RRS 1971, 3/9: 212).

The giving and taking of *pāico* indicates the existence of usury and usurer's capital at Rārā. Usury is the lending at an interest (Habib 1963-64: 393) and usurer's capital is thus wealth lent out in this way. Marx (1971, vol. 3, Chapter 36) considered usurer's capital to be an earlier form of the interest-bearing capital found in capitalism. Marx considered the nature of these two types of capital to be similar, and he wrote:

What distinguishes interest-bearing capital—in so far as it is an essential element of the capitalist mode of production—from usurer's capital is by no means the nature or character of this capital itself. It is merely the altered

conditions under which it operates and consequently also the totally transformed character of the borrower who confronts the money lender.

(*ibid.*: 600)

As far as the preconditions for usurer's capital is concerned, Marx states:

The existence of usurer's capital merely requires that at least a portion of products should be transformed into commodities and that money should have developed in its various functions along with trade in commodities. and that:

Usurer's capital as the characteristic form of interest-bearing capital corresponds to the predominance of small-scale production of the self-employed peasant and small master craftsman.

(*ibid.*: 593-594)

The situation found at Rārā is similar to the one outlined here by Marx. Everyone cultivates some land and such cultivation centres around the household as the unit of production. Dom artisans are as service castes to some extent tied to the households of their *ritis* and as such they receive a more or less regular payment in grain. But Dom also produce tools which can be bought for cash as well as grain and which thus are commodities. Further, there is and has been for a long time, a market for produce, livestock and, as I shall elaborate further below, land (Seddon 1979: 79). In addition, in Nepal generally there has also for a long time been a market for precious metals and

luxury goods. At Rārā, usurer's capital takes the form of either produce or money. Produce is used as a means of exchange particularly within the village and the immediately surrounding area, and this may restrain the general development of usurer's capital into the type of interest-bearing capital which is seen by Marx to be an important precondition for the development of capitalism. Indeed, as Habib has pointed out, usurer's capital may not be a separate entity. It originates from agricultural production and from gains made by previous employment of produce in usury as well as from wealth acquired in other departments of economic life (Habib 1963-64: 411). Usurers are cultivators like everybody else and do only constitute a separate class when a certain stage of economic development has been reached (ibid).

At Rārā, *pāico* and the accumulated interest can be paid off either in the form in which the loan was taken or in labour. The rate of interest actually charged by individual *saus* never did become clear but that it believed that the rates given above constitute an ideal from which reality often differed. Thus that Thakuri *saus* generally charged 5 *pāthi* per *muri* except from their closest kin, and that one Chetri *sau* consistently charged 3 *pāthi* per *muri* from a father's brother's son. Thakuris are able to use their former political status as well as their present caste status to manipulate their kinship and village ties to their advantage, and Thakuri *saus* were considered to be hawks by most of my Chetri and Dom informants. This more influential position of the Thakuris is clearly shown by the fact that, whereas some Thakuri households who take *pāico* from Chetris at Rārā pay

3 *pāthi* per *muri* in interest, the Chetris who take *pāico* from Thakuris, irrespective of whether they live in Rārā village or not, invariably pay 5 *pāthi* per *muri*. If the loan is paid back in labour the rate is 3-5 *pāthi* per working day.

The giving and receiving of *pāico* can also become a long-term arrangement as in variation 2 of the *hali-riti* relationship. In such cases, the *hali*, as was described in Chapter 5, is more or less dependent upon his *riti* for survival and the precise amounts of grain given and taken may not be calculated. The *hali* then becomes obligated to labour for his *riti* all year round and may receive help from his *riti* at ritual occasions such as weddings and funerals as well. More independent households who need to take *pāico* perhaps only occasionally prefer to spread the debt over a number of *saus* or *pāico*-givers so as to avoid becoming heavily indebted to one household.

A portion of the agricultural surplus produced by some households in Categories 1 and 2 can be used to give *pāico* to households who cannot meet their grain requirements from their own land. On the whole, cash is not converted directly into produce within the village. People who have cash can to some extent make up their grain deficits by purchasing grain from elsewhere, such as in Jumla or from Mughali traders who pass through the village twice a year,¹⁴ but such grain purchases are only made for own consumption, and not in order to employ the grain thus acquired in *pāico*. It is, however, difficult to be precise about the amount of produce involved in *pāico*. Economic matters such as these are only discussed reluctantly and most households are keen

to uphold the ideal; namely that households produce and consume independently. My information on the extent to which households give and take *pāico*, (presented in Table 11), thus has to be taken with some degree of reservation. However, the information on this mainly by being present when *saus* made their annual collections after the harvest. Such collections are public and since they involve some amount of book keeping and calculating also necessitate the presence of persons who are literate. Thakuris performed these services for Chetri *saus* who, as are Chetris and Doms generally, are illiterate. Since I could not obtain the written accounts and since I could not myself keep trace of the amounts of grain involved, I have merely tried to establish which households take and give *pāico*. By “givers” I refer to households who give regularly and in the category of “takers” I have included households who admit to ever having taken *pāico*.

In Table 11, it can be seen that while some Thakuris of Category 1 take *pāico* sometimes, only 2 of the Chetri households are in this position leaving 5 to manage on their surplus, but not being regular *pāico*-givers either. As would be expected, Category 2 is more evenly divided between people who take *pāico* and people who manage on what they themselves produce. It is significant that all Thakuri households of this category are takers and this reflects the higher standard of living set by the Thakuris compared to that of the two other castes. Finally, in Category 3 everyone—Thakuris, Chetris as well as Doms—takes *pāico*. Thus Category 3 is a category in which every household is indebted to some extent.

Table 11: Pāico

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Caste</i> | <i>Givers</i> | <i>Takers</i> | <i>Rest</i> | <i>Total Household</i> |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 1. | T | 4 | 3 | - | 22 |
| | C | 8 | 2 | 5 | |
| | D | - | - | - | |
| % of 1 | | 56 | 22 | 22 | |
| 2. | T | - | 4 | - | 22 |
| | C | - | 9 | 8 | |
| | D | - | 1 | - | |
| % of 2 | | - | 64 | 36 | |
| 3. | T | - | 2 | - | 24 |
| | C | - | 16 | - | |
| | D | - | 6 | - | |
| % of 3 | | - | 100 | - | |
| Total Household | | 12 | 43 | 13 | 68 |

4. THE SALE OF LAND

It is important for the development of usury that individual producers should have rights to alienate their land. With interest at usury levels the debtor may never be able to repay his debts. Only if he has rights as an individual to his land can be mortgage it. However, even such mortgages may not solve the problem of indebtedness and the debtor may eventually become the bondsman or virtually the slave of the creditor (Habib 1963-64, Kumar 1965). In Nepal generally the sale of land was by no means unknown. Thus Prithvinarayan had sold and mortgaged land as

a way of realising revenue (RRS 1972, 4/7: 138) and land transactions have been recorded to have taken place in Kathmandu as early as 1794 (RRS 1972, 4/8: 149). Further in the western hills, land which had been mortgaged against the payment of money was, and is even today, known as *bandha* (RRS 1972, 4/2: 33), a term which still indicates the total indebtedness or slavelike status of the original owner. It has already mentioned that, although most land in Karnali and around Rārā was classified as *raikar*, contrary to the situation on *raikar* land elsewhere in the country, in Karnali *raikar* land could be sold and mortgaged by individual cultivators (Regmi 1971). Thus, at Rārā as elsewhere, usury and individual rights to land went hand in hand.

Since 1923, all registered landowners in Nepal have had the right to sell *raikar* as well as other types of land (Regmi 1968, vol. 4). However, debt bondage and hence mortgages arising from money- and grain-lending have been made illegal. In 1977 such practices were still carried out at Rārā, although most people have denied this. Generally people were reluctant to discuss land sales at all, and very few individuals would provide information as to who had actually been involved in particular sales. The figures presented on land transactions in Table 12 thus include mortgages as well and should be taken to indicate the actual situation in a very general way.

In 1977, 1 *hal* at Rārā cost around Rs. 200, the price varying marginally depending on the fertility of individual plots. On *aula pākho* 1 *hal* cost Rs. 200-250, and the price of 1 *hal* of *aula khet* was up to Rs. 2,000. This can be compared with the price of

1 *hal* at Rārā 30-40 years ago: then some people say a good *hal* cost between Rs. 15 and Rs. 20. The availability and hence price of land has been profoundly influenced by the establishment of the National Park. Before 1964, new agricultural land at Rārā could easily be made by investment of labour power, whereas nowadays land is only available through purchase.

Table 12: Land transactions

| Category | Caste | Bought | Sold | None | Total Households |
|------------------|-------|--------|------|------|------------------|
| 1. | T | 5 | — | 1 | 22 |
| | C | 12 | 2 | 2 | |
| | D | — | — | — | |
| % of 1 | | 77 | 9 | 14 | |
| 2. | T | 1 | 1 | 2 | 22 |
| | C | 3 | 4 | 10 | |
| | D | — | — | 1 | |
| % of 2 | | 18 | 23 | 59 | |
| 3. | T | 1 | — | 1 | 24 |
| | C | 2 | 3 | 11 | |
| | D | 1 | — | 5 | |
| % of 3 | | 17 | 13 | 70 | |
| Total Households | | 25 | 10 | 33 | 68 |

The land transactions presented in Table 12 have taken place in the last 20 years and most of them during the last 10 years and have involved Rārā as well as *aula* land. 54 per cent of all households have

been involved in such landsales; 38 per cent of these have bought land whereas only 15 per cent have sold land. 54 per cent of all Thakuri households, 35 per cent of Chetri households and 14 per cent of Dom households have been involved in buying, whereas 8 per cent of all Thakuris and 19 per cent of all Chetris have been involved in sales. Thus more people have bought than have sold, and this is to some extent a reflection of the fact that those Thakuris who have moved to Khater to stay permanently and severed their ties to Rārā completely, have sold their landholdings to several different buyers. The fact that proportionately more Thakuris than Chetris have bought land reflects the higher availability of cash amongst the former. The recent prospects of land compensation elsewhere has also made it more attractive for people with cash to invest this in land at Rārā.

Table 12 shows the three economic categories and their position with respect to land transactions. While 77 per cent of households in Category 1 have bought land, only 18 per cent of Category 2 and 17 per cent of Category 3 have done so 9 per cent of Category 1 have sold land, whereas 23 per cent of Category 2 and 13 per cent of Category 3 have raised cash in this way. The most interesting points, however, emerge from column 3, dealing with those households who have not taken part in land transactions at all. For households of Category 1 the 14 per cent is not surprising. After all, land is not only the traditional, but also the safest investment in this economy. In Category 2 the figure of 59 per cent of households who have not taken part in land transactions is

perhaps in accordance with the fact that Category 2 includes households who can just manage independently. It is surprising, however, that as many as 70 per cent of Category 3 have managed to avoid selling or mortgaging their land. This high figure may be due to the inaccuracy of the data. The people did not want to admit that they had been forced to sell land. On the other hand, this high percentage suggests that people only reluctantly sell their land. Thus, despite the existence of money, the possibility of selling and mortgaging land and the existence of usurer's capital, the cultivation of land as a livelihood remains a priority for most people. The ownership of, or access to land is, so far, still the only secure means of existence.

Despite the absence of a legal mechanism which might tie certain sections of the peasantry to the land (Habib 1963) they are cultivating, and despite the possibility of alienating land, the peasants of Rārā are nevertheless tied to the land in a general sense (Frykenberg 1969). This is to some extent a result of the fact that for most people there is no other secure employment immediately available. However, even some of the Thakuris, who have secured for themselves an appreciably regular income, have not given up cultivating or abandoned their interests in the land.¹⁶ Thus, despite the fact that, at least, for some households alternative economic pursuits exist, the economic as well as the ideological importance of land and its cultivation persists.

The ideological importance of land is reflected in the worship of *kuldevatās* (lineage or clan deities). For all castes at Rārā there, exists a particular

relationship between the land inherited from an ancestor and the *kuldevatā* of that ancestor. The *kuldevatā* is worshipped particularly after the harvest and this worship involves the offering of the first grain harvested from the ancestral fields (*sikh*) and the *pujāri*, who officiates on these occasions, is the senior agnate of the senior line of the *kul*. If people have sold ancestral land, theoretically the buyers should take part in such worship because the relationship between the land and the *kuldevatā* of the people who originally cultivated it is considered to be permanent. Thus, when the Thakuris worshipped their *kuldevatā* which is Bhavani Masto¹⁷ some of the Chetris who had bought ancestral land from the Thakuris also offered *sikh*. Similarly, the Thakuris were obliged to offer *sikh* for the worship of Mahadeo on Kartik Puny. Mahadeo is the *kuldevatā* of one of the Rokaya Chetri lineages as well as the village *devatā*. The Thakuris contributed because they are considered to have been given land which belonged to this lineage when they first arrived at Rārā. The relationship between land and the *kuldevatā* is thus made explicit and the abandonment of ancestral land is also to some extent considered an abandonment of the old group affiliation. A full analysis of the *kuldevatā* is given in Chapter 8 and there the involvement of the *kuldevatā* in matters pertaining to economics and politics will become clearer.

There is another sense in which land is of ideological importance. Neale has referred to this and has made the distinction between "land-to-own" and "land-to-rule" (Neale 1969: 7). While undoubtedly Neale is right in emphasizing that in India (as well

as in Nepal) the most important social meaning of land was “land-to-rule”, at Rārā where land is alienable, the two meanings of land can, in fact, not easily be separated. However, in pointing out the difference in the economic and social implications of these two different social meanings, Neale uncovers a crucial difference between the economy of capitalism and that of the Hindu state. Neale writes:

A crucial difference between estate management (British) and the village management, was that the estate manager maximised the net produce of his land while the village manager maximised the number of mouths he fed.

(*ibid.*:12)

Thus, while the estate manager invests in better tools and techniques in order to increase the productivity of the land, the village manager or the owner cultivator tends to either employ more labour with his wealth or, if he cannot do that, invest in more land. These are the only two alternatives open to him. The repeated investment in land rather than other means of production and the consequences of such reinvestments have been commented upon by Marx, who wrote:

The expenditure of money-capital for the purchase of land, then, is not an investment of agricultural capital. It is a decrease *pro tanto* in the capital which small peasants can employ in their own sphere of production. It reduces *pro tanto* the size of their means of production and

thereby narrows the economic basis of reproduction It contradicts in fact the capitalist mode of production, which is on the whole indifferent to whether the landowner is in debt, no matter whether he has inherited or purchased his estate.

(Marx, 1971, vol. III Chapter 47: 810)

Marx, who was preoccupied with the transition from a precapitalist economy, in this way considered repeated reinvestment of capital in land by small producers a factor which arrests the development of capitalist relations in agriculture and thus reproduces the original situation. This illuminates the situation at Rārā. While people there invest in land because land is both a means of subsistence as well as a way of asserting political and economic independence and status, on the other hand, the very same circumstances result in people only selling and alienating land reluctantly. This emphasis on the ownership of land further inhibits change into a situation in which more people may be freed from their ties to the land and wage labour become more easily available.

As Neale pointed out, the whole question of the importance of land hinges around the role of labour in the economy. Ownership of land in India is only meaningful because it indicates the number of people a landowner can support and the amount of labour he can command. The *sau* who gives *pāico* at Rārā can command the labour of his debtors if they cannot pay back the loans, and the *hali* may be indebted in this way to his *riti*. This is the case for some of the *halis* employed by the Thakuris and for

all the *halis* employed by the Chetris. Conversely, land can only be converted into wealth and status if it can be cultivated and since cultivation on *aula* as well as on Rārā land is relatively labour intensive, this can only be done if the landowner already commands the appropriate amount of labour.

Labour can be recruited in various ways. All households use household labour and some households also use labour supplied by members of other households. The extent to which such extra-household labour is available is in part a reflection of the impoverishment of some sections of the labour force. Thus, share-cropping is unpopular because the *sājhā* who cultivates does generally not consider it worthwhile for the small return. Further, since households who have a large household labour force can earn some cash and with this cash buy land for themselves to cultivate, such households do not consider it attractive to be at the beck and call of other landowners. Generally, then, extra-household labour is only available from those households who produce a deficit. In some of these households the deficit is made up by members of the household undertaking short-term work for which they are paid in grain or cash. However, some households, who consistently produce a deficit, have to take *pāico* and this relationship between economic category and the taking of *pāico* is reflected in Table 11. Some of these loans are paid back in labour rather than in produce. The point is that at Rārā, in order to command extra-household labour nowadays, households have to produce a sizeable surplus. Further, the ability to increase the amount of surplus produced is influenced

by the extent to which other households are impoverished and hence need extra-household work. The high percentage of uncultivated land owned by the Thakuris has to be seen in this light. As a result of the Thakuri prohibition on certain types of work, Thakuri households need more extra-household labour than do Chetri and Dom households. Thus Thakuri households need to produce large surpluses in order to cultivate their extensive landholdings. In fact, only 30 per cent of Thakuri households produce even enough to be able to give *pāico* regularly. On the other hand, as a result of the "land-to-rule" idea which for Thakuris, who after all are descendants of the old rulers of the area, is particularly important, Thakuris continue to retain and reinvest in land. Although the recent resettlement plans and the promise of the government to make some sort of compensation available for people when they move out of the area, undoubtedly has influenced the market for land in the five years or so preceding 1977, There is no evidence that people behaved differently before. Thakuri households with uncultivated land were even then not selling in the hope that one day they would be able to command enough labour to make the cultivation of such land possible.¹⁸

5. WHAT TYPE OF ECONOMY?

In this chapter outlined the extent of monetarisation at Rārā and also shown the extent to which the role of money and grain as capital are related to the existence of usury and land sales. In the previous chapter analysed the production process which takes place on agricultural land and the relationships

involved. It has become clear that these two aspects of the economy can, in fact, not be described independently of each other. Although self-sufficiency is the ideal for Chetris, not all Chetri households can live according to this ideal. Nor is such self-sufficiency the ideal for Thakuris or Doms, who by virtue of their caste position, necessarily must be involved in extra-household relations of production. Such extra-household relations are influenced both by the existence of limited commodity production,¹⁹ usurer's capital and the alienability of land at the local level, as well as by the relationship between the state and its subjects and the involvement of the state in trade. While many commodities can be bought for grain as well as cash locally, in Karnali revenue payments to the state have for a long time involved cash payments. The conversion of payments in kind into payments in cash by itself does not necessarily indicate involvement in commodity production or a market economy (Neale 1962). However, when cash payments are required this presupposes that cultivators can raise cash in some way. In Karnali cash can and could be obtained not only by the sale of produce but also by the sale of means of production, such as land and livestock. This is an indication of how far agricultural production is influenced by commodity production. Habib has made a similar point. Referring to the village communities which existed in Moghul India he writes:

Though a large share of the village produce was taken to the urban market, the villages hardly received anything in return from the towns. Thus the village was deeply affected by the

requirements of commodity production (i.e. production for the market) and yet had to provide all its own needs from within itself.

(Habib 1963:118-119)

Thus Habib concludes that in Moghul India conditions for a money economy and a subsistence economy existed side by side and these conditions are contradictory:

It was the presence of these two contradictory economic elements that probably accounted for the social contradiction manifest in the existence of an individualistic mode of production in agriculture on the one hand, and the organisation of the Village Community on the other.

(ibid. 119)

This contradiction pointed out by Habib has been at the centre of the debate on Indian landtenure referred to earlier in this chapter and has also, as Thorner (1966: 34) has pointed out, been at the heart of the often confusing comments made by Marx on the nature of the asiatic society. On the one hand, Marx in his earlier writings²⁰ considered the asiatic community's a communal mode of production, characterised by traditional idyll and staticity with exploitative relations existing between the state and the village community. The state was conceived as a remote and corporate body which exacted surplus and levied tribute and revenue. Situated in luxurious towns, the state bureaucracy stood in sharp contrast to the peasants in the countryside who produced and

consumed communally. On the other hand, as is evident from his later writings, from some of which Marx also considered the Indian forms of property and the limited commodity production as constituting a social situation from which all other forms of society evolved. Other 19th century writers with actual experience have commented on either or both of these aspects (Dumont 1966a). Thus the notions of communal land, equality with respect to landholdings and the village community as a corporate body have been discussed by Baden-Powell (1896), Campbell (1876: 35), and Maine (1881), whereas Ellis (1882: 62) and Phear (1880: 847ff) have both pointed to the relations of inequality which also existed in these communities. Finally, a more recent debate concerning these issues has centred around the definition and nature of the asiatic mode of production (Krader 1975, Godelier 1978, Keyder 1976, Cook 1977, Hindess and Hirst 1975).

The statement made by Habib for Moghul India pointing to the individualistic nature of agricultural production also holds for Rārā. I have described how the right to ownership and cultivation of land is an individual right and that to some extent landed property at Rārā approximates "private property" and that this cannot be considered a development brought about by capitalism. Further, how the process of agricultural production does not require the cooperation of several households and units of production and how, in fact, even members of the same household rarely cooperate in any of the agricultural tasks. Nor do any of the tools used necessitate such cooperation. The process and

organisation of production is individualised in this sense. On the other hand, individual members of a household own and cultivate their land together and they also pool all their additional resources. Their position as a property-holding unit is the basis of their position as a unit of production. However, as described in Chapter 4, each male agnate has a right to alienate his share once the property has been partitioned. In this sense male agnates, who are the owners and heirs to landed property, as well as the heads of households, may own land individually.²¹

Does this indicate that the early British officials were right in not questioning the application of economic concepts derived from capitalism to the Indian situation? It seems that they were not, but the reason why they were wrong is not because economic mechanisms akin to capitalism were non-existent in India. Rather, as Neale has so excellently pointed out in the article referred to above²² the reason why they were wrong is because the rationale of the whole social system in India was different from that found in England. In India, the command of labour was of far greater importance for caste and political status. In the next chapter, it would be analysed further that the role of labour in the economy and in the social and political relations at Rārā and also enlarge on the relationship between economic category and caste.

Chapter 7

CASTE AND ECONOMIC DIFFERENTIATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies of caste societies have inevitably made contributions to general anthropological theories of social stratification. In comparisons between systems on the Indian subcontinent and other social systems two main issues have arisen. The first concerns the extent to which “castes” can be said to be an Indian social phenomenon and this is related to the second, namely, the difference between “caste” and “class”. Those anthropologists and sociologists (Myrdal 1967, Earth 1960) who have considered caste a general social phenomenon have also tended to consider “caste” as an extreme case of “class” (Dumont 1970). On the other hand, for those (Leach 1960, Dumont 1970), who consider “caste” as a particular Indian institution the relationship between “caste” and “class” has been more problematic. Yet others have considered caste relations before the influence of capitalism to have corresponded to relations between classes (Beteille 1965: 223, Meillasoux 1973: 105), and indeed used the term “class” in the analysis of such a precapitalist society. Without underestimating the uniqueness of caste as an institution it can be noted

that the problems inherent in the relationship between “caste” and “class” are similar to those encountered when we try to define peasant societies or peasant economies and understand how such economies are transformed.¹ Central to more recent debates about peasant society as a particular type of economy with specific relations of production is the extent to which the peasantry itself, apart from its relations with the state, is stratified and the extent to which such peasant strata accord with what may be defined as classes. It has not been the purpose of this study to consider the transformation from the former to the latter at Rārā. Changes which may be attributed to Nepal’s involvement in capitalism have only significantly affected the area around Rārā in the last few decades. Further, such changes have mainly resulted in increased possibilities to earn a cash income. This has had two main effects. Firstly, Chetris and Doms have been able to earn a wage in jobs which were not available before and many of them now combine such occasional labouring with cultivation. Secondly, Thakuris, many of whom have regular salaries, have increasingly been able to buy labour such as *halis* and day labourers *aula* for cash. These changes have not, however, resulted in the creation of a new “free” labour force. Thakuris, Chetris and Doms all remain, primarily, cultivators. It does, therefore, not seem appropriate to talk about the existence of classes in the capitalist sense.

Nor does this study address itself to the problem of whether “classes” can be said to exist in the pre-capitalist situation. However, the material presented so far has pointed to the lack of coincidence between

caste and economic category and this state of affairs is not a new situation brought about by capitalism. On the contrary, this lack of coincidence can to some extent be related to the nature of the economy combining subsistence with involvement in limited commodity production, which in Karnali as well as in areas of India prevailed since before the Gorkha conquest and since before the arrival of the British. Limited commodity production and its corrolary individual rights to the land and the individualised process and organisation of production allow for the economic mobility of individual households insofar as such households can and could acquire means of production such as land and plough-animals. On the other hand in a caste society, different groups of people are not in the same position with respect to the amount of labour available to them.

In this chapter the attempt is made to explain how caste and economic category are integrated. The basis for economic category is the availability of labour for individual units of production, and how command of labour is one aspect of notions of purity and pollution are discussed hence in this respect fundamental to the caste hierarchy at Rārā. It should be emphasized, however, that here the concern is not with the origin of caste, nor the suggestion that individuals' positions with respect to economic category itself leads to changes in their caste position. As it will be cleared in Part III, caste position is a result of various practices, and only one of these involves the type of work people are willing to undertake. Rather, the argument is that the coincidence between the two systems is conceptual and that the

resilience of caste, in part at least, is due to the fact that caste differences can be and are articulated in terms of how much labour can be commanded.

It begins with the analysis of the role of labour in agriculture and how this allows for an economic differentiation of households. This will enable me to make some comments on the Russian stratification debate and the positions put forward by A.V. Chayanov and L. Lenin. The consideration is the various ways in which labour is available to different households and different castes and to analyse the role of slavery in the past and also suggest how in this context the *jajamāni* system can be understood. Finally, I shall considered economic position and caste together and show how, rather than being two different aspects in disjunction, to the people of Rārā they are based on the same premise.

2. THE ROLE OF LABOUR IN THE ECONOMY

The general economic and political importance of labour in the precapitalist Indian and Nepalese economy has already been commented upon. Neale (1969) and Breman (1974) have both emphasized this. Numbers of individuals are important insofar as they constitute a following for political authorities, who may be landowners, tax-collectors or rajas. Thus, Breman in his study of agrarian relations in south Gujarat describes how the Dublas who worked the land of the Anavil Brahmins there, also looked to their landlords for patronage and protection. When the landowners changed to the cultivation of less labour intensive crops for the market, they did not need the labour of the Dublas

any more and the economic position of the latter deteriorated. At Rārā, elements of patronage are present in the relationship between *halis* and *rītis*. However, while the amount of labour households can command and the number of individuals they have under their patronage may be a reflection of the political position and status of households, the availability of labour also plays a direct economic role in the reproduction of households and their positions. Tables 5, 7 and 11 presented in the preceding chapters point to a relationship between the economic position of households, *pāico* taking and inadequate ownership of plough-animals. Households who consistently produce a deficit and therefore fall into economic category 3 are likely to own too few oxen, if any, to be able to plough independently. Further, such households are likely to be involved in relations of production outside their own household and are also likely to be regular *pāico*-takers.

The importance of the availability of plough-animals to the cultivators has been pointed out for peasant societies elsewhere. Thus Lenin recognised the importance of means of production other than land in the peasant economy of late 19th century Russia and used the number of draught animals owned by households as well as the area under crops, as indicators of the economic position of households (Lenin 1967). Maine, too, in commenting on ancient and mediaeval Ireland, pointed out that plough-animals there were a scarce resource and he believed that vassalage in the Irish tribe resulted from chiefs giving livestock to tribesmen who in turn owed him "not only rent, but service and homage" (Maine 1889: 158).

This importance of the availability of plough-animals in the process of production and in the economic differentiation of households is further confirmed at Rārā by the existence of particular relations of production there. These are, the *hali-riti* and the *sākhi* relationships. The fact that some households do not own an adequate supply of plough-animals is central to both these relationships and Tables 8 and 9 show that such households are likely to supply the labour in these relationships. These two types of relations of production differ insofar as the *hali-riti* relation is an open declaration of inequality between the households and the individuals concerned. The *sākhi* relationship, on the other hand, is conceived of as a relationship between equals and the exchange of labour for the use of plough-animals is sometimes a short-term arrangement. Despite this difference between the way these two relationships are conceived, however, they are not mutually exclusive. Thus, some *halis* claim to be *sākhi* with their *riti*, whereas the latter vehemently deny that the relationship can be expressed in such an egalitarian manner. Indeed, it is possible that a *sākhi* relationship which has continued over a number of years becomes one which is better described as *hali-riti*.² Neither relationship need be long-term, continuing from year to year or from generation to generation. Thus those Thakuri households (9 out of 13) who hire *halis* for three months and pay a wage, may hire different *halis* each year, although for some the relationship continues from one year to the next. Similarly people who agree to be *sākhi* in one year may not agree to continue the relationship in the following year, although, in fact, most *sākhi* relationships do continue from one

agricultural season to the next. When *ritis* give *pāico* to their *halis* this relationship, on the other hand, is of a long-term and permanent nature and the *halis* perform agricultural work for their *ritis* all year round, in return for which they receive not only grain but also special food, meals on ritual and ceremonial occasions; clothes and help to meet the expenses of marriages and funerals. Patronage is thus an essential aspect of the *hali-riti* relationship. Even when the *riti* does not support his *hali* all year round, as is increasingly the case for the Thakuris, both parties behave as if they have general claims on each other. Such Thakuri *ritis* use their *halis* for all types of manual labour during the three months or so they employ them. On days when there is no ploughing to be done it is common to see *halis* carry firewood, mend agricultural tools, thresh grain or run specific errands for their *ritis*. On the other hand, during this time *halis* often ask specific favours of their *ritis* and these are usually conceded by Thakuris, who are anxious to uphold their status as *riti*.

The payment of a wage to a *hali* is a new development.³ Previously *halis* were tied, either as *pāico*-takers, as slaves⁴ or in other ways⁵ to the households of their *ritis*. As such they were not independent producers and received their own upkeep and help from *ritis* on ceremonial occasions. Indeed, this version of the *hali-riti* relationship, which is said to have been more widespread in the past, constitutes the ideal. When people are involved in the more recent variations of the relationship they attempt to reproduce it in its ideal form. This is true of the *hali* as well as the *riti*. In this respect the situation at Rāṛā

is different from the one described by Breman for one village in south Gujarat where the Anavil Brahmans increased their landholdings by changing from more to less labour intensive crops and thereby surpassing and getting rid of their Dubla *halis* and clients (Breman 1974). At Rārā there has been no change in the crops cultivated, nor are any of the crops primarily cultivated for sale in the market. Further at Rārā, as in Nepalese hill villages generally (Seddon 1979: 113) there are few landless households and labour is generally in short supply. Nor have any cultivators been able to emphasize less labour intensive crops and in this way change the relationship between the amount of land owned and the amount of labour needed for its cultivation. At Rārā the labour relations, although particularly by the Thakuris experienced as being under strain, have not been severed in the manner described by Breman.

As noted, the *sākhi* relationship differs from that of the *hali-riti* in that it is conceived to be a relationship between equals. *Sākhi* does, of course, imply a certain amount of economic differentiation between the households, but contrary to the *hali-riti*, *sākhi* does not imply a general economic relationship in which one party is expected to perform different types of labour for the other. *Sākhi* is restricted to an arrangement for ploughing and the owner of the plough-animals cannot call on his *sākhi* to perform any other work. Nor are *sākhi* normally indebted to each other or dependent on each other for supplies of grain, although people who are involved in *sākhi* may take *pāico* from other households. *Sākhi* does not suggest a *patron-client* relationship and this is to

some extent in accordance with the fact that *sākhi*, as we shall see, often involve households of similar caste status and may even involve close kin. Ideologically *sākhi* and *hali-riti* are thus presented as being in accordance with Chetri and Thakuri values and attitudes respectively. By virtue of their caste position Thakuris cannot be *sākhi* as this would be a claim to equality with those who plough. By refusing to plough Thakuris are forced to be involved in the *hali-riti* relationship. The ideal conception of this relationship involved elements of patronage and inequality. In fact, relations of inequality occur between *sākhi* as well, but in this case a claim to the equality between the parties is implied.

Sākhi and *hali-riti* suggest a relationship between the economic positions of households and the amount of labour households can command. Further, these relations of production also suggest the process by which the economic differentiation of households takes place. As noted, contrary to the relations of production involving Thakuris, Chetri relations of production include both *hali-riti* and *sākhi* relationships. With respect to the processes of economic differentiation Chetri relations of production are therefore revealing. These are presented in Tables 13A and 13B. Table 13A shows the relationship between people who are *sākhi*, whereas Table 13B indicates the relationships between Chetris and their *halis*.

In the four Chetri households who use *halis*, the *halis* also take *pāico* from their *ritis*. In two cases, namely relationship nos. 1 and 2 in Table 13B, the *halis* are Dom, whereas in the other two cases,

relationships nos. 3 and 4 the *halis* are close agnatic relatives.⁶ The *riti* and *hali* in no. 3 are related to each other as father's father's brother's son's son. Gorkhya Rokaya, who is the *riti* in this relationship is the head of a large household including two younger brothers, one of whom has married and has children, as well as a son of his deceased older brother. This household has invested extensively in livestock and is generally considered to be wealthy. Gorkhya gives *pāico* to many of his close agnates, but particularly Palta depends on him for subsistence needs. Palta is a *lāto* (mentally retarded) and owns only a small amount of land at Rārā. He did inherit *aula pākho* at Ashidara village from his father, but this land has all been mortgaged to his *ritis*, (one of whom is Gorkhya) from whom he has taken *pāico*. The *hali-riti* arrangement between Gorkhya and Palta has not lasted three years and Palta is not the only ploughman in Gorkhya's household. Gorkhya's younger brother also ploughs and the household is also involved in a *sākhi* relationship with a halfbrother.⁷

Table 13A: Relationships between Sākhi

| <i>Relationship no.</i> | <i>Sākhi (1)</i> | <i>Sākhi (2)</i> | <i>Relationship</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | HH24* | HH62 | different caste |
| 2. | HH31 | HH32 | full brothers |
| 3. | HH35 | HH40 | different lineage |
| 4. | HH37 | HH36 | full brothers |
| 5. | HH44 | HH45 | FBS/FBS |
| 6. | HH46 | HH61 | different lineage |
| 7. | HH47 | HH48 | FFBSS/FFBSS |
| 8. | HH50 | HH52 | BS/FB |
| 9. | HH57 | HH57/58 | FBS/FBS |

Table 13B: Chetri hali-riti Relationships

| <i>Relationship no.</i> | <i>Riti</i> | <i>Hali</i> | <i>Relationship</i> |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1. | HH25* | HH62 | different caste |
| 2. | HH27 | HH63 | different caste |
| 3. | HH37 | HH38 | FFBSS/FFBSS |
| 4. | HH58 | HH59 | FBS/FBS |

*For household numbers see Appendix B.

The other *hali-riti* relationship in which the parties involved are agnatically related Chetris is the one involving Ritea Rawal, who is *riti* and Manglea Rawal who is *hali*. Manglea is 17-18 years old and has not married yet. He is the only surviving child of his elderly parents with whom he lives. Manglea's father and Ritea are related as father's brother's sons and Ritea is considered by most to be the wealthiest. Rawal Chetri. Manglea's household owns land at Rārā as well as at Guira village but the household is small and only Manglea is able to work. They cannot cultivate all their land and they do not own any livestock. The amount of grain Manglea himself can produce from his own and his father's land is not sufficient for the reproduction of the household, and Manglea and his father, therefore, take *pāico* from Ritea. They have apparently taken such loans for a number of years and before Manglea was old enough his father used to plough for Ritea.

There are in all 9 pairs of *sākhi* (Table 13A) and only three of these are not related agnatically.⁸ In one of these the *sākhi* who undertakes to plough is a Dom whereas in two cases the ploughing *sākhi* is of a different lineage and cannot trace a genealo-

gical relationship to the *sākhi* who owns plough-animals. Relationship no. 3 confirms that *sākhi* is not necessarily a relationship of exploitation. In this case Nar Bir Rokaya ploughs for a widow, Janikall Rokaya, who has three small children. Nar Bir owns more land at Rārā and more *khet* at Ashidara than does Janikalla. However, Nar Bir has recently partitioned from his elder brother and he has not yet managed to acquire a full yoke of plough-animals. He has only one oxen. Janikall also has one oxen, but being a woman she does not plough. Thus, Nar Bir ploughs some of her land and in return uses her oxen on his own land. The two households fall into different economic categories. Nar Bir takes *pāico* occasionally when the harvest is particularly bad, whereas Janikalla takes *pāico* regularly and pays some of it back by labouring on the land of both Chetri and Thakuri *saus*. Since Janikall's three sons are all still young, this household cannot enter a *hali-riti* arrangement, but is to some extent dependent on the good-will of agnates and other villagers.

In Relationship no. 6, a genealogical relationship cannot be traced either. In this case, however, the relationship between the two *sākhi* is one in which the ploughing *sākhi* is the poorer. The latter has no livestock and also no labour power within the household, the oldest male member being around 15 years old.

Most of the *sākhi* relationships, namely six out of nine, involve independent households where the men are agnatically related. These relationships are of varying closeness, but as can be seen in Table 13A, it is not unusual that such relationships arise between

households who relatively recently formed one productive and consumption unit. Thus relationships nos. 2 and 4 involve full brothers, whereas in relationship no. 8 the *sākhi* are related to each other as brother's son to father's brother, the latter being the ploughing *sākhi*. *Sākhi* no. 2 is a relationship between two brothers who partitioned four years ago. Baru Rokaya, who is now the wealthier and more capable of the two, has bought land since the partition and all his land is ploughed by his elder brother Kalchu, who now has no plough-animals himself. Kalchu is considered a *lāto* (mentally retarded), although he is able to manage his own household fairly well. Neither of these two households takes *pāico*, but Kalchu is not able to keep as good a standard of living as is his brother. Kalchu has had three sons, but the eldest son has been adopted by Baru who is himself childless and the remaining two sons are still young.

Relationship no. 4 has already been referred to. This is a relationship between Gorkhya Rokaya, who is also the *riti* in relationship no. 3 in Table 13B. Gorkhya's *sākhi* is Ranga Rokaya, his brother by a different mother, and Ranga has no plough-animals. Gorkhya also contributes a certain amount of grain to Ranga's household, but the relationship was not described as *hali-riti*.

Sākhi relationship no. 8 is that between Ram Chandra Rawal and his father's brother, Chandra Bahadur. Ram Chandra's father has recently died, but while he was alive the two households were involved in *sākhi* as well. Chandra Bahadur is the poorer, owning slightly less land, no plough-animals and has

sold land at Rārā about five years ago. Neither Ram Chandra nor his father has sold any land. Both of these households take *pāico* partly from Ritea Rawal and partly from the Thakuris, but neither of them produces a deficit large enough to be classified in economic category 3.

In relationships 5 and 9, *sākhi* they are more distantly related to each other. Relationship no. 5 is between Mana Bir Rawal and Jaya Lall Rawal and the latter ploughs. These two men are related as father's brother's sons, and there is a clear difference in their respective wealth. Thus, Mana Bir has plough-animals, cows as well as a sizeable herd of sheep, whereas Jaya Lall owns no livestock. Mana Bir has also been able to buy land whereas Jaya Lall has sold land. Mana Bir produces a surplus whereas Jaya Lall has a deficit, but neither is regularly involved in the giving and taking of *pāico*.

In *sākhi* relationship no. 9, Suki Ram Rawal and his younger brother Rattan Bahadur, who only recently partitioned their joint household, plough for their father's brother's son Minjur Rawal. Neither Suki Ram, Rattan Bahadur nor Minjur owns a full yoke of plough-animals. The relationship is, however, explicitly stated to be *sākhi* rather than one in which either party *maṅnu* or borrow oxen. All three households now produce a surplus above 5 *muri*, but that of Minjur Rawal generally appears to be less than that of Suki Ram and Rattan Bahadur. Minjur is quite an old man now and lives together with his son who is about 20, and the latter's wife. This household thus does not have a large labour force. The joint household of Suki Ram and Rattan Bahadur, on the other hand,

did have a surplus of labour, some of which was used in providing labour for the *sākhi*. It is likely that the *sākhi* relationship will change now that Suki Ram and Rattan Bahadur have partitioned, but at the time of fieldwork such changes had not yet materialised.

Finally, the *sākhi* in relationship no. 7 are even more distantly related. Thus Hira Lall Rawal is the father's father's brother's sons's son of Sunam Rawal and while Hira Lall does not have plough-animals himself and therefore ploughs both his own land as well as the land of Sunam Rawal, Hira Lall is in fact the wealthier of the two. Hira Lall has bought land at Guira whereas Sunam has sold land there as well as land at Rārā. Further, Hira Lall produces enough grain to be able to give small amounts of *pāico* whereas Sunam takes *pāico* each year, although not from Hira Lall. Once again this case shows that *sākhi*, which is a relationship centred around the ownership of plough-animals, does not always imply that the person who ploughs or labours for the household owning means of production is poorer. A *sākhi* relationship may also be entered into as a short-term arrangement by which the problem posed by an acute shortage of plough-animals can be solved. In the case of Hira Lall and Sunam the former is, in fact, a much more experienced cultivator than the latter and has had extremely bad luck with his livestock recently.

For Chetris, the participation in the *hali-riti* relationship is a much clearer indication of the economic position of the parties involved than is the participation in the *sākhi* relationships. In the former, *ritis* are always economically superior, whereas the *halis* own inadequate means of production and are

indebted to their *ritis*. In the latter, the *sākhi* may participate for various reasons. Some *sākhi* face a temporary or sudden crisis in their own household either because they have lost plough-animals recently or because they have an inadequate supply of labour. Households involved in *sākhi* are not in all cases differentiated economically to any significant degree. They may both produce a surplus or they may both produce deficits. On the other hand, the ploughing *sākhi* may also be economically superior to the *sākhi* for whom he ploughs. In the *sākhi* relationship households find other households with whom they can match their needs and the relationship may not last more than one season. However, the relationship is clearly distinguished from the situation where households borrow (*māgnu*) oxen from other households on a day-to-day basis. In *sākhi* one party in principle undertakes to plough all the land and this is seen as being an exchange for the use of plough-animals, which the ploughing *sākhi* does not have. In the *māgnu* relationship, on the other hand, the two households plough their own land.

The difference between the economic position of the parties involved in the *hali-riti* and in the *sākhi* relationships is in accordance with the way these two relationships are conceptualised with respect to inequality. Thus only the *hali-riti* relationship is conceived as a relationship between a client and a patron, whereas the *sākhi* relationship is considered as one between equals. This difference is also to some extent apparent when one considers the caste and kinship relations between *halis* and *ritis* on the one hand and *sākhi* on the other. At Rārā as in other Hindu

societies, caste relations are by their very nature considered to be relations of inequality and caste inequalities are expressed in the nature of the work undertaken by different castes, in the commensal hierarchy, in the manner in which members of different castes address each other and in the privileges enjoyed by different castes. Kinship relations on the other hand are, at least, to some extent considered to be relations of equality, and such equality is expressed in the concept of *bhāibandhu* (brotherhood), referring to descendants of a common ancestor and in the notion of shared bone, flesh and blood.⁹ However, not all Chetri *ritis* employ Dom *halis*. Two of the *halis* employed regularly by Chetris are also agnatically related relatives and in one case the *hali* is a father's brother's son of his *riti*. Further, although *sākhi* may be a relationship between households who are more or less of similar economic position, this is by no means always the case. On the contrary, as can be seen in Table 9, all *sākhi* who own plough-animals and who therefore do not plough belong to economic categories 1 and 2, whereas a majority (78 per cent) of the *sākhi* who plough and do not have an adequate supply of plough-animals at their disposal belong to economic categories 2 and 3, with 56 per cent in category 3. Thus, while people who in terms of kinship are considered to be equals and brothers may be involved in *hali-riti* relationships with each other, in some cases people who are of significantly different economic position may be agnatically closely related kinsmen and *sākhi*. The *hali-riti* relation, although an adequate representation of the economic position of the parties, is not always in accordance with other aspects of the relationship between the

people and the households involved. On the other hand, the representation of *sākhi* as a relationship between equals is in accordance with the agnatic ties in which *sākhi* tend to be related, but this representation is not necessarily in accordance with the relative economic position of the households involved.

This suggests that despite the ideological representation of *bhāibandhu* and *sākhi* as relationships involving equals, economic differentiation exists, or may exist between households related in this way. Further, this also suggests a process by which such economic differentiation takes place. Economic equality between brothers breaks down once households partition, because after partition brothers do no longer belong to the same unit of production, i.e. the same household. For various reasons, economic differences are likely to come about between households who started out from more or less equal economic positions. Thus, demographic differences between households, management and knowledge of agriculture and natural conditions all influence the land/labour ratio which is a central factor in the reproduction of households. A slight differentiation between households and brothers may further develop and solidify if they enter *sākhi* relationships. Once *sākhi*, despite the claim to equality, the labouring household loses out economically by virtue of having to spend labour time on the land of another household. If a *sākhi* relationship continues over some years, a process of economic differentiation may have been started which may lead to the taking of *pāico* and eventually to the position of the indebted *hali*. Through this process the households concerned become further differentiated economically.¹⁰

This process of differentiation affects households from different castes to varying degrees. Thus in the case of Thakuri households, who are not unaffected by demographic factors and factors relating to the management and cultivation of the land as well as natural circumstances, the process is influenced by the fact that Thakuris do not plough or carry out certain types of manual labour. As outlined, Thakuris cannot be *sākhi* and their *halis* are necessarily recruited from castes other than their own. The nature of the relationship between the Thakuri *ritis* and their *halis* is presented in Table 13C.

From this table it is clear that all Thakuri *halis* are from a different caste. Only in one case is there also a kinship relation between the *riti* and his *hali*. This is relationship no. 10. Puran Bahadur, who is the head of his household is also a junior agnatic relative of his *hali* Jasya. Jasya is a descendant of the father's father of Puran Bahadur, and a Chetri slave. He is thus the father's brother of Puran Bahadur and was kept in the household as a workman by Puran Bahadur's father. I was told that at that time it was understood that Jasya had a claim to, at least, some of the ancestral property. After the death of Puran Bahadur's father, however, Puran Bahadur himself has settled the matter by giving Jasya a token 5 *hal* of the ancestral property and now uses Jasya as his *hali* and workman. Jasya resents this, but is poor and ineffective. He tries to take part in Thakuri ceremonies and exerts moral pressure on his brother's son whenever he can. Puran Bahadur cannot afford to give *pāico* to Jasya; indeed he himself takes *pāico* fairly regularly, and he does not want to be responsible for Jasya all year round. Jasya and his wife and only daughter beg

(*māgnu*) from all the Thakuri households and also perform occasional day labour for those who need an extra hand.

Only in two cases do Thakuri *ritis* employ Chetri *halis* and in both these cases the Chetris are from Rārā and are also *pāico*-takers from their *ritis*. Otherwise most *halis* tend to be Dom, both from Rārā and from surrounding villages and only in two cases are these Dom also indebted to their *ritis*. In all the other cases the Dom are employed for three months and receive a wage (*jyālā*) as well as two daily meals. For many of the Thakuri households who employ Dom *halis* in this manner it is in fact difficult to find Dom who are willing to work for them. In one case the same Dom *hali* worked for two Thakuri households. This difficulty in recruiting the labour they need is to some extent a result of the fact that Thakuris cannot give *pāico* extensively and the fact that there is no free labour force in the area surrounding Rārā. All the Thakuri households who pay their *halis* a wage are also *pāico*-takers themselves. While the process of differentiation takes place for all households regardless of caste status, and while the availability and recruitment of labour is important for this process, Thakuris at Rārā have not yet started labouring for others or even ploughing their own land. This is despite the fact that many of them are indebted to Chetri *saus*.¹¹

As described in Chapter 5, Dom provide tools and services for Thakuri and Chetri households. They are thus related to particular households as service castes and as such they are involved in the process of production in households other than their own. My data

on landholding, household yields, ownership of plough-animals and other livestock and giving and taking of *pāico* suggest that Dom are indeed included in the poorest economic category. This is in accordance with the predominance of Dom *halis*. Thus the process of economic differentiation of Dom households is influenced by the fact that they start off from a position of labourers and conversely cannot easily recruit labour from other households than their own.

Table 13C: Thakuri Hali-Riti Relationships

| <i>Relationship no.</i> | <i>Riti</i> | <i>Hali</i> | <i>Group Affiliation of Hali</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--|
| 1. | HH1* | HH18 | Chetri from Rārā |
| 2. | HH2 | HH64 | Dom from Rārā |
| 3. | HH3 | | Dom from Kachya |
| 4. | HH4 | HH66 | Dom from Rārā |
| 5. | HH5 | | Dom from Ruma |
| 6. | HH6 | | Dom from Kachya |
| 7. | HH7 | | Dom from Kachya |
| 8. | HH8 | HH67 | Dom from Chapru |
| 9. | HH9 | | Dom from Ruma |
| 10. | HH10 | HH14 | Chetri from Rārā but also FB of <i>riti</i> |
| 11. | HH11 | HH30 | Chetri from Rārā |
| 12. | HH12 | HH67 | Dom from Rārā |
| 13. | HH13 | | Dom from Ruma |
| 14. | HH7&10 | HH16 | Chetri from Rārā and only temporary |
| 15. | Kachya HH | HH65 | Dom from Rārā plough for Chetri in a different village |
| 16. | HH2, 4, 10 & 11 | HH68 | Dom from Chapru |

* For household numbers see Appendix B.

3. DIFFERENTIATION AND THE ECONOMY

The statistical data presented in Tables 3-13 show that households are differentiated economically and that such economic differentiation does not totally accord with differences between households in terms of caste status. While caste position may influence economic matters such as the ability to hold permanent jobs in the bureaucracy, in other cases there is no such correlation. Rather than pointing to a society divided internally into castes consisting of households of more or less the same economic category the data point to an overall differentiation of households which, although influenced by caste position in individual cases, is not dependent upon such caste differences. The condition for the differentiation of individual households is laid, not so much by the presence of caste differences as by the existence of an individualised labour process and organisation of production, of an individual right to ownership of means of production and the presence of usurer's capital. These conditions allow for and develop further, relations of inequality between units of production and when two or more households are involved in a process of production such relations are likely to be exploitative.

The crucial factors in the process of differentiation are ownership of means of production in particular, plough-animals and ability to command labour. It has already seen how land by itself is not a good indication of economic position, although land is obviously an integral element of the process of production involving plough-animals and labour. The importance of plough-animals and labour is represented

ideologically in the *hali-riti* and *sākhi* relationships of production. The *sākhi* and *hali-riti* relationships constitute processes by which economic differentiation, allowed for by the individual right to ownership of means of production, by the individualised labour process and by the existence of usurer's capital, are solidified and further developed. Usurer's capital, the giving and taking of *pāico* is an important element of this process because not only does *pāico* presuppose that land, labour and produce can be exchanged as commodities it also involves the reaping of interest and hence in Marx's terms surplus value (Marx 1971, vol. III, Part VI, McMichael 1977, Roseberry 1976).

Leaving aside for the moment the question of caste, it is clear that the type of peasant economy described here is in many respects similar to the one found in pre-revolutionary Russia. Chayanov (1966) and Lenin (1967) have both written about the nature of the Russian peasant economy and these ideas have influenced students of societies elsewhere (Shanin 1971, Sahlins 1974, Ennew, Hirst and Tribe 1976-77). Chayanov criticises the application of capitalist principles such as rent, capital, price, profit and wage labour to the peasant economy. Peasants are not trying to maximise their profits, rather the peasant economy is a separate entity with values and methods different from those operating in a capitalist economy. According to Chayanov, peasant households seek to adapt their labour/land ratio to their own reproduction and not to the idea of profit calculation. Thus, Chayanov wrote:

Thorough empirical studies of the peasant farms in Russia and other countries have enabled us

to substantiate the following thesis: the degree of self-exploitation is determined by a peculiar equilibrium between family demand satisfaction and the drudgery of labour itself.

(*ibid.*: 6)

and later:

It is obvious that with the increase in produce obtained by hard work the subjective valuation of each newly gained ruble's significance for consumption decreases, but the drudgery of working for it, which will demand an even greater amount of self-exploitation, will increase. As long as the equilibrium is not reached between the two elements being evaluated . . . the family, working without paid labour, has every cause to continue its economic activity. As soon as this equilibrium point is reached, however, continuing to work becomes pointless . . .

(*ibid.*)

From these basic assumptions Chayanov derived a theory of social and economic differentiation. Since peasant households mainly are aiming to be able to reproduce themselves comfortably, the area of land sown by households is related to their size and is further influenced by the developmental stage of the household. Thus, as household size increases in the course of the developmental cycle, they expand their sown areas and also the extent of their activity, i.e., their self-exploitation. Conversely, households who have recently partitioned decrease the area of land sown as well as the amount of effort put into cultivation (*ibid.*: 67). The expansionist cycle of

households is financed by the increasing availability of labour within the households as well as by activating household labour which previously was underused. Thus, according to Chayanov, the peasant household itself determines the extent to which land is cultivated as well as the extent of involvement in commercialisation and commodity production. First and foremost the peasant household attempts to satisfy its own needs and in this process of reproduction demographic changes are of major importance.

Lenin, on the other hand, considered the peasant of pre-revolutionary Russia, already as polarised classes in the making. Using two indices of economic status, namely area of land under crops and number of plough-animals as well as general information provided by the Zemstvo statistics, Lenin showed that the peasant economy was commercialised to a much greater extent than believed by Chayanov. Thus Lenin wrote:

.... all the general data on the economy of our rural districts indicate an uninterrupted and rapidly increasing differentiation: on the one hand, the "peasants" are abandoning and leasing out their land, the number of horseless "peasants" is growing, the "peasants" are fleeing to the towns, etc; on the other hand, the "progressive" trends in peasant farming are also taking their course, the "peasants" are buying land, improving their farms, introducing iron ploughs, developing grass cultivation, dairy farming, etc."

(Lenin 1967: 185)

In his analysis, Lenin showed that the peasants taking part in the first process were, by and large, the impoverished sections of the peasantry, whereas those who took part in the second process were the rich peasants, and he postulated that ultimately:

....the old peasantry is not only “differentiating”, it is being completely dissolved, it is ceasing to exist, it is being ousted by absolutely new types of rural inhabitants—types that are the basis of a society in which commodity economy and capitalist production prevail.

(*ibid.*: 177)

However, Lenin was not clear on the extent to which stratification existed amongst peasants independently of capitalism. On the one hand, he implied that such differentiation created a home-market for capitalism and that in this process usurer’s and merchant’s capital became transformed into industrial capital (*ibid.*: 187-188). This process was conceived by Lenin to take place along the lines indicated by Marx and referred to in Chapter 6. On the other hand, Lenin also considered:

....that the independent development of merchant’s and usurer’s capital in our countryside *retards* the differentiation of the peasantry.

(*ibid.*: 188)

While he does point to the difference between what the Narodniks termed property inequality or “simple differentiation” (*ibid.*: 177), and the increased differentiation which creates a home-market, it is not clear exactly how one state of affairs develops into

the other. As Charlesworth, (1979) has pointed out, Lenin fails to see that the existence, of usurer's capital in peasant communities by itself creates rather than retards stratification and that consequently such differentiation and stratification does not necessarily lead to the dissolution of the peasantry. Indeed, as the experience in many parts of the world including India has shown, peasants have proved remarkably resilient to the development of capitalism.

Chayanov's model is useful in understanding how at Rārā family size and a certain standard of living determine the extent to which land is cultivated and how hard individual family members work. It also explains why certain households are not investing in more means of production, even though they may have the wealth to do so. Further, it is in accordance with the often stated Chetri ideal of producing and consuming relatively independently. However, unless one includes the *hali*, the service castes and other labourers in the Chayanovian family farm as consumers as well as labour, Chayanov's model cannot account for the fact that such additional labour exists. Indeed, contrary to the situation suggested by Lenin, the peasant farm in Chayanov's model does not use extra-household labour. Consequently as Charlesworth (*ibid.*) and Neale (1972) have pointed out, and as the analysis suggests, the application of the Chayanovian model to Indian and Nepalese material is awkward. Although some households at Rārā may be able to produce and consume independently, all households are also involved in other economic relations with service castes and a majority of households (83 per cent) are also involved with other households directly

in the process of agricultural production. To consider such extra-household labour as part of the household consumption unit not only obscures important economic relations but is also inaccurate since only in some cases are those who render their labour provided for all year round. Thus, while Chayanov's model is insightful with respect to the demographic factors and cycles which affect the household as a unit of production, it ignores extra-household economic relations. Further, as a consequence of this Chayanov never considers usury or debt relations. At Rārā the giving of *pāico* is one way in which labour can be recruited and such labour can either be used to free particular members of the household from the labour process or to expand or intensify the cultivation of land. In both cases the land/labour ratio available to the productive unit is affected.

Lenin's model, on the other hand, can account for such factors as extra-household labour and the presence of usurer's capital, but relates these facts too closely to the development of capitalism.¹² The peasants of Rārā, who are virtually untouched by the development of capitalist relations, are differentiated and this differentiation is not just a result of inequalities in the ownership of property. On the contrary, how brothers who have recently partitioned and who therefore own more or less equal amounts of land may become differentiated economically. Such differentiation may partly be a result of the working of demographic factors in the manner suggested by Chayanov, but once such differentiation has occurred, and if brothers become *sākhi*, further differentiation may develop.

On balance, then, the two models do not exclude each other, but can both be usefully applied

to different aspects of the Rārā economy. While Chayanov can explain how initial differentiation may come about between productive units, Lenin's approach provides a better framework for an analysis of extra-household relations of production. In the final analysis, however, the two aspects are not distinct. The individual ownership of means of production and the individualised labour process must be seen in relation to usury and the existence of limited commodity production. Thus, while the basic production/consumption unit of the peasant economy is the individual household, the unit of reproduction is much wider, including the village, the community and ultimately the state. Within these wider units of reproduction individual households are related to each other through involvement in the same process of production, through relations of exchange and distribution.¹³ Chayanov's model does not allow for an analysis of these wider relations. Lenin conducted such an analysis for the peasantry in pre-revolutionary Russia, but his analysis cannot be extended to include peasant economies found in caste societies. It seems, both Chayanov and Lenin were wrong in their basic assumptions about peasant economic behaviour. Chayanov assumed that peasants everywhere expanded and contracted the size of their family farm according to the stage of the developmental cycle of the family and hence their consumption needs. Aside from this, peasants saw no incentive to produce or invest. Lenin, on the other hand, assumed that peasants behaved in a capitalistic manner as soon as the conditions for such behaviour were present. The peasants at Rārā are not a collection of independent households satisfied

or able to look after their own needs only; nor are they engaged in capitalist reinvestment and expansion of their estates. Rather their economic behaviour is in accordance with a system in which political status and wealth is measured in the number of individuals and amount of labour commanded by individual households. Labour is not only of fundamental economic importance in the Chayanovian sense. Labour and the ability to command it is also the rationale of the giving of *pāico*. Accordingly separation from the labour process indicates high political and caste status. These are the values which underlie the economy at Rārā and as such they are rather different from those depicted for both the Chayanovian peasant and the capitalist farmer.

4. THE COMMAND OF LABOUR

To summarise, it can be said the importance of labour is manifest in different ways in the economy of the peasants at Rārā. Firstly, the land/labour ratio of households is crucial for the independent reproduction of these units of production. Secondly, the rendering of labour to owners of land and plough-animals is central in extra-household relations of production. Finally, the ownership and control over land implies, in a general sense, the ability to control and command the labour of individuals. In this last set of circumstances political status enjoyed by individuals and groups is related to caste position. At Rārā the continuing claim of the Shah Thakuris to politically superior status is facilitated by their refusal to plough and carry out certain other types of manual labour. Whether or not they can “afford” to pay for extra-

household labour, the Thakuris need *halis* and other help in the agricultural process.

The idea that manual labour is degrading is prevalent in India as well as Nepal and has been referred to by many writers (Thorner and Thorner 1962, Kumar 1965, Hjejle 1967, Breman 1974 and Sanwal 1976). High castes such as Brahmins and Kshatriyas tend to claim as their privileges an aloofness from the labour process, whereas low castes such as untouchables not only perform polluting activities as a result of their special occupation, they are also seen fit to perform all types of manual labour as well. As Kumar remarked, "One of the most striking and important peculiarities of the Indian forms of servitude is their close connection with the caste system." (Kumar 1956: 34). On the other hand, whereas political status and caste position result in the ability to command the labour of others, such command of labour may also lead to superior political status and perhaps, within certain limits, to enhanced caste status. The extent to which caste and political status coincide, however, is different in different localities and regions and probably a result of specific political and historical events. Thus in his study of stratification in Kumaon Sanwal (1976) pointed to the lack of coincidence between caste and political status as a result of Chand conquest.¹⁴ About the status distinctions during Chand rule Sanwal states:

According to this the population of Kumaon was divided into three broad hierarchically-placed estate-like categories: (i) the Asal or Thul-jat including the Asal or Bhal-Baman caste . . . and

the Thakuri-Rajput or Kshettri caste; (ii) the Khasi including the Pitali-Hali or Khasi-Baman and the Khasi Jimdar . . . castes; and (iii) the Dom. The first two of these were each made up of castes belonging to two *varnas*, the Brahman and the Kshatriya, but the immigrants were deemed superior to the Khasi. We thus get a situation in which a caste (the immigrant Kshettri) inferior in terms of *varna* to the Khasi- or Pitali-Baman actually ranked, on the ground, higher than the latter.

(*Sanwal 1976: 27-28*)

Sanwal believed that this situation in Kumaon was a result of conquest. In Chapter 3 discussed criticisms of such a conquest theory. Certainly there is no clear evidence in Karnali that conquest by immigrant Rajputs actually took place nor that it had the consequences for the already existing caste and political system described by Sanwal. The distinction between Shahs and Shahis may be a result of conquest. On the other hand, this distinction may have come about through internal processes of stratification. Contrary to the situation reported for Kumaon by Sanwal, whatever its origin the Shah/Shahi distinction in the area around Rārā is one in which caste and political status coincide. Since the Gorkha conquest those who now claim to be Kalyal Shahs held certain political privileges and in terms of the caste hierarchy and commensality these Kalyals rank higher than the Kalyal Shahis, who in turn, rank higher than any of the Chetris. This distinction is expressed in terms of the difference in the legitimate need to command

labour that is to say in terms of a difference between those who plough and those who do not.

At Rārā then, the amount of labour which is available to and can be commanded by different households can be seen to be a result of various circumstances. Firstly, labour is available from inside the household, depending on its size and the health and age of household members. The extent to which such labour is actually used is, of course, influenced by the need to activate all this labour fully, by the standard of living and by the attitude of household members to work. Secondly, labour from other households can be used and the availability of such extra-household labour is further influenced by various circumstances. Most households can recruit a limited amount of labour from other households on the basis of *madat dinu* (reciprocal labour exchange). However, contrary to suggestions made by Seddon (Seddon et. al. 1979) for mid-western Nepal, at Rārā this system does not provide households with a large pool of labour from which they can draw. More consistent use of extra-household labour can only be commanded by households who produce enough grain or earn enough cash to be able to pay for such labour. Thus, to some extent, the availability of extra-household labour to individual units of production is a result of the amount of surplus, over and above their own needs of reproduction they can produce. Finally, as indicated above, the amount of labour which households can command, is also a result of their political and caste status. And as already discussed that the manner in which the people at Rārā can command labour by virtue of their different political and caste status.

5. POLITICAL STATUS AND COMMAND OF LABOUR

Not all Thakuri households belong to economic category 1, and only a few Thakuri households produce enough grain to be able to give *pāico* consistently. The rest hire *halis* for certain periods of time and pay such *halis* a wage. In the past, *halis* were not paid a wage, but were dependent on their *ritis* for produce and patronage. For various reasons indicated in Chapter 3 changes affecting the agrarian relations at Rārā have taken place during the last 30-40 years. The following description of the Thakuri ability to command labour as a result of their political position, therefore, mainly refers to the past, although to some extent the situation could be observed in the interaction between Thakuris, Chetris and Doms in 1977.

The history and background of the people who live at Rārā was also described in Chapter 3. Because of the absence of reliable historical material from the period before and immediately after the Gorkhāli conquest it is difficult to evaluate the accuracy of the claims made in the Kalyal chronicle. In this chronicle the presence of Kalyal Thakuris at Rārā is said to date back to the middle of the 17th century. The extent of Kalyal political authority at that time can only be surmised but it resembled that of the Indian *zamindar*; that is to say they were landowners and revenue-collectors with almost total judicial authority over other cultivators. The role of the Shah Thakuris as tax-collectors around 1843 is confirmed by a document issued in 1904 and from this time to the present they have retained at least some of the privileges attached

to this position. The amount of political authority enjoyed by them was affected by changes in central government policy, particularly between 1868 and 1904, but their positions as *jimwāls* after 1904 was strengthened by the fact that they became directly responsible to the central government. Similarly in theory, at least, the privileges enjoyed by the Thakuris have waxed and waned at different times. Legitimately *jimwāls* presided over local courts in which they heard minor offences and imposed fines which they were obliged to pass on to the representatives of local government in the district. They were in charge of forced labour, both to carry out tasks stipulated by the government and to be used to a limited extent by themselves. They were also at times exempt from certain taxes themselves. Finally, they had the right to collect at least small fees, such as *salāmi* from the cultivators. The extent to which *jimwāls* had the right to impose other levies such as *sirto* (tribute) is not clear, but the numerous orders from the central government urging tax-collecting officials to moderation in their extraction of payments from the cultivators, indicate that abuse of the various privileges held by these tax-collectors was commonplace. Indeed, since most of the abuse and exploitation inflicted on the local cultivators by the tax-collectors was illegitimate, one would not expect to hear about this in official records. To learn more about the privileges enjoyed by local authorities one must, therefore, turn to information on this subject given by informants themselves. This type of data too has its shortcomings. The information thus given only refers to a generation or at the most two. Further,

while information about such delicate issues are rarely agreed upon by different parties, it would also be a mistake to treat such information as historical fact.

The three Thakuris described in the 1904 *rukkā* each had descendants who are now living at Rārā. The four villages in which the right to collect revenue and the right to the *jimwālships* were acquired were divided between these descendants, so that two branches each held one large village each, whereas the third branch held the two smallest villages. This situation changed in 1966 with the establishment of the district headquarters in the area, but as late as 1973 *sirto* is said to have been collected (*uthāunu*, standard Nepali) by the *jimwāl* from the inhabitants of one of these villages. The payment included 2 *pāthi* barley or wheat, 1 *māna* rice, 1 spoonful of ghee and a handful of salt and red peppers, and this apparently had been the payment claimed annually from each household by the *jimwāls* in the three villages. It was possible to pay *sirto* in labour rather than in produce and that generally Thakuris extracted *jhārā* labour for their own as well as government purposes. Thus the carrying of loads and other manual labour was often done by Chetris and Doms who were summoned specifically for such tasks. There was apparently the assumption amongst the Thakuris and particularly by the members of the *jimwāl's* households, that they had a right to Chetri and Dom labour if the labour available in their own households did not suffice. Indeed such attitudes were in evidence in 1977 at Rārā. Thus, when produce harvested by Thakuri women was to be carried from

the fields to the house, or when firewood had to be collected, Thakuris would invariably attempt to coax the nearest Chetri and Dom into performing this labour for them. In some cases, the Dom or Chetri in question considered the favour as part of an exchange for which he would claim a return at some future date. Thus, at one time Padam Bahadur Shah, who nowadays commands very little labour, had several baskets of barley carried to his house in return for writing a letter. Increasingly, however, unless they have some return favour in mind, or unless they are already in some way indebted, Chetris and Doms make some vague excuse and do not perform the tasks requested by the Thakuris. Nowadays the Thakuris have no means of punishing such refusals, whereas in the past, when the *jimwāls* held considerable judicial authority, Thakuri harassment of Chetris and Doms must have been relatively easy.

Some Thakuris are also said to have acquired possession of large amounts of land by fraud (*jāli garnu*, local dialect). In these cases Thakuris are said to have distorted the land-records they kept for the villages to their own advantage. Whether such accounts are, in fact, true cannot, of course, be established. It is sufficient to note that this is the manner in which Chetris and Doms thought about the political superiority of the Thakuris in the past. Although no doubt some Thakuris acquired a reputation for being exploitative, Chetris who have enjoyed particular emancipation since the 1962 Constitution for Panchayat Democracy may be exaggerating the darkness of the past in order to romanticise the future. Indeed, the ties between political superiors and

political inferiors combine elements of both patronage and exploitation (Breman 1974). On the one hand, there was a tendency for Thakuri *jimwāls* in the area to exploit the cultivators from whom they collected revenue and who were under their jurisdiction. On the other hand, in this system no one could escape the jurisdiction and the overlords of the tax-collectors and there must have been a need for Doms and Chetris to secure for themselves the patronage of powerful Thakuri *ritis*. This was true for those Thakuris who did not hold political office as well, but at least these Thakuris could appeal to the ideas of equality expressed between *bhāibandhu* and those who share bone, flesh and blood.

This element of patronage between political superiors and inferiors is clearly discernible in the relationships between those who hold official positions and those who do not. Thus officials at the post-office, most of them Thakuris, tend to find Chetris and Doms to carry baskets of produce from the fields and to perform other smaller tasks more easily than do other Thakuris. Such labour may be provided by the *hulākis* (postmen) or it may be provided by people who aspire to get such employment. Similarly it is hardly surprising that the household in which the M.P. representing Mugu district is a member, finds it relatively easy to command various types of extra-household labour, even though this household is not a regular *pāico-giver*.¹⁵

Aside from an ability to generally command the labour of Chetris and Doms, the Thakuris at Rārā also used to have slaves. The existence of slavery in Nepal had already been reported by Kirkpatrick

(1811), Hamilton (1819) and Hodgson (1864). Thus Hodgson noted that the slaves he heard of and encountered were Nepali and not, as elsewhere, from foreign countries. He recorded that in Kathmandu in the early 1830s the price of a female slave in her prime was between Rs. 40-60, whereas the price of a male slave was Rs. 8-125. (Hodgson 1864, vol. 7). The fact that many slaves had been born free was also mentioned by Hamilton (1819: 235) and the government had at various times tried to limit the extent to which individual free peasants could be enslaved (RRS 1969, 1/2: 44; RRS 1972, 4/11: 205; RRS 1973, 5/1: 18). Slavery was finally abolished (at least in law) by Jung Bahadur Rana in 1924 when he delivered a famous speech in which he tried to show that increasingly slavery was becoming an archaic and expensive way of commanding labour. He suggested that the government should compensate the slaveowners by paying a statutory price and that after a period of seven years slaves should be free to go anywhere they wished (Kennion 1925; RRS 1972, 4/11, 4/12; 1973, 5/1, 5/2, 5/3). The official statistics indicate that when Jung Bahadur Rana made his speech the number of slaves found in Jumla amounted to a mere $1\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the population in the district; (ibid.: 1973, 5/4: 63).

At the time of abolition all the Thakuri households at Rārā owned slaves.¹⁶ The caste position of the Thakuris themselves was considered incompatible with the servile status of a slave, and slaves kept by Thakuris were recruited from inferior castes. They were also recruited in different ways. Some had fallen to the status of slave through indebtedness (*bandha*).

In such cases their land, if they had any, had usually been mortgaged to a *sau* as a result of continued *pāico*-taking. Theoretically, such slaves could work off the debt, but this depended on the availability of land and labour in his or her original household. Usually, the debt continued to accumulate and eventually the whole household would become *bandha* slaves. Slaves could also be bought outright for money and the price is said to have been between Rs. 100-200. Such slaves were also referred to as *bandha* slaves. Other slaves owned by the Thakuris were children of parents who themselves were slaves, and such slaves were referred to as *kumāraketāketi* (the children of slaves). A few of these slaves had not grown up as the slaves of the Thakuris at Rārā, but had been transferred with dowries (Levine 1980: 206) given by affines from Pyuthan and Jajarkot situated to the south east of Rārā. Such transfers of slaves had thus taken place simultaneously with the transfer of wives and to some extent ensured that the women thus given in marriage were looked after and did not have to work.¹⁷ Indeed the genealogical material indicates that whenever women were given in this direction, they were also accompanied by a slave as part of the dowry.

Slaves are referred to by several terms. The most general term is *kām garne mānche* (a person who works, standard Nepali). This term does not indicate slave status, but can be used to refer to other people who for various reasons work for a *riti*. Many Thakuris used the term *nokar* (servant) to refer to such people as well as to slaves proper, but when this term is used it indicates the payment of a wage rather

than some form of bondage. By using this term, the Thakuris were trying to stress the continuity between the old forms of slavery and the hiring of servants which is, of course, acceptable today. The servants employed at the district headquarters are also referred to as *nokar* and any kind of government employment is referred to as a *nokari*. The Thakuris at Rārā kept slaves until long after slavery had been officially abolished, but after 1924 such people were officially referred to as servants rather than slaves.¹⁸ The inferior status of slaves is suggested in the term *pešān* (from *peš*, work) and this term, together with the term *kām garne mānche* are used politely. These terms are used to refer to people who have been slaves previously or whose parents have been slaves, but who now have become free (*chutkārā pāune*, to receive freedom). The most derogatory term, and also the term which is most frequently used to refer to slaves is *kumāro* (slave).¹⁹ This term can also be used as a term of address and as a term of abuse.²⁰ I often heard Thakuris use this term in scolding their *halis* or complaining about the bad workmanship of a *bhyāl* or a *damāi*. The term indicates the inferior status of a slave and some of my Thakuri informants claimed that generally all Doms should be considered as *Thakuro kumāra* (the slaves of the Thakuris). While masters refer to and address their slaves as *kumāra*, the latter refer to the former as *riti* and as in the *hali-riti* relationship and the relations between inferior service castes and their *ritis*, address their master by using the term *hajur*. *Kumāra* also greet their *riti* by performing *dhok*. Slaves who have been set free are referred to as *chorka kumāra* (slaves who have been

forgiven or let go) and they are not considered of equal status with other free peasants.

Every Thakuri family had at one time slaves attached to the household. In 1977, there were still four individuals, all men who were considered to be *kumāra*. These belonged to three Thakuri households. In one case the slave was a descendant of former slaves and an old man who apparently had decided not to leave his *riti* and in two cases the slaves also claimed some kinship relation to the heads of households. As it has already mentioned the case of Jasya who is the descendant of a female slave and a Thakuri, and who nowadays ploughs for Puran Bahadur, his father's brother's son. Jasya is treated as *kumāra*, as *bhāibandhu* and as a *hali* by Puran Bahadur, depending on the context, and is referred to as *kumāra*, *hali* and *kāncho buwā* accordingly. In the second case, the kinship relation is more remote, going back four generations and also arose as a result of a sexual union between a Thakuri man and a female slave. In this case the relationship between the descendents of this mixed union and the legitimate Thakuri descendants is less ambiguous. The former continue to be *kām garne mānche* and since this household is fairly well off there has not yet been any attempt to deprive them of their rights to membership. It is possible that these two slaves have not left their masters because they consider their claim to some of the ancestral property, legitimate.

According to the information given by Thakuris there were a total of 62 slaves at Rārā around the time of abolition.²⁰ Twenty-seven of these slaves are said to have been men, whereas 35 are said to have

been women and these figures also include children. Slaves were Dom as well as Chetri and in the survey carried out, 36 of the 62 slaves were Chetris, 20 were Doms and the caste status of another 6 could not be determined. This indicates that there were perhaps more Chetri than Dom slaves, but that Dom slaves by no means were absent. For Thakuris the untouchability of Dom slaves did not present a problem. Dom slaves were, of course, not allowed inside Thakuri houses, but slept in the *goth*, the space underneath the house where the livestock are kept, or lived in separate houses built for them by their *ritis*. The Chetri slaves, on the other hand, inhabited the house together with their Thakuri masters. They slept in the *baithak* and were also allowed into the outer kitchen. They were, however, excluded from the *bhānse kothā* where rice was cooked. Chetri slaves involved in domestic activities fetched water and firewood, husked and winnowed grain and prepared other foodstuffs for cooking. The cooking of food was carried out by Thakuri women.

While some slaves were thus involved in domestic activities, perhaps contrary to elsewhere in Nepal (Caplan 1980) slave labour at Rārā was mainly important for agricultural production. Slaves cultivated their master's land. They ploughed and sowed, threshed and winnowed, weeded and transplanted, carried produce and tended the livestock. Slaves also sometimes made and repaired agricultural tools, although this was, of course, also done by the *bhyāl* and the *lohar* of the household. Nowadays many of the Thakuris make their own carrying baskets (*tun*) and pay Chetris about Rs. 10 for a new plough. In

the past these items were made by slaves. Slaves also used to cultivate the *aula* landholdings of their Thakuri masters. Thus the land at Raunteri was cultivated by slave labour before some of the Thakuris moved to settle there on a permanent basis. Similarly the landholdings at Gilar and Kalai and elsewhere, some of which are not cultivated on a sharecropping basis, were in the past cultivated by slaves. Slaves used to stay in these *aula* places while they cultivated the land and the Thakuri masters would sometimes come to oversee that the work was carried out properly. Other members of the Thakuri households stayed permanently at Rārā and the Thakuri women are said to have been kept in seclusion at this time. They never walked through the village and never showed themselves to the Chetris and Toms. The only household activities which Thakuri women consistently performed was the cooking of daily meals.

Slaves were considered to be members of the family (*pariwār*). Thus they had a right to reasonable upkeep and the *riti* was responsible for the arrangement of the marriages of his slaves. Theoretically slaves could marry free peasants and if a female slave married a free man their descendants would be free and, therefore, lost to the *riti*. For this reason, *ritis* often tried to arrange the marriages of their slaves of to other slaves of other Thakuri households. Children of such unions would belong to the households of their father's maters and indeed the information suggests that *ritis* often encouraged exchanges marriages between slaves belonging to different households. When a slave died, the extent to which mortuary rites were performed depended on

whether or not the slave had any relations who could perform and pay for such rituals. If the slave had no free relatives such rituals would almost certainly not be performed. The *riti* and his household did not observe pollution after the death of one of their slaves, but if relations were affectionate (*khusi lāgyo*, happiness is felt) the *riti* might help the relatives of a slave to perform such rituals on a minor scale. More often, however, all rituals were dispensed with and a dead slave simply buried (*phālnu*, to throw, standard Nepali) in a makeshift grave in the jungle.

Slaves were the property of their masters. Not only could slaves be sold and bought parallel with means of production such as land and plough-animals, slaves could also be rented out to another *riti*. The *riti* who borrowed a slave on a short-term basis would undertake to feed the slave adequately while the work lasted. For longer loans, however, the *riti* would also pay a rent to the original *riti*.²¹ Since slaves were the private property of their *ritis* it is hardly surprising that the slaves themselves could not own any property. The personal property of a slave would always, on his or her death, revert to the master's household, since the latter was considered to have given it in the first place. In this, there was a difference between slaves who were descendants of slaves and slaves who had come into servitude through *bandha*. Theoretically and legally the *bandha* slave could own property; in practice the *riti* eventually claimed this property for himself.

Upon abolition, the government paid a statutory sum of money to the slave owners. At Rārā this sum is said to have been Rs. 175 per adult slave. After

some years the slaves were free to go elsewhere and indeed some of the slaves at Rārā seem to have taken advantage of this. Most of those who left went to Khater or further afield, and there is little information as to what has happened to them. Other slaves, and particularly the older ones, are said to have stayed on in their masters' households where they, at least, had a right to their own upkeep and are said to have died there. Occasionally a descendant of a past slave comes up to Rārā to visit the Thakuris and ask for a favour. Thakuris welcome such visits particularly when they occur in the busy agricultural season, for the former servant rarely gets away without having yet again demonstrated his subordinate status.

At Rārā, as in south India (Kumar 1965, Hjejle 1867) slaves thus played an important role in agricultural production. The abolition of slavery therefore had a particularly devastating effect on the position of the Thakuris. When slaves eventually disappeared the Thakuris were forced to find new ways of recruiting labour. One result has been the increased burden of labour for Thakuri women. Thakuri women no longer sit secluded in their houses only engaged in cooking and child rearing. Thakuri women nowadays provide the bulk of the intra-household labour in Thakuri agricultural production (Chapter 5). Some writers (Levine 1980, Goody 1980) have pointed out that the existence of slavery is related to the existence of a shortage of labour. The Thakuris at Rārā certainly experienced a shortage of labour when abolition of slavery eventually took effect. A shortage of labour may also, at least indirectly, have resulted in Thakuris having slaves in the first place. A labour shortage must

be seen in relation to the extent to which labour is needed, and for Rārā a need for labour varies according to the caste position of different households. Because of their high status Thakuris have always needed enough labour to free themselves from involvement in manual labour. In this economy one way of recruiting extra-household labour is the giving of *pāico*. Consistent *pāico* giving and taking eventually leads to differentiation of households and indebtedness *bandha*. The descendants of *bandha* slaves, who were unable to pay back their debts, eventually became *kumārako ketaketi* and the private property of their masters. A few of the Thakuri slaves had come to Rārā as part of the dowries accompanying in-marrying Thakuri women. However, it is at least likely that most of the Thakuris' slaves, originated through the process of *pāico*-giving and *bandha*. Such slaves constituted the main labour force of the Thakuris, but aside from this Thakuris, partly legitimately, also made claims on some of the labour and produce of all the inhabitants of the villages for which they were tax-collectors. Such claims were sanctioned by the central government and by the fact that Thakuris claimed to be the descendants of previous rulers. It was this politically superior position which resulted in the Thakuris being economically superior in the first place.

Although the slaves of the Thakuris were both Chetris and Doms, and although slave relations thus did not represent caste as much as political and economic superiority, there was in 1977 the notion that caste relations and relations between slaves and their masters could be expressed in the same terms. Thus Dom were referred to as *Thakuro*

kumāra and some Thakuris still assume that they have a right to command at least some of the labour of Dom. This has been pointed out by writers referring to the situation elsewhere. Describing the situation in Kumaon, Sanwal states:

A Dom, whatever his occupation, could freely be sold with or without land by the proprietary body of a village to which he was attached. Occupational specialisation was very elementary and fluid for a Dom and he was jurally bound to perform any service he was called upon by Bith masters and could not leave the village or change his occupation without the permission of the latter.

(*Sanwal 1976:62*)

Similarly Hjeje (1967) has described the existence of a slave-caste of untouchables in south India. This suggests a coincidence between the most exploitative relations of production and relations between the most superior and most inferior castes of any locality. At Rārā such a coincidence is far from complete. Chetris could be *kumāra* as well as *halis* on the one hand, and *riti* on the other. However, although in reality this coincidence is not complete, people, particularly members of superior castes, talk as if it is generally true. This suggests further, that the caste hierarchy itself embodies ideas about who should and who should not receive the labour of others.

6. CASTE AND COMMAND OF LABOUR

Referring to a general problem in contemporary writings on caste society Dumont writes: "Everyone seems to deal more or less uneasily with a fundamental duality." (Dumont 1970: 152). In the same essay, Dumont expresses the view that this duality cannot and should not be reduced; it is intrinsic to the nature of caste society as well as to sociological analysis (ibid.: 165). For Dumont, however, this duality is not unproblematic. Commenting on the debate on caste in Contributions (No. 8, 1965) Dumont continues:

... the editors of contributions themselves may be said to have shown some uneasiness or, at any rate, not to have fulfilled their programme: they insisted that Bougle's principles were in the last analysis reducible to one, namely the purity-impurity opposition. This accounts well enough for "the extremes" except that it does not clearly explain why the bulk of unfree agricultural workers should be labelled 'Untouchables'. But what about the middle ranges of the hierarchy, in so far as politico-economic factors inflect it, as undoubtedly they do? What about the co-existence in the jajmani-system of clearly religious functions with functions in which the religious aspect is either absent or at least minimal?

(Dumont, ibid:153)

Dumont himself has not attempted to answer these questions. However, all students of the so-called jajmani-system have come up against the duality and

in the source of analysis the problem has been turned in many different ways. In this section to outline the contribution which the data from Rārā can offer to this debate, and in doing this it can be stayed well that within the approach outlined by Dumont above. While the attempt to reduce the duality, that the two principles of caste hierarchy and economic differentiation converge at a point of common emphasis.

The division of labour at Rārā has been described in Chapter 5. Nevertheless a short summary may be useful here. At Rārā, as elsewhere in the Himalayan region, there are relatively few service castes. Thus the main occupational divisions are three: (i) Upadhya Brahmins who are *purohits* for Thakuris and Jaisi Brahmins who are astrologers as well as *purohits* for some of the Chetris; (ii) Thakuris and Chetris who are householders and landowners and (iii) Doms who are artisans. The relationship between a Thakuri and a Chetri on the one hand and a Brahmin on the other is referred to as a relation between a *jajamān* and his Purohit. In the relation between householders and artisans, however, the former is considered a *riti* whereas the general term for the latter is *dom*: The *purohit* is paid *dān*, *dacchinā* and *sanpun* as well as some grain (*gerā*) and his relationship with his *jajamān* tends to be of a casual short-term nature. The *dom*, on the other hand, are paid *anna* annually by their *riti* and the relations between a *riti* and an *āphno bhyāl* or *āphno lohar* tend to be long-term, inherited and to involve an element of patronage. The *damāi* who, as a drummer and as a tailor belongs to both these two

categories of relationships is paid in cash or grain for the particular pieces of clothing he sews and receives *sanpun* and *sikh* as payment for his services on ritual occasions. The smith and leatherworker may also sell tools by the piece and most of them have an income from this as well as from their *ritis*. Thus the people at Rārā themselves distinguish the occupational roles ascribed by caste into two types of relationships and the customary payments as well as the nature of the relationships differ. The first type refers to the ritual services provided for the *jajamān*, whereas the second refers to the more, although not wholly, economic services provided for the *riti* by the artisans.

In the general debate which has taken place on the nature of the *jajamāni* system, the duality has appeared in different ways sometimes as an opposition between different writers and sometimes within the work of individual writers as an emphasis on the presence of different aspects in the system. Thus some writers have noted the harmonious and organic interdependence between different castes (Wiser 1936, Leach 1960, Orenstein 1962). According to this point of view the monopoly-like nature of caste occupations ensures the functional unity of the system. Other writers have noted the asymmetrical nature of relations between householders and specialists and interpreted the system as a form of "exploitation" and "coercion" (Beidelman 1959).

Epstein (1967) has suggested that a solution to the difference between these two positions is related to the rate of payment made to the service castes. Epstein's argument is that since "the interdepen-

dence between the different caste occupations is based on hereditary ties" (ibid: 231) productive activities as well as the quantities produced have, within limits, become fixed according to the subsistence needs of landowners and their service castes.²³ The static nature of the system of production ensures the basis for an average productivity according to which the quantities of grain and other payments received by the service castes have become fixed. The only variation over the years is that between bad and good harvests. After bad harvests the service castes receive the same quantity of grain from the landowner as they do when the harvest has been good. However, in the latter case the landowner receives a much larger surplus and it is at such times that economic differentiation takes place. Thus the economic differentiation emphasized by Beidelman is particularly noticeable in good years, whereas in bad years the organic interdependence and the security of the service castes underlined by Leach and Wiser is more obvious.

In various ways Epstein emphasizes the fixed qualities of the system. Thus the hereditary nature of the ties between landowners and service castes is fundamental to her argument. However at Rārā not all such ties are necessarily hereditary. The *purohīts* who nowadays serve Thakuris and Chetris are brought in for specific occasions and are rewarded then and there; nor do *bhyāls* and *lohars* only provide tools for their own *ritis*. Similarly Parry notes that in Kangra "A *kamin* does not have the right to serve his *zamindar* in the same way as a *purohit* has a right to serve his *jajaman*. There is no question of *jaddi*

(ancestral property) here; the term would be quite inappropriate (Parry 1979: 69). This point bears on another also made by Parry; namely that in order to make her argument persuasive Epstein would have to show that the system of rewards based on average productivity is in fact adjusted to cope with demographic fluctuations (ibid.: 75). As servants households expand and partition their subsistence needs also change. Further, in order that payments remain the same the population of landowners would have to expand and contract at the same rate as that of the service castes. The data from Rārā indicate, as do studies conducted elsewhere (Lewis 1965), that there is variation in the number of patrons and the amount of income enjoyed by different individuals in the service castes. At Rārā the extent to which *dom* work for other patrons or the extent to which they earn an income in other ways, does not enter into the *riti's* calculations about how much to pay. Even if the *riti* has been influenced by such factors in his decisions, this in fact works against Epstein's arguments, for since artisans also sell tools piece by piece for specific payments in grain, their overall income depends on the general demand and is unlikely to be the same from one year to the next.

Many of the difficulties with the Epstein thesis derive from her conviction that rates of payments are fixed quantities. The observations made by other writers (Beidelman 1959, Mayer 1960, Berreman 1963, Caplan 1972, Prindle 1977) do not confirm this. Orenstein has pointed out that payments are not only dependent upon the amount of services or goods provided but also on the amounts produced by the

“purchaser” (Orenstein 1962: 302) and Parry points to the bargains and disputes over payments between landowners and artisans (Parry 1979: 68). At Rārā, although payments are said to be 3-4 *pāthi* of grain, in practice the amounts are variable and certainly often openly disputed by the artisans. Thus payments constitute a proportion of the total product rather than a fixed quantity, but the extent to which the proportion itself is fixed may vary from place to place. Contrary to the situation described by Neale (1957), at Rārā there is no accurate enumeration of the shares in the grain heap.

In view of the material presented here from Rārā a final and perhaps most serious problem with Epstein’s approach is her much too simple statement that “what good seasons do is to facilitate economic differentiation.” (Epstein 1967: 250). The effort has been given to show that while initially economic differentiation may be a result of demographic factors and thus can be reversed, in the long run this process is a result of the relations of production and is also influenced by the political and caste position of individuals. Since artisans and *halis* themselves own some land, good harvests may for them result in a higher degree of economic independence. Further, the windfall profits enjoyed by landowners in good seasons are only relevant as factors in the process of economic differentiation if such amounts of grain are given as loans or spent employing extra labour. In the area around Rārā where harvests are considered to have been bad for the last four or five years previous to 1977, there is no evidence that economic differentiation has been minimised, nor that the

product has been shared in an egalitarian manner. The explanations offered by Epstein depict a fixed and static social system in which change arises from external factors. What Epstein fails to see is that economic position and caste status do not necessarily coincide and that both are subject to competition between individuals and groups.

Another and more insightful contribution to this debate has been made by Pocock (1962). As one of the editors of *Contributions*, Pocock together with Dumont pointed to the fundamental principle in caste societies being the opposition between the pure and the impure. The fact that purity is superior to pollution (Dumont 1970) in caste society results in a hierarchy of different castes, some of whom are considered purer than others. Since the pure may be polluted through contact with the impure the hierarchy can only be maintained through separation. However, such separation cannot be complete because the pure, in order to maintain their purity, must depend on the impure for, assistance in various involvements with the natural world. Polluting involvements include contact with biological substances such as blood and faeces, with birth and death, and with certain types of work. The ideology of the opposition between the pure and the impure results in a division of labour between the different castes. For Pocock this is the essence of the system of occupational castes. Thus he writes:

I should prefer to say that true specialisation for certain important castes derives from the basic opposition of purity and impurity and only by

extension of this idea can other castes be said to be 'specialised'.

(*ibid.*: 82)

Thus Pocock isolates two main categories of relationships in the system, which according to him misleadingly has been referred to as the *jajamāni* system. The term *jajamāni* relation he reserves for the relationship between religious specialists and their patrons and these relationships he sees as distinct from the relationships between patrons and those service castes who provide a more economic and craft-like service. Within this second category unskilled agricultural labourers can further be distinguished.

A distinction between religious and economic caste occupations is to some extent also made by people themselves. At Rārā, as I have described, in terms of payments and the nature of the ties, a distinction is made between those specialists, the *purohit* and the *damāi* as drummer, who officiate at life cycle rituals and other ritual occasions, and those such as the *bhyāl*, the *lohar* and the *damāi* as tailor who are artisans and who provide a skill. Only in the former case is the employer a *jajamān*. Such a distinction is also reported by Caplan for western Nepal (Caplan 1972), by Gaborieau for central Nepal (Gaborieau 1979), by Berreman for Tehri-Garhwal (Berreman 1962, 1963) and by Mayer for Malwa (Mayer 1960). On the other hand, as Parry (1979: 78) has pointed out, some caste occupations, such as that of leatherworker, fall into both these categories, in so far as leatherworkers perform a technical service necessary for agricultural production as well as

services (such as the removing of dead animals) which are polluting and, therefore, avoided by others. Parry therefore suggests the following distinction within the artisan category:

....between the highly competitive and religiously neutral trades (like carpentry) which are open to interlopers from other castes, and the 'closed shop' which the Barbers and Chamars can more easily maintain on account of the religious evaluation of their occupations which discourages trespassing by opportunist outsiders.
(*ibid.*: 79).

However, noting that this further distinction reproduces Pocock's difficulties at another level, Parry confronts the problem referred to by Dumont in the quote. As noted, Dumont himself only poses the problem. Thus he writes: "Regarding the *jajamani* system: (i) the system of divisions of labour in the Indian village is oriented to the whole and not to the individual; (ii) in close keeping with its holistic orientation, the system is decisively shaped by religious functions. These two factors taken together constitute its *encompassing* aspect. Then the functions in which the religious aspect is minimal and which we could be inclined to call 'purely technical' or 'economic' are encompassed within this framework."

(*Dumont 1970a: 161*)

As Parry comments, this indicates "that there is no such thing as a non-religious caste occupation,

since all such functions are, as it were, contaminated by the encompassing ideology.” (Parry 1979: 80).

In a general sense this observation made by Parry remains true for all occupations in a caste society, regardless of whether they are religious, “economic” or even caste-specific. Thus it may be more appropriate to consider caste-specific occupational relationships together with other relations of production. In an attempt to do this, Pocock, in the paper referred to above, wrote:

Landholding and labouring castes cannot be said to have politico-economic status. They have, of course, only that religious status which the caste system confers. Nevertheless, this religious status is for them historically achieved and currently maintained through the manipulation of politico-economic factors.

(Pocock 1962: 90)

For Pocock this statement seems unproblematic and he ends up claiming that political and economic factors do not contribute to or affect caste statuses across the hierarchy equally, but does not explain why this should be so. Other writers (Beidelman 1959: 10, Kumar 1965: 33, Neale 1973: 57) have pointed to the similarity between the position of service castes and forms of servitude, but Breman has been more specific and states that:

... the relations between landowners and farm servants must be judged in the light of a much more general pattern of relationships, which

prevailed among the various castes in the traditional society and which has come to be called the *jajamani* system.

(Breman 1974: 12)

Further, Breman considers that:

... servitude in the traditional community should be interpreted as a form of unfree labour complicated by a relationship of patronage.

(*ibid.*: 21)²⁴

Breman's position is thus a compromise between Wisner and Beidelman. On the one hand his approach admits that patron and client are voluntarily involved with each other because both need what the other can offer. On the other, he considers that patronage implies an unequal "exploitative" relationship. At Rārā not all those relationships which generally are referred to as *jajamāni* are long-lasting and personal and hence involving established elements of patronage. Thus when applying Breman's ideas to the situation at Rārā the duality appears again, but this time those who provide a religious service rather than those involved directly in agricultural production appear to be outside the system.

Thus the problem of the relationship between the economic-politico and the purity-impurity opposition is left unsolved. Clearly, despite their resilience, caste societies have changed under the impact of capitalist production. Clearly, too, despite being encompassed by the ideology of the pure and the impure, relations of production, for various reasons

change (Bailey 1957, Breman 1974, Neale 1962). Dumont and Pocock are probably right in emphasizing the strength and importance of the ideology in shaping the system, but they leave the economic aspect unexplored and hence, in fact, fail to explain the whole system. Breman, on the other hand, at first appears to secularise the system.

However, Breman also offers a clue as to how this endless confusion might be resolved, although he does not develop his insight. Breman states: "Pocock is mistaken in thinking that a *hali* in south Gujarat was taken into service only because the landlord needed an extra labourer. (Pocock 1962: 89). No doubt such a need was an important consideration, but it was one that was also determined by the circumstance that agricultural labour and especially handling the plough was thought defiling." (Breman 1974: 14). Breman is here suggesting that agricultural labour is degrading and that this is the basis of the hierarchical relationship between patron and client. The former does not work and from this he gains prestige. But his status and prestige is also supported by the fact that the client labours for his patron and to varying degrees is dependent upon the latter.

At Rārā a patron is referred to as a *riti*. This term is used to denote the landlord or master of several clients and only some of the occupations of the latter are caste-specific. Thus a *riti* is a patron of a *hali*, *kumāra* or *kām grane mānche* as well as a *lohar*, *bhyāl* or a *damāi*. Indeed the term *riti* is used to refer to the master or patron of anyone of inferior caste status with whom he has a personal relationship

which involves the giving of labour. Further there is no clear distinction between the work carried out by these different labourers. The *bhyāl* and the *lohar* may also be asked to carry produce from the fields and a *hali*, who strictly speaking is employed to plough, may repair tools as well as perform other agricultural tasks. Similarly, in the past, slaves carried out different kinds of labour appropriate to their caste status.

At Rārā the patrons par excellence are the Thakuris. While Chetris are *ritis* to service castes and also occasionally use *halis*, Thakuris are necessarily *ritis*. Their avoidance of agricultural work, in particular of ploughing and carrying is one aspect which emphasizes their superior caste status. The idea that high caste position and the ability to command labour should coincide is also expressed by the Rarals themselves. Thus dom are said to be *Thakuro Kumāra* (the slaves of Thakuris) and when asked who generally plough for *ritis* most people will answer "Dom". Similarly while Thakuris hold the idea that it is their legitimate right to command at least some of the labour of all Doms and Chetris in the area, it is the Doms who are most vulnerable to such Thakuris demands. Thakuris also considered that after resettlement by virtue of their superior caste and political status they would receive enough land to support themselves as well as an adequate labor force.²⁶

There is then at Rārā some idea that caste and economic position should coincide. This is despite the fact that nowadays and probably periodically in the past as well such coincidence is and has been lacking.

This idea is in part expressed by the definition of the term *riti*. The so-called *jajmāni* system not only provides patrons with caste specific labour which is polluting it also provides such patrons with unspecific agricultural labour and the patron is a *riti* whether the labourer in question is performing one task or another. No doubt the demand and need of high castes for labour outside their own households is seen as legitimate as well as prestigious (Mayer 1960-75). However, for Rārā, at least, that all types of manual as well as agricultural labour, including those for which particular reasons are defiling, are considered in terms of the purity-impurity opposition. The Rarals hold general ideas about which type of work is appropriate for which caste status and these ideas are expressed not only by considering Doms slaves and *halis* par excellence, but also by making a distinction between Shahis and Shah Thakuris in terms of those who plough and those who do not. Thus the giving and taking of labour as well as commensal and marriage practices (see Part III) constitute a focus for caste differences. For the Thakuris agricultural labour generally and ploughing in particular is polluting as well as degrading because ideally it should be undertaken by people less pure and less prestigious than themselves.

So far reiterated the problem, for despite having shown that giving and taking of labour is considered in terms of purity and pollution at Rārā it has not considered the position of the *purohit* in this. In terms of purity the *purohit* occupies a position at the top of the caste hierarchy; he does not plough and therefore he, too, commands a certain amount of

labour. He does not, however, command the labour of his *jajamān*. Rather, the *purohit* provides a service for his *jajamān*. Thus the *purohit-jajamān* relationship is problematic and in order to consider this relationship suggestions should be taken by Reiniche (1977) in her analysis of the *jajamāni* relations.

Taking her lead from Dumont (1970) as well as from Hocart (1950), Reiniche considers the role of *jajamān* as that of sacrificer. Sacrifice is seen as central to the system and for sacrifice to be effective the *jajamān* needs a Brahmin who as *purohit* ensures that the sacrifice is carried out successfully, thus guaranteeing prosperity. Due to their different functions and different status, this relationship between sacrificer and officiant is asymmetrical and hierarchical and the relationship between *jajamān* and *purohit* is central to the whole system of castes and provides an ideal for all other relationships (Pocock 1962). Agricultural production is also organised on the model of sacrifice and sacrificial activity because agriculture parallel to all other activities is a rite directed toward the achievement of prosperity. In agricultural production knowledge about techniques is ritual knowledge and artisans as well as the Brahmin are specialists who officiate. Members of the dominant caste (Srinivas 1959) are the *jajamāns* par excellence because they receive a larger amount of services than do *jajamāns* of lesser status. The *jajamāns* are also the principal distributors and redistribute and administer the fruits of production as if they were gifts. From such gifts they in turn receive both religious merit and material gain. The Brahmin represents the ideal of non-action and by his ritual

knowledge he ensures the prosperity towards which all production is directed. His position is in contrast to the active involvement of the castes who take part in agricultural production, which by itself is not adequate nor sufficient for prosperity and reproduction. These two endeavours converge in the sacrifice made by the *jajamān* and he is, therefore, at the centre of all worldly hierarchical relations, a position which results in his control of goods. Thus, while the Brahmin represents the ideal of non-action and separation from the world, the *jajamān* or the dominant caste is characterised by command over the material resources in the world. Through the rituals which they together arrange and perform caste divisions are reproduced.

Following Dumont, Reiniche emphasizes religion as the encompassing factor, and despite her claim that her approach does not suppose religion as the condition of social relations (Reiniche 1977: 97) she herself does not consider either those relationships which have been termed “purely economic” nor does she consider agricultural labourers. This is a result of her position that when members of different castes are involved in the same productive process such relations of production are necessarily conceived of in caste terms, i.e., on the model of the *purohit-jajamān* relationship. At Rārā relations of production are indeed conceived as one aspect of the opposition between purity and impurity. Further, Galey has shown that in Tehri-Garhwal relations of indebtedness and servitude may be expressed in terms of the hierarchical distinction between castes (Galey 1981). However, the material from Rārā also shows that despite this ideal in reality

economic category and caste position do not necessarily coincide.

Both Reiniche and Galey appear to be more concerned with the ideal than with the relationship between politico-economic factors and the purity-impurity opposition. However, the model of sacrifice does allow for a consideration of this relationship, because it points to the asymmetrical nature which underlies caste relationships as well as the general division of labour in a caste society. In this asymmetry the Brahmin is superior and his status is epitomised by the ideal of non-action. This ideal is also shared by other castes who are ranked on the basis of the nature of the work they undertake to do. Those whose work is considered directly polluting occupy the lowest positions in the hierarchy. The more separate from the labour process in which food and material resources are produced the higher the position in the hierarchy.

Although Reiniche does not mention this, the corollary of the Brahmanical ideal of non-action is that some people legitimately, by virtue of their caste position, can command the labour of others. As the analysis of *hali-riti* and *sākhi* relations of production suggests, significant economic differentiation occurs only when extra-household labour can be commanded regularly. At Rārā such extra-household labour may be commanded not just as a result of caste status, but also as a result of ability to give *pāico*. Thus a patron may be someone whose superiority and aloofness from the labour process is derived from his caste position or someone whose superiority is a result of his ability to produce a large surplus. In some cases a patron may derive his superiority from both and this is also the ideal

expressed when all relations of production are conceived of in the idiom of caste. In other cases the economic category and caste position of households do not coincide.

Generally, however, caste and economic category not to receive equal ideological recognition. While the former is conceived as relatively stable and upheld by commensal and marriage practices as well as the ability to command labour, the latter is fluid and open to change as a result of demographic factors, mismanagement and natural disasters. Thus, while caste position predisposes a household to membership of a certain economic category, a position which the household in reality may or may not occupy, membership in a certain economic category does not directly influence the caste position of households. On the other hand, caste receives its strength and resilience precisely because, together with economic category, it is, in part at least, based on ability of individuals and households to command the labour of others. Since caste position is a statement about the amount of extra-household labour households can command, caste position also influences the ability of households to accumulate a surplus and hence to command labour as a result of giving *pāico*. Conversely for those who by virtue of their caste position must give some labour to others the prospect for themselves to be able to command any extra-household labour is correspondingly limited. Thus, while relations of indebtedness and servitude are expressed in terms of hierarchy (Galey 1981) such relations themselves also recreate the ideal.²⁷ Similarly while agricultural labourers retain their position in the hierarchy as a result of their active role in agricultural production (Reinicke

1977) the position of such people also upholds ideal of coincidence between economic category and caste position because they supply manual labour for households who can afford to pay for such labour.²⁸ As a result of this, such castes are hindered in accumulating surpluses and commanding labour themselves. Thus the duality between caste and economic position noted by Dumont cannot be reduced. However, the material from Rārā suggests that caste and relations of production also converge because the matter of who controls the labour of whom is crucial.

So far accepted the Brahmanical ideal of non-action for the *purohit* and for the *jajamān* as well. However, the nature of the asymmetrical relationship between the two remains a problem. On the one hand the Brahmin is superior because he epitomises the ideal of inaction and purity. On the other hand, the *jajamān* is superior for if ritual as well as agricultural production is necessary for successful reproduction and prosperity then the *jajamān* can be said to command the labour of his *purohit* in the same way as a *riti* commands the labour of his *bhyāl*, *lohar* and *hali*.

The material from Rārā, however, suggests a difference in the nature of the labour relations in these two cases. At Rārā, it will be remembered, the labour relations including those referred to as *jajamāni* relations fall into two different types of relationships. In one, the patron is a *jajamān* employing a *purohit* or a *damāi* to officiate on ritual occasions. Such relationships tend to be impersonal and payments are made in the form of gifts (*dān*) immediately after the service has been provided and are not subject to bargaining. In the other type of relationship the

patron is a *riti* who commands the labour, or some of the labour of his *bhyāl*, *lohar*, *kumāra*, *hali* or *kām garne mănche* and these relationships tend to be long-term and similar to those described as patron-client relationships by Breman. Thus the *jajamān* does not command the labour of his *purohit* in the same way as he commands the agricultural labour of others. The *purohit* is in some respects superior to the *jajamān* and this is incompatible with the rendering of labour. In particular, the ritual context is incompatible with the material aspects of the patron-client relationships. This is suggested by the absence of personal relationships between the sacrificer and other service castes when they participate in rituals. Thus the drummer does not consider the sacrificer his *riti*, and when the presence of other *dom* are needed they are more likely to be any *bhyāl* or any *lohar* than those whom the *riti* calls his own (*āphno*). Further at major rituals Doms generally receive small presents of specially cooked food from all the Thakuris at Rārā. Thus at ritual occasions the caste relationships expressed are impersonal and the *Brahmin* is superior because of his purity and his ability to remain inactive and aloof from the worldly production process. He is also the receiver of *dān* and *dacchinā*, gifts normally offered to people who are considered in some way superior (Chapters 8 and 10). In agricultural production, on the other hand, relationships between castes are long-term and personal and the *riti* is superior because of his ability to stay aloof from the labour process and command the labour of others. This aloofness of the *riti* is, however, only maintained by reference to the Brahmanical ideal of inaction and in Chapter 8 under certain circumstances (particularly

in *kuldevatā* worship) a *riti* or a *jajamān* himself performs the most important priestly functions. The duality and ambiguity in the relationship between *purohit* and *jajamān* are thus inescapable. While the former may be superior in terms of purity the latter is superior because only he, by virtue of his wealth, can manage to stay wholly aloof from all aspects of agricultural production. Nevertheless, the two may justify their superiority by reference to the same model, namely the opposition between purity and pollution and the notion that the pure avoid contact with the biological and productive processes of the world. In this way, relations of production maintain and are maintained by caste relations as expressed in ritual interaction.

CONCLUSION

In Hindu society, Dumont and his students have considered economics as encompassed and as “decisively shaped by religious function” (Dumont 1970a: 171). The religious function of economics, however, cannot be dissociated from the position of the king. This transition from the economic to the political level can be discerned in the *Arthashastra*. Commenting on this Dumont writes:

. . . artha, it says, is the subsistence of men (this is for us economic) and it goes on: it is the land supplied with men (politics). In economics, the actors or agents are men, and land is, implicitly, their principal means of subsistence. In politics, the agent is the Prince, and *from his point of view*, men as well as land are means. Politics appear here

as a superior kind of economics in so far as, thanks to power, it includes among its means men; politics is economic *par excellence*, and it bears upon the land with its complement of men, with the men so to speak to garnish it.

(*ibid.*: 80)

Reiniche (1977: 99) and Galey (1981:145) have both emphasized the similarity between the position of the dominant caste and the position of the king. This similarity is striking not only because the king is also the chief commander of labour as well as of land. This powerful position of the king is the basis for the conception that the king is the ultimate owner of the land, the ultimate landlord. While this position of the king may be confirmed ideologically, it has shown that in reality various people always had different rights in the land, both in India and in Nepal. In Karnali, the right of those who held titles to particular plots of land amounted to individual, if not private ownership, for landowners could sell and alienate their land. Such individual ownership of land is in accordance with the individualised organisation of production, with the existence of money and usurer's capital and with limited commodity production. Fundamental to peasant economies organised along these lines is the ability of some to command extra-household labour. Command of extra-household labour results in extra-household relations of production, and in this way a process of differentiation occurs. At Rārā caste membership also stipulates who should and who should not command the labour of others. While this is so for the Rarals and thus may represent

a Kshatriya-ideal, that in general terms the Kshatriya and the Brahmanical ideals are perhaps not as separate as some writers (Heesterman 1964, Burghart 1978) have suggested. The caste status of households stilts and curtails the effect of the process of economic differentiation on them and this process is, therefore, not easily discernible in the relations of production. This does not mean, however, that a process of differentiation is not taking place. Indebtedness and servitude testify to the fact that it is. However, the resilience of caste relations is no coincidence. On the contrary, hierarchy derives its strength, at least in part, from the fact that command of labour a crucial factor in the process of economic differentiation is also a component in the opposition between the pure and the impure.

The duality can thus be expressed as one between relations of production leading to a process of differentiation on the one hand and caste relations coinciding with relations of production on the other. Thus, for example, the distinction between Shah and Shahi Thakuris in Karnali is one in which lower ritual status is in accordance with an absence of a need for Shahis to (necessarily) command the labour of *halis*. On the other hand, many Shahis nowadays are better off economically than the Shahs who insist on the legitimacy of their needs for such labour. At certain points in time the coincidence between the relations of production and caste relations may be less marked than at other times. Thus, the power of the dominant caste is relative to the degree of autonomy they enjoy (Fox 1971). In this way the power of the Thakuris at Rārā was curtailed probably first by the Gorkha conquest and

certainly later when the state of Nepal strengthened and the structure of the revenue collecting administration changed. The Shah Thakuris regained some of their former autonomy when some of them were made the sole intermediary tax-collectors between the cultivators and the state in 1904. In the last 40 years or so their position has again changed, and this will enlarge in Chapter 12. The duality has always been there but may under particular political conditions have been less discernible. Despite the lack of coincidence between caste and economic position at Rārā today it would, however, be premature to conclude anything about the disintegration of the social system.

PART III

Chapter 8

THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF CASTE

1. INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters the economic relationships existing between people living at Rārā have been discussed. In these relationships, the giving and taking of labour was shown to be a crucial factor and in this respect the Rārā economy is similar to other peasant economies. But the analysis so far has also pointed to the difficulty is isolating “purely economic” processes. Thus, when economic relationships exist between individuals or productive units of different castes, these relationships are inevitably influenced by the caste status of the individuals and the units concerned. This is so because the opposition between the pure and the impure includes notions about the defiling nature of certain types of work. Consequently, the giving and taking of labour and the resulting process of differentiation influences the position of Chetris and Thakuris to varying extents. The Thakuris can abstain from ploughing and other forms of manual labour, and as long as they can, in some way, command the labour of others for these purposes,

they remain protected from the full impact of the differentiating process. Thus, the economic relationships in which Thakuris are involved are always relationships with individuals and productive units of lower caste status. Chetris too, are involved in intercaste relationships insofar as they use the services of the *bhyāl*, *lohar*, *damāi* and *lābhra*. Other agricultural work, however, may be carried out by Chetris for other Chetris without jeopardising their caste position. Economic relations at Rārā, therefore, include both intercaste and intracaste relationships and are influenced by ideas about purity and pollution as well as ideas about kinship.

In this and the following chapters the analysis shifts from economic to kinship. This requires a change of emphasis and a discussion of matters which at times may seem unrelated to the process of differentiation and the command of labour. The connection between Part II and Part III will, however, become clear, particularly in Chapter 12, where the changes which have taken place for the Thakuris over the last forty years or so. In Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 examine the kinship organisation and the kinship ideas of the Chetris and Thakuris. The kinship ideas of these two castes are flexible and that, despite their differences, Thakuris and Chetris hold a common kinship ideology. This kinship ideology has allowed for and accommodated changes and in particular such changes have involved Thakuri marriage patterns.

This chapter begins with the internal structure of castes. The aim here is to examine the kingroups and to consider their relation to castes and subcastes. Since some aspects of households have already been

discussed in Chapter 4, it is considered that this lowest level of organisation to be an appropriate place to start. This will also enable to put forward some ideas on the reasons behind the difference in the Thakuri and Chetri ideal family and move on to consider the lineage, the clan, the caste and the subcaste.

2. THE PARIWAR

The ideal family of Thakuris and Chetris and the actual household composition has already been described in Chapter 4. For the Rārāls the *pariwār* is constituted by those people who hold rights in the same property and who are in this respect considered to be together (*sansarga*) (Inden 1976: 44). This is also the way that defined a household and a *pariwār*, although at Rārā members of the same *pariwār* may live permanently in separate houses (*ghar*) and have separate cooking fires (*chulo*). In this respect Thakuris differ from Chetris. For the latter, partition between agnates entails the breaking-up of the co-residential unit as well as the property, whereas for Thakuris other intermediary stages are possible. Indeed, in the majority of joint Thakuri households members live in separate houses without having partitioned the property. The household or the *pariwār* is thus a unit of production and this is why the process of differentiation could not be understood without reference to the size and composition of these units. But the *pariwār* is also a unit in which members consider themselves to be related as kin. As members of the same unit of production, members of the *pariwār* share ancestral and newly acquired property,

food, income and pool their labour. As kin, members of the *pariwār* share physical substances (Section III and Chapter 11). The sharing of property may be said to be derived from the sharing of physical substances, but when a group of people cease to hold property in common the extent to which they share other things is also affected. At Rārā members of an unpartitioned (*nachutea*, local term) *pariwār* have a legal right (*hak*) to a share of the common property (in the case of men) and to their own maintenance (in the case of women). Once the *pariwār* is partitioned (*chutto-chutto*) and new households are formed, such rights in the former unit cease to exist. The sharing which still may take place between the members of the former *pariwār* is a result, not of a right, but of the affection (*khusi*) kinsmen have for each other. According to public opinion, kinsmen and particularly descendants of a common known ancestor should show affection for each other. However, the extent to which such affection is articulated varies not only with the distance of the relationship, but also with the individuals concerned. This is why some *sau* can get away with charging the common interest on loans given to kinsmen whereas others find it impossible to act in such an unkind manner. In this way, relations between units of production are of a different quality than relations within such units, although in both cases they may be relations between people who are kin.

Partition of households is inevitable. Moreover, partition is the realisation of each male agnate as an independent head of a household (*mukhi*) and a potential ancestor in his own right. Partition is the

culmination of competition between brothers who on the one hand, inherit equal shares and, on the other, are hierarchically differentiated amongst themselves (Parry 1979: 314).¹ Economically the change is also important. After partition new households are formed and such households must employ their own service castes and extra-household labour separately. They become independent units of production.

The only "free" labour available to households is that of their members. Some Chetri households are able to get along using no other labour than their own and that of the service castes. Other Chetris and all Thakuris are involved in extra-household economic relationships either as the givers or as the takers of labour. Since there are relatively few opportunities for non-agricultural employment at Rārā such extra-household economic relationships tend to involve households in the village or the surrounding area. The analysis further shows that the ideal Chetri family is smaller than the ideal Thakuri family. This difference between the two castes is supported by the analysis of actual household composition and following Tambiah (1973) that this should be seen in relation to the Chetri emphasis on inheritance by lineals to the exclusion of collaterals. The result is that Chetri households partition more often than do Thakuri households and although there is no data on rates of partition, the general observations support this.

The analysis also showed that in some Chetri cases the relationship between the heads of independent households involved in *sākhi* and *hali-riti* relationships is one of close agnatic kinship and sometimes one between full brothers. This is the

crucial difference between Chetris and Thakuris. For Chetris, relations of kinship do not preclude those relations also being relations of production as long as the households are separate units of production. A large proportion of extra-household labour used by Chetris is drawn from their own ranks and the resources at the disposal of any Chetri includes not only inherited land but also his own labour. The Thakuris, on the other hand, cannot rely on their own labour. Rather, they depend on the extent to which they can command the labour of Chetris and Doms. This ability of the Thakuris to command the labour of others is a result of their caste and political position. As tax-collectors and grantees of land some of the Thakuris' ancestors were invested with political authority over the inhabitants of the area and until recently this position has been retained by some of them (Chapter 3). One important attribute of such political positions has been the right to receive an unspecified amount of forced labour (*jhārā*).

In Khasa law (Joshi 1929) as well as in the Mitakshara and Dayabhaga schools of law (Kane 1946), political office is inherited by the eldest brother only. Accordingly at Rārā the *jimwālship* has also passed from fathers to their eldest sons. In this emphasis on primogeniture with respect to political office lies, a clue to the Thakuri emphasis on jointness. Since labour was controlled largely by political means one way of maintaining and increasing the supply of available labour for the Thakuris has been to emphasise jointness generally and to play down the divisive and competitive tendencies between brothers. For the Chetris, on the other hand, frequent

partition and small families have been integral factors in the maintaining and increase of their labour supply. This is because *sākhi*, as we have seen, offers households of average means the possibility of recruiting extra-household labour. It is not suggested that a causal relationship between a process of differentiation and household composition or notions about the ideal family, nor do suggest that Thakuris and Chetris necessarily consider the availability of labour when they decide to partition.² However, that the particular conditions which have existed at Rārā and in the surrounding area, particularly the relative lack of income from outside the area and the political domination of the Thakuris, have resulted in certain ideas and practices regarding the family as a productive unit having been upheld.

So far considered the role of the *pariwār* as a unit of production and suggested that the economic importance of the *pariwār* affects the notions Chetris and Thakuris have about the ideal family. In the rest of this chapter, as well as in Chapters 9, 10 and 11, Other aspects of Thakuris' and Chetris' kinship ideology. The members of a *pariwār* share physical substances and consider each other kin. This statement now needs to be elaborated and explained. Physical substances are passed on by birth and in the case of women by marriage.

Physical substances are considered to be passed on from parents to their children, but in this the parents do not contribute equally. The important substances of *hār* (bone), *ragat* (blood) and *māsu* (flesh) are considered to be passed on from a man to his children through his semen (*śukra*). The sharing

of these substances creates the notion of *hār nāta* (bone relations). A woman, on the other hand, is said to be the house or the field where new life is made and as such she is not considered to contribute to the conception of a child (Mayer 1960: 204, Parry 1979: 133, Inden 1976: 95 and Karve 1953: 83). After the birth of a child, however, a mother passes physical substance through her breastmilk (*dudh*) and these create the notion of *nāta* between children and their mother and some of her relations. These physical substances are considered weaker than those shared between a father and his children. *Nāta* derived from the sharing of physical substances passed through breastmilk disappears after three generations or so, whereas the physical substances shared with a father never cease to be passed on between male descendants (*hār nāta kahile pani chordeyna*, relations through the bone never leave). Because women cannot pass on the most important physical substance they are also themselves easily transformed. At marriage the groom applies *sidur* (red vermilion) to the parting of the hair of his bride for the first time and this creates a notion of bride and groom sharing bodily substances and being of “one body” (Inden 1976: 95). After marriage the bride becomes a member of her husband’s *pariwār* and a notion of *hār nāta* exists between her and her husband’s agnates.³ A married woman does not, however, become totally transformed, for she passes on physical substances to her children independently of those passed on to them by her husband. Children share such substances not with their father, but with their mother, mother’s mother, mother’s sister and mother’s brother and these people as well as their children are also *nāta*.⁴

Aside from being in close daily contact and working together, the members of a *pariwār* are also particularly affected at each other's life cycle rituals and at other ritual occasions. Thus at Dasai the members of the *pariwār* are first to receive *achetā* (blessing) from each other and in the marriage rituals, as described in Chapter 10, the *pariwār* of the groom and bride are particularly involved. At the death of a member, the other members of the *pariwār* are also normally afflicted by death pollution (*sutak*).⁵ The death of a kinsman entails the departure of that person's bodily substances and therefore affects all those who share these substances. However such substances are not shared to the same extent by those who consider each other *nāta* and *sutak*, therefore, afflicts *nāta* to varying degrees. Orenstein (1970) has termed this "relational pollution" because those people who are genealogically close kinsmen are more heavily affected by a person's death than are those who are genealogically more distant. However, Orenstein's "proximity of kinship principle" refers not only to the idea that pollution decreases with genealogical distance, but also to the "normal" state of pollution of kinsmen. The less "pure" a person is normally considered to be, the less those who share physical substances are polluted after his or her death. Thus young children and even young unmarried girls are buried instead of cremated and no ceremony (*kiriyā*) is performed for them. In such cases only the mother observes pollution (*juṭho mānnu*) for one or two days. If the child is older, the father and siblings may also observe pollution for this length of time. However, only men who have had the *bratabandha* ceremony performed for them and women who have

married are considered adults and normally sufficiently pure to be mourned fully. For both Chetris and Thakuris the full period of mourning should be thirteen days. The exact timing of the different rituals which take place during the *kiriyā* is not agreed upon by informants. The thirteen days are ideal and that in reality, the length of the period of observance and the rituals performed varies in individual cases.

Those people afflicted by *sutak* are polluted and during the period of mourning they become progressively restored to their 'normal' state of purity. For men this purifying process involves shaving the whole head (*kapāl katranu*) as well as bathing (*nuhāunu*) and the abstention from eating foods which are particularly polluting. Women bathe and also abstain from eating such foods. One person is always singled out as the performer of the *kiriyā* rituals and this person should preferably be a son. If the deceased had no sons, a male agnate standing in filial relationship, such as a father's brother's son or a person who is also a male heir to the deceased, can perform this duty. Women may perform the *kiriyā* for their husbands if there are no close agnates available or if the husband was a *ghar-juwāin* and the couple have had no male children. The chief mourner administers the last rites and is the *kiriyā basne mānche* (the person who sits through the *kiriyā*). He or she sleeps in an outer room and wears only a blanket and a white cloth over the head and eats just one meal of especially pure *jokho* (local term) food a day. If a father or a husband has died the chief mourner must particularly abstain from eating any kind of meat (*māsu*) and if a mother has

died he must abstain from consuming milk (*dudh*). Theoretically, these avoidances should last a year.

The *kiriyā* includes various rituals. However, that particularly the making of *sāmeru* (local term) and a ritual referred to as *sāt biu* (seven seeds) are crucial for the performance of a proper *kiriyā*. The *sāmeru* is a personification of the deceased's body and is also made annually a *śrādha*. It consists of a small mound of soil made on a piece of ancestral land and it is here that *pinda* (balls made of rice flour) are offered daily to the deceased's spirit. On the tenth day the *sāmeru* is destroyed and seeds of rice, wheat, barley, buckwheat, beans, peas and mustard are planted on the ground. The chief mourner now bathes and is shaved for the second time, but the pollution (*jutho mānu*) does not end before the thirteenth day when the chief mourner eats together with the agnates and all those who have taken part in the funeral. This is called *pucha hāt hālne* (pouring into clean hands) and marks the end of the *kiriyā*.

The chief mourner is particularly chosen because of his "aliqueness" to the deceased. All sons and brothers of the deceased share this quality with him. However, for the *kiriyā* as well as for the continuation of shared substances and the inheritance of property the filial relationship between a father and a son receives more emphasis than that between collaterals. In this all sons are equals and they also have rights to equal shares of their father's property. In other respects the sons themselves are differentiated and the eldest son (*jetho*) is considered to be socially most like his father. Terminologically he is distinguished from his brothers of whom he commands

respect and some measure of obedience. He also inherits his father's position as head of the joint family and as office holder. The eldest son is thus the *kiriyā basne mānche* par excellence, and only if he is not available may other sons perform this duty. Ideally, however, the *kiriyā basne mānche* should be someone who both shares physical substances with the deceased and inherits his property.

A son is always considered an heir to his father and it makes no difference whether the son is a member of his father's *pariwār* or not. However if the deceased has had no sons the pattern of partition and the manner in which the deceased's property is inherited appear to affect the choice of a *kiriyā basne mānche*. Thus, if the deceased lived jointly with a brother, who also has no sons, this brother is more likely to be preferred as *kiriyā basne mānche* than is the son of a brother or a more distant collateral from a separate *pariwār*. Informants explained this by pointing out that the brother's son of a separate *pariwār* has no right to the property if his father has previously partitioned from his other male siblings.⁶ Thus if the chief mourner is not a son he should, at least, be *hār nāta* as well as an heir and his position as heir depends on the manner in which the *pariwār* of the deceased has partitioned.

In some cases then partition affects the rights of individuals but it does not generally change the extent to which physical substances are shared. On the contrary since physical substances inherited from the father never cease to exist, and since those passed on from a mother to her children last for two or three generations, these substances are shared between

members of different *pariwār*. In this respect, the *pariwār* is a link in the flow of physical substances and must be seen in relation to wider categories of kin.

3. SĀKH, KUL AND KULDEVATĀS

The *sākh* and the *kul* are two such wider categories of kin. Although *sākh* and *kul* are ideally distinguished both in terms of genealogical depth and in terms of the activities members perform, in practice a *kul* may include only those who consider each other *sākh* or a wider selection of kinsmen. Further, *kul* which include more people than those who consider themselves *sākh*, may also sometimes perform activities which are considered the distinguishing mark of *sākh*. Common to both these categories of kin is that they include descendants of a male ancestor and that they exclude married sisters and daughters but include wives. They are thus patriline of varying depths.

Sākh refers to a relationship between agnates who are not members of the same *pariwār* but who are related to each other by virtue of common descent from an ancestor removed by three generations. Brothers become *sākh* after having partitioned their joint property and household. Usually a new house is built adjacent to the old one and *sākh* therefore also tends to be *saulo* (neighbours, local term), and in close daily contact with each other. For this reason people who are not close agnates but who live in the same household-cluster may refer to each other as *sākh*. Normally people who are *sākh* can trace a genealogical relationship to each other, but in some cases they merely assume that such a relationship

exists. This is more common for Chetris whose genealogical knowledge is shallow compared to that of the Thakuris.

The emphasis on an ancestor three generations removed suggests a sense of identity between those people who are the descendants of a common great-grandfather (Parry 1979: 142, Tieman 1970: 173). However, for the Chetris and Thakuris at Rārā this category cannot be said to have particular structural significance. *Sākh* may be involved in helping each other in agricultural tasks (*madat dinu*) and borrow plough animals from each other (*gorhu māgnu*), but *sākh* may, also be *sākhī*⁷ and a *sākh* may pay interest on loans borrowed from another *sākh* or be his *hali*. Neither Chetris nor Thakuris follow the Mitakshara school of law in considering four generations of agnatic males as exclusive co-partners (Tambiah 1973: 78) and *śrāddha*, if observed at all, is only, observed for one's own father (*śrāddha-pitra*) and mother (*mātā-pitra*) and not for any other male or female patrilineal ancestors.

The main obligations of *sākh* towards each other involve the observance of death pollution⁸ and the making of prestations at other major life-cycle rituals such as *bratabandha* and *bihā*. The marriage rituals will be discussed in Chapter 10. Here it is concerned with the role of *sākh* in the observance of death pollution. Upon the death of an agnate, *sākh* observe pollution for as long as the chief mourner, namely thirteen days.⁹ They assist the chief mourner in the offering of *pinda* and in the "seven seeds" ritual, and they bathe and shave their heads on the tenth day, whereas more distant agnates observe

pollution until the fifth day (some people say tenth) when they bathe but do not shave. The *sākh* and the more distant agnates as well as all those who have taken part in the funeral eat together with the chief mourner at the *pucha hāt hālne* on the thirteenth day.

Sākh observe the full pollution period for only those people with whom they unambiguously share physical substances. The wives of such people are included not only because wives are considered to share physical substances with their husbands, but also because at marriage women cease to be considered *matwāli*. Thus, a wife is mourned for thirteen days by her husband and his *sākh*. A married daughter, on the other hand, is mourned by her parents and siblings for only five days and their *sākh* are unaffected by her death. Further, *sākh* shave their heads for a wife of an agnate, whereas no one, not even a father or a brother, shaves for a married daughter or sister.

If an unmarried woman dies, only the members of her *pariwār* observe death pollution for three days (some people say five) and her *sākh* are unaffected. In this case the father and brother of the deceased woman shave but ideally none of these people should perform the *kiriya*. For an unmarried woman the appropriate *kiriya basne mānche* is a *brahmin* or an affine (*kutumba*) such as for example a sister's husband. As a virgin, an unmarried woman is celebrated and worshipped like a goddess (Füerer-Haimendorf 1966: 44ff). This is also shown at the *achetā khuwāunu* ritual (to give or feed a blessing) which takes place on the eleventh day of mourning. At this ritual *dacchinā* consisting of some of the deceased's possessions and property is given to the *brahmin* as

payment for his services during the mourning rituals. At the same time, as well as at subsequent *srāddhas*, unmarried daughters of the *pariwār* or the *sākh* also receive *dacchinā*, usually consisting of one or two rupees. This worship of an unmarried woman underlines the difference between her and the rest of her agnates, and this difference is also expressed in the marriage rituals which shall be discussed in Chapter 10. Later the nature of the relationship between women, unmarried and married, and, in particular, their brothers, is central to Thakuri and Chetri ideas and practices of marriage, but in this there are, as we shall see, important differences between the two castes.

Although *sākh* generally are said to include descendants of a great-grandfather, other agnates who are not strictly speaking *sākh* may also observe the full period of mourning and shave their heads. In some cases the people who observe mourning to this extent include all those who are members of a *kul*. The term *kul* (clan, tribe, dynasty, family, ancestor, Bista 1972: 57) may be used to refer to all kinds of living beings. Waterbuffaloes, cows and birds as well as people have *kul* (Inden 1976: 15, Karve 1953: 51). Further, *kul* may refer to a relationship or to a group of individuals. A person acquires *kul* from his father's side and *dudh* from his mother's side and *kul* is thus passed on from a father to his children along with the physical substances of bone, flesh and blood. As is reported from elsewhere (Parry 1979, Karve 1953, Inden 1976, Fruzetti and Östor 1976), the genealogical depth of a *kul* varies. At Rārā a *pariwār* may be referred to as a *kul*, but usually *kul* includes many

pariwār. Some *kul* include only descendants of an ancestor three to four generations removed, but other *kul* include six or seven generations of descendants and in yet others the members cannot trace a genealogical relationship to each other. Several writers have translated the term *kul* as "lineage" or "clan" (Bista 1972: 57, Fürer-Haimendorf 1966: 42, 1971: 17, Bennet 1978: 123, Pocock 1972: 60). However, *kul* implies more than what is usually meant by these terms (Radcliffe-Brown 1952: 70), for *kul* is particularly defined with reference to a *mukhi*. The *mukhi* of a *pariwār* is the eldest male agnate but the *mukhi* of a *kul* is the god of the *kul*, the *kuldevatā* (the god worshipped by the ancestors Bista 1972: 57). The eldest male agnate of the senior line of the *kul* is the officiating priest in such worship and in everyday conversation he may also be referred to as *mukhi*. At the time of worship (*pujā*) he is however more often referred to as the *dāgri* or the *pujāri*.¹⁰ Only the *pujāri*, the Brahmin who sometimes conducts the *hom garne*¹¹ at worship and the *dhāmi* (the spirit medium) may approach the shrine of the *kuldevatā* and particularly polluted members of the *kul* must keep away. The *kul* or *kulsantān* are thus those people who worship a common *kuldevatā* and the influence of the *kuldevatā* over these people is a result of the worship performed by the ancestors.

A *kuldevatā* is responsible for the prosperity of the people who worship together. Prosperity is considered to be achieved through a continuation of the physical substances of bone, flesh and blood and the creation of wealth (Bista 1972: 59), and worship is usually directed towards these ends. A *pariwār* may

perform a *pujā* for their *kuldevatā* if one of the members is ill or as a precautionary measure to ensure a good harvest or the increase of a herd of livestock. *pujās* are also performed annually after the harvest by the *kul*¹² as a whole and in these rituals each *pariwār* of the *kul* offers food (*sikh*). Neglect of a *kuldevatā* is likely to result in misfortune (*devatā lāgcha* ‘the god strikes’) but misfortunes may also be caused by other circumstances over which the *kuldevatā* has no influence.

The *kuldevatā* is particularly concerned with the purity and pollution of the *kulsantān* and disregard for proper conduct in this respect is likely to incur the wrath of the *devatā*. Thus, the most common explanation for the abstention from drinking alcohol (*raksi*) and eating eggs for *tāghādāri* castes particularly polluting foods, is that the *devatā* will get angry if such items are consumed. Similarly, inaccurate observance of *chui* by women is often thought to be the cause of minor misfortunes and illnesses. Even in their “normal” state, women are considered unfit for worship, but during menstruation and after childbirth women must keep well away from the shrine. The *devatā* is also sensitive to death pollution, and if a member of the *kul* has died, worship is suspended for a year.

The *kul* is thus a group of people who by virtue of sharing substances also share a common code of conduct (Inden 1976: 20). However, in this the land cultivated by the *kulsantān* plays an important role. A *kuldevatā* has influence, not only over those people who take part in the worship but also over their property.¹³ The success and continuation of the *kul* is achieved only by proper worship and the offering of

sikh during the *pujā*. *Sikh* should be produced from the ancestral land offered at the ancestral shrine together with the offerings made by other agnates. Thus, when people move away to live in a new place they are jeopardising their prosperity. They still consider themselves to be under the influence of their *devatā* but proper worship becomes more difficult. If only some members of a *pariwār* move away permanently then another male agnate, even if he is not the *mukhi*, can make the offering from the ancestral land. Thus, when the largest of the two Thakuri *kul* at Rārā worshipped their *kuldevatā*, Bhavani Masto¹⁴ at Saun Puny (the full moon in the month of Saun) only those Thakuri *pariwār* who live permanently at Rārā offered *sikh*, but they considered that the offerings were made on behalf of all the *kulsantān*, although some of these live elsewhere. If a whole *pariwār* or a whole *kul* settle elsewhere they may make a new shrine and start worshipping in the new place, or alternatively they can send *sikh* to the old shrine.

The worship of a *kuldevatā* in a new place may indicate a change in the orientation of the *kul*. Thus, while the Rawals at Rārā all worship the same *kuldevatā*, namely Chimi Dev,¹⁵ there, they have recently begun to worship another *kuldevatā*, named Nepali Chaitia,¹⁵ at Guira where all their *aula* land is situated. My impression is that these changes had started even before the plans for resettlement were made, but that these plans further influenced the Rawals in their emphasis on and identification with land outside the National Park.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the association between *kul* and the property owned by its members

is also evident when such property is sold or given away, for new owners are expected to make offerings to the *kuldevatā* of the old. Thus, Mahadeo, who is the *kuldevatā* of the largest Rokaya *kul* at Rārā, was worshipped at Kartik Puny not only by the *kulsantān* but also by other Rokayas as well as by all the Rawals and Thakuris. The Thakuris did not take active part in the worship by the shrine (*thāna*, local term), but they did offer *sikh*. The ancestors of this Rokaya *kul* are believed to have arrived at Rārā first and everybody at Rārā considers that they cultivate land which once belonged to this *kul*. Mahadeo is thus a village god as well as a *kuldevatā* of some of the Rokayas and all other *kul* consistently worship this *kuldevatā* as well as their own. In accordance with this, informants say that when people move they must worship the *kuldevatā* of the original *kul* in their new place of settlement as well as their own. In this way, *devatās* who are worshipped by more people are considered more powerful than those worshipped by only the members of a *kul*.

Some Chetris also worship the *kuldevatā* of those people whose plots of land are adjacent to theirs. This they claim increases the likelihood of good harvests and decreases the possibility of disputes over boundaries. It was also told that if someone steals property from a member of the *kul* then the *kuldevatā* may be evoked by a *pujā* and the sacrifice of a goat. Although the property itself cannot be recovered by this procedure, it will at least ensure misfortune for the thief and his relatives.

The influence of a *kuldevatā* may thus be extended to other people and when land is given

ritually (*dharam garne*, “to do a good thing”, “religious duty”), this may result in the assimilation of new people of appropriate status into the *kul*. Eventually, these people may even be considered to share physical substances with members of the original *kul*. This appears to have happened to the next eldest (*māilo*) branch of Thakuris. This branch is considered to have arrived at Rārā last (Chapter 3) and to have received a gift of land from those who then belonged to the branch in which the *jimwālship* for Rārā village was held, i.e. the *kāncho* branch. As a result of this gift, members of the *māilo* branch started to worship the *kuldevatā* of the *kāncho* branch and now the descendants of these two branches also observe full death pollution for each other. In this case then, the *kulsantān* include people who cannot trace a genealogical relationship and all these people also behave towards each other as if they are close agnates. They do not all, however, consider each other *sākh*. This assimilation was possible because both these branches claim to be Thakuris and consider that they are descendants of Bali Raj. These two branches distinguish themselves from the third and “eldest” (*jetho*) branch of Thakuris at Rārā. The ancestors of this branch are considered to have been the original grantees of the land around Rārā and also to have arrived at Rārā first. They worship a different *kuldevatā*, namely Thapar Masto, and are considered a separate *kul*. They also consider each other *sākh* and observe full death pollution for each other, but not for any other Thakuris.

Nowadays these two Thakuri *kul* (see Fig. 7) are distinguished politically and to some extent in

terms of status as well. The *kul* of the *jetho* branch has lost its former political superiority and this *kul* is not of the same importance to other people in the area as is the *kul* of the two other branches. When the latter worship they do so at a shrine situated in the village and other people, such as those who have bought land and livestock from these *kulsantān*, contribute *sikh*. When the *kul* of the *jetho* branch worship, on the other hand, this involves the *mukhi* only and they no longer have a shrine in the village, but go to another shrine for Thapar Masto situated on the other side of the Karnali river. Generally the members of *kul* are said by others to have fallen into disrepute. Not only have they failed to worship properly, they have also in the recent past taken wives from nearby Shahi Thakuris. In these respects, the members of this *kul* are considered inferior by the members of the larger *kul*, although this inferiority is not expressed in commensal activities and at *bihā* and *bratabandha* rituals all the Thakuris at Rārā are involved.

A sharp distinction between *sākh* and *kul* cannot be drawn. As we have noted *sākh* sometimes refers to people who live in the same household cluster and who cannot demonstrate a genealogical relationship to a common ancestor. On the other hand, the *kul* may include people who can trace such relationships to an ancestor removed by more than three generations and who consider each other close agnates. Nevertheless the emphasis is different for the two categories of kin and the position of the *gharjuwāin* vis-á-vis his wife's father's *sākh* and *kul* demonstrates this difference. Since Thakuris do not

accept a *ghar-juwāin*, this situation only occurs amongst Chetris.

When a *ghar-juwāin* dies only his son shaves, but both his son and his wife's father observe pollution for thirteen days. Their *sākh* do not shave although they should observe pollution for ten days. Chetris consider a *ghar-juwāin* to be like a son, but the extent to which they observe death pollution for him suggests that his position is ambiguous. From the point of view of the *kul*, however, his position is more straight-forward. Because a *ghar-juwāin* cultivates the land of his wife's father he must also regularly participate in the worship of his wife's father's *kuldevatā* and is considered a member of the latter's *kul*. Thus, despite the overlap, *sākh* are primarily defined with respect to the sharing or assumed sharing of physical substances, whereas *kul* is primarily defined with respect to worship of a common god and the offering of *sikh*.

However, *kul* membership is also related to shared physical substances as well as to the cultivation of land over which the *devatā* has influence and this is a result of sons being their fathers' heirs as well as sharing bodily substances with him. A *ghar-juwāin* is, therefore, eligible for membership in his own father's *kul* and only if he does not inherit land from his father (*āphno ansa nakhāne*, not to eat one's own share) does this eligibility lapse for him or his descendants. Sons of a *ghar-juwāin* therefore, often inherit their mother's father's land and both they and their sisters will be considered *sākh* as well as

kulsantān of their mother's father's agnates. However, a *ghar-juwāin* sometimes inherits land from his own father as well as cultivates the land of his wife's father. In such cases his position, as well as the position of his descendants, remains ambiguous, for they are considered to be members of two *kul* and worship two *kuldevatās* as their own. Gara Rokaya's father was such a *ghar-juwāin*. He was a Karka Chetri from Puly and married a Rokaya girl from Rārā where he lived uxorilocally. Despite being a *ghar-juwāin* he also inherited land at Puly from his own father and nowadays Gara himself still cultivates land in these two places. Gara did not inherit any *aula* land from his mother's father and the land at Puly has thus been extremely useful. The *kuldevatā* of Gara's father's *kul* is Gura, whereas that of his mother's father's *kul* is Daralo Masto and Gara now worships both and is also the *dhāmi* for Daralo Masto. He reckons himself to be Karka as well as Rokaya Chetri, but thinks that after resettlement he will move to Puly. Then he will be a Karka Chetri and the land at Rārā as well as Daralo Masto will be lost (*harāyo*) for him and his descendants. In this way the position of a *ghar-juwāin* and his descendants may continue to be ambiguous.

I have mentioned that both Chetris and Thakuris consider that the quality of the relationship derived from shared substance through breastmilk is weaker than that created by the sharing of bone, flesh and blood. However, Chetris place more emphasis on the relationship between a mother and her children than do Thakuris. Thus, parallel to the *kul*, Chetris, as do

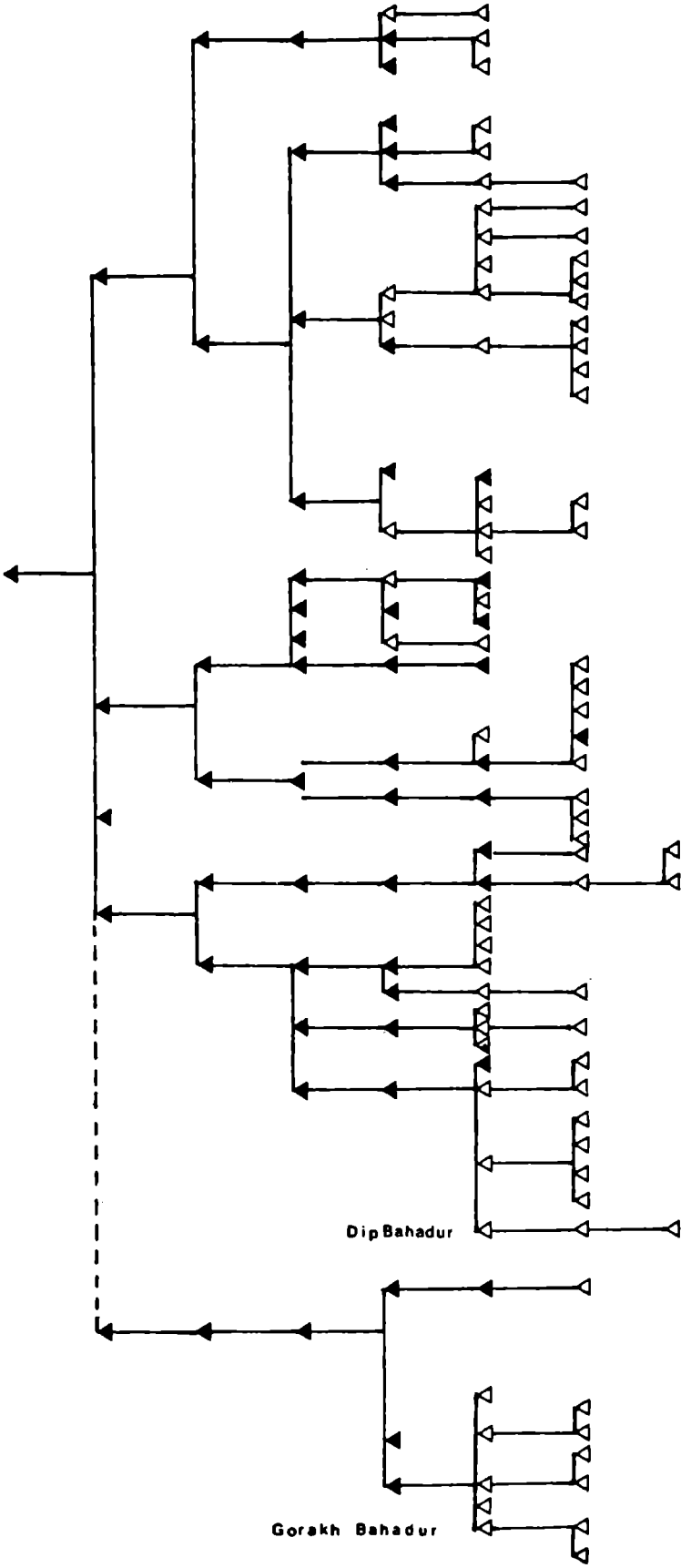


Fig.7a: *Thakuri Kul of Bhavani Masto*

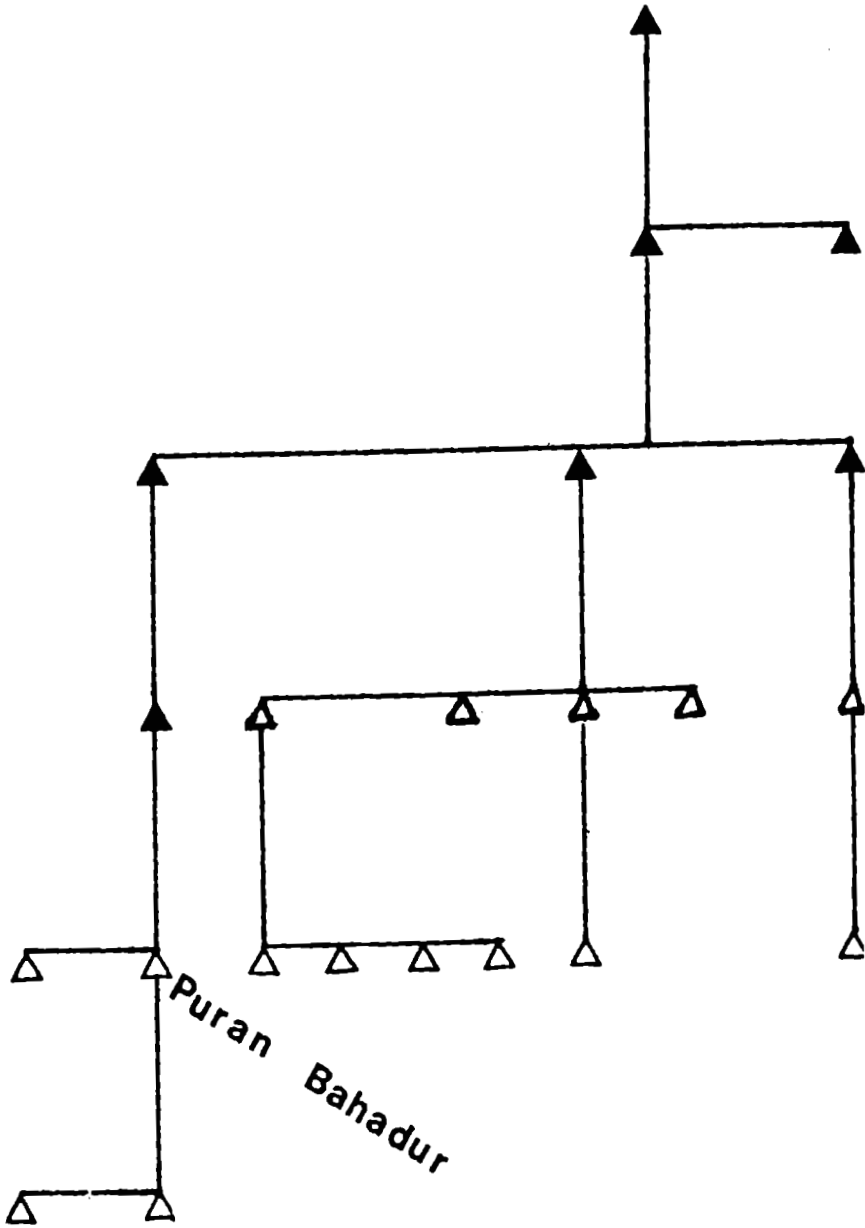


Fig.7a: Thakuri *Kul* of Thapar Masto

Dom, conceptualise the people who are related through shared substance deriving from breastmilk as an actual category of people referred to as *dudhkul*. The Chetri *dudhkul* includes a man's brothers, sisters, mother, mother's brother, mother's brother's children, mother's sister, mother's sister's children and mother's mother.¹⁶

The members of a *dudhkul* do not worship their own *kuldevatā*, nor do they perform any other activities together. Some of such *nāta* are considered to have special obligations and they are also to some extent mourned when they die. Except for the mother, all these *nāta* are of a different *kul* and *gotra* (see Section 4), and as a general rule both for Chetris and Thakuris, such *nāta* should be mourned for one day only and male mourners do not shave. Chetri men, however, shave upon the death of a mother's brother, whereas they merely bathe and observe pollution for one day upon the death of a sister's son. Other people who are also considered *nāta*, but who are first and foremost *kuṭumba* (affines), such as the wife's brother, sister's husband and wife's father and mother are not mourned at all (see Chapter 11).

Although these rules are more or less the same for Chetris and Thakuris, in practice Thakuris hardly ever observe pollution for uterine relatives. Thakuris marry people from distant villages and news about relatives travels slowly if it arrives at all. Chetris, on the other hand, marry in nearby villages and therefore have much more contact with their mother's parents and siblings and such *nāta* are often present at festivals and life-cycle rituals. Thus, amongst the Chetris a mother's brother is likely to take active part

in the *bihā* or *bratabandha* of his sister's children, whereas amongst the Thakuris the idea that he should contribute is hardly ever realised. However, never saw such a uterine kinsman at any Thakuri rituals and their arrival at Rārā usually signals the beginning of new marriage negotiations.

Despite what is generally said about *sākh* by both Thakuris and Chetris, this category of people cannot easily be distinguished either as a group of people with a definite "genealogical depth" nor as the people who cooperate at major life-cycle rituals. The *kul* can be more easily isolated, but *kulsantān* may also act as if they are *sākh* and other people than those who are members of a *kul* may participate in worship. This difficulty in identifying levels of segmentation in the kinship system has also been noted by other writers for India (Parry 1979: 137, Fox 1971: 19). In relation to this, Mayer (1960: 169) has proposed a distinction between the "lineage of cooperation" containing those agnates "who come to one's social functions" and the "lineage of recognition", referring to "recognition of a previous agnatic link". This distinction cannot easily be maintained for the Thakuris and Chetris at Rārā. There the extent to which agnates cooperate on ritual occasions varies from one context to another. At minor life-cycle rituals such as haircutting and naming, only the *pariwār* may be involved and a major life-cycle ritual may be scaled down for economic reasons. Further, as we have noted, *sākh*, as well as those who are considered to be *kulsantān*, may observe death pollution for each other. At a Thakuri *bihā* or *bratabandha* all the members of the three branches

of Thakuris living at Rārā are invited and they may all take active part. Finally, cooperation and participation in life-cycle rituals itself creates a notion of a close agnatic relationship. Such is the case of the *māilo* branch of the Thakuris, which could be included as close agnates to the members of the *kāncho* branch because the members of both considered each other as equals. Such is also the case of the *ghar-juwāin* and his descendants who, despite not sharing the vital physical substances, are considered to be *sākh*.

4. CLANS AND SUBCASTES

The people who are *sākh* as well as those who are *kulsantān* and who worship together, constitute a localised group. *Sākh* also tend to be neighbours and members of a *kul* often live in the same *bār* (ward). However, the Chetris and Thakuris at Rārā also consider themselves members of a wider category of kin, namely the clan. Some of the most common Chetri clans in this part of Karnali zone are Burha, Rawal, Rokaya, Oidi, Karka, Sat, Batta, Banari, Bista, Barn and Adhikari and these may be referred to as either *thar* (species) or *bañsa*, (line). Many of these clans are also found elsewhere in Nepal (Füerer-Haimendorf 1966). The Thakuri clans in the area are Kalyal and Malla, but elsewhere and intermarrying with these Kalyal and Malla Thakuris are also Thakuris of Singha, Bum, Rajkot, Chan, Chatyal and Pal clans. Thakuris refer to these clans using the term *bansa* (Inden 1976: 17). The term *bañsa* (local dialect) or *vamsā* (standard Nepali) is used at Rārā particularly by Thakuris in two different ways. One refers to the

descendants of a founding male ancestor, all of whom share physical substances and who are *hār nāta*. Thus, all Kalyal Thakuris are of the same *bañsa* because they are assumed to be descended from Bali Raj, the founder of the Kalyal dynasty. The Thakuris also have a *vamsāvali* (genealogy) and they consider that the knowledge of this is what distinguishes descendants of royalty from descendants of commoners. Chetris also use the term *bañsa* in this way although they do not have a *vamsāvali*. In everyday conversation *bañsa* is thus used to denote a line of patrilineal descendants and some writers refer to this category of people as *kul* (Karve 1953: 140, Taft-Plunkett 1973: 69, Parry 1979: 132). At Rārā the *kulsantān* are also members of the same *bañsa* but *kul* refers to localised segments of a *bañsa* and there may be several *kul* amongst those people who live in the same place and who are of the same *bañsa*. A sharp distinction between these two concepts and the levels of organisation to which they refer, cannot however be made. *Kul* may occasionally be used to refer to a whole clan. and *bañsa* may refer to a segment of a clan.

The other way in which the term *bañsa* is used is in accordance with Rajput tradition reported from north India (Mayer 1960: 164, Taft-Plunkett 1973: 66). Several clans may be included in one line of descent and such lines are identified with either the sun (*surjivamshi*) or the moon (*chandramāvamshi*). Karve (1953:139) calls these *vamsā* superclans and considers that there are four such lines. At Rārā only the Thakuris have knowledge about these lines and they cannot name more than the two mentioned

above. Most Thakuris do not know to which of these two lines they belong. The lines are further divided into *shākhā* (branches) and some Thakuri men know that they belong to Madhyannhi *shākhā*, but cannot explain why. These lines and branches play no role in everyday life at Rārā but their existence is considered by informants to be proof of their Rajput ancestry.

The clan is not a localised kingroup. Clan-members never perform any rituals or act together in any other way. Indeed, people do not know where all the members of their clan live. However, Chetri clans are further divided into subclans¹⁷ also called *bañsa* or *thar* and these are sometimes, although not always, associated with a territory or a locality. All the Rokaya Chetris at Rārā are Utsidunge Rokaya and this name refers to their supposed place of origin, namely Utsidunge near Sija. Other Rokayas in the area such as those living at Sija itself and at Murma are also Utsidunge Rokayas and all these Rokayas consider themselves to be more closely related than other Rokayas. The Rawals at Rārā are Jachari Rawals which also refers to their origin from a village near Sija.¹⁸ They are supposed to have come to Rārā later than some of the Rokayas and to have been given land by the latter. The Rokayas' claim to land in the area generally and at Rārā is believed to date back to the time of the Kalyal rajas. One of these rajas is said to have given land as well as the *janai* to four Chetri subclans. These were Darakot Bista, Luiko Karki, Utsidunge Rokaya and Rana Rawals. These *thar* or *bañsa* are therefore believed to have been the original landholders in the area. Nowadays, Rana

Rawals live in the area immediately surrounding Rārā. Thus, the Rawals at Jhari, Topla and Sigari villages are all Rana Rawals and of a different subclan than the Rawals at Rārā.

Exactly how new subclans are founded is difficult to establish, but informants suggest that the four original *bañsa* divided (*puteo* broke) through separate migration of segments and subsequent intermarriage. Generally *bañsa* and *thar* are considered exogamous categories and members who share the same clan-name are *hāmāta*. Thus, Rokayas should not marry Rokayas and Rawals should not marry Rawals. In reality, however, it is the subclan, the members of which consider themselves to come from the same locality, which is exogamous. Thus, Rokayas have married Rokayas of a different subclan and, discussed in Chapter 10, the Rawals of Rārā frequently marry Rana Rawals from nearby villages. However, there is no evidence to explain why Jachari Rawals living at Rārā should marry Rana Rawals from nearby settlements when the Rokayas of Rārā still consider the Rokayas of Sija, two to three days walk away, *hār nāta*. Spatial distribution no doubt is important, but status distinctions may also be relevant. The relative rank of different *bañsa* and *thar* is uncertain. When asked, most people consider their own *bañsa* vaguely superior to that of others, but no definite hierarchy can be established. There is, however, a general feeling that the Rokayas at Rārā are of a slightly higher status than the Rawals there and that this is a result of the position of the former as grantors of land to the latter. The slightly inferior and insecure position the Rawals may have resulted in them

establishing as many ties as possible to the original landholders in the area and thus in intermarriage with Rana Rawals of nearby villages. Indeed, Fürer-Haimendorf suggests that such intermarriages have resulted in the loss of status for Rana Rawals, particularly those of Jhari (Fürer-Haimendorf 1971: 18).¹⁹

The Rawals of Rārā do not know of other Rawals who call them Jachari Rawal and in their case the subclan is not only localised but is also a *kul*. More commonly, however, the subclan is not localised and the Karka, Bistas, Rokayas and Rawals (other than those at Rārā) inhabiting different villages in the area around Rārā belong to the same subclans, namely those who received land from one of the Kalyal rajas. The Burhas who live in Chapru village (the nearest village to Rārā), are Gajekot Burhas and other members of this subclan also live in Ruma and Ruga. Contrary to many Burhas elsewhere in Karnali (Fürer-Haimendorf 1975), these Burhas wear the *janai* and are not considered to be *matwālis* all these cases the people who live together constitute a localised segment of the subclan and they are members of different *kul*.

The subclan is distinguished from the clan insofar as members of a subclan usually consider that they have come from the same original settlement. For Chetris it is this identification with a locality which distinguishes subclans, whereas, for Thakuris it is descent from a common mythical ancestor which distinguishes clans. Thakuris isolate no intermediary level between the clan and the *kul* and in everyday conversation when people speak of *bañsa* they refer to the relationship between the members of the

localised segment of the clan. Depending on the context, this may include the *sākh*, the *kulsantān* or the whole localised segment of the subclan clan. Only the *sākh* and the *kul* and, as we have seen in certain contexts, the localised segment of the Thakuri *bañsa*, participate in common activities. Aside from this, *bañsa*-membership implies that members share a common name and that they cannot marry.

With respect to clan-membership the position of a *ghar-juwāin* is again ambiguous. The extent to which he and his descendants become members of their wife's father's and mother's father's *bañsa* depends on whether or not the *ghar-juwāin* inherits land from his own father. Whatever the pattern of inheritance, however, the descendants of a *ghar-juwāin* cannot marry members of their mother's father's *bañsa*.

People of the same *bañsa* are *bhāibandhu* (brothers). Thus, all Rokayas are *bhāibandhu* and if a Rokaya Chetri meets a stranger who is also a Rokaya he will almost certainly refer to the *bhāibandhu* relationship. Similarly, all Thakuris who claim to be descended from the first Kalyal raja consider each other *bhāibandhu* even if they are of different status. In this sense the people who are *bhāibandhu* are of the same clan and this is the most inclusive meaning of the term. On the other hand, *bhāibandhu* also refers to people who consider each other to be related more closely. Thus, the Kalyal Thakuris who live at Musikot are specifically pointed out as being the *bhāibandhu* of the Rārā Thakuris and marriage between the Rokaya Chetris of Rārā, Murma and Sija is prohibited because they are, *bhāibandhu*.

Bhāibandhu may thus refer to clans or subclans according to context and in this most general sense includes the descendants of a male ancestor and their wives and children but not their married sisters and daughters. The term *bhāibandhu* thus refers to those people who share physical substances, but more specifically it also refers to a relationship of equality and one's *bhāibandhu* are thus the living descendants of a common ancestor who all consider each other equals.

Like most other concepts of kinship at Rārā (see Chapter 11) *bhāibandhu* is a segmentary concept; it may refer to the *kulsantān* and to the *sākh* as well as to the *bañsa* or segments of the *bañsa*. However, in its most restricted sense *bhāibandhu* refers to a group of siblings, sisters as well as brothers. When used in this way the term may not exclude married sisters and their children. Thus, at this level one's *bhāibandhu* are one's own siblings, the children of a father's brother and mother's sister as well as the children of a father's sister and a mother's brother. This is in accordance with the idea that a relationship of *nāta* is passed from both parents to their children. As the physical substances passed through breastmilk cease to exist after two or three generations so does the relationship of *bhāibandhu*. Thus, the relationship between a woman and her mother's mother's brother's son's son, for example, is not considered to be one between *bhāibandhu*. Insofar as *bhāibandhu* refers both to agnates, their wives and unmarried sisters and daughters and thus is coterminous with *bañsa*, *kul* and *sākh* as well as to relationships through women and the children of cross-sex and same-sex siblings, the

term *bhāibandhu* is different from the others discussed so far. *Bhāibandhu* together with other concepts such as *nāta* and *kutumba* embody notions of equality as well as hierarchy and that emphasis on either of these aspects varies according to context and according to the caste position of the people concerned.

Clans and subclans are exogamous, but ideally one should also not marry someone who shares one's *gotra*. Contrary to some areas of north India (Pradhan 1966, Tieman 1970) at Rārā the *gotra* is not a clan. Rather, several clans belong to the same *gotra* and the same *gotras* are also found in different castes. Most Chetris and Thakuri men know their own *gotra* but women do not and only a few people know the name of their wife's father's *gotra*. Nor is the origin of *gotras* known to most people and even one of the younger brahmins who came to Rārā to officiate in various rituals could not explain what a *gotra* was. One older *brahmin* suggested that *gotras* have arisen from sages (*rishis*) and this is also the way *gotra* is conceptualised amongst Thakuris and Chetris elsewhere in Nepal (Gray 1980). There are then a limited number of *gotras* but nobody could name them all or put forward a theory about the relationship between *rishis* and those people who now have a common *gotra*. Although most people express the idea that *gotras* are exogamous, some Chetris also say that you can marry someone of your own *gotra* if *bañsa* is different. Indeed, the Rawals at Rārā are of the same *gotra* as the Rana Rawals of Jhari, namely Rabigotra, and thus when they marry they do not follow the general *gotra* rule.

The *gotra* is not an agnatic category of kin. However, since a boy acquires his father's *gotra* at the

bratabandha ceremony and since a girl is included into her husband's *gotra* at marriage, the people who are members of the same *bañsa* ideally also belong to the same *gotra* (Madan 1962). In practice, however, localised segments particularly of Chetri clans and subclans may identify themselves with different *gotras*. Thus, some of the Burha Chetris belong to a different *gotra* despite being of the same *bañsa*. The explanation for this may be found in the practice of Thakuri rajas conferring enhanced caste status on inferior castes. Many of the Chetris are said to have received their *gotra* together with the *janai* from rajas ruling the area before the Gorkha conquest. When this happened, inferiors became included in the *gotra* of the raja who also gave them the *janai*. Some Burha Chetris received the *janai* from a Bum raja who ruled the area from which they originally came. Others, however, are said to have received *gotra* and *janai* from a Kalyal raja and hence belong to the same *gotra* as the Kalyal Thakuris, which incidentally also is *Rabigotra*. The sharing of *gotras* between castes may thus indicate a relationship of former political dependence and no doubt conferred prestige on both the givers and the receivers.²⁰ Indeed, the ritual dependence of Chetris on Thakuris is made manifest every year during the month of Jeth when Chetris come to the Thakuris to ask for a new *janai*. At Rārā only Thakuri women spin the *janai* and these are given to the same Chetri men every year, although nowadays some are also sold to Shahi Thakuris. Labourers and *halis* of *tāgādhāri* castes receive their *janais* from their *rītis*, but it has been seen that unattached Chetri men being asked for favours such as carrying a basket or helping with the harvest, when they requested a new *janai*.

Aside from being of some importance in determining who you can and cannot marry, *gotras* are thus also of wider ritual significance. The possession of *gotras* denotes *tāghādāri* status and such status could be conferred by Thakuri rajas. In this area the raja thus appears to have had powers similar to those of the *dharmadhikar* elsewhere (Galey 1981, Sanwal 1976). However, even for the Thakuris, the possession of *gotras* is only an indication of their high-caste aspirations. They play no important role in everyday life.

When a Chetri man is asked to which *bañsa* he belongs he will answer Rokaya, Rawal or Burha as the case may be. If the same man is asked to which *thar* he belongs his answer will be the same. As with *bañsa*, *thar* (species) refers to clan or subclan, but for Chetris *thar* is more often associated with caste status than is *bañsa*. Collectively Chetris may be referred to as *thari* and when used in this way the term denotes their caste position or their *jāt* (species) as different from Thakuris and Dom. For both Thakuris and Chetris *bañsa* primarily refers to a relationship between all the descendants (*santān*) of an ancestor (*bāje*). Chetris are *thari* because they have *thar* or named patriline which are also *bañsa*. However, as is the case of the Rawals in the area around Rārā, people may be of the same *thar* and yet consider each other of different *bañsa*. On the other hand, the four original Chetri subclans of the area are also sometimes referred to as *thar*. *Bañsa* and *thar* may thus refer to the same category of people. From an external point of view these people are of the same *thar* from an internal point of view they are of the same *bañsa*.

Chetri clans and subclans are also sometimes referred to as *jātis*, but more commonly *jāt* designates caste or *varna* and *thar* is reserved for lower level segments. Asked about his *jāt* a Chetri will answer Chetri or *thari* and in the story about origins of caste, the four *jāt* of the area—namely Brahmin, Thakuri, Chetri and Dom—are associated with the four original *varna* of the traditional Sanskrit literature (Dumont 1970: 67, 68). Thus, Bhagwan who created the whole world also created four brothers from Vishnu came the Thakuris, from Brahma came the Brahmins, from Vaisie came the Chetris or *thari* and from Sudra came the Dom. Vishnu was the eldest brother and parallel with other royal Thakuris in Nepal (Shah 1975) the Thakuris of Rārā identify themselves with him. This story, which was related to me by both Thakuris and Chetris, is in accordance with the Thakuris' claim to superiority in the area and with the inferior status of Brahmins vis-á-vis Thakuris outside ritual contexts. Thus, Brahmins, who were not *purohits* greet Thakuris by performing *dhok*.

The Thakuris do not have *thar*. They use the term *jāt* to refer to *varna*, caste and clan. As described, Thakuris do not identify, subclans and never heard them refer to such segments as *jāt*. However, Thakuris distinguish between themselves those who are Shahs from those who are Shahis and these two categories are referred to as *jāt*. A Thakuri asked about his *jāt* may thus answer Thakuri, Shah or Kalyal. The origin of the Shah/Shahi distinction is not clear. Fürer-Haimendorf considers (Fürer-Haimendorf 1971: 14) the distinction to indicate a status difference between those high ranking Thakuris who married women of

equally high rank with full rites and those who did not. The Thakuris at Rārā certainly maintain that Shahs conduct marriage negotiations and marriage ceremonies properly, whereas Shahis are more like Chetris. However, there is no indication that children of Shah men and Shahi women were considered Shahis and nowadays, the main distinction between Shahs and Shahis is that whereas the latter plough, the former do not.

The status of Shah and Shahi refers to individuals, but may also be used to describe whole clans. Thus, some clans use Shah or Shahi as their surname whereas others use their clan-name in this way. This practice has created confusion between clan and the Shah/Shahi categories and it is sometimes impossible to establish the clan of a married woman's father. The difference between the two is, however, important, for while the clan or *bañsa* is exogamous, the ideal is that people should marry others of the same rank. The division of Thakuris into Shahs and Shahis is thus a division into endogamous categories and indeed people of the same *bañsa* may also be distinguished in this way. Thus, the Kalyals who live at Pina are Shahis and only reluctantly admitted to be the *bhāibandhu* to the Shah Thakuris at Rārā.

Neither *thar* nor *bañsa* are localised. The subclan may be localised but often is not. The members of a localised kingroup thus identify themselves with members of other localised kingroups elsewhere, these people being considered *bhāibandhu* and non-eligible marriage partners. The term *jāt* may be used to designate castes as well as clans. Castes, however, differ from clans insofar as they are

endogamous units within which members should marry, whereas clans are exogamous. The Chetri distinction between *jāt* and *thar* may be considered to refer to this difference. However, *thar* itself indicates status and therefore despite the absence of endogamy at this level, it seems appropriate to designate *thar* as subcaste. Although such subcastes are not ranked in any manner, generally agreed upon, most Chetri informants suggested that their own *thar* was superior to that of others. Further, those *thar* who are considered to be original landowners in the area appear to have a slightly higher status than those who are considered to have arrived more recently. Finally, there are clear status distinctions between those *thari* who are *matwālis* and those who are *tāghādāri*, and the Chetris at Rārā do not eat, smoke or marry Chetris who do not wear the *janai*.²¹

The distinction between *thar* or subcastes and castes appears even less marked when one considers the ease with which breaches of caste endogamy are accepted in Nepal generally (Fürer-Haimendorf 1957, 1966). In the area immediately surrounding Rārā there are not many examples of intercaste marriages or subcastes whose ancestors have contracted mixed unions. However, thus, for the Chetris at Rārā and in Nepal generally, neither caste (*jāt*) nor subcaste (*thar*) can be defined strictly in terms of endogamy.

The Thakuri distinction between Shah and Shahis appears much more like that between different castes reported from elsewhere (Mayer 1960). Thus, Shahs and Shahis are distinguished commensally; they do not marry each other and do not perform the same types of work. However, instead of being further

divided into exogamous clans, as is the case in Malwa, this distinction cuts across clans. It is thus more similar to a distinction between royal and commoner lines (Taft-Plunkett 1973, Stern 1977) than to one between subcastes.

5. SUMMARY

No sharp distinctions are made by the Rārāls to refer to various levels of caste and kinship categories. Rather, the system and the terms used are segmentary (Dumont 1970). The term *pariwār* is perhaps the most rigid, being used generally to refer to a household. At the same time, the household is solidified by the unquestionable right of the members to share. The quality of intra-household relations is a result of this unit being a property holding unit. *Sākh* usually include the descendants of a common great-grandfather, but this concept is only used when the agnates have partitioned, and not everyone can trace a genealogical relationship even this far. The *kul* may be of varying depth, but is rarely, at Rārā, used in the sense of a clan. *Bañsa* may refer to the whole clan or any segment of it and this category is also referred to as *jāt* or *thar*. Chetris distinguish themselves from Thakuris in that the caste-like aspect of clans and subclans is denoted by the term *thar*. Thakuris, on the other hand, make no distinction between the caste and kinship aspects of these categories. Finally, no distinction is made between *jāt* and *varna*.

Thakuris do not identify subclans by naming them. For them, descent from a named ancestor, as described in the *vamsāvali*, provides a charter for the clan and the exogamous unit is widely dispersed.

Thus, Kalyal Thakuris are found as far away as Musikot and these are considered the *bhāibandhu* of the Thakuris at Rārā. For Chetris the effective exogamous unit is the subclan and the original founders are identified with a certain locality. This unit is, therefore, relatively localised, including inhabitants from several nearby villages.

Thakuris also emphasise agnatic kinship to a greater extent than do Chetris. Thus, the Thakuris of the larger *kul* at Rārā observe full mourning for each other and at other life-cycle rituals all the Thakuris at Rārā participate. At similar Chetri occasions full participation is usually restricted to *sākh*. Chetris, on the other hand, emphasise relationships through women to a greater extent than do Thakuris. They conceptualise those related through breastmilk as an actual group of people, the *dudhkul*, and such relatives may take active part in life-cycle rituals. Further, they allow the practice of the *ghar-juwāin* which may result in an ambiguous position, not only for the *ghar-juwāin*, but also for his descendants.

Finally, Thakuris emphasize rank to a greater extent than do Chetris. Chetri clans and subclans may be referred to as *thar* or *jāt*, but aside from the distinction between *matwālis* and *tāgādhāris*, no general distinctions of rank could be agreed upon by Chetri informants. Even the distinction between those *thar* who originally were granted land and those who are considered as newcomers is vague and does not inhibit intermarriage nor is it reflected in commensal activities. The Thakuris, on the other hand, assess the status of different clans according to their *vamsāvali* and distinguish Shahs (noblemen) from Shahis (commoners). Further, as is the case at Rārā, there

may be a feeling that *kul* are of different political status.

To my mind these differences between Chetris and Thakuris in the emphasis they place on status and inequality is related to their different emphasis on cognatic and agnatic kin respectively. The Chetri emphasis on *nātna*, created by virtue of sharing physical substances passed through breastmilk, prevents the creation of distinct patriline. The absence of such emphasis, on the other hand, allows Thakuri patriline to be more inclusive as well as distinct and hence opens the possibility for inequality between them. In Chapter 10 showed how Chetri and Thakuri ideas about who you should and should not marry and their marriage strategies further support these conclusions, and in Chapter 11 showed that the cross-sex sibling relationship and the way this is conceptualised is central to these differences between Chetris and Thakuris.

Chapter 9

THE KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter examines the formal kinship terminology, i.e. the terminology of reference used by Chetris and Thakuris at Rārā. This chapter only refers to terms of address in passing, but a fuller discussion of these as well as of greetings are presented in the appendix. It considers that it appropriates to present the kinship terminology at this stage for two reasons. Firstly, it is convenient now to introduce kinship terms to which reference is in subsequent chapters. Secondly, as does Scheffler, that a kinship ideology includes a system of kin classification and that “the classification of kin is itself a social act and therefore to understand it is to understand something of the sociology of the people who do the classifying” (Scheffler 1980: 134). It follows that in examining a kinship terminology we are also gaining insights into the structure of a society, although the nature of these insights has been the cause for argument.¹ In this chapter examines the terms and show how these are extended in a regular and predictable manner (Vatuk 1969) but here also tries to abstain from making inferences about what these extensions reflect.

Such inferences can only be made when other aspects of the kinship ideology have been examined (Chapters 10 and 11).

The debate about Indian kinship terminologies has largely been concerned with the difference between two types, also called the Dravidian type and the non-prescriptive type of north India. Recent articles published on the subject (Allen 1975, 1976; Stirrat 1977; Good 1981), suggest that the north/south opposition is not tenable and that there are variations within each of these types as well (see also Beck 1972, and Gough 1956). The Rārā kinship terminology further supports this. Although located within the geographical area of north India this terminology consists of both north Indian and Dravidian characteristics.

2. THE TERMINOLOGY

The kinship terms are listed in Tables 14–16. Table 14 shows the kinship terms of the Thakuris and Table 15 shows the terms used by Chetris where these differ from those of Thakuris. Table 16 shows the terms used to refer to households and places of residence.

Rārā Kinship Terminology Terms of Reference

Table 14: Kin Terms Used by the Shah Thakuris

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Kin Term</i> | <i>Relation to Speaker</i> |
|------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. | <i>bāje</i> ² | FF, MF, FFB, FMB, MMB, MFB, FFZH, FMZH, MMZH, MFZH, FBWF, MZHF, FZHF, MBWF, MBWB |

| No. | Kin Term | Relation to Speaker |
|-----|--|--|
| | <i>bajai</i> | B of any <i>bāje</i> B of any <i>bajai</i> FM, MM, FMZ, MMZ, MFZ, FFZ, FZMZ wife of any <i>bāje</i> z of any <i>bāje</i> z of any <i>bajai</i> |
| | <i>burho sasurā</i> | HFF/WFF, HMF/WMF any <i>bāje</i> of H or W husband of any <i>sāsu</i> |
| | <i>burhi sāsu</i> | HFM/WFM, HMM/WMM any <i>bajai</i> of H or W wife of any <i>sasurā</i> |
| 2. | <i>buwā, bābu</i> <i>muwā</i> <i>jetho buwā,</i> <i>kāncho buwā</i> | F M FeB/FyB, MZH, FFBS, FFZS, FMZS, FMBS, MZHB, FBWZH, FBWZHB, WBWF, WZHF, husband of <i>jethi/kāncho</i> <i>muwā</i> |
| | <i>jethi muwā,</i> <i>kāncho muwā</i> | MeZ/MyZ, FyBW/FeBW, MFBD, MMBD, MFZD, MMZD, FZHZ, FBWZ, WZHM, WBWM, HBWM, HZMM, MZHBW, ZHBWM, BWZHM wife of <i>jetho/kāncho buwā</i> |
| | <i>māmā, māuli</i> | MB, MFBS, MFZS, MMZS, FBWB, MZHBWB, FBWB WZH |
| | <i>māiju</i> | MBW wife of any <i>māmā</i> |

| No. | Kin Term | Relation to Speaker |
|-----|---|--|
| | <i>phupu</i> | Z of any <i>māiju</i> FZ, FFZD, FFBD, FMBD, FMZD, MZHB, MZHZ, FZHBW, FZHZ |
| | <i>phupāju</i> | FZH husband of any <i>phupu</i> |
| | <i>sasurā</i> | B of any <i>Phupāju</i> HF, WF, HFBy and e, HFZH, WFZH, HMZH, WMZH, BWF, ZHF, BWFB, ZHFB, BWMB, ZHMB ⁶ , HFF, WFF, HFFB, WFFB, HFFZH, WFFZH, HMMZH, WFMZH |
| | <i>sāsu</i> | HM, WM, HMZy and e, WMZy and e, HMBW, WMBW, HFBW, WFBW, BWM, ZHM, BWMZ, ZHMZ, BWFZ, ZMFZ, HMM, WMM, HFM, WFM |
| | <i>māuli sasurā</i> ³ | HMB, WMB, any <i>māmā</i> of husband or of wife |
| | <i>phupu sāsu</i> ⁴ | HFZ, WFZ any <i>phupu</i> of husband or of wife |
| 3. | <i>dāi</i> ⁺ <i>bhāi</i> ⁺ | B, FBS, FZS, MBS, MZS, BWZH, BWBWB, ZHZH, ZHBWB, WZH, WBWB, WZHB, HBWB, HZH, husband of <i>bhāju</i> or <i>buhāri</i> |
| | <i>bhāju</i> ⁺ | BW, BWZ, BWBWBW, ZHZ (ms) |
| | <i>buhāri</i> [*] | WBWBW, HZHBW wife of any <i>dai</i> or <i>bhāi</i> |
| | <i>didi</i> ⁺ | Z, FBD, FZD, MBD, MZD |

| No. | Kin Term | Relation to Speaker |
|-----|--|--|
| | <i>bahini</i> * | BWBW ⁵ , BWZHZ, ZHBW, ZHZHZ, WBW ⁵ , WBWZ, WZHZ, HZHZ, HBW |
| | <i>bhināju</i> ⁺ | wife of any <i>bhināju</i> or <i>juwāin</i> |
| | <i>juwāin</i> ⁶ | ZH, ZHB, ZHZHZH WBWZH, HZHZH, BWBWBZ, BWBZH |
| | <i>jethān</i> (ms) ⁺ | husband of <i>didi</i> and <i>bahini</i> WB, WFBS, WMBS, WFZS, WMZS |
| | <i>sālo</i> (ms)* | BWB (ms), BWBWBWB any B of own wife and B of BW |
| | <i>jethāli</i> (ms) ⁺ | WZ, WFZD, WFBD, WMBD, WMZD |
| | <i>sāli</i> (ms)* | any Z of wife |
| | <i>sāru dāi</i> ⁷ | WZH, WZHB, BHWZ |
| | <i>jethān</i> (fs) ⁺ | HB, HFBS, HMBS, HFZS, HMZS |
| | <i>dewar</i> (fs)* | any B of husband |
| | <i>dulai</i> (fs) | HBW ⁸ |
| | <i>laliyu, jethi</i> (fs) ⁺ | HZ, HFBD, HMBD, HFZD, HMZD |
| | <i>nanda</i> (fs) | ZHZ (fs) |
| | <i>srimā</i> (fs) | H |
| | <i>srimāti</i> (ms) | W |
| | <i>samdhi</i> | SWF, DHF, SWMB, DHMB, SWFB, DHMB, ZSWF, ZDHF, BSWF, BDHF, DHFF, SWFF, DHMF, SWMF |
| | | F of any <i>juwāin</i> and <i>buhāri</i> |
| | | H of any <i>samdhini</i> |
| | <i>samdhini</i> | SWM, DHM, SWMZ, DHMZ, |

| No. | Kin Term | Relation to Speaker |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| | | SWFZ, DHFZ, ZSWM, ZDHM, BSWM, DDHM, SWMM, DHMM, SWFM, DHFM |
| | | M of any <i>juwāin</i> and <i>buhāri</i> W of any <i>samdhi</i> |
| 4. | <i>choro</i> | S, BS (ms), FBSS (ms), MZSS (ms) ZS (fs), MBDS (fs) MZDS (fs), HBS, WZS, BWZS, (ms) SWZH, DHZH, DHBWB |
| | <i>chori</i> | D, BD (ms), FBSD (ms) FZSD (ms) MZSD (ms) ZD (fs), MBDD (fs), MZDD (fs), HBD, WZD, BWZD (ms), SWBW, DHBW |
| | <i>bhatija</i> | BS (ms), HBS (fs) S of any B or HB |
| | <i>bhatiji</i> | BD (ms) HBS (fs) D of any B of HB |
| | <i>bhānja</i> | ZS (ms), HZS (fs) S of any Z or HZ |
| | <i>bhānji</i> | ZD (ms) HZD (fs) D of any Z or HZ |
| | <i>bhadau</i> | BS (fs), ZS (fs) |
| | <i>bhadai</i> | BD(fs), ZD(fs) |
| | <i>bhadau sāla</i> | WBS (ms), WZS (ms) |
| | <i>bhadai sāli</i> | WBD (ms), WZD (ms) |
| | <i>juwāin</i> | DH, SWB, BDH, ZSWB, DDHF, SSWF, SDHF, yZH H of <i>chori</i> , <i>bhatiji</i> , <i>bhānji</i> , <i>bhadai</i> , <i>nātini</i> , <i>palātini</i> and <i>jalātini</i> ⁹ |
| | <i>buhāri</i> | B of <i>buhāri</i> SW, SWZ, BSW, ZSW, DHZ, ZSWZ, SSWM, WBSW, DDHM, DSWM |

| No. | Kin Term | Relation to Speaker |
|-----|---------------|---|
| | | wife of any <i>choro</i> , <i>bhatija</i> , <i>bhadau</i> , <i>nāti</i> , <i>palāti</i> , <i>jalāti</i> ⁹ yBW ²⁷ |
| 5. | <i>nāti</i> | S of <i>choro/chori</i> , <i>bhatija/bhatiji</i> <i>bhānja/bhānji</i> , <i>bhadau/bhadai</i> SS or DS of all these ⁹ SSS or DSS or DDS of all these ⁹ . |
| | <i>nātini</i> | DS, SD, D of <i>choro/chori</i> , <i>bhatija/</i> <i>bhatiji</i> , <i>bhanja/bhanji</i> , <i>bhadau</i> , <i>bhadai</i> DD of SD of all these DDD or SDD or DSD of all these ⁹ |

Note: + = elder
* = younger

Table 15: Terms of Reference Used by the Chetris of Rārā

| No. | Kin Term | Relation to Speaker |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | <i>buwā</i> <i>muwā</i> | FF, FFB FM, FFBW |
| 2. | <i>bā</i> <i>āma</i> <i>jetho bā</i> , <i>kākā</i> ¹⁰ <i>thulo bā</i> . | F M FeB/FyB, MZH, MZHB, FFBS, FFZS, FMZS, FMBS, FBWZH, FBWZHB, WBWF, WZHF, MBWB husband of <i>jethi/kāncho āmā</i> |
| | <i>jethi āmā/kāncho</i> <i>āmā thulo āmā</i> | MeZ/MyZ, F BW/FyBW, MFBD, MMBD, MFZD, MMZD, FZHZ, FBWZ, |

| No. | Kin Term | Relation to Speaker |
|-----|----------------------------|--|
| | | WZHM, WBWM, HBWM, HZHM, MZHBW, MBWBW, ¹¹ ZHBWM, BWZHM wife of any <i>jetho bā/kākā</i> |
| 3. | <i>jethi sāsū</i> (ms) | WZ, WFZD |
| | <i>logne</i> (fs) | H |
| | <i>svasni</i> (ms) | W |
| | <i>solti</i> ¹¹ | ZHS (ms), WZHZZH |
| 4. | <i>choro</i> ¹² | Own S (ms + fs), DHZH, ZWZH |
| | <i>chori</i> ¹² | Own D (ms + fs), SWBW, DHBW |

Table 16: Termas Applied to Households

| Generation | | |
|------------|---------------------|---|
| +1 | <i>māwal</i> | MB's household |
| | <i>māwal sāurāl</i> | HMB's or WMB's household |
| 0 | <i>sāurāl</i> | WF's or WB's household |
| | <i>māiti</i> | A married woman's F and B's household |
| | <i>ghar</i> | Ego's (ms) own home, where a married woman has married; home of F, FF for male speaker and unmarried women. |

Before turning to a discussion of the differences and similarities between the Rārā terminologies and the other terminologies referred to above it would be better to make a few comments on the Tables. There are only, a few terms which differ for male and female speakers (ms and fs respectively). Thus, WeZ (*jethāli*), WyZ (*sāli*) and WyB (*sālo*) are used by male speakers only and HeZ (*jethi*), HyZ (*nanda*) and HyB (*dewar*)

are used by female speakers only. The term *jethān* (HeB or WeB) is used by both sexes. Further, while WeB/WyB (*jethān/sālo*) and HeZ/HyZ (*jethi/nanda*) are used by a person and his or her same sex siblings, the terms for WeZ/WyZ (*jethali sāli*) and HeB/HyB (*jethān/dewar*) are used only by a man about his own wife's sisters and by a woman about her own husband's brothers respectively, and not about their same sex siblings' spouses' siblings. Thus, when a man refers to his BWZ he uses the terms *bhāuju* or *bhuāri* which are also the terms for BW (ms and fs). When a woman refers to her ZHB she uses the terms *bhināju* and *juwān* which are also the terms for ZH (ms and fs).

The terms *jethān/sālo* (WeB/WyB) and *jethi/nanda* (HeZ/HyZ) are not used by ego's opposite sex siblings. As in Vatuk's data (Vatuk 1969, 1972, 1975) there appears to be an ambiguity about these terms. My female informants gave no term for BWB. One Thakuri man claimed the correct term for ZHZ to be *bhāuju* and Chetri men use *solti*.

The only other suggestion of terms which differ according to the sex of the speaker is found in generation-1 in the three sets of terms *bhatija/bhatiji*, *bhānja/bhānji* and *bhadau/bhadai*. The fourth set, *choro/chori*, is the same for male and female speakers referring to own children and children of same sex siblings. Men may refer to the children of their brother as *bhatija/bhatiji* and Chetris tend to do this much more than do Thakuris. When women use these terms they are referring to the children of their husbands' brothers. When they refer to the children of their own brothers they use the terms *bhadau/bhadai* and these terms may also sometimes refer to a woman's sister's son and daughter although these

may also be referred to as *choro/chori* by a woman. A man refers to his wife's brother's children as *bhadau sālo/bhadai sāli*. A man's sister's children are his *bhānja/bhānji* and when these terms are used by a woman speaker she is always referring to the children of her husband's cross-sex siblings.

To summarise, it can be said that while men distinguish between the children of same sex siblings and those of opposite sex siblings and may distinguish both from their own children, women classify the children of all their siblings together. They may, however, distinguish own children and children of same-sex siblings from children of opposite-sex siblings. Thakuri men tend not to follow this latter distinction made by their wives. They classify the children of all the siblings of their wives together. Some terms are used in two or more than two generations. Thus *bāje/bajai* refer to any ancestor or ancestress of generation +2 and above. *Sasurā/sāsu* refer to spouse's parents, spouse's parent's siblings and spouse's parent's sibling's spouses as well as to any *bāje/bajai* of a spouse. *Buhāri* refers to yBW and SW, *juwāin* to yZH and DH and these two terms are also used about any spouse of *nāti* or *nātini*. *Nāti/nātini* refer to any person of generation -2 and generations below.¹³

Neither the Chetris nor the Thakuris make slips in the usage across generations in the manner described by Beck (1972: 227). The only example of this phenomenon is the term *bābu* (father) used by a person to address his or her own son. The Thakuri usage of *bāje* referring to MBWB and *bajai* referring to FZHZ could be examples of such slippage, but it seems more likely that here these terms were given

to denote the distance of the relationship.¹⁴ *Bāje/bajai* are also general terms which can be used about anybody who appears to be of appropriate generation and the same is true for the reciprocal terms *nāti/nātini*. Aside from having referents in successive generations these terms are also used in address between unrelated people and they may be used to specify relations between kingroups. Thus, the Kalyal Thakuris of Rārā are said to be *nāti* to the Kalyal Thakuris of Musikot who are *bāje*.

The absence of slippage across generations should be seen in the wider context of the rigidity of generations. The five generations for which there are separate terms are never adjusted to bring people who live together nearer in generational terms. Thus, some of the men at Rārā are younger than others by whom they are considered to be *buwā* or *bā*. Such relationships are not adjusted according to the actual age of the living and the rules of address and greeting (Appendix) are observed according to the assumed genealogical relationship.

One final point about Table 14 relates to the inequality between siblings. As generations are fixed, so relative age is also rigidly observed. In particular, this is expressed in generation 0. In this generation two terms are used to refer to every genealogical position, one referring to a junior, the other to a senior. Here the principle (*italicised*) is the relative age of siblings. Thus, *dāi* (eB) is distinguished from *bhāi* (yB) and *didi* (eZ) is distinguished from *bahini* (yZ). Similarly *bhināju* (eZH) is distinguished from *juwāin* (yZH) and *bhāju* (eBW) is distinguished from *buhāri* (yBW). For *jethān/sālo*, however, it is the age difference between ego's wife and her brother which

matter. A *jethān* is a wife's elder brother, whereas *sālo* is her younger brother. The principle of the relative age of siblings determines the character of a number of relationships. For example, in generation +1, MyZ is *kāncho muwā*, MeZ is *jethi muwā*, FyB is *kāncho buwā*, FeB is *jetho buwā*, etc. This hierarchical relation between ancestors who were siblings also justifies relations of inequality between lines of descent. In everyday life such hierarchical relations are expressed in the way such relations greet and address each other.

Table 15 shows where the kinship terms of the Chetris differ from those used by the Thakuris. The terms *buwā* and *muwā* which are used by Thakuris to refer to father and mother respectively, are used by Chetris to refer to a patrilineal ancestor of generation +2 and his wife. All other relatives of this generation are referred to as *bāje/bajai*. Chetris use a different term for own mother and own father, namely *āmā* and *bā* respectively, and they make the further distinction between own father (*bā*) and his same-sex siblings. Thus, father's brother (elder and younger) as well as MZH are referred to as *kākā* rather than by the terms *jetho buwā/kāncho buwā* used by the Thakuris.

Chetris use *logne* for "husband" and *swāsni* for "wife". These terms mean "man" and "woman" respectively and the Thakuri usage of *srīmā* and *srīmāti* for "husband" and "wife" are considered more correct in Nepali.

The term *solti* is used exclusively by the Chetris to refer to ZHZ(ms) and WZH ZHZ(ms). According to Turner (1931) this term refers to "B or Z of BW or ZH of sister-in-law", but at Rārā the term

is not used to refer to sisters-in-law in a general sense. The fact that the Chetris use a different term than Thakuris does not result in any change in the terms used for adjacent positions. The ZH is still a *bhināju* or a *juwāin* and the ZHZH a *dāi* or a *bhāi* for both Chetris and Thakuris.

To our mind the similarities in the kinship terminology used by Chetris and Thakuris override the differences. Therefore we feel justified in treating this as one system of kinship terminology. The main point to be made about the differences here is that, whether they can be explained or not, they are used by both castes to emphasise the cultural differences between them and this is the main significance of these differences in day-to-day village life.

3. WHAT TYPE OF KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY?

I now turn to a more general discussion of the kinship terminology. From the tables it should be clear that etymologically the terms used by Chetris and Thakuris at Rārā resemble those reported from many north Indian systems (Berreman 1963, Khare 1975, Leaf 1971, Madan 1975, Parry 1979, Karve 1953, Vatuk 1969, 1972, 1975, and Lall 1911), and discussed by Dumont (1975), Turner (1975) and Scheffler (1981). Equally it should be clear that in many cases the manner in which the terms are extended to refer to more distant relatives is different from most of these north Indian terminologies.¹⁵ Before considering the differences and similarities between the Rārā terminology and these north Indian terminologies, these extensions shall, therefore, be briefly explained.

Generation +2 is straightforwardly divided into one set of terms referring to all relations and their spouses traced through both one's father and mother. Relations of this generation traced through own spouse are assigned affinal terms which are extended in a similar manner. Thus, any *bāje* of H or W are *burho sasurā* to ego.

In generation +1 a distinction is made between own mother and father and their same-sex siblings by using the qualifying *jetho* (eldest) and *kāncho* (youngest) for parents' same-sex elder and younger siblings.¹⁶ Since the term for MZ is the same as that for FBW and the term for FB is the same as that for MZH, extensions traced through parents' same-sex siblings to their spouses and the latter's siblings involve an endless chain of people who are all designated a term which is a variation on the terms for M and F. In other words, in this generation same-sex siblings are designated identical terms. For opposite-sex siblings there is a certain amount of disagreement between informants about the appropriate terms. Thus, MBWB is sometimes referred to as *bāje* and sometimes as *kāncho buwā* (*kākā* by Chetris). The FZHZ is referred to as *phupu*, *muwā* or *bajāi*. The confusion and uncertainty about these positions is great enough for me to feel that Vatuk's statement that "both cross-sex siblings and spouse of same individual are characteristically assigned identical terms" (Vatuk 1969: 104) does not hold for the Rārā terminology. Most consistently the Thakuris referred to FZHZ as *bajai* whereas Chetris used the term *kāncho muwā*. Both Chetris and Thakuris, however, pointed out that her husband, namely FZHZH, would be *kāncho buwā* or *kākā*.

In generation 0, the terms for brother and sister designate own siblings, parallel and cross-cousins as well as people married to one's affines. Thus, a WZH and his sister, a WBW and her brother, a BWBW and her brother, a HZH and his sister, a HBW and her brother, a ZHZH and his sister are all designated sibling terms. Some positions in these extensions can be designated two sets of terms and this is also pointed out by informants. A WB is a *jethān* or a *sālo* and his WB is designated the terms *dāi* or *bhāi* according to the relative age of this latter pair of siblings. A WBWBW is a *bhāuju* or a *buhāri* and her brother, namely the WBWBW is designated the terms *jethān* or *sāla*. In this chain of extensions the sibling of an affine is thus considered to marry someone who by ego is designated a sibling term and the affinal pair of siblings are considered *bhāuju/buhāri* and *jethān/sālo*. For such extensions through the sister the following emerges. A ZH is a *bhināju* or a *juwāin*; the ZHZH is a *dāi* or a *bhāi*. The ZHZHZH is again designated the terms *bhināju/juwāin* and his sister, namely ZHZHZH is a *bhāuju/buhāri* and her spouse a *dāi* or a *bhāi*. In this chain the affinal pair of siblings (except in the first bloc where the ZHZ is *jethi* or *nanda* for ego's same-sex siblings) are *bhināju/juwāin* and *bhāuju/buhāri*. From these extensions it appears that the brother of a *bhāuju buhāri* may be either a *bhināju/juwāin* or a *jethān/sālo*. This corresponds to the fact that the pair of affinal sibling in the extensions are married to people ego would call by sibling terms, so that, depending on which side you approach, the BWB is also a ZH and the ZHZ is also a BW.

The suggestion made by one Thakuri informant that the ZHZ (ms) is a *bhāuju/buhāri* is in line with this. Her husband is designated a sibling term and she herself appears to be a possible spouse.¹⁷ The absence of a term for BWB(fs) can then be understood in terms of the general avoidance a woman shows towards her husband. The BWB of a woman is also a possible spouse and he is certainly a possible sister's husband.

These extensions only apply consistently outside a person's immediate affines. As should be clear from Table 14, aside from the terms for wife's brother, the immediate siblings of a person's spouse are designated special terms and these terms do not appear in the extensions.¹⁸

In generation-1 terms are extended to children's spouses, children's spouses' siblings and children's spouses' siblings' spouses in a similar manner to that just discussed for generation 0. Children's spouses and their siblings are considered to be *juwāin/buhāri* according to sex, whereas their siblings are considered to be *choro/chori*. This is straightforward when own children and their spouses are concerned. For the children of sisters and brothers there are variations in the terms according to the sex of the speaker. This manner of extending terms does not, however, apply when affines other than ego's and ego's siblings are concerned. Thus, affines in generation 0 traced through a son or a daughter, SWF/DHM, etc., and their kin and affines, are all designated the same set of terms, namely *samdhi/samdhini*.

The regularity with which terms are extended in the three central generations of the kinship

terminology thus emerges most clearly in generation 0. In this generation terms denoting kin and affines alternate in the chain of extensions so that the affines of affines are designated kin terms whereas their affines are designated affinal terms. These extensions could in principle go on indefinitely, but in practice such distant relationships are never traced.

This principle of extension is familiar from the so-called Dravidian systems of kinship terminology as reported by Allen (1975, 1976), Beck (1972), Dumont (1953, 1961, 1964, 1966), Stirrat (1977), Good (1981), and Yalman (1962, 1967). In the Dravidian terminology the principle is consistently applied and produces a simplicity not present in the Rārā terminology. In Rārā cross and parallel cousins are not distinguished but all denoted by sibling terms. The terms for MB and FZH differ as do the terms for FZ and MBW and all of these differ from the terms used to refer to HF/WF and HM/WM. At Rārā neither ego's cross-cousins nor his MB can be said to be defined terminologically as affines (Dumont 1953) and there is nothing in this terminology which leads one to pre-suppose or expect cross-cousin marriage. However, opposite sex siblings are terminologically distinguished from siblings of the same sex. Thus, MB and FZ and their spouses are singled out with special terms, and in generation +1 extensions through opposite sex siblings are problematic and informants are confused. The same confusion does not occur when relations through same-sex siblings are considered. Further, a person, calls his or her same-sex sibling's children by the term used for own children, but there are special terms for the children of opposite-sex siblings.¹⁹

There are two additional similarities to the Dravidian systems. The first is the absence of a distinction between maternal and paternal kin in generation +2 and between descendants of sons and daughters in generation -2. The second is the distinction between senior and junior relatives in generation 0 as well as in generation +1. Although some age distinctions are made in north Indian terminologies (Parry 1979: 298–299, Vatuk 1969: 98–100), the consistency of the Rārā terminology in this respect is worth noting.

The etymology of terms, the absence of a distinction between cross and parallel cousins and the extension of sibling terms to all these are characteristics which the Rārā terminology shares with those reported from north India. Some of these north Indian terminologies have also been shown to express a distinction between those who give and those who take wives (Vatuk 1969, 1972, 1975; Turner 1975 and Pocock 1972). At Rārā, the terms of reference certainly distinguish such wifegivers as the MB and the WB from wifetakers such as the FZH and the ZH. However, when these terms are extended to refer to affines of the affines and their affines, then wifegivers may also be designated terms for wifetakers and vice-versa. The *bhināju/juwāin*, *bhāju/buhāri*, *jethān/sālo* complex reflects this: although *jethān/sālo* and *bhināju/buhāri* are two different sets of terms they may refer to the same individual in the chain of extensions. Terminologically a WB may also be a ZH and a ZHZ (ms) may be a BW (*bhāju/buhāri*). Further at Rārā, but not in the typical north Indian system of terminology, MZH and FB are designated identical terms, as are FBW and MZ. Thus, despite the similarity with north Indian systems, no conclusions about the pattern of marriage can be made

from an analysis of the Rārā kinship terminology. Just as nothing pre-supposes the practice of cross-cousin marriage, there is also no evidence of the system reflecting hypergamy. Although the ZH is distinguished from the WB, this in itself does not indicate differences of status between the two, and when terms of address are considered no such status differences emerge (Appendix C). On the other hand, the extension of terms suggests exchange marriages, or that wifegivers may also be wifetakers and vice-versa. However, this assumption can also not be made from the terminological system itself for with one exception (*jethān* referring to HeB and WeB) the terms used to refer to a person's immediate affines of generation 0 are different from those used in the extensions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

It has been an attempt that an underlying principle in the Rārā kinship terminology cannot easily be isolated. The Rārā terminology contains both Dravidian and north Indian characteristics but does not conform to either of these models. Other such variant terminologies have been reported and some writers (Allen 1975, Stirrat 1977) have suggested that these are transformations of the two original types. Such transformations may be seen as part of a general process of transformation from Dravidian symmetrical prescriptive systems to the non-prescriptive north Indian type as suggested by Needham (1966, 1967). Although it might be plausible to consider the Rārā terminology as part of this process of transformation, the data does not lend itself to such an interpretation. There is no information on the terminology used in the past, nor is there any consistent indication of how the terminologies of Chetris and

Thakuris have differed. On the other hand, as Needham has shown, “symmetric prescriptive terminologies can govern asymmetric affinal alliances” and “asymmetric affinal alliances can be accompanied by a non-prescriptive terminology (ibid.: 1967: 43). Thus, the absence of any underlying principle in the Rārā terminology does necessarily indicate an absence of certain marriage strategies which have been shown to exist in those Indian kinship terminologies where such underlying principles have been isolated. On the contrary, Needham’s analysis suggests that a kinship terminology must be examined together with rules and practices of marriage as well as actual marriage patterns.

The kinship terminology of the Thakuris and Chetris at Rārā suggests the possibility, at least, that a system of kin classification does not “reflect” a structure of social relations in any straightforward manner. In other words, the possibility exists that a search for underlying principles which account for terminological classification as well as for social behaviour may not be successful. Accepting this is not to claim that a system of kin classification may not be coherent or that the way people classify their relations is insignificant. Rather, such a position implies that the nature of ideology itself may not be straightforward. A kinship ideology includes a system of kin-classification, ideas about marriage, other concepts of kinship as well as rules about social behaviour (Good 1981) and any attempt to understand it must necessarily take account of all these levels. How these levels are related, to what extent they betray underlying principles and whether principles apparent at one level can legitimately be said to govern or be reflected at other levels, can only be established when all aspects of the ideology have been examined.

Chapter 10

MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE STRATEGIES

1. HYPERGAMY AND ISOGAMY

This subject has already been referred to on a number of occasions. It has already indicated that the marriage strategies of the Thakuris of Rārā have changed during the last four decades or so and that this evidence is important in general argument about the status of the Shah Thakuris at Rārā. In this chapter, then, analysing ideas about who you should and should not marry, the prestations made at weddings and the marriage strategies of Thakuris and Chetris. How these different aspects reveal similar, although contradictory tendencies and how together they may be seen to constitute a kinship ideology which can be interpreted differently according to context.

Ideas about marriage and ideas about affinal relationships are often seen to reveal attitudes about the relative status of those who marry. Amongst Rajputs (Parry 1979, Stern 1977, Karve 1953, Taft-Plunkett 1973, and Inden 1976), such ideas allow for the practice of hypergamous marriages in which, generally speaking, a man is of higher status than his bride (Dumont 1964). Amongst the Chetris and

Thakuris, who may both be considered Rajputs or at least as part of Rajput tradition (Fürer-Haimendorf 1966, Dumont 1964, Berreman 1969, Galey 1980 and Sanwal 1976) hypergamy defined in this way cannot nowadays easily be identified. However, several writers on this subject point to the two-faced nature of a hypergamous system. Thus, Parry states:

I shall argue that... upheavals are endemic to the system itself and that the hypergamous hierarchy is like the Phoenix: it contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction and its own rebirth.

(Parry 1979: 196)

Pocock (1972), Stern (1977) and Ahmad (1973) also describe how hypergamy may break down and how at least for some time there may be an adherence to isogamy or marriage between equals. Because of these demonstrated fluctuations between these two types of marriage strategies Dumont's sharp distinction between them seems unwarranted. For Dumont, the status of a wife who has married hypergamously is of no consequence to her children. They are considered to be of their father's status. In an isogamous marriage, on the other hand, the "unequality of status" between husband and wife will be reflected on the children (Dumont 1964: 86-87). As Parry has shown for the Kangra Rajputs and as Inden has shown for middle period Bengal, the status of the mother's natal group is not irrelevant to her being accepted as a bride in a hypergamous marriage. Thus, isogamy and hypergamy are not as different as suggested by Dumont and emphasis on one type of marriage may

be transformed to an emphasis on the other. This nature of hypergamy, however, presents more than a definitional problem, for, given that the system may go through an isogamous phase, by what means can hypergamy be identified during this phase? If hypergamy refers to a practice or a norm then it cannot be identified in this way during an isogamous phase. If, on the other hand, hypergamy refers to a status difference between two families where a woman of one has married a man of the other and this status difference has been created by the event of marriage itself, then every marriage, whether between people who otherwise consider themselves equals or not, is conceptualised as hypergamous. In this latter case the evidence for hypergamy is not based on patterns and strategies of marriage; rather the inequality between wifegivers and wifetakers in this case should be demonstrated from the marriage ritual itself and from the way immediate affines conceptualise and behave towards each other. Thus, as it is commonly used, hypergamy refers to two different levels of a kinship ideology. In one sense hypergamy refers to behaviour and strategies, whereas in the other sense it refers to concepts and ideas. The distinction is important because hypergamy in the latter sense can exist without the former. Thus, hypergamy as created by the event of marriage may exist with a practice of hypergamous marriage or with a general emphasis on isogamy and exchange marriage. This is the case for the Chetris and Thakuris at Rārā today, whereas in the past Thakuris appear to have conformed more closely to a general hypergamous practice characteristic of Rajputs elsewhere.

2. MARRIAGE RULES

As noted, marriage is prohibited between people of the same *gotra* and as far as most people are concerned this is the chief function of *gotras*. In some cases the rule of *gotra* exogamy can be violated and the minimum requirement of prospective spouses is that they should be of different *bañsa*. Whether *bañsa* here refers to clan or subclan depends on whether the *bañsa* itself is considered to have divided (*puteo*, broken). *Gotra* and *bañsa* exogamy are considered to be the only straightforward prohibitions on marriage and by these prohibitions people who share the physical substances of bone, flesh and blood and who are *hār nāta* are excluded from marrying each other.¹

Some informants mentioned a rule prohibiting marriage with the father's line up to the seventh generation and with the mother's line up to the third and called this rule *sāt pustā samma* ("up to the seventh generation"), but, while Chetris did not operate with this rule at all, two of the Thakuri informants claimed that this was a new rule which had been advocated by king Mahendra, the father of the present king of Nepal. Although not an operational rule, the *sāt pustā samma* rule reflects both the *sapinda* rule known from India (Mayer 1960: 203, Madan 1965: 105, Karve 1953: 55) and certain ideas held by Thakuris and Chetris about marriage to real and classificatory parallel and cross-cousins.

Marriage to the children of the father's brother is excluded by the rule of *bansa* and *gotra* exogamy. These people are like your own full siblings and they may even be members of your *pariwār*. The case is less clear with the children of mother's sisters, but

the possibility of marriage with these people is excluded on the grounds that, although they do not share any substances of *hār*, *ragat* and *māsu* with you, they call your mother by the same term as you yourself, namely *muwā* for Thakuris and *āmā* for Chetris.² Similarly, your mother may refer to the children of her sister using the terms for son and daughter. Marriage to the children of parents' cross-sex siblings is, however, not excluded, despite the fact that such cross-cousins are considered siblings terminologically, but with regard to this Chetris and Thakuris hold different attitudes. Some Thakuris consider that full FZD marriage should be avoided, whereas others claim such a marriage to be perfectly in order. For all Thakuris, however, full and classificatory MBD marriage and classificatory FZD marriage are acceptable types of marriages. Chetri informants are more in agreement with each other. They admit the possibility of a full cross-cousin marriage only reluctantly, but claim classificatory cross-cousin marriages of both types to be not only acceptable but the preferred marriage.

This difference between Thakuris and Chetris is also reflected in their attitudes to marriages in which two men exchange sisters (*sañlea*, local term). Thakuris accept such marriages between two sets of full as well as classificatory siblings whereas according to Chetris such marriages should be avoided. When such exchange marriages happen Chetris consider that one marriage will be good and successful whereas the other will be bad and ridden with misfortune.³ This does not, however, apply to exchange marriages when they take place between people who are related as siblings in a classificatory way.

Thus far, the marriage rules described are negative, pointing to prohibitions rather than prescriptions and preferences. The only people who are unambiguously prohibited are those with whom a person shares his or her *gotra* and *bañsa* and those who may call your mother by the same term as you yourself use, i.e. full or classificatory MZDs. The prohibition of these two categories of kinsmen not only points to the importance of the sharing of physical substances but also to the difference between same sex and opposite sex siblings already referred to in Chapter 9. Thus the MZD is prohibited as a spouse whereas the MBD is not. On the other hand, the possibility of mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter's marriage is neither a preference nor a prescription. It is simply stated that such marriages are possible and not prohibited and Chetris are much more clear about their dislike for marriages between closely related people in all circumstances than are Thakuris.

There is in addition to these rules also another rule. Thus, both Chetris and Thakuris state that people should marry equals and that women are both given to and taken from (*uri puri linu dinu*, to take and give back and forth) this category of people referred to as *kutumba*. Thakuris consider that they should marry other Thakuris who also are Shah and Chetris consider only those who are *tāgādhāri* eligible as spouses. Although generally all those between whom marriage takes place are considered *kutumba*, the preferred marriage is with *kutumba* with whom one's line or segment of the *bañsa* already have married. The preferred marriage is, therefore, with *caleko kutumba*, meaning *kutumba* who have already been used, and

it is explicitly stated that in such marriages there need be no anxiety about the purity of either side, nor are dowries as substantial as they are with new or *nāyā kutumba*. When a man seeks a bride for his son, he will invariably enquire into the status and *bañsa* of her mother's brother. If this man is of the groom's own *bañsa* or of the *bañsa* of any of his wifetakers or wifegivers, then the equality between the people concerned is considered confirmed.

Thus, while marriage is prohibited between people who are *hār nāta* and also between people whose parents are same sex siblings, both Chetris and Thakuris operate a positive marriage rule which stipulates that people should marry equals. Further, equals or *kutumba* include both wifegivers and wifetakers and the possibility of marriage with such people and people who are considered *nāta* is also suggested by the relaxed attitude to cross-cousin marriages of both the patrilateral and matrilateral type.

3. MARRIAGE

Despite the emphasis on isogamous marriage there are no apparent differences between the offspring of wives who are of equal status with their husband and the offspring of those wives whose status is considered to be lower. Thus, offspring of Shah men and Shahi women are considered Shah and if a *tāgādhāri* Chetri man marries a *matwāli* Chetri woman their offspring is also considered to be twice-born. Thakuris and Chetris express the same attitude to the status of the mother, i.e. they prefer her to be an equal but her lower status does not affect the status of her children. However, the two castes differ with respect to the type

of unions they accept and the extent to which children from these different unions are considered legitimate.

There are five different types of union between men and women and Chetris consider all of these to constitute marriage, although some of these unions are more prestigious than others. In addition there exists the possibility of concubinage and the children from such unions are not considered legitimate, although they may be favoured by their fathers.

For both Thakuris and Chetris, proper marriage (*bihā*) consists of the gift of a virgin, (*kanyā dān*, standard Nepali) or *dātā* be (local term). In giving a daughter or a sister away in marriage the bride givers symbolically state their inferior status towards the bride and her husband by ritually washing her and his feet (*gor dhunu*). In this there are some differences between Thakuris and Chetris. Amongst the Thakuris the feet of the bride are washed by members of her *pariwār*, her *sākh* and by the heads of all the *pariwār* of the localised *bañsa* and the feet of the groom are washed by members of the bride-giving *pariwār*. Amongst the Chetris, however, the feet of the bride are washed by her *pariwār* only and her *sākh* and other members of the *bañsa* are not involved in this at all, nor are the feet of the bridegroom washed. On this occasion *dacchinā*, a ritual payment of a few rupees which in other circumstances is also made to a *purohit* (Chapter 7) and to unmarried daughters (Chapter 8) is given by both Chetris and Thakuris, not only to the bride and groom, but also to the sisters of the bride and their husbands, the father's sister and the father's sister's husband, i.e. to all the immediate wifetakers of the *pariwār*.

The position of the married sisters and father's sisters as receivers of *dacchinā* accounts for the fact that they do not give dowry to the bride. Dowry (*dāijo*) consists of clothes, jewellery, pots and pans and perhaps livestock, but only rarely of cash⁴ and is given to the bride first and foremost by members of her *pariwār*, that is by her father, brothers, mother, sisters and father's sisters if they are unmarried. Secondly, all *sākh* contribute as amongst Thakuris do all the *pariwār* of the localised segment of the *bañsa*. The mother's brother of the bride is also included as one of the main contributors. Although he does not give any particular item, he should give more than *sākh* but less than the father. This inclusion of the mother's brother as a dowry-giver suggests that at least in this context, from the point of view of the wifetakers, the mother's brother, i.e. a wifegiver of the wifegivers, is assimilated to the wifegivers, whereas from the point of view of the wifegivers he is considered a consanguine.

The transfer of dowry and *dacchinā* from the wifegivers to the wifetakers is in accordance with *kanyā dān* and the idea of hypergamy, namely that inferiors should give to superiors. However, at other stages of a normal *bihā*, the direction of giving and taking is reversed (Inden; 1976: 100). But here again there are differences between Chetris and Thakuris. Aside from an opening gift called *ek rupiyā dām* (the price of one rupee) comprised a *janai*, a betel nut and a silver rupee given by the father of the groom to the father of the bride, the main prestation from Thakuri wifetakers to their wifegivers is made when the marriage is fully completed and when the groom meets his wife's parents as a son-in-law. At this

occasion he is obliged to make a prestation called *paura kauni*⁵ comprised money or gold to the wife's father and clothes to the wife's mother. Chetri wifetakers make a prestation to the wifegivers at the beginning of the wedding. This prestation is called *koseli* (bribe or present). At this time the *pariwār* of the groom, that is his father, mother, brothers and unmarried sisters give *dautai* (local term), a particular kind of Chetri shawl, and *lāru* (local term), a sweetmeat, to those who later give dowry. The mother, father's mother, unmarried sisters, unmarried father's sisters and mother's brother's wife of the bride receive *dautai*, whereas the father, father's father, brother and mother's brother receive *lāru*. Thus, while at one stage in the marriage rituals, namely when the bride takes her departure from her *māiti* (her father's house), a status distinction between wifegivers and wifetakers is emphasised; at other stages the marriage prestations made are in accordance with the general ideology of giving and taking between *kutumba*.

Bihā is marriage proper and it takes place with the help of *purohit*. The bride and groom have not chosen each other, nor have they met before the wedding. More likely for both Chetris and Thakuris, the father of the groom has conducted an extensive search to find a suitable match for his son and *pariwar*.⁶ Nowadays, the marriage rituals tend to coincide with the *bratabandha* and ideally the main ritual should take place in the village of the groom so that his male agnates and *sākh* as well as anyone who takes part in the ceremony and are subsequently fed, can offer *ritauni* (*ritaunu* to make nice) which consists of a few rupees given to the young man at

his *bratabandha*.⁷ In this way the groom's father also carries most of the expense of the wedding since he alone will provide the food for the final feast (*boj khānu*). On the whole Chetris follow this pattern, but increasingly Thakuri men appear to have had both *bratabandha* and *bihā* performed for them in their wife's *māiti*, sometimes even using the *purohit* of the bride's father rather than their own *purohit*. However, my Thakuri informants carefully pointed out that this in no way reduces the cost for the groom's family. They bear the expense of sending the groom as well as some of his closest agnates with a procession to the bride's village. Since the Thakuris marry girls from distant villages the journey itself can be costly. Further once the marriage party returns to the groom's village, his father is obliged to sacrifice a goat in the *ghar-paiso* ritual, which marks the first entrance of the new bride into the house of her husband's father as well as the acceptance of her by the *sākh*.

When a man remarries the wedding on this second occasion may also be a *bihā*, but it is normally referred to as *dusro bihā* (second marriage) and the ritual may be abbreviated. Thus it was told that in the old days at *dusro bihā* the fire was circumambulated by a *khukuri* (Nepali knife) instead of by the bride and groom. This seems to have been the practice particularly when the second wife was of lower status. Sometimes a Shahi woman was married to a Shah man in this way, and while the offspring of such unions became Thakuris of Shah status, the inferiority of the wife and mother could be reflected in the status of the particular line of branch of the *bañsa* which had undertaken such marriages. This is, for example, the case for the *jetho*

branch of the Thakuris. As noted in Chapter 8, nowadays this branch is considered slightly inferior to the other two branches.

Another type of union practised only by Chetris is *jāri*. This term actually means “adultery” but is used to refer to the second marriage of a woman. If a Chetri woman leaves her husband for another man, and if this man wants to keep her as his wife, he must pay money (*jān dinu*) to the first husband. No other ritual or transfer of prestations is necessary and the father of the woman is not involved in the affair at all. A *jāri* payment may be as much as Rs. 4,000, but in one case which took place in 1977, a Rokaya paid Rs. 2,500 in *jāri* for a woman, who then became his son’s first wife. In seven cases of *jāri* at Rārā, four men received whereas three men paid cash.

A third union is *urālo* (steep, in a downwards direction) or *tipi linu* (to pick up). In this, spouses simply cohabit without any ceremony or ritual having taken place. As the term *urālo* itself suggests, this union is considered of low status, although in no case could detect any inferiority in the status of the children born from such unions. *Urālo* is often preferred if both spouses have been married before and in this case no dowry or any other marriage prestations are transferred. According to the genealogies, there have been only five such cases at Rārā and all of these have involved Chetris, but since this type of union is considered to be of low status that more have taken place and that these were concealed from the general knowledge.

A fourth and nowadays rare type of marriage is called *corere lānu* (to take away as a thief)—thief marriage or marriage by capture. In such unions, a

boy literally steals the girl with the help of his *sākh* and she is held secluded in a *goth* until her kin agrees to the match. A full *bihā* may follow and even if it does not *dāijo*, *dautai* and *lāru* may be transferred. Some people suggested that if parents cannot afford a proper marriage they may try to arrange for a boy to “steal” their daughter in this manner. It is heard only of one such case involving a Rokaya boy from Rārā who abducted a poor Burha girl from Chapru. This took place some time before my arrival at Rārā and apparently involved both Chetris and Thakuris.

For Chetris and Thakuris alike the most offensive marriage is one which directly suggests that a girl can be bought for money. This type of marriage which involves a payment of rupees from the father of the groom to the father of the bride, is called *muniyako dān khāne* (eating the price of a young girl) by the Thakuris and simply *koseli* by the Chetris (Berreman 1963). It is considered of low status and a shameful affair, but again this does not reflect on the status of the offspring from such unions. Indeed, both Chetris and Thakuris practice such marriages but because of the delicate nature of the subject it was difficult to obtain any concrete data and the number and circumstances of such unions. One Thakuri admitted that Rārā girls had been involved in such marriages a couple of times, but defended these marriages by pointing out that the money received by the bride’s father had, in all cases, been used to equip the girl herself and therefore ultimately ended up with the *kutumba* anyway.

Thakuris consider marriage with Chetri women impossible. Chetri women can become mistresses (*bhitreni*) of Thakuri men, but they cannot be married

properly and usually offspring from such unions remain members of their mother's *jāt*, *bansa*, *kul* and *pariwār*. Such sexual unions appear to have been particularly common in the past, often involving Thakuri men and Chetri female slaves. Such slaves often constituted part of the dowry from wealthy wifegivers and were thus transferred together with the bride. The groom appears to have had sexual access to such female slaves as well as to his wife, but only the offspring of the latter were considered legitimate and could inherit. Jaysa, already referred to in Chapter 7, is an example of such an illegitimate child. He is the offspring of a sexual union between a Chetri *bhitreni* and a Thakuri man and he is nowadays stubbornly trying to assert his rights as a descendant against his legitimate halfbrother.

Although ideally Thakuris cannot marry Chetri women in *bihā*, in practice such marriages have taken place with no consequence for the status of the offspring. Thus, three generations ago one Thakuri married three wives; two Thakuri women of appropriate status and one free Chetri woman from Sumli village to the north of Rārā. The descendants of this latter marriage consider themselves *sākh* and equals with those from the other two marriages, and there is no indication that they are considered to be inferior by other *bañsa*-members. Indeed, this patriline is considered of slightly higher status than the members of the *jetho* branch who have married Shahi Thakuris. The reason for this is partly that the status of a patriline does not exclusively depend on the type of marriages it has undertaken and partly that one inappropriate marriage is not enough to cause loss of status. While the men of the *jetho* branch

consistently have married Shahi women, the other patriline had only blundered once and apart from this marriage their record is quite as impeccable as that of the other members of their branch.

In Part II, described how the Shah Thakuris at Rārā abstain from ploughing and from carrying out other heavy agricultural work, and that to them this is vital for the maintenance of their status as superiors to both Shahi Thakuris and Chetris. Aside from this abstention from ploughing, there are other rules which Shahs ideally should observe if they are to retain their superior status and these rules are all related to marriage and the status of women. Thus, the Shahs recognise only one type of marriage, namely *bihā*, and such marriages should be *kānya dān* and accompanied by a dowry. Once married, a woman belongs to her husband's *bañsa* and she should be devoted to her husband's kin and ideally never go back, even to visit her own *māiti*. Thakuris express this in the saying *chori gharma caldeyna* (a daughter does not belong in the house), and they do not bring in a *ghar-juwāin* even if there are no sons. Women should preferably live in seclusion and observe the rules of *purdah* scrupulously, although nowadays, when women perform most of the agricultural work, such ideas are difficult to uphold. Finally, Thakuris emphasise monogamy for both men and women.

As a summary and in terms of Dumont's distinction between primary and secondary marriages (Dumont 1966: 82) the situation at Rārā can be stated in the following way. For Chetri women *bihā* is the primary, proper marriage and secondary marriages such as *jāri* and widow remarriage are entered without a ritual. Such secondary marriages are fully acceptable. Chetri

men, on the other hand, can marry in *bihā* more than once as long as such marriages are primary for the bride. Thakuri men too, can marry in *bihā* several times and all such marriages are of equal importance in terms of the status of the bride and the offspring. Subsidiary marriages, although also *bihā*, may be with women of equal or slightly inferior status. Finally, Thakuri women should only marry once in *bihā*. The way status is influenced by these unions differs for Chetris and Thakuris. Chetris consider both principal and subsidiary marriages of men and primary and secondary marriages or unions of women of equal status and there are no status differences between the offspring of different unions. Thakuris, on the other hand, consider only the principal marriages of men and primary marriages of women as proper. Thus, although the distinction between men and women with respect to the types of marriage they can undertake, suggests an inequality of status between the sexes and a possibility for marriage between people who are not equals, this possibility is also negated by Chetris claiming equal status of all unions and their offspring and by Thakuris claiming that ideally marriage should be a monogamous affair between equals.

4. THAKURI MARRIAGE STRATEGIES

So far described an ideology about marriage which, with some exceptions, is held commonly by Chetris and Thakuris alike. The marriage preferences and prohibitions point to two major differences from the north Indian model. Firstly, there is no prohibition on the reversal of the direction of marriage and secondly marriage to consanguines is acceptable although more so for the Thakuris than for the Chetris. Similarly, while

at first sight the marriage ritual conforms to the idea that every marriage is hypergamous, there is at other times of the marriage rituals a reversal of the direction in which prestations are made. In this and the next section examines the actual marriage patterns of the two castes and shows that at this level of behaviour the differences between them is more marked.

According to the genealogies⁸ the Rārā Shahs have never intermarried systematically with other Thakuris nearby. They say that there are no Shah Thakuris in all of Mugu district and therefore they have to find their *kutumba* elsewhere. The *kutumba* most often referred to live in Accham, Bajhang and Bajura districts, five to seven days' walk south-west of Rārā. However, some marriages have also taken place with people living to the south-east in such locations as Pyuthan and Jajarkot districts.⁹ Contrary to what is reported by Mayer from Malwa (Mayer 1973: 211) and from elsewhere in India (Parry 1979: 219), where there is a feeling that the further east one marries the lower the status of such affines, the Rārā Shahs consider the most prestigious marriages to take place with Thakuris who live towards the east and nearer Kathmandu than Rārā. Marriages with people from the west or south-west are not particularly remarkable, although it is recognised that each area may be inhabited by Thakuris of different status. The distribution of marriages between the Rārā Shahs and Thakuris of other districts is presented in Table 17, and Table 18 presents such a distribution with respect to villages. An analysis of the 154 Thakuri marriages presented in these tables shows that the *kutumba* of the Rārā Shahs can be divided into three categories: those who have taken brides, those who have given brides and those who have both taken

and given brides to the Rārā Shahs. Each of these categories discussed in turn starting with an analysis of those marriages in which the Rārā Thakuris have been wifegivers only.

There are two main localities to which wives have been given, and no wives have been taken, and both of these are situated to the south-east of Rārā. Pyuthan is one such place and appears to be the most prestigious. Several stories are told about sisters or father's sisters marrying rich Thakuris from Pyuthan and how their husbands sent gold, silver and even sometimes slaves back to their wife's *maiti* at the *pau ra kauni* ritual. The house I lived in during fieldwork happened to be a manifestation of such Pyuthan wealth. It was built by Maggadul Shah, a well-known and, by now, legendary Thakuri from Pyuthan, for his *jethan* (WeB) and *sasurā* (WF). This house is without doubt the finest in the village with extensive woodcarvings and is big enough to house a large joint family.

Of 51 marriages in which Thakuri women were given away from Rārā, I have information about 8 in which girls were sent to Pyuthan. No wife has come from Pyuthan to Rārā for as long as informants can remember and the women married into Pyuthan were three FFZ, three FZ and two Z of the adult men living at Rārā today, these women being related to each other as *phupu/bhadai* or *didi/bahini* (Karve 1953: 142, Taft-Plunkett 1973: 72). Lalit Bahadur's and Padam Bahadur's two father's sisters were both married in Pyuthan (Fig. 8). Lalit Bahadur is *gāuko* (classificatory) *buwā* of Padam Bahadur whom he calls *choro*. The two men are of approximately the same age, both in their forties. Lalit Bahadur's FFZ married in Pyuthan and had many sons. One of these was Maggadul Shah who married Padam

Bahadur's FFZ and built the house referred to above and now lived in by Padam Bahadur, his wife, his children and two of his brother's children. The two women married to Pyuthan were related to each other as FZ/BD and the marriage between Maggadul Shah and the FFZ of Padam Bahadur was classificatory cross-cousin marriage.

Table 17: The Distribution of Marriage between Rārā Shahs and Thakuris of Other Districts

| <i>District</i> | <i>Number of Wives Taken</i> | <i>Number of Wives Given</i> |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Achhan | 9 | 21 |
| Baitadi | — | 3 |
| Bajhang | 7 | 16 |
| Bajura | 10 | 21 |
| Dailekh | 1 | 4 |
| Jajarkot | 11 | 2 |
| Jumla | — | 1 |
| Kalali | — | 2 |
| Kathmandu | 2 | 4 |
| Magu | — | 11 |
| Nepal gang | — | 1 |
| Pyuthan | 8 | — |
| Surkhet | — | 1 |
| Not known | 3 | 6 |
| Others | — | 10 |
| | 51 | 103 |

The other locality to which girls have been given but not usually taken is Jajarkot district. Jajarkot is nearer to Rārā than Pyuthan and includes Musikot (Chapter 3). It is, perhaps, not surprising that the Thakuris should have marriage ties to the Thakuris

in this area, but the data on Jajarkot marriages suggest some differences from Pyuthan. Firstly, women have been given to Jajarkot more recently than they have been given to Pyuthan, the latest marriage in this direction having taken place about five years ago. Secondly, women who have Thakuris of Jajarkot do not appear to be celebrated to the same extent as those who married Pyuthan Thakuris. No stories are told about wealth and gifts sent to the Shahs of Rārā from these affines.

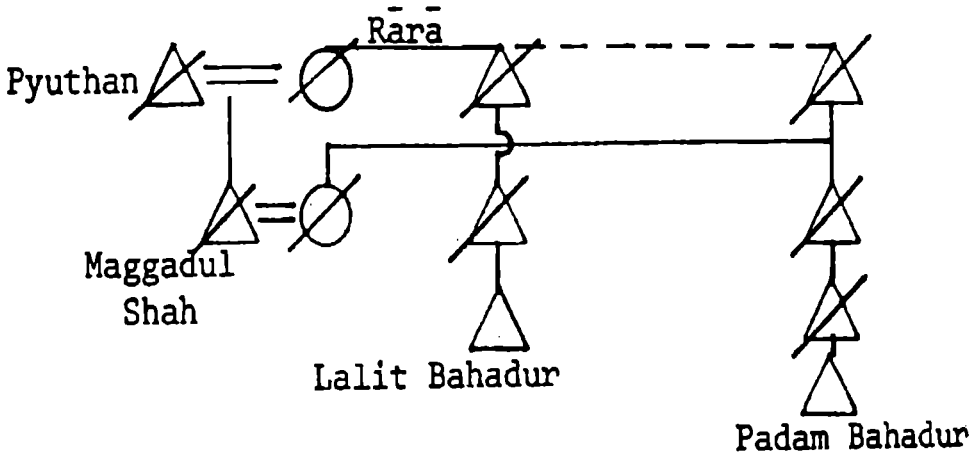


Fig. 8: The Marriages of Lalit Bahadur's and Padam Bahadur's Father's Sisters

A total of 11 women have been given to Jajarkot Thakuris in marriage and these women were five FZ, five Z and one D of the present generation of adult men. Some Thakuri *pariwār* have sent several girls to Jajarkot whereas a few have sent none.

Puran Bahadur has two father's sisters who are both married into prestigious places; one to Pyuthan and the other to Jajarkot (Fig. 9.). His FFyBSD, i.e. his *bahini* has also married a Thakuri from Jajarkot and the two FZs are also *phupu* to her.

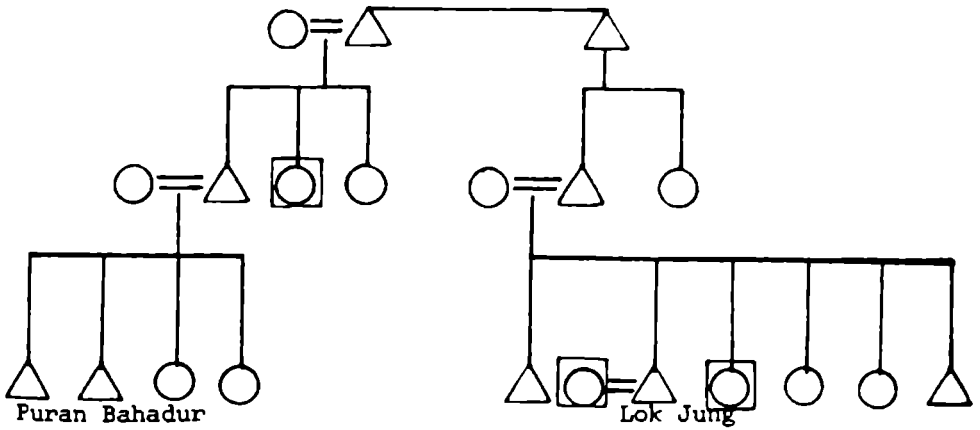


Fig. 9: The Marriages of Puran Bahadur's Father's Sisters and Sister

Table 18: The Distribution of Marriages between Rara Shahs and Thakuris of Other Villages

| <i>Place</i> | <i>Number of Wives Taken from Rārā</i> | <i>Number of Wives Given to Rārā</i> |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Baitun village | — | 1 |
| Bajhang district | 3 | 4 |
| Bajura village | 3 | 5 |
| Banara village | 1 | 6 |
| Bius village | — | 1 |
| Cheurola village | — | 2 |
| Chira village | — | 2 |
| Darna village | 1 | 1 |
| Dullu village | — | 2 |
| Guma village | — | 1 |
| Gungalkot village | — | 2 |
| Jajarkot district | 11 | 2 |
| Kalangra | — | 1 |
| Kapitole village | — | 1 |
| Kashikot village | — | 1 |
| Kathmandu | 2 | 4 |
| Kuliku village | — | 2 |
| Kunna village | 2 | 1 |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Kuri village | 2 | 10 |
| Laura Dunga village | 5 | 3 |
| Mallatikot village | — | 1 |
| Mangal Sein | 1 | 6 |
| Nepalganj | — | 1 |
| Neulakot village | — | 1 |
| Palchora village | — | 1 |
| Pyuthan distric | 8 | — |
| Puchura Hat village | — | 2 |
| Rajpuri village | — | 2 |
| Ruanda village | — | 1 |
| Sani village | — | 1 |
| Satia village | 1 | 1 |
| Srinagar village | — | 4 |
| Sumli village | — | 1 |
| Sunni village | — | 1 |
| Surkhet | — | 1 |
| Tali Guira village | 5 | 12 |
| Talkot | 1 | 2 |
| Chaidapur | 2 | — |
| Chetris | — | 4 |
| Others | 3 | 10 |
| Total | 51 | 103 |

Whereas there is no incidence of Pyuthan Thakuris giving wives to Rārā there are two examples of wives given from Jajarkot to Rārā. One of these involves the marriage of Lok Jung who is the eB of the girl who has married in Jajarkot and who is the FFBSD of Puran Bahadur in the example above. This marriage was negotiated by Lok Jung's ZH and the bride, an orphan who lived with her mother's brother in Jumla, was Lok Jung's ZHZ before marriage. But it was not able to get anyone to tell the name of this girl's clan and the informants did not think she was of a very good family. The other case involves a Rārā

Thakuri who has married in Jajarkot and gone there to live as a *ghar-juwāin*.¹⁰ There was no veidence that this man has married a girl of unsuitable status, mainly because he has given up his inheritance at Rārā by going to live as a *ghar-juwāin*, but also because the name of his wife's kingroup was given as Thakuri only.

There are some other marriages in which the wifetakers have also not been wifegivers and some of these involve Rana men who as political officials and taxcollectors came to Rārā on business. Such marriages never created lasting alliances between Ranas and Rārā Shahs¹¹ but are said to have been a great honour to the latter. Two girls have also been given in marriage to the Thakuris in Chainpur village in Bajhang district, but the Thakuris of Chainpur have not returned brides. Later, it will be clear that it is not significant that the Thakuris in this village have taken wives from Rārā without given any back, for Bajhang district as a whole is a well-established wifegiver and wifetaker of the Thakuris at Rārā.

In most marriages involving Pyuthan and Jajarkot my Thakuri informants stubbornly insisted that these wifetakers were Shah and did not know their *bañsa* or *gotra* affiliations. Neither did informants know the exact village of marriage. This poverty of information may be related to the practice of sending daughters and sisters to live with their future husbands while they are still young and to the fact that nothing has been heard from most of these women since they married. In many of the Pyuthan cases this was also long before the present-day Thakuris at Rārā were born. On the other hand, it is perhaps no coincidence that prestigious wifetakers are known as Shah only,

whereas wifegivers may be known by their clan-name as well. As a result of this incomplete information there has only been able to give the figures for Pyuthan and Jajarkot for the district as a whole, whereas the figures for those places from which wives have been given to Rārā are recorded for particular villages as well (Table 18).

Despite this imbalance, my figures do show that Shahs from Pyuthan and Jajarkot are not generally wifegivers to the Rārā Shahs. The position of Pyuthan as a wifetaker in the past is indisputable. Today, however, except when genealogies or history is discussed, relations with Pyuthan are never mentioned. Thakuris of Jajarkot, too, took wives from Rārā in the past and have also done so recently. Although prestigious wifetakers, their reputation compared to that of the Shahs from Pyuthan is less striking.

Who then, are the wifegivers of the Rārā Shahs? Those who give wives only first and then move on to those who are wifetakers as well as wifegivers. The total number of wives given to Rārā mentioned in the genealogies is 103. Of these, 43 have come from villages who have not also been wifegivers of the Rārā Shahs. One village, Banara in Bajhang district, has given six wives to the Shahs, and has, in fact, received one, but as will become obvious, the circumstances of this latter marriage were somewhat unusual and for the time being it therefore, considered Banara a wifetaking village.

Four of the six girls whose *māiti* is Banara have married men who are related to each other and these four women are all related to each other in a classificatory way as *gāuko nāta* and two of them are also actual kin. Two of these women and their

husbands are related in the following way (Fig. 10). Krishna Bahadur's wife is the FBSD of Kalla Bahadur's mother and these two women are therefore related to each other as *phupu/bhadai*. The marriage of Krishna Bahadur thus repeated a marriage made in the previous generation and he has married his FFFFBSSSWBD whom he referred to as *māmāko chori* before they married. Krishna Bahadur's wife and Kalla Bahadur are considered *didi/bhāi* and at *bhāi-tika*¹² she performed a *pujā* for him.

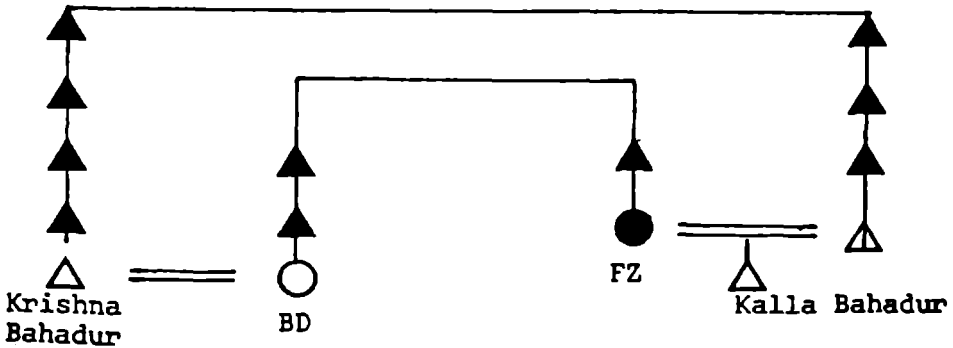


Fig. 10: The Marriages of Two Banara Women

The geographical distribution of the villages which are only wifegivers is worth noting. Eleven of these villages are situated in Seti zone; five in Bajhang district, two in Bajura district, three in Accham district and one elsewhere in this zone.¹³ Four of these villages are situated in Karnali zone: two in Mugu and two in Jumla district. Three villages are situated in Bheri zone to the south-east close to Jajarkot: one in Dailekh district and one in Barakot district and one elsewhere. Finally, two villages are situated in Makkali zone by the Indian border to the far west and in four cases girls have been given by Thakuris now residing in towns such as Surkhet,

Nepalganj and Rajpuri. Thus, the wives from the twenty-three wifegiving villages come from a large geographical area stretching both to the south-west and the south-east of Rārā and there is a preponderance of wifegivers to the south-west and around Rārā. In most cases, the girls given are the first to go to Rārā from any particular village and aside from Banara and Srinagar villages mentioned above, there is no evidence for lasting alliances between Rārā and these localities.

The clans represented in these villages are Singha, Malla, Bum, Chan and Rajkot. Eighteen of the marriages between Rārā and the wifegiving villages were with Singha girls, seven with Malla girls, three with Bum girls, one with a Chan girl, two with Rajkot girls, four with Chetri girls, one with a Hamal girl¹⁴ and in six cases the only name given was Shah. The overwhelming majority of inmarrying women from the purely wifegiving villages were thus Singha, but occasionally other clans were accepted as wifegivers. In some cases, it was pointed out to me that the wifegiving people also were Shah whereas in others it was not. Although people would never admit openly to their wives to being of Shahi families in a few cases, came to know that the wife had come from a family who, in the eyes of others, ranked as a Shahi. It may be that many more of the girls given to Rārā from the purely wifegiving villages are, in fact, from families which rank as Shahis, but such information was very difficult to confirm.

In view of the Thakuri claim that they cannot marry Chetri women, the four cases in which a Thakuri man had married a Chetri girl are interesting. One of these marriages happened three generations

ago, and the descendants of this marriage live as proper Shah Thakuris. Another was the case of the younger brother of the richest man at Rārā, who married a Chetri girl from Kotila village. He has subsequently gone to live as a *ghar-juwāin* in her village and is now not considered a member of the *bañsa*.

As noted, it is much more common for a Thakuri man to take a Chetri mistress and children from such unions are not supposed to inherit or even be considered as members of the kingroup. In practice the situation may be different, as the following example shows. Dip Bahadur Shah is the present *jimwāl* of Rārā and his father had such a Chetri mistress. The descendants, a son and a daughter, now live in Gilar, an *aula* village in which the *jimwāl* and also his brothers own land, but which otherwise is inhabited by Burha Chetris. These two descendants are called *hāmro gilarko bhāi/bahini* (our Gilar brother and sister) by the *jimwāl's* brothers¹⁵ and the sister has, with the help of the *jimwāl's* family, recently married a Singha Thakuri from Banara village. This man, a classificatory brother of the mother of Kalla Bahadur (see Fig. 10) is said to be a Shah Thakuri, but not of a very prestigious family. It is perhaps significant that the first woman taken from Rārā by this established wifegiving village is one of dubious ancestry. In fact, this woman has married her classificatory mother's classificatory brother, a marriage which is considered somewhat scandalous.

So far it has been examining the wifetakers and the wifegivers as two distinct categories of people, one living mainly to the south-west of Rārā, the other to the south-east. Now turn to those *kutumba* who

both give wives to and take wives from Rārā. There are nine such villages and they are all, except one, situated in Seti zone.¹⁶ The total number of wives given to Rārā from these villages is 44, whereas 29 wives have been taken. Five of these villages, namely Kuri, Bajura, Laura Dunga, Tali Guira and Mangal Sein have been involved in repeated giving and taking, whereas four villages have only exchanged wives once or twice with Rārā (Table 18). Kathmandu was mentioned by informants as a giver of 2 wives and a taker of 2. However, all these marriages have taken place in Kathmandu and informants at Rārā know nothing about the *kutumba* involved. The Kathmandu figures have, therefore, been excluded and the data for the five most important wifegiving and wifetaking villages are presented below.

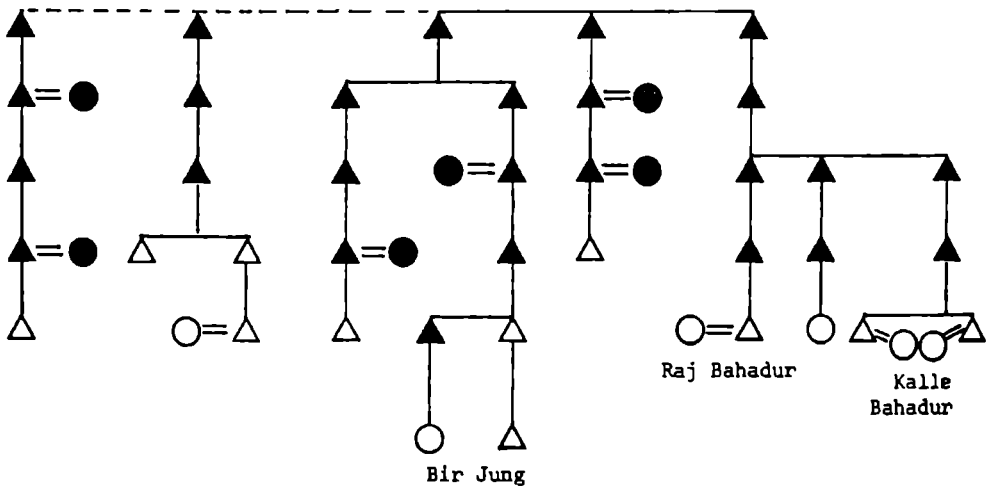


Fig. 11: Wives Given to and Taken from Kuri Village

Kuri village in Bajura district has given ten wives to the Rārā Thakuris and taken two. The two wives taken are one sister and one daughter of the present generation of adult men, whereas the wives given are FFM, FM, M as well as W and BW of this

generation. In Fig. 11 all the women concerned are included. This figure shows the relationships between the men who have given women to and taken women from Kuri village; it does not include all existing relatives.

From Fig. 11 it is evident that, whereas wives have been taken from Kuri as much as three generations ago, wives have only been given in this direction by the Rārā Shahs recently. Kuri was thus a well-established wifegiver to Rārā before the latter started to return women. A reversal of the direction of marriage has taken place between Rārā and Kuri, and in one case such a reversal has taken place in the same generation. Thus, two brothers, Raj Bahadur and Kalla Bahadur, have married two women who are of the same *bañsa* and who are considered *gāuko didi/bahini*. One of their *gāuko dhāi* has in turn married their husband's sister, i.e. his FFBSD (see Fig. 12). This marriage has involved a reversal and a classificatory brother and sister marrying a brother and a sister related as FFBSD/FFBSS. Raj Bahadur and Kalla Bahadur have married their sister's husband's classificatory sister.

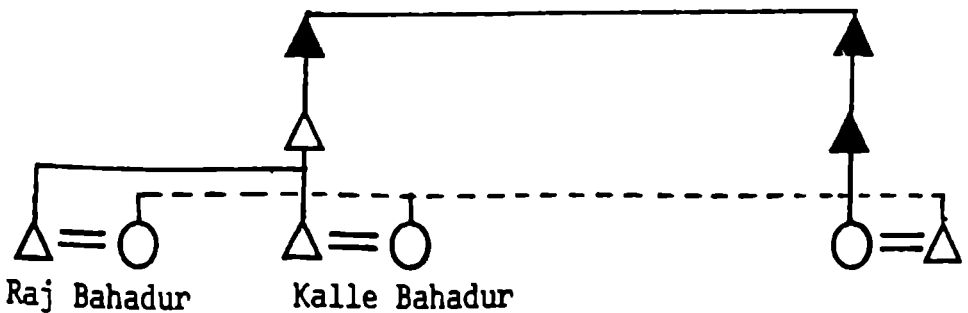


Fig. 12: The Marriages of Raj Bahadur and Kalla Bahadur

Bajura village in Bajura district has given five wives to Rārā and taken two. The women given to Rārā are related as FFM, M, FBW, BW and W of the present generation of adult men and those taken are related to them as FZ. Fig.13 includes all these women and shows the relationships between their husbands.

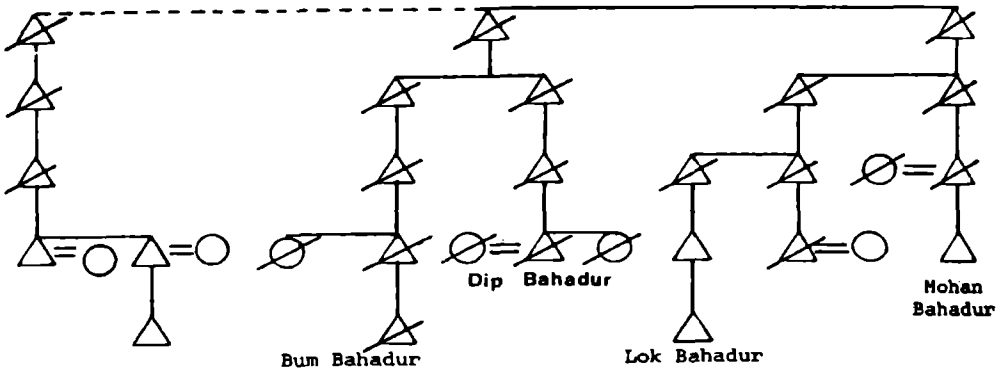


Fig. 13: Wives Given to and Taken from Bajura Village

In generation +1 there are two reversals of the direction of marriage. The marriage of the FZ of Bum Bahadur was the first of these. Subsequently, this woman's FFBSS, namely Dip Bahadur, married a girl from Bajura village and his Z, i.e. the FFBSD of the first woman was given to the same *bañsa*. Dip Bahadur's wife is related to his ZH as classificatory sister and thus a classificatory brother and a sister have married a sister and brother who are full siblings.

Except for one woman, all the wives given to or taken from Bajura village are of the same generation. The exception is a wife given in generation +2. The first woman returned from Rārā was Bum Bahadur's FZ and this took place after Rārā had already received

at least three wives. The next reversal involved a case of sister exchange. About a generation ago Bajura was thus relatively popular as a wifegiver and one line of Rārā Shahs, that of Bum Bahadur, Dip Bahadur and Lalit Bahadur repeated the alliance twice in the opposite direction.

Laura Dunga village, situated in Bajura district, has given three wives and taken five. These women and their generational position is shown in Fig. 14. In this case the most senior generation has received one wife from Laura Dunga, whereas two wives were taken. These two women are now in their mid-thirties and living in Laura Dunga. In the next generation two wives were given to Rārā and in the most junior generation three wives have been taken. The *kutumba* from Laura Dunga arrived at Rārā in 1977 to ask for two more wives but were refused.

The three women from Laura Dunga married to Rārā Shahs are all from the same *pariwār* and one is the *phupu* (FZ) of the other two. The FZ married Santta Bahadur from Rārā (Fig. 15) and her brother, i.e. the FB of the two younger girls, married Santta Bahadur's sister, or rather FFBSD. Thus, in this generation a brother and a sister (B/Z) married a brother and a sister (FFBSD/FFBSS). In the next generation two classificatory brothers from Rārā, Puran Bahadur and Mangal Bahadur, who are reckoned to be related to Santta Bahadur as BS/FB married his wife's brother's daughter. As Santta Bahadur's wife is reckoned to be *kānchi muwā* to Puran Bahadur and Mangal Bahadur they have, in fact, married their classificatory mother's brother's daughters, who as a result of the marriages made in the previous generation also are their father's sister's daughters.

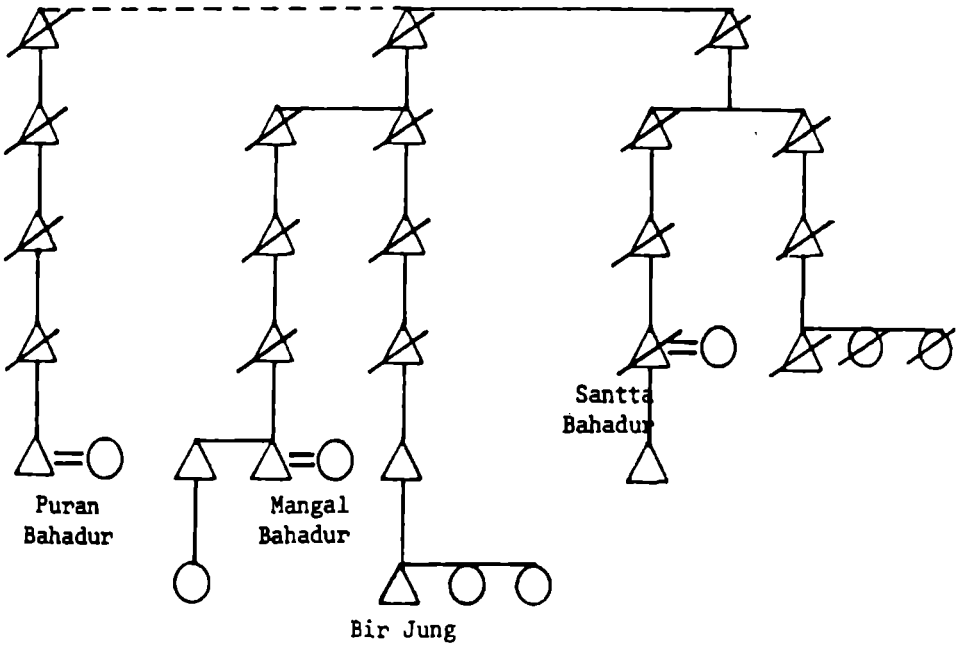


Fig. 14: Wives Given to and Taken from Laura Dunga Village

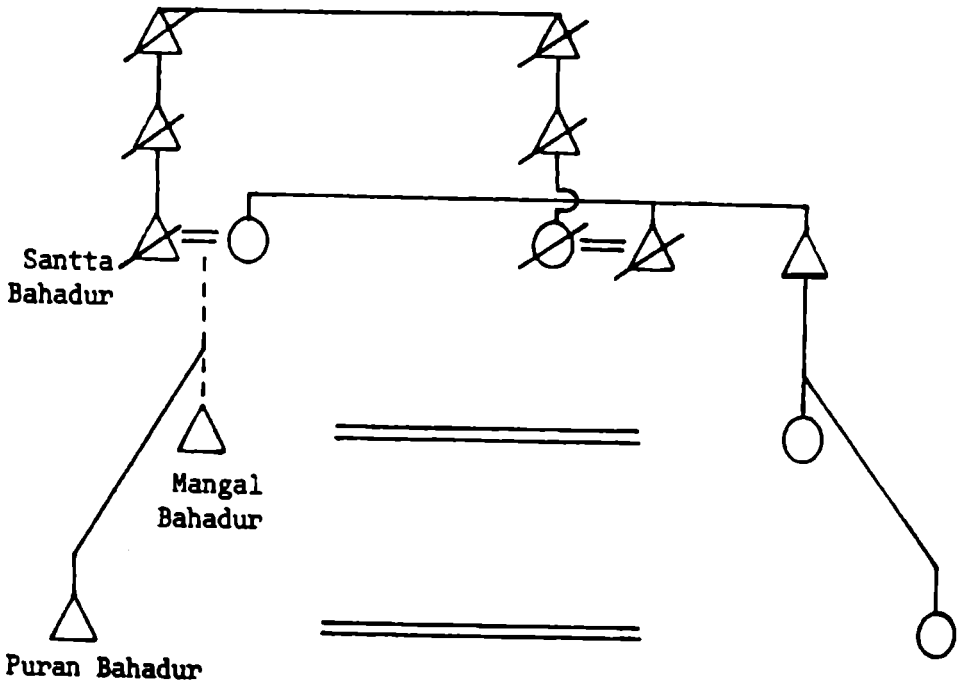


Fig. 15: The Marriages of Santta Bahadur; Puran Bahadur and Mangal Bahadur

It was the father of the two women married to Puran Bahadur and Mangal Bahadur who arrived at Rārā to ask for wives for his two sons, the younger brothers of these two women. He asked for a bride in four households and only in one, namely that of Santta Bahadur's elder brother's son, where he asked for this man's ZD, i.e. a FZD of the young men, was he refused on the grounds that they and the girl in question were too closely related. To summarise, although a wifetaker as much as twenty years ago, Laura Dunga was also a wifegiver then. Its status as both was established in the two subsequent generations. In the future, however, the position of Laura Dunga as a wifetaker of the Rārā Shahs is perhaps doubtful.

Tali Guira village in Accham district has given twelve women in marriage to the Rārā Shahs and in turn taken six. The generational position and the relationships between these women is shown in Fig. 16. In three cases a man has helped to marry his own sister to the Thakuris of Tali Guira and has taken his own wife from there as well. Despite being a FZ, woman no.13 in Fig.16 is in fact not older than many of the other women related as sisters and her marriage has thus happened later than her generational position suggests.

The twelve women who have come from Tali Guira to Rārā all trace some relationship to each other. Thus, woman no.1 is related to women nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as *gāunko bhadai* and they are her *gāunko phupu*. This woman is also related to women nos. 7, 8 and 9 as classificatory sister. Woman no.1 and woman no. 10 are

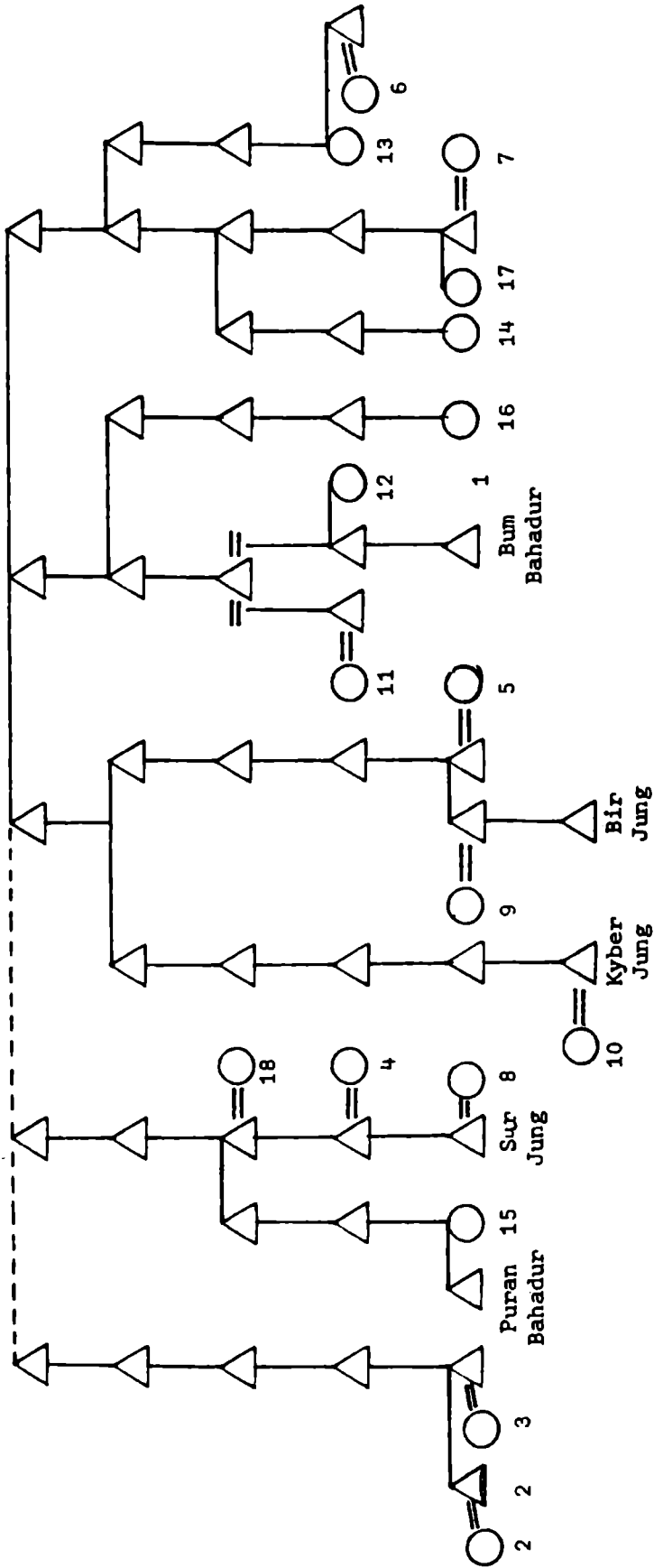


Fig. 16: Wives Given to and Taken from Tali Guira

related to each other as *āphno* (own) *bhadai/phupu*, but because of the awkwardness this produces at Rārā where woman no.1 is always considered senior to woman no. 10, these women use terms of marriage rather than consanguinal terms towards each other. The case of women nos. 5 and 9 show that women related as *phupu/bhadai* can marry two full brothers, so that HB is also FZH.

Because of their closeness in genealogical terms, it is necessary briefly to examine the marriages of women nos. 1 and 10. Woman no 1, Kanna Kumari, is about forty years old and lives alone with her children at Rara. Her husband, Bum Bahadur, has only recently died. Her FB has married her husband's FZ and her FZ has married her husband's FB (Fig.17). In this case of exchange marriage both pairs of brothers and sisters are full siblings. Thus, Bum Bahadur has married a woman who is both his matrilineal and patrilineal cross-cousin. This is a result of the way kinship is reckoned. Bum Bahadur called his FBW (also his WFZ in this case) for *kānchi muwā* and similarly his wife calls her FBS for *kānchi muwā*.

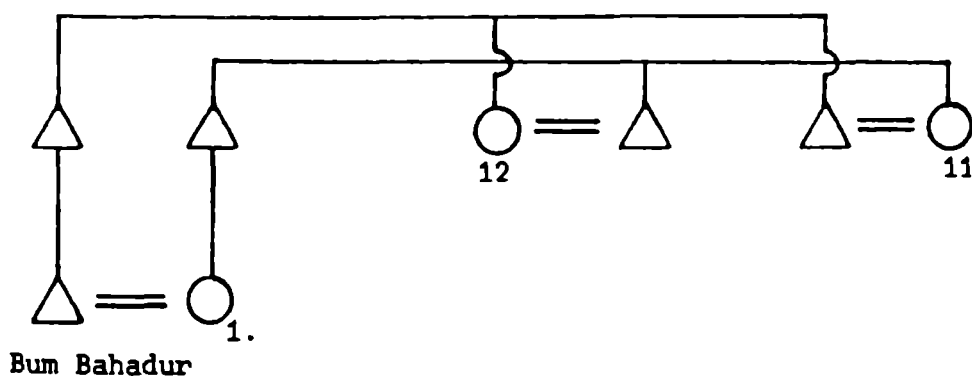


Fig. 17: A Case of Full Sister Exchange

Woman no. 10 has married Kyber Jung, the *jimwāl's* son, and her father's second wife and her father's brother's wife both came from Rārā. Kyber Jung is related to both these women in a distant but recognised relationship. His WFW is the daughter of Shri Krishna Shah who lived at Rārā and died some years ago. Kyber Jung considers her to be his FZ. Thus, the step-mother of Kyber Jung's wife is also his father's sister and he has married his classificatory father's sister's daughter (Fig. 18). The woman who has married Kyber Jung's WFB is considered to be his FFZ, but the traceable relationship is FFFFFSSD. Thus, two brothers in Tali Guira have married woman related to each other as *gāunko phupu bhadai*.

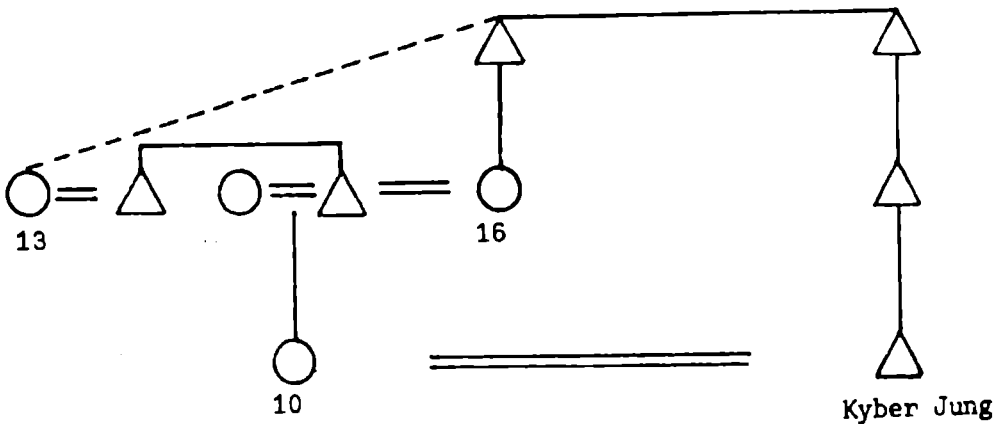


Fig. 18: The Marriage of Kyber Jung

The trend established for the other villages, except perhaps for Laura Dunga, is upheld by the data from Tali Guira. Tali Guira was clearly first a wifegiver two generations ago. In the subsequent generations it became a wifetaker as well, but more women have gone to Rārā from Tali Guira than the other way around.

The last of the five villages is Mangal Sein, situated in Accham district. Five women have been given in marriage to Rārā from Mangal Sein and only one girl has been taken. The women given and taken are shown in Fig. 19. In generation +2 one woman was given to Rārā and in generation +1 a further two. In generation 0 two women from Mangal Sein were married to two classificatory brothers whereas a sister went to Mangal Sein. The position of Mangal Sein as a wifetaker thus appears to be a recent development.

The women who have come from Mangal Sein are related as consanguines as well as through marriage. Padam Bahadur's wife, woman no. 1 in Fig. 19 is related to women nos. 2, 3 and 4 as *gāunko bhadai* whereas her relationship to women nos. 5 and 6 is not so distant. Woman no. 5 is her *āphno phupu* her FFBD, and woman no. 6 is her *kānchi muwā*, her FFBSW (Fig. 20) Padam Bahadur and Lok Bahadur are classificatory brothers but Lok Bahadur and woman no. 6 are more closely related. In this example of sister exchange a real brother and sister have married a brother and a sister related to each other as FFBS to FFBD. In the next generation two classificatory brothers have married two women related as FZ/BD and Padam Bahadur is reckoned to be his wife's FZHB as well as her FBWB.¹⁷ It should be noted, however, that the reversion of the direction of marriage happened after the FZ and the BD had been married to Lok Bahadur and Padam Bahadur respectively, and that the marriage of woman no. 1 cannot be said to be a consequence of the marriages in which sisters have been exchanged.

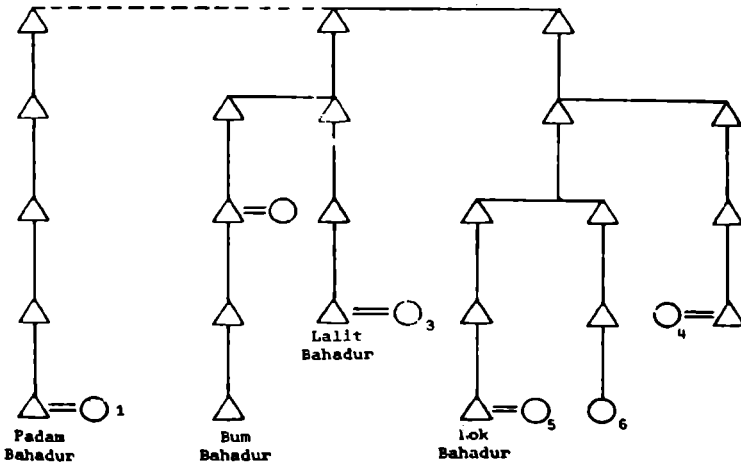


Fig. 19: Wives Given to and Taken from Mangal Sein

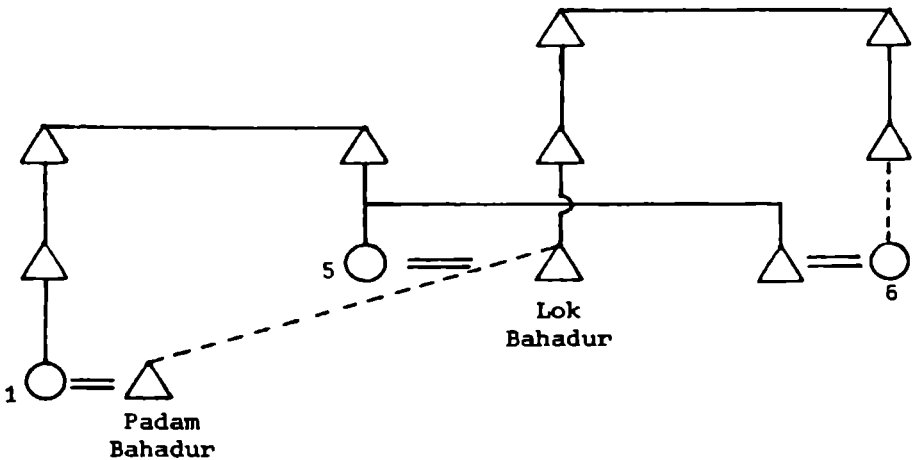


Fig. 20: The Marriages of Padam Bahadur and Lok Bahadur

So far it has not discussed the clan-affiliation of the people inhabiting the wifegiving and wifetaking villages. When asked, the Kalyals of Rārā say that they consider Singha Tahkuris for equals and all other clans,

such as Malla, Bum, Pal and Chan for slightly inferior. However, pointed out that there is some confusion between clan and status. Thus, that those people who are wifetakers tend to be considered Shah and in a majority of cases their clan-name is unknown or was not given by informants. The case is different for the villages which are both wifetakers and wifegivers and because of the presence at Rārā of women who have come from these villages, information on this particular—for some informants obviously a sore point, could not be explained. In fact, the people of Kuri, Bajura, Laura Dunga, Tali Guira and Mangal Sein with whom the Kalyal Thakuris have intermarried are all Singha Thakuris. Similarly, in Banara, Darna, Talkot and Kunna villages the people who have married Rārā Shahs are Singha. Only in one case, namely Satia village in Bheri zone, were the *kutumba* said to be Shah only.

The distribution of marriages according to clan is shown in Table 19. Here, it is clearly shown that Singha Thakuris are most often preferred as both wifetakers and wifegivers of the Kalyals. Other clans are also accepted, particularly as wifegivers, and again it is, perhaps, significant that the number of cases in which the *kutumba* were known as Shah only is three times as high for wifetakers as for wifegivers. According to the women who have married into Rārā, the Singhas in the five most important wifegiving and wifetaking villages are also Shah Thakuris. This confirms the general statement made by the Thakuris that they marry Singhas and that Singhas and Kalyal are of equal status. However, as already noted for the Kalyals of Rārā and Pina, the Shah/Shahi distinction cuts across clans and clan-name is, therefore, not a good indication of status. But the Shah/Shahi distinction itself is ambiguous.

Table 19. The Number of Wives Given to and Taken from Other Clans by the Kalyals at Rārā

| <i>Clan of Status</i> | <i>Number of Wives Taken from Rārā</i> | <i>Number of Wives Given to Rārā</i> |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Singha | 29 | 66 |
| Malla | 2 | 7 |
| Bum | 1 | 3 |
| Rajkot | — | 2 |
| Chan | — | 1 |
| Hamal Shahi | — | 1 |
| Pal | 1 | — |
| Chetri | — | 4 |
| Shah | 18 | 6 |
| Shahi | — | 1 |
| No Information | — | 12 |
| Total | 51 | 103 |

On the one hand, it rests on the daily conduct of people, on whether they follow certain rules and norms and on their ability to claim aristocratic descent. According to these criteria segments of a localised *bañsa* may be more Shah and others more Shahi. On the other hand, common residence tends to result in common kinship relations and common kinship for external purposes, at least, indicates common status.

5. CHETRI MARRIAGE STRATEGIES

Contrary to the Thakuri data, there is no clear direction to the pattern of wifegiving and wifetaking of the Rārā Chetris. All the villages involved in marriage are situated in Karnali zone and most of

them a day's walk or less away from Rārā. Although superficially it seems that the Chetris of the area intermarry randomly, an analysis of the genealogies yields a pattern and shows differences between Rokaya and Rawal Chetris.¹⁸ Table 20 shows the distribution of the marriages of Rokayas and Rawals between different villages and Table 21 shows the distribution between different *thar* or *bañsa*.

The marriages of the Rokaya Chetris which account for the larger part of the sample have taken place with people from 17 different villages.¹⁹ Four of these villages have given one girl to the Rokayas of Rārā. With the remaining twelve villages, marriages have been repeated in one way or another. Two villages, Bau and Ruma, have each given four girls in marriage to the Rokayas and another village, Buro, has given three girls. The rest, nine villages, have both given and taken wives. The number of purely wifegiving villages is thus nine; eight villages are both wifetakers and wifegivers and one village is a wifetaker only. Ninety-one out of the 123 Rokaya marriages (74 per cent) have taken place with the wifegiving and wifetaking villages.

The villages which are both wifegivers and wifetakers are Chapru, Jhari, Tuma, Puly, Sumli, Kachya, Hernikant and Gumta.²⁰ A preference for marriage within Mugu district is clear and for the Rokayas particularly Chapru, Tuma, Puly and Kachya villages are popular. Thus, the preferred villages are not only in Mugu district but are also villages situated in the immediate surroundings of Rārā itself. Indeed, one could speculate that the preference for marriage with such nearer villages is a result of the proximity of these villages. The Rokaya Chetris do not marry

equally with all the villages in the proximity. Thus, the figures for Jhari, a village situated two hours' walk from Rārā and closer than Puly and Kachya, show that, despite geographical position, Jhari is not very popular as a place to marry.

The Chetris living in the 17 villages with whom the Rokayas marry are of the following *thar* or *bañsa*: Rawal, Burha, Oidi, Karka, Rokaya, Sat, Batta, Adhikari, Banari and Bista.²¹ In one case, a Chetri man has married a Shahi Thakuri woman from Dullu. Rawal, Burha and Karka Chetris inhabit the most popular villages and this accounts for the large number of intermarriages with these *thar* in Table 21. In three cases did Rokayas from Rārā marry Rokaya women, whereas in one case only was a Rokaya girl given in marriage to a Rokaya man in Murma village. This one marriage with the people of Murma village is puzzling because the Rokayas of Rārā and those of Murma consider each other of one *bañsa* and *bhāibandhu* and therefore should not marry. The *thar* of the Murma man was said to be Thapa, but not heard of any other Thapa at Murma, nor could get this confirmed by informants generally.

Although these figures on the giving and taking of wives between different clans show no general status differences between wifegivers and wifetakers, they do suggest differences between the Rokayas of Rārā and Burha and Oidi Chetris. Thus, wives are not given to or taken from these *thar* in equal numbers. Whereas seven wives were given to Burha Chetris as much as thirty wives were taken from them by Rokayas and most of these marriages took place with Chapru village.

Table 20: The Distribution of Chetri Marriages Between Different Village

| Village | Rokayas | | Rawals | |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Wifetakers | Wifegivers | Wifetakers | Wifegivers |
| Chapru | 6 | 25 | 7 | 14 |
| Jhari | 2 | 4 | 8 | 20 |
| Tuma | 7 | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| Puly | 5 | 9 | - | 1 |
| Nigalo | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Bau | - | 4 | - | - |
| Sumli | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Ruma | - | 4 | - | 1 |
| Kachya | 4 | 7 | - | - |
| Humla | | | | |
| district | 6 | 3 | - | - |
| Hernikant | 2 | 1 | - | 1 |
| Burho | - | 3 | - | - |
| Sigari | - | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| Balai | - | - | 5 | 4 |
| Karkibara | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Toplar | - | 1 | - | 3 |
| Kotilla | - | - | 2 | 5 |
| Murma | - | 1 | - | - |
| Luma | - | 2 | - | - |
| Gumta | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| Others | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Total | 40 | 83 | 35 | 61 |

Despite this imbalance, however, the fact that women are given to Burha Chetris at all suggests that in the context of marriage the possible difference of status between Burhas and Rokayas are underplayed. The case of the Oidi Chetris is different. Four Oidi girls have been given whereas none has been taken. Indeed, Oidi are sometimes referred to as *tali Chetri* ("low" Chetri) and the Oidis who used to live at Rārā and of whom there are still two descendants were all Thakuri slaves. It is possible that the status of Oidi as a whole has been affected by the inferiority of

these slaves. The figures for Rawals²² and Karka Chetria, however, uphold the idea that these *thar* and Rokayas are equals. In both cases, the figures of wives given represent about half of those taken, thus corresponding to the bias in the sample as a whole.

Table 21: The Distribution of Chetri Marriages Between *Thar*

| <i>Thar</i> | <i>Rokayas</i> | | <i>Rawals</i> | |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Wifetakers</i> | <i>Wifegivers</i> | <i>Wifetakers</i> | <i>Wifegivers</i> |
| Burha | 7 | 30 | 7 | 14 |
| Rawal | 13 | 22 | 18 | 28 |
| Rokaya | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Oidi | — | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Karka | 15 | 19 | — | 2 |
| Sat | 2 | — | — | — |
| Batta | — | 1 | — | — |
| Shahi T. | — | 1 | — | — |
| Adhikari | — | 1 | — | — |
| Banari | 1 | — | — | — |
| Bista | — | 1 | — | 3 |
| Bam | — | — | 6 | 4 |
| Thapa(?) | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Total | 40 | 83 | 35 | 61 |

The marriages of the Rawal Chetris account for one third of the sample and these marriages have been contracted with people from fourteen different villages. Most of these villages are those with which Rokayas also marry, but whereas the latter have not intermarried with Kotilla village, the Rawals of Rārā have not intermarried with Puly, Kachya, Murma, Burho or Bum, nor have they given wives to or taken wives from Humla district as a whole. Of the fourteen villages one has given a girl in marriage to a Rārā Rawal and four villages have each taken a Rawal girl.

With the rest, i.e. nine villages, marriages have been repeated in some way. In one case, that of Toplar village, three girls have been given to the Rārā Rawals, whereas none has been returned. In two cases one girl has been taken and one girl given. With the remaining six villages an established exchange of women has been taking place and except for two villages, Kotilla and Balai, these villages are in the proximity of Rārā. The villages near Rārā inhabited by the *kutumba* of the Rawals are thus: Chapru, Jhari, Tuma and Sigari. Jhari is no doubt the village into which the Rawals marry most frequently. Chapru village is also popular, but as is the case with the Rokayas, the Rawals do not intermarry equally with all the villages situated nearby. Thus, the figures for Sigari show that proximity does not necessarily indicate a high rate of repetition of marriage, whereas those for Balai show that, despite some distance, repetition of marriage is still possible.

The distribution of Rawal marriages between different *thar* can be seen in Table 21. The most popular *thar* are Oidi, Burha, Barn and Rawal. Oidi Chetris have given five girls to the Rārā Rawals and taken three. Burha Chetris have given fourteen girls to the Rawals and taken six, and finally twenty-six daughters of other Rawals have married Rārā Rawals, and eighteen Rārā Rawal girls have been given in marriage to Rawal men in Jhari, Tuma and Sigari. Thus, most marriages have taken place with other Rawals and the reason why this is possible has already been discussed in Chapter 8. The Rawals of Rārā are considered to be of a different subclan than those Rawals inhabiting the surrounding villages, the latter being Rana Rawals. All these Rawals, however,

are of Rabigotra and thus in every marriage between Rawals the rule of *gotra*-exogamy has been violated.

The figures for Rawal marriages with Oidi, Būrha and Rokaya Chetris do not indicate that the exchange of wives between them and these *thar* is unequal. The Rawal data thus support the conclusion that a more or less equal exchange of wives takes place between the Rokayas and Rawals of Rārā and those *thar* and villages with whom they intermarry most frequently. On the other hand, there are *thar* which are only wifegivers to the Rawals and Rokayas of Rārā and these are not the same for the two subcastes. Thus, Karka Chetris are frequent wifegivers and wifetakers of the Rokayas, whereas they are only wifegivers to the Rawals. Although not clearly differentiated in terms of status the two subcastes are thus differentiated in terms of the *kutumba* they choose.

Rokayas and Rawals cannot marry people who are considered to be members of their own *bañsa*. The people who recognise common descent and residence constitute an exogamous unit. This notion is extended to account for the preference for village exogamy generally. Rokayas and Rawals of who live in Rārā village recognise *gāuko nāta* and observe pollution upon each other's death. Thus, despite the awareness of the obvious advantages in terms of land—and houseownership—marriage between Rokayas and Rawals at Rārā is considered awkward. In fact, four such intra-village marriages have been made. In three cases Rokayas have been wifegivers and in one case the Rawals have given a wife to a Rokaya. Except for near affines, who after such marriages use affinal rather than consanguinal

terms, these marriages have not changed the way people refer and behave towards each other.

6. THE REPETITION OF MARRIAGE

For the Chetris and Thakuris of Rārā the only people who are directly prohibited as marriage partners are those who are members of the same *bañsa* and *gotra*. This rule excludes all those who consider each other *hār nāta* from marrying. Aside from this there are no prohibitions on marriage with people who share *bañsa* and *gotra* membership with any other consanguines. Thus, there is no tendency in the marriage rules themselves to generate a dispersed marriage pattern by limiting the repetition of the marriages made by close kin (Mayer 1973, Parry 1979, Madan 1965). On the contrary, at Rārā the rule that people should marry *caleko kutumba* suggests that such repetitions are particularly desirable. Further, ideas about whom you can and cannot marry also suggest that not only repetitions but also reversals of the direction of marriage is acceptable. Thus, people who are classified in the category of cross-cousins are said to be desirable marriage partners. However, it is noted the differences between Thakuris and Chetris in this and now want to examine the differences between the two castes with regard to the marriage repetitions which actually take place.

For the Thakuris, how the repetition of marriage between Rārā and other villages results in women from the same *māiti* living in the same village or even in the same *pariwār*. Such repetitions involve certain types of marriages and the presence of women related to each other as *phupu/bhadai* or *didi/bahini* is a recurring feature of this marriage pattern. If a FZ and a BD marry

into the same *pariwār* then the second marriage which is usually that of the BD will be a matrilateral cross-cousin marriage and this has happened a few times. If the two women marry more distantly related agnates then the marriage will be a classificatory matrilateral cross-cousin marriage and this has happened often. When such repetitions take place the women refer to each other after marriage using kinterms, *phupu/bhadai* and *didi/bahini* and in the latter case the terms also coincide with those which may be used if the relationship is traced through the husbands of the women, thus HBW=Z.

The tendency for a FZ and a BD to have a special relationship is also clear in other contexts. At the marriage ceremony the *phupu* is allowed to interrupt the circumambulation of the fire and demand money (*phupuchar*). The informants suggested that the *phupu* of the bride could take her groom for herself and this relationship is also extended to that between a *phupāju* (FZH) and his *bhadai sāli* (WBD). The *phupāju* can joke and make sexual advances towards his *bhadai sāli* for they are considered *kutumba* and are eligible spouses in marriage. The marriage in which two brothers marry two women related as FZ/BD is consistent with this. The BD will in this case be marrying a man whom she calls FZH before marriage.

But the direction of marriage can also be reversed and such reversals may take place directly. Thus, reversals with the five most favoured villages result in different types of marriages. If the reversal takes place in adjacent generations the marriage will be of the FZD type and it is significant that there is no recorded case of such a marriage taking place

between full cross-cousins,²³ whereas marriage to a classified FZD category occurs often. Another type of marriage which involves a reversal is the exchange of women in the same generation. In all such marriages a brother and a sister married a brother and a sister and often, at least, one of these pairs of siblings were full siblings. The fact that such exchange marriages take place is not inconsistent with the ideology of the Thakuris. Such marriages (*sañlea*) are said to be perfectly acceptable and involve a ZHZ marrying her BWB which, as discussed in Chapter 9, is consistent with the kinship terminology.

The people who marry in the generation below those who have undertaken such a marriage will be related to each other in more than one way. In such cases the MBD is also a FZD and the MBS is also a FZS. The MB is also a father-in-law and the FZ is also a mother-in-law. Those marriages in which a FZD was married, in fact, also tended to be those in which an exchange marriage had taken place in the previous generation and the girl married was also a MBD. In these exchange marriages the full siblings were more often the F and FZ of the girl due to marry than her M and MB. In other words, there is a tendency for one pair of siblings in exchange marriages to be related in a classificatory way and for the other to be full siblings and for a man to be related more closely to his bride as FZS/MBD than as MBS/FZD. The latter tends to be classificatory relationship, whereas the former may not be. Thus, although exchange marriages are ideologically acceptable and in fact take place, one consequence of such marriages —namely that people classified as FZD and MBS marry—is underplayed. Indeed, the preference for the actual MBD as a bride is also

suggested by the *kutumba* relationship between a FZH and his WBD. The FZH may also be the HF of a woman, whereas the situation in which the MB is also a HF is awkward. The MB contributes to the dowry of his sister's daughter and is thus not straightforwardly a *kutumba*.

The villages which take wives from and give wives to the Rārā Thakuris also repeat marriage amongst themselves. Thus, Kuri and Bajura villages have given women to and taken women from Laura Dunga. Kuri has also exchanged women with Tali Guira. Bajura village has given women to and taken women from Mangal Sein and Kuri is also a wifetaker of Mangal Sein. Further, Banara (the wifegiving village which so far has also received one Thakuri woman of mixed descent from Rārā) has received three women from Laura Dunga and returned one.

The exchange of women between the seven villages (including Banara and, Rārā) account for 32 of the 119 marriages recorded in the genealogies of Thakuri women.²⁴ Thus, about 27 per cent of the marriages of the wifegivers of Rārā Thakuris have taken place within the seven villages and another 15 per cent have involved exchange between one of the seven and an outside village. The rest, about 58 per cent have taken place with other villages, some of which are also wife givers to the Rārā Shahs. The tendency for the seven villages to intermarry is not made explicit by informants. They do not list the seven, nor is there any prohibition on marrying elsewhere in the manner reported by Pocock for the Patidar (Pocock 1972) and by Parry for Kangra during the reform movement (Parry 1979). On the other hand, the inclusion of Rārā with the seven is slightly odd. All the Thakuris of the six villages with

which Rārā Shahs exchange wives most frequently are Singha Thakuris and the Rārā Shahs are thus the only ones of a different clan.²⁵

As already pointed out that when asked, the Shahs of Rārā state that Kalyal and Singha Thakuris are the highest (*thulo*) Thakuri clans, whereas other Thakuris, such as Malla, Chan, etc., are of lower (*sanu*) status. The Rārā Shahs thus consider that they marry equals when they marry the Singha Thakuris of the six *kutumba* villages. The data on the wifegivers, however, suggest that the Shahs of Rārā perhaps are of slightly higher status than the Thakuris of the other six villages. The women's genealogies give information about 119 marriages, but clan or status was only given in 93 cases. The wifegivers of the wifegivers were Chan Thakuris in six cases, Pal in three, Malla in eleven, Bum in one, Kalyal in seven and Singha in nine. In ten cases wives were said to have been given by Shahs and in eight by Shahis. Wives taken from the wifegivers have in two cases married Chan Thakuris, in another two Malla Thakuris, in fifteen Kalyal, in eleven Singha, in six Shah and in two Shahi. Despite the small number of wifegivers' marriages about which the data suggest a tendency for the wifegivers of the Rārā Shahs to take their wives from more clans which are considered of inferior status, than do the Kalyals at Rārā themselves. In view of this, and since the genealogies of the wifegivers do not suggest repeated intermarriage with such traditionally prestigious places as Pyuthan and Jajarkot, and it is reasonable to conclude that the Rārā Shahs are desirable wifetakers.

An analysis of the repetitions and reversals of Chetri marriages reveals a different pattern from that of the Thakuris. First, however, it must be pointed out

that since the Chetri genealogies are shallow, they only show repetitions of marriages when such marriages have taken place between first or second cousins. Contrary to the Thakuris, Chetris appear unconcerned with genealogical relationships outside a certain range. Accordingly, only one case of cross-cousin marriage appears in the Chetri genealogies. On the other hand, it has also noted that the Chetris disapprove of exchange marriages and also generally of marriages in which the spouses are closely related. Thus, the situation in which a man's wife comes from the same village into which his sister has married never involves two pairs of full siblings. Even the situation in which the same group of agnates are wifetakers and wifegivers to the same localised subcaste occurs relatively rarely amongst the Chetris. Eight such cases including seventeen marriages²⁶ and these constitute 6.7 per cent of the sample.

The line of descent in which Pancha Rokaya is the eldest male agnate has repeated marriage with the Karka Chetria of Kachya village several times and some of these marriages have involved reversals of the direction of marriage. As far as I could ascertain the women from Kachya married to Rokaya men and the men in Kachya married to Rokaya girls are not considered genealogically related, although they recognise *gāunko nāta*. The two cases of exchange marriage in this line are shown in Fig. 21. They occurred in the same generation and involved Pancha's father's two sisters and two brothers who all married into different *pariwār* in Kachya and their spouses were related as classificatory siblings. Pancha himself gave a hint to the usefulness of these marriages when he pointed out that he can trace a *nāta* relationship to many houses (*ghar*) in Kachya.

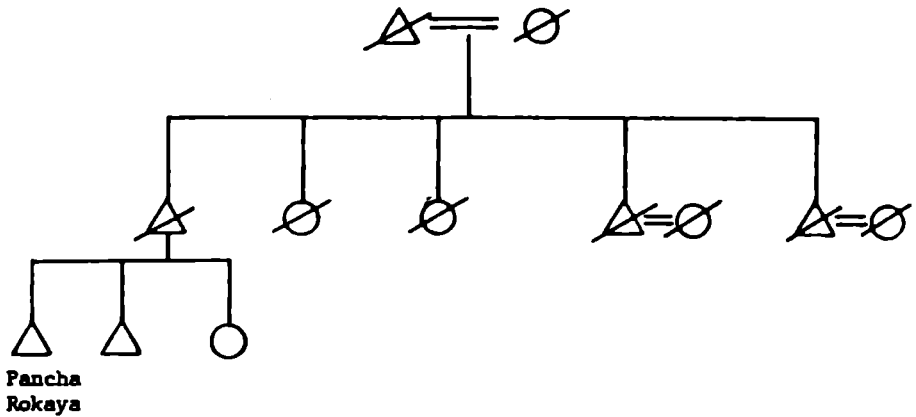


Fig. 21: The Marriages of Pancha's Father's Siblings

The marriage of two identical sex siblings to two identical sex siblings is considered good and acceptable by the Chetris. The spouses of two identical sex siblings sometimes belong to the same localised subcaste. Twelve such cases involving 25 marriages and constituting 9.9 per cent of the sample. In one case three full brothers from Rārā had married three classificatory sisters and in all other cases two identical sex siblings had married two classificatory identical sex siblings. It is difficult to isolate the reasons which led to such marriages, but in some of these cases the siblings who married people from the same localised subcastes were two out of a larger group of siblings and such marriages have, in at least three cases, taken place simultaneously.

So far the discussing repetitions of marriages for people of the same generation. Now considers the repetitions which take place in different generations. When a man takes his wife from his mother's *māiti*, father and son have taken wives from the same localised subcaste without a reversal of the direction of marriage. This occurs amongst Chetris and occasionally such

marriages are repeated in more than two generations. There were 15 cases of this type of repetition involving a total of 35 marriages of 13.5 per cent of the total sample. In 10 cases a father and a son had taken their wives from the same place and in the remaining 5 cases the repetition had taken place in three generations.

The genealogy of Gara Rokaya provides several examples of this kind of marriage. In Fig. 22 all the women taken from Chapru by this line are included. Gara Rokaya's father was a *ghar-juwāin* to Rārā and Gara treats his mother and her kin as if they were his agnates.

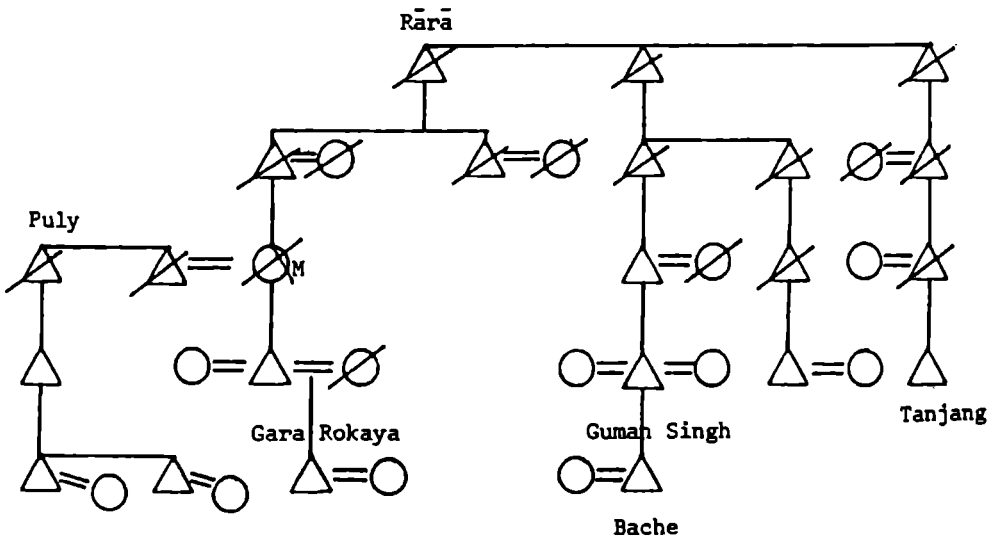


Fig. 22: The Marriages in Gara Rokaya's Genealogy

Bache Rokaya, a young man of twenty, has married a Burla girl from Chapru. His own mother and his father's mother also came from Chapru. In Tanjang Rokaya's line the situation is similar. In three consecutive generations, fathers and sons have taken their wives from the Burhas of Chapru. Gara's own marriage and the marriage of his eldest son is yet another example of such repetition. Further, there are two examples here of identical sex siblings, in these cases brothers, taking their spouses

Dhan Karne's FFZ married a Barm Chetri from Karkibara near Guma, the district centre. This is also where his FFM had come from. This FFZ had a daughter who married a Rawal from Rārā, namely a man related to Dhan Karne as father's classificatory brother, the relationship not being traceable. Dhan Karne's FFZD (FZ) and classificatory FB also had a daughter and she married a Rawal from Jhari. In this example, three women have been returned in alternate generations for Dhan Karne's FFM and his FFZD were of the same *māiti*. Indeed, these marriages seemed highly unusual, but could not find out anything about the circumstances surrounding them.

The figures presented in Tables 20 and 21 suggest that Chetris, as do Thakuris, repeat marriages with a limited number of villages and clans. However, when looking at the repetition of marriages made by close kin such as sister, brother, father and mother, the percentage of Chetri marriages which involve such repetitions appears low. Thus, only 6.7 per cent of all marriages are exchange marriages in the same generation; 9.9 per cent of all marriages involve identical sex siblings marrying people from the same localised subcaste and generation; 4 per cent involve marriages in consecutive generations in which the direction is reversed and 13.5 per cent involve such repetitions in different generations without reversing the direction of marriage. In the rest, namely 65.9 per cent of all marriages, there is no repetition of the marriages made by either sisters, brothers, fathers or mothers. Thus, while Chetris do not practice cross-cousin marriage between cross-cousins who can trace a genealogical relationship, they also tend to avoid marriages which repeat the marriages made between a *pariwār* and a certain localised subcaste.

When such marriages do occur there is a tendency not to reverse the direction in which women are going.

The marriages made by a FB and a FZ, however, may be repeated in either direction and in such cases the relationship between the spouses concerned is considered to be classificatory. The incidence of classificatory cross-cousin marriage of both the matrilateral and patrilateral type is thus high, but difficult to ascertain because of the way kinship is reckoned. Indeed, Chetris consider marriage to *māmāko gāunko chori* or *phupuko gāunko chori* desirable because they not only repeat and solidify relations with the *kutumba*, they are also in accordance with the general ideology of exchange between and equality of localised subcastes.

In the Thakuri repetitions and reversals, on the other hand, spouses are much more likely to be related as close kinsmen than is the case for Chetris. To some extent this difference between Chetris and Thakuris is due to the greater genealogical knowledge of the latter. However, Thakuris also do not consider the repetition of marriages made by members of the *pariwār* problematic. Thus, only one actual MBD-marriage amongst the Chetris, whereas amongst the Thakuris there were several examples of this type of marriage. Further, at least one Thakuri exchange marriage has involved two pairs of full siblings and in most exchange marriages a genealogical relationship could be established between the siblings of either pair.

Thus, while the rule of exogamy and the preference that people should marry *caleko kutumba* suggest a high rate of repetition of marriage, the Thakuris and Chetris differ in the pattern such repetitions take. Chetris marry within a limited geographical area and most marriages involve a direct

exchange between *bañsa* or *thar*. There is, however, a tendency to avoid such direct repetitions of marriages made by close kin such as by a father, a mother, a brother or a sister, i.e. by members of the immediate *pariwār*. If the marriages of the *pariwār* are repeated, such repetitions tend not to reverse the wifegiving and wifetaking relationships of the *pariwār*. Thakuris marry within a larger geographical area with villages situated far away from Rārā. In some of these marriages the wifegivers and the wifetakers are different; in others wifegivers are also wifetakers. In either case marriage repetitions may involve repetitions and reversals of marriages made by members of the *pariwār*. These different strategies also correspond to Thakuri and Chetri statements about the marriageability of cross-cousins. Thus, the Chetri dislike for full cross-cousin marriage of either type is reflected in the actual marriages they undertake, whereas the Thakuri preference for matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is also reflected in the actual incidence of patrilateral cross-cousin marriage and in the fact that this type of marriage is always associated with an exchange marriage in the previous generation. Neither of these strategies, however, “corresponds” or “accords with” the kinship terminology, in which cross-cousins are referred to by sibling terms. To both Thakuris and Chetris the terms *dāi*, *bhāi*, *didi*, *bahini* suggest unmarriageability and yet cross-cousins, who are designated by these terms, are often married and shall return to this in Chapter 11.

7. THE CHANGE IN THAKURI MARRIAGE PATTERNS

While the Chetri pattern of marriage appears to have been the same in the past, the data on Thakuri marriages

point to certain changes in strategy starting perhaps forty to fifty years ago. Forty years ago the Thakuris of Rārā used to give their daughters and sisters in marriage to Thakuris of Pyuthan and Jajarkot districts, situated to the south-east of Rārā near Musikot. Some of the elder sisters of the present generation of adult men have been given in this direction but in the last forty years or so no such marriages have been made.²⁷ The bulk of women thus given were given in the past and their marriages are always talked about with the utmost respect. The Thakuris of Pyuthan and Jajarkot were prestigious and desirable wifetakers and they did not give women back to the Thakuris of Rārā. The latter took and still take their wives from a number of different villages mostly situated in Accham, Bajhang and Bajura districts about seven days' walk south-west of Rārā and in two or three cases from villages situated nearer Pyuthan and Jajarkot. The wives taken from around Rārā itself have all been Shahi women.

In the past, some women were also given to the Thakuris from the prestigious wifegiving villages of Accham, Bajhang and Bajura districts and when the number of women given to Pyuthan and Jajarkot decreased forty years ago, those given to some of these villages in Accham, Bajhang and Bajura increased. In particular, six such villages have become established as both wifegivers and wifetakers of the Rārā Shahs and the data from these villages suggest that they were predominantly wifegivers before they became wifetakers. It is nowadays first and foremost the Thakuris living in these villages who are referred to as *kutumba*.

The geographical distribution of the marriages and the differentiation of villages in terms of status

suggests that for the Rārā Shahs marriages to the south-east are most prestigious than those to the south-west, and that in the past women tended to come from Accham, Bajhang and Bajura to Rārā and from Rārā to go to Pyuthan and Jajarkot. This also suggests a pattern of hypergamy in the past and that when the Rārā Shahs started giving wives to the Singha Thakuris of Accham, Bajhang and Bajura, they were accepting a decrease in status as these Thakuris, although Shahs, used to be their wifegivers. With this move, the Rārā Shahs started to reverse the direction of marriage and the first marriages made in this reversal involved sister exchange, a marriage which goes directly against the notion of *kanyā dān* and hypergamy. Sister exchange is, on the other hand, consistent with the present adherence to isogamy and the idea that one should marry *kutumba* who are also equals. Despite this isogamous emphasis nowadays, the idea of inequality between wifegivers and wifetakers continues to be discernible in other aspects of the kinship ideology. Thus, how a MBD-marriage, in which the spouses are closely related, is more acceptable to the Thakuris than is a FZD-marriage where this is so. Further, it has also shown how the preferred marriage should be *kanyā dān* and how the suggestion that a girl can be bought for money is felt to be offensive. Paradoxically, equality can only be obtained through the exchange of daughters and sisters all given in *kanyā dān*.

A similar type of paradox is reported from Brahmins and other high-ranking communities in Konku by Beck. Thus, Beck explains that the giving of dowry, the distinction between wifegivers and wifetakers made by using kinterms which imply

inferiority and superiority respectively and the importance attached to FZD marriage "can perhaps best be understood as a kind of combination of the prestige of hypergamy and dowry with a more immediate concern for the purity of a tightly-knit endogamous community." (Beck 1972: 255)

To describe the Thakuris of the seven villages which intermarry as a "tightly-knit endogamous community" would not be accurate, at least not at the level of the actual marriage patterns. However, at the level of marriage rules, the rule that one should marry *caleko kutumba* amounts to a rule of endogamy in a general sense and here the ideology of the Rārā Shahs shares characteristics with aspects of Parry's data on the Rajputs of Kangra (Parry 1979), with the *ekada* circle amongst the Patidar (Pocock 1972) and with the traditional Rajput states where *ekevra* (wifegivers) sometimes were distinguished from *bevra* (wifetakers and wifegivers) (Stern 1977: 73).

As most writers on the subject report, and for the Rārā Shahs, hypergamy does not exist without a periodic adherence to isogamy and both in isogamy as well as in hypergamy the status of both sexes is at issue. It may be commented that just as the notion of endogamy between the intermarrying villages is loosely defined and a preference rather than a strict rule, so the classic system of hypergamy with strict status connotations may have been absent in the past. However, when isogamy is emphasised this necessarily implies an exchange of women and a delineation of all those who consider each other equals. This entails a notion of endogamy and even if the ideal of endogamy is not expressed directly in terms of a preference for FZD marriage as in Konku, any

expression of the ideal, when considered in relation to *kanyā dān*, the giving of dowry and the *gor dhunu* ritual, will necessarily create the above-mentioned paradox.

This paradox, however, may work perfectly smoothly, as it does for the Chetris of Rārā as well as for the Chetris elsewhere in Nepal (Gray 1980). Because of the Chetri dislike for repeating the marriages made by the members of the *pariwar*, the immediate wifegivers are rarely also wifetakers, although the localised subcaste may be both. In this way, despite the idea that every marriage is hypergamous and thus creates a status distinction between wifegivers and wifetakers, there can also be a general adherence to isogamy. Inequality, which exists between *pariwar*, is not reflected at the level of the subcaste and the clan.²⁸

Nowadays, with respect to marriage, the Rārā Thakuris find themselves in a critical situation. In 1977 no Rārā Thakuri girls had been given away in marriage for three years. There were eighteen girls, some of them considered past marriageable age at Rārā, and although the situation was regretted by everyone, no marriage was being negotiated. Some of the men said that they were waiting for the government to instigate the resettlement scheme so that they could marry their daughters into new and more prestigious places nearer their future place of residence. They did not, however, use this argument for their sons. The point is that people did not come to Rārā to ask for wives.

The Rārā Shahs generally find themselves in a crisis with respect to status. Economically they are no longer wealthier than the Chetris and some

of them are poorer than the richest Doms. They cannot any longer command the labour necessary for their standard of living and appropriate for their Thakuri status. This crisis has had repercussions for Thakuri marriages. Thus, over the past two or three generations their pattern of marriage has changed to include exchange marriage with people who are of lesser status than the Thakuris of Pyuthan. A similar conclusion is made by Ahmad for the Sheik Siddiques (Ahmad 1973). Ahmad shows that both endogamy and hypergamy can serve to maintain the boundary of a caste as well as a mechanism for social mobility. Like the Thakuris of Rārā the exogamous marriage circle of the Sheik Siddiques reveals an emphasis on hypergamy together with marriage between cross-cousins of both the matrilineal and patrilineal type. Both the Thakuris of Rārā and the Sheik Siddiques accept such marriages between close relatives as the second best to hypergamous unions. Thus, with respect to marriage the Rārā Shahs have moved from an emphasis on inequality and hierarchy to an emphasis on equality between *kutumba*. They have not, however, adapted the pattern pursued by Chetris emphasising the equality of subcastes and clans, but allowing for short-term inequality between *pariwār*. Rather, the Thakuris are more ready to directly reverse marriages and the paradox between *kanyā dān* and the idea of sister exchange, therefore, in their case appears more striking. In Chapter 11 shall be further explored these differences between the two castes.

Chapter 11

CONCEPTS OF KINSHIP

1. INTRODUCTION

The marriage patterns themselves suggest conflicting tendencies. Moreover, conflicting tendencies are also evident at other levels of the kinship ideology. In Chapter 9 showed how, using the traditional anthropological models constructed for India, it is difficult to reconcile the different aspects of the kinship terminology. Further, while marriage patterns and terminology separately exhibit conflicting tendencies there are also inconsistencies between these two levels. Thus, while the terms *dāi*, *bhāi*, *didi* and *bahini* suggest unmarriageability, cross-cousins are designated by these terms and are sometimes married. Finally, reversals of the direction of marriage which do not repeat the marriages made by the immediate kinsmen are in accordance with the manner in which terms are extended to affines of affines and their affines. But Thakuris also practise direct reversals between *pariwār*. Such inconsistencies between forms of behaviour and the way in which kin are categorised have been at the centre of the old debate between alliance and descent theorists. In criticising Dumont, Schneider has pointed

out that such inconsistencies deserve attention. Schneider wrote:

If for Dumont, kinship terminology is not kinship behaviour and if it has nothing to do with actual groups' and if it yields conclusions which seem contrary to those which follow if behaviour and actual groups are to be considered, how are these to be explained

and further:

to insist, as Dumont does, that terminology is and must be an ego-centred system is only to raise the question of how the ego-centred system articulates with the system as a total system. One cannot take shelter behind the assertion that these are different. The very difference itself is problematic.

(Schneider 1965: 53).

In order to understand these various inconsistencies in the kinship ideology of the Thakuris and Chetris at Rārā. Some of these concepts have already been referred to, but here examine them all and follow suggestions made by Schneider in his analysis of American kinship (Schneider 1968) and also the analysis made by Inden and Nicholas for Bengali kinship (Inden and Nicholas 1977) and by Carter for non-Brahmin kinship in western Maharashtra (Carter 1974). A kinship ideology cannot be understood without an examination of indigenous categories and concepts. The categories and concepts no less than terminology and marriage rules can be interpreted in different ways in different contexts and that in Rārā the two castes of

different status express their attitudes to hierarchy and equality by emphasising different aspects of the same kinship ideology.

2. NĀTA

There are several terms which refer to relationships. Generally “a relation” or “a relationship” is *sāinu* (standard Nepali). Thus *muwā*, *choro*, *bhāi*, and *sāurāli* are all *sāinuko nām* (the name of the relationship). Towards people who are *sāinu*, *nāta pārcha* (there is *nāta*) and these people are considered *nāta*. *Nāta* generally refers to people who are related in various ways. This category includes one’s agnates and their wives, one’s cognates, one’s wifegiving and wifetaking affines and the affines of one’s affines. In this sense *nāta* refers to relationships of shared substance as well as of marriage which can be traced.¹ More specifically, *nāta* denotes a relationship in which people share bodily substances. Thus, people who share the all important substances of *hār* (bone), *masu* (flesh) and *ragat* (blood) are considered to be *hār nāta* or simply *nāta*. These substances are passed on directly from a father to his children, and this theory of conception provides the basis for *bañsa*, *kul* and *pariwār* as exogamous units within which marriage and sexual relations amount to incest (*hār nāta lāgne*). The people of the *bañsa* and particularly the male members, although being slightly different with respect to all the substances constituting each individual, share these basic substances of bone, blood and flesh. Women, too, share these substances and thus before marriage daughters and sisters are considered *hār nāta* or *nāta* in this sense. However,

as these substances derive from men, they cannot be passed on by women, and once women marry and conceive children the line of shared bone, flesh and blood ceases to be part of these children. From this point of view, daughters and sisters, although *nāta* before marriage become *kutumba* and included in the *bañsa*, *kul* and *pariwār* of their husbands after marriage. For women marriage creates *nāta* and the relationship between a husband and his wife is conceived as one of shared blood, flesh and bone.

Women, however, also pass on substances to their children in the form of breastmilk (*dudh*). This too creates a notion of *nāta* between those who share these substances, but the idea of *dudh* is taken further by the Chetris than by the Thakuris. The former consider such *nāta* as constituting a category, the *dudhkul*, where as the latter recognise a relationship of *nāta* to such people as the mother's brother's and sisters and their children as well as the mother's mother. The relationship of *dudh* is weaker than that shared by people of the same *bansa*. Thus, the mother's brother is referred to as *sanu* (small) *nāta* as opposed to the father who is *thulo* (big) *nāta*. Despite such gradation, however, the idea of shared substance from both parents results in the inclusion of such people as MB, MZ and their children as well as the Z and her children in the category of *nāta*. Thus, the category of people who share substances and who are all considered *nāta* includes but is not identical to the category of people between whom marriage is strictly prohibited.

There are also other people towards whom there is *nāta*. Such people may be described as *ista-*

mit (friends and relations) or as *hāmro mānche* (our people). The term *ista* sometimes also are *kutumba*, whereas the term *mit* refers to people of the same sex who have entered a relationship of ritual brother or sisterhood (*mit-lāgne*). *Ista-mit* may be used to refer to people of different status. Thus, people often choose to perform the *mit* ritual with people of a different *jāt* than their own. Similarly, Thakuri women who have performed the *bhāi-tikā* ritual for Chetris men and therefore consider them to be like brothers, may also refer to these Chetris as *ista-mit*. The Chetris and Thakuris at Rārā also consider each other *ista-mit* by virtue of common residence and occasionally a *hali* and a *kām garne mānche* may refer to his *riti* using this term.

When a person generally refers to his or her *ista-mit* this category of people not only includes those people described above, but also those with whom that person shares physical substances and stands in an affinal relationship. In this general sense, *ista-mit* include all those people a person knows and who might be invited to a life-cycle ritual or a feast. *Ista-mit* thus constitutes a category of people to whom there is some notion of shared substance. This notion may be derived from closeness of the relationship (in genealogical terms), it may be assumed, it may be a result of intermarriage, or it may be a result of a ritual. Only those who are included in this category by virtue of a marriage link are marriageable. If two people of the same *jāt* perform a *mit* ritual² then, they are considered to be like full siblings, and their children should not marry. It should be noted that

in reference the term *ista-mit* is usually used to refer to the wide category of people described above, but it may also be used to refer to specific individuals. Thus, the Singha Thakuris who came to Rārā to find wives for his two sons was referred to as an *ista* by some of the people in whose houses he asked for a bride. He was not, however, referred to as *ista* by the husbands of his two daughters who already had married into Rārā. These two men used kinship terms to refer to the old man and his two sons.

On the one hand, *nāta* refers to a category of people; on the other it refers to the quality and content of the relationship between people in this category. The central notion in *nāta* is the sharing of substances and people who consider each other *nāta* share substances or act as if they do. Thus, while members of the *bañsa* share the actual physical substances of bone, flesh and blood, and while individuals descended from the same mother and mother's mother share the actual physical substances passed through breastmilk (*dudh*), *kutumba* and particularly *caleko kutumba* assume that they share such substances. *Ista-mit* is a general term used when people want to refer to all those people to whom they consider themselves related in some way and between *ista-mit* the concept of *nāta* provides an idiom for the relationship. In this general way the only people who are not *nāta* are *arko* or *nayā mănche* (strangers). Such people tend to be people of a different caste and subcaste with whom one does not have regular contact or whose position vis-à-vis ego is economic.

3. KUTUMBA

Kutumba is derived from *kutumb* (family, relatives), and as with *nāta*, *kutumba* refers both to a category of people and to the quality of the relationship between these people. Thus, for Chetris and Thakuris alike, *kutumba* refers both to people who marry and who are considered equals, and to the nature of the relationship between people who give and take wives. In this latter sense *kutumba* is a relationship through marriage between *pariwār*, *kul* and *bañsa*. Although *kutumba* are marriageable people and potentially include people with whom one's *pariwār*, *kul* or *bañsa* have never intermarried, marriage with such *nayā kutumba* (new *kutumba*) is disliked and the preferred type of marriage is, with *caleko kutumba*.

Between *kutumba* there should be a direct exchange of wives and this category thus includes both wifetakers (*chori linu kutumba*) and wifegivers (*chori dinu kutumba*). It includes such people as WB, WZ, WF, WFZ, WM, WMB and ZH, ZHB, ZHZ, ZHF, ZHM, ZHMB as well as the parents of children's spouses. The *kutumba* of first ascending generation of both sides are referred to by the same terms. Thus, WF, WMB, ZHF and ZHMB are all *sasurā* and WM, WFZ, ZHM and ZHFZ are *sāsu* and the parents of a married couple refer to each other reciprocally as *samdhi* and *samdhini* depending on sex. Further, the *kutumba* of ego's own generation are terminologically distinct and the terms for WB are different from the terms for ZH.

The equality between *kutumba* is reflected in the way such people greet each other.³ People of younger generations greet both their wifegiving and

wifetaking affines according to the rule observed for all *nāta* generally, namely that one should show respect and obedience towards a senior. Thus, the WB should be greeted respectfully if he is WeB and should greet ego in this way if he is WyB. The ZH should be greeted respectfully if he is eZH and should greet ego in this way if he is yZH. *Samdhi/samdhini* greet each other simultaneously in a respectful manner. Permanent status inequalities are thus not displayed in the way *kutumba* greet each other, rather the inequality expressed depends on the age difference between siblings.

No other behaviour of wifegivers and wifetakers in everyday affairs suggests the superiority of one to the other. When Thakuri *kutumba* come to visit they stay in a separate house and cook their own *bhāt* and *dāl*. They do not enter the kitchen of their hosts, but do accept cooked vegetables and bread from the latter.⁴ Nowadays, when Chetri *kutumba* visit each other, which occurs much more frequently than amongst Thakuris, they eat in each other's houses and accept even the most *jokho* foods from each other. Thus, while Chetris emphasise the equality of *kutumba* in the separateness of Thakuri *kutumba* is notable. The latter treat each other with the utmost respect but the treatment is reciprocal.

Kutumba is not only a relationship between those people who marry but also between the relatives of both sides. In this respect marriage has different consequences for men and women. When women marry they are lost to their natal *bañsa*, *kul* and *pariwār* and become members of their husbands' *bañsa*, *kul* and *pariwār*. This idea is expressed by Thakuris in particular when they make the statement:

chori gharma caldeyna (the daughter has no place in the house). When a man marries a *kutumba* relationship is created between him and his wife's relatives. When a woman marries a relationship of *nāta* is created between her and husband and his relatives. By virtue of her assimilation to her husband, a woman is thus *kutumba* to her brothers and father after marriage, but she is also their *nāta* insofar as she still shares physical substances with them.

While both wifegivers and wifetakers are *kutumba*, the immediate wifegivers of a *pariwār* are distinguished from the immediate wifetakers. The former are collectively referred to as *saurāli*, whereas the latter are *bhināju* and *juwāinchori*.⁵

The *saurāli* includes WB, WF, WM, WMB, WFZ and the *saurāli* of a brother are also considered ego's own *saurāli* and the same terms of references and address are used as ego would use to his own in-laws. The *saurāli* relationship is not passed from one generation to the next and the *saurāli* of a father are not considered to be the *saurāli* to his sons; rather the *jethān* or *sālo* (WB) who is *saurāli* par excellence of a father become *māmā* (MB) to his sons.

Although ZHF and ZHM are referred to by the terms *sasurā* and *sāsu* as are WF and WM, these wifetakers are never referred to as *saurāli*. Rather, the immediate wifetakers of a *pariwār* are referred to by specific terms. Thus, the ZH and the DH are *bhināju/juwāin* and *juwāinchori*. Unlike *saurāli* the relationships of wifetakers is passed on from a father to his sons, for the DH of a man becomes the ZH of his sons and these individuals are considered wifetakers par excellence. Both the *saurāli* and the *bhināju* of a father, however, cease to be considered

in this way in relation to his sons, but are instead *māmā* (MB) and *phupāju* (FZH). In relation to ego these two relatives may both be classified as *kutumba*, in this respect the position of the *phupāju* is less ambiguous.

While wifegivers and wifetakers together are considered *kutumba* and equals, the terms *sāurāli* and *bhināju/juwainchori*, distinguish wifegivers from wifetakers and in particular refer to the relationships between immediate wifegivers and wifetakers of a *pariwār*. The nature of the relationships between individuals in these categories is expressed not only by the terms *sāurāli* and *bhināju/juwāinchori*, but also by the concepts *nāta* and *kutumba* depending on the context in which statements about these relationships are made. They are *kutumba*, i.e. people with whom the *pariwār*, the *kul* or the *bañsa* have married, but they are also *nāta* in the sense that *nāta pārchā*.⁶

4. THE SEGMENTARY NATURE OF THE CONCEPTS

In summary it can be said that what holds for Bengali kinship as reported by Inden and Nicholas (1977) and by Fruzzetti and Östor (1976) and for non-Brahmin kinship in western Maharashtra as reported by Carter (1974) holds for Rārā kinship as well. People conceive of concepts of kinship and categories of kin in a segmentary manner (Fig. 24). At Rārā the most inclusive category denoting one's own people is that of *ista-mit*. This can be used to refer to all a person's friends and relatives generally and these are also considered to be *nāta* either by virtue of sharing physical substances, by virtue of an assumption that

they share such physical substances or by virtue of having performed a ritual. This category is divided into two, which are not rigidly distinguished. Thus, these people who are *nāta* and *kutumba (ista)* are distinguished from those who are related by virtue of having performed a ritual. On the other hand, *ista-mit* may sometimes be used to refer to people other than those *nāta* who actually share physical substances and the *kutumba*. In that case, *nāta-kutumba* refers to people who can trace a relationship of blood or marriage and who share or are assumed to share substances. It includes agnates, cognates and all affines as well as kin and affines of affines as far as relationships are traced.

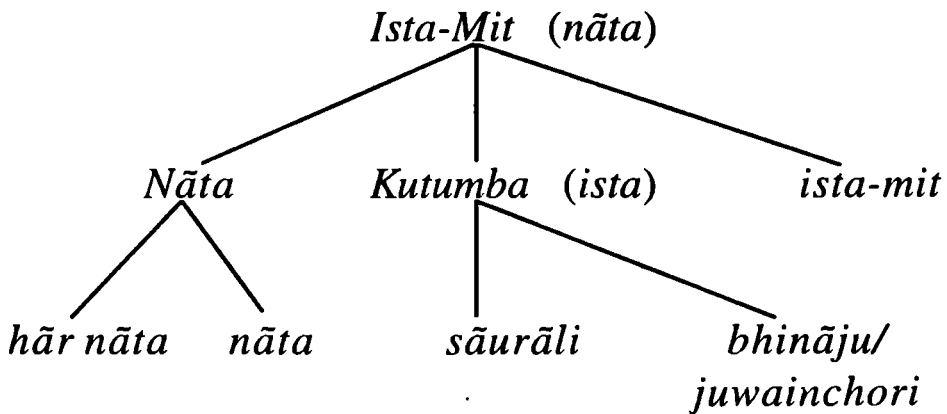


Fig. 24: Concepts of Kinship

Nāta and *kutumba* are both further divided. *Nāta* which at this level refers to those agnates and consanguines who actually share substances deriving from both parents, is divided internally into *hār-nāta*, i.e. agnates plus wives excluding married sisters and daughters, and *nāta* referring to all remaining consanguines. *Kutumba* includes the wifegivers, their unmarried sisters and daughters and their wives and

the wifetakers, their unmarried sisters and daughters and their wives and this category is also divided internally. Thus, *sāurāli* refers to the wifegivers including WB, WZ, WF and WM and *bhināju/juwāinchori* refer to particular wifetakers, the sister's and the daughter's husbands. The rest of the *pariwār, kul* and *bañsa* of these wifetakers and the *kul* and *bañsa* of the wifegivers are referred to as *kutumba*.

Thus, those people who are *hār nāta, saurāli* and *bhināju/juwāinchori* are conceptually and actually distinct, whereas such a clear distinction cannot be made between *nāta* and *kutumba*. Sisters and daughters who are considered *hār nāta* become *kutumba* after marriage. On the other hand, the shared substances constituting a person do not change and particularly those deriving from breastmilk are emphasised with respect to the relationship between married women and their natal home. While a sister and a brother are *kutumba* from the point of view of the *bañsa*, from the point of view of dudh and shared substances from the mother they are *nāta*. This dual quality is particular to the relationship between cross-sex siblings and is passed on from one generation to the next, thus extending to the FZ and the MB and their children. In this way the problem of whether certain relatives, chiefly the MB and his children and the FZ and her children, are kin or affines ceases to exist. For the Chetris and Thakuris of Rārā these relatives are clearly both *nāta* and *kutumba* and the presence of this duality goes some way towards explaining the fact that, although considered siblings termino-

logically, the children of parents' cross-sex siblings may be considered marriageable. After three generations the relationship between siblings from *dudh* ceases and it is said that then people become *arko mānche*, other people as opposed to "our own people". Such people, however, may still be *nāta* in a general sense.

5. THE BROTHER AND THE SISTER

The passing of shared substance from one generation to the next is also expressed in the way the concept of *bhāibandhu* (brotherhood) is used by both Thakuris and Chetris. As described in Chapter 8, *bhāibandhu* is also a segmentary concept and refers to a relationship between siblings of both the same and opposite sex. *Bhāibandhu* specifically refers to a relationship of equality and in this way cuts across the inequality and distinctions of status which exist between elder and younger full and classificatory siblings. Further, by including people who are both *nāta* and *kutumba* in this category, such as the children of a mother's brother and a father's sister, a possible distinction in terms of the status of wifetakers vis-à-vis wifegivers is submerged in a general equality expressed in the idiom of equality between siblings.

In a recent paper, Scheffler (1980) places particular emphasis on this aspect of the system. He calls this principle "the symmetry and transitivity of sibling relationships" and sees this expressed in the kinship terminology. Further, in his analysis of the north Indian terminology reported by Vatuk (1969, 1972, 1975), Scheffler chooses to interpret all

terminological extensions as being dependent on the rules which are at the basis of this principle. Thus, Scheffler says:

It seems premature to conclude that any feature of this system of kin classification are best understood or somehow explained by noting how they are 'consistent with' or 'reflect' a principle of hypergamous marriage.

(Scheffler 1980: 156).

In the Rārā kinship terminology some of the equivalence rules accepted by Scheffler for the Hindi terminology do not apply.⁷ These differences between the Rārā kinship terminology and that of north India were discussed in Chapter 9 and there by itself the Rārā terminology does not make it possible to predict either hypergamy or bilateral cross-cousin marriage. In Chapter 10, however, both these types of marriage patterns take place and one could legitimately claim that some aspects of the Rārā kinship ideology and terminology reflect, at least indirectly, both these types of marriage. Thus, the terminological extensions classify all affines of affines as kin. This indicates exchange marriages and given the way terms are designated, some of these marriages are marriages between people who consider each other cross-cousins. Further, the terminological distinction between immediate wifegivers and wifetakers and the terminological equation of SW with yBW and DH with yZH suggest that in consecutive generations the direction of marriage should not be reversed and this, at least, allows for the practice of hypergamy. In reality, notions of hypergamy are expressed at all

marriages and the general marriage pattern may be one of hypergamy as it seems to have been for the Thakuris in the past, or one of isogamy as it is for both Chetris and Thakuris today. In both cases the proportion of cross-cousin marriages is high.

The futility of the debate about north and south Indian terminologies and their differences is confirmed by the Rārā terminology. One underlying principle or rule can be isolated for this terminology or for any other. Scheffler's emphasis on the "symmetry and transivity of sibling relationships" is obviously valid as the concept of "brotherhood" found all over India confirms (Mayer 1960, Beck 1972, Berreman 1963, Madan 1965 and Parry 1979). In a general sense this concept embraces all those people who are of one jāt and who in this sense share physical substances and a moral code of conduct. However, as Dumont (1970) so forcefully has pointed out, there is in principle no clear distinction between castes and grades between castes. Thus, the principle isolated by Scheffler is only one aspect of a kinship terminology in a caste society. Another aspect is the distinction, which may be hierarchical, between wifetakers and wifegivers. Here, it may be said that the offence of which Scheffler is so critical, i.e. "the analysis itself on knowledge of features of the structure of society." (Scheffler 1980. 135): Despite the scholarly and profound nature of Scheffler's criticism on this point, it seems to me that even his analysis is dependent upon the way people use the terms⁸ and hence on a sociological analysis much less clearly defined than that of Carter, Vatuk and others. Further, far from arguing that systems of kin classification contribute

to the maintenance of the social order, the systems of kin classification may, as may other ideas and concepts of kinship, allow for different interpretations in different contexts, and in this way contribute constitutively to the social order. Contrary to Scheffler's, approach thus assumes that a kinship terminology may not necessarily be a logically coherent system.

In north as well as south Indian kinship ideologies the controversial relationship remains that between cross-sex siblings. People married to same-sex siblings are considered kin in both north and south India as well as in Rārā and the special nature of the relationship between a brother and a sister has been commented upon by several writers. Thus, Beck describes for Konku how all castes isolate one cross-cousin, a MBD or a FZD, with whom a man has a right (*urimai*) to marry. The *urimai* refers to a man's actual FZD or MBD and not to more distant cross-cousins, although marriages with such women are statistically more common. The *urimai* is also expressed in the *iNaiccir*-ceremony in which the sister of the groom requests a future daughter of her brother in marriage for her own son. In some cases his own marriage cannot proceed unless the groom consents to her request (Beck 1972: 237–242), Beck considers that the *iNaiccir* ritual "is one of a group of rituals performed at weddings that emphasise the ties of the groom with his mother and sister, that is the women of his own descent group" (ibid: 239), However, she also points out that the FZD *urimai* "is found in association with a persistent ranking of givers and takers . . ." and that "the MBD *urimai*, by

contrast . . . is associated with an egalitarian treatment of givers and takers" (ibid: 256).

From Chetris of the Kathmandu Valley, Fürer-Haimendorf (1966), Gray (1980) and Bennet (1978) all report on the *pujya* relationship which exists between cross-sex siblings. A girl is worshipable to her 'father and her brothers and this is expressed at marriage where her feet are washed (*gor dhunu*) and when she is given *dacchina* by these relatives. Fürer-Haimendorf further reports that *pujya* relationships must not be reversed in marriage and that therefore particularly marriage to a FZD should be avoided. He suggests that the relationship of a man to his sister is extended to the ZH and this accounts for certain avoidances and the distinction between wifegivers and wifetakers (Fürer-Haimendorf 1966: 44-50).

At Rārā the term *pujya* is not used, but a young girl (*muniya*, bird) is worshipped by her father and brothers at her marriage and she is also given *dacchinā* on several occasions such as *śrāddha* and *dasai* as well as at the *bratabandha* ceremony of her brothers. This relationship between her and her brothers is, however, not only one of hierarchy but also one of equality. They as well as their children are considered *bhāibandhu* and therefore equals. This suggests that despite the fact that all marriages are considered hypergamous, one cannot generalise from the cross-sex sibling relationship to relations between wifetakers and wifegivers. The relationship which exists between a brother and his sister does not make it possible to predict the nature of the relationship between wifetakers and wifegivers. The latter may be one of hierarchy or one of equality. In fact, differences

in rank between wifegivers and wifetakers are not expressed by the Chetris at Rārā. They eat with both kinds of *kutumba* and do not perform the *gor dhunu* for the son-in-law.

On the other hand, as with the castes of the right and the left divisions in Konku, the Chetris and Thakuris place different emphasis on hierarchy and have different attitudes to direct reversals of marriages. These differences are allowed for by the dual nature of the relationship between cross-sex siblings. For both Chetris and Thakuris a sister is both *nāta* and *kutumba*. She is *nāta* insofar as she shares with her brother the physical substances passed from their parents. However, upon marriage she becomes a member of her husband's *pariwār*, *kul*, and *bañsa* and thus *kutumba* to her brother. This dual nature of the brother/sister relationship is also extended to the next generation, thus a mother's brother and a father's sister and their children are also considered *nāta* and *kutumba*. This special relationship between cross-sex siblings can also be discerned in the kinship terminology⁹ where parents' same-sex siblings and children of same-sex siblings are classified with own parents and own children respectively, whereas parents' cross-sex siblings and children of cross-sex siblings are referred to by using special terms (Chapter 9).

6. EQUALITY AND HIERARCHY IN CHETRI AND THAKURI KINSHIP

There are elements present in the Rārā kinship ideology which express both equality and hierarchy. Thus, how *kutumba* is a relationship between equals

by virtue of the isogamous marriage rule and how as *kutumba* wifegivers and wifetakers are neither distinguished nor considered of unequal status. Indeed, the terminological equation of affines of affines with one's own kin is in accordance with a direct exchange between *bañsa*, an exchange which constantly reverses the relationship between wifegivers and wifetakers. At the same time, the notion of shared substances from father and mother creates shared substances between units, which in an ongoing exchange are related to each other as wifegivers and wifetakers. The sharing of substances gives rise to the relationship of *nāta* and *bhāibandhu* and the concept of *bhāibandhu* suggests that when cross-cousins are married such marriages are isogamous and in accordance with the general equality between *nāta* and between *kutumba*. When marrying a cross-cousin one marries someone who is *nāta* in belonging to the group of people who share bodily substances and *kutumba* in not belonging to the category of people who are considered to be her *nāta*. The position of the mother's brother and his children and the father's sister and her children as both *nāta* and *kutumba* and marriageable does not pose a problem as long as marriage is an isogamous exchange, wifegivers are also wifetakers and the ZH may be a WB.¹⁰ From this angle, the kinship system of Rārā exhibits similarities to the Dravidian model. Further, both Chetris and Thakuris make prestations at marriage in both directions from wifegivers to wifetakers and from wifetakers to wifegivers and that the marriage patterns of both castes bear witness to a general exchange.

On the other hand, there had the discussion hypergamous tendencies in the system at several levels. Thus, terminologically one's immediate affines are distinguished as *sāurāli* and *bhināju/juwāinchori*. Further, *kanyā dān* is part of the marriage rituals and the Thakuris' worship of the *bhināju* and *juwāin* by the *sāurāli* points to the inferior status of the wifegivers. A difference in the statuses of the groom and bride is also suggested by the difference between the sexes with regard to first and secondary marriages. Both Chetri and Thakuri men can marry in *bihā* more than once, whereas for Chetri women all secondary marriages, although acceptable are entered into without ritual and Thakuri women can only marry once. Finally, the marriage patterns confirm these tendencies. In the past, Thakuris actually married off some of their daughters to high status Thakuris of Pyuthan and Jajarkot, and in the isogamous marriages undertaken nowadays by Chetris there is a tendency for the spouses not to be too closely related in marriages which reverse the direction of giving and taking.

The presence of these elements suggests the possibility of hypergamy and that marriage between people who are not equals may be realised even though the kinship ideology generally stresses isogamous marriage. Such a possibility is provided for by the segmentary nature of concepts of kinship. At one level those people who intermarry can be divided into people who are *nāta*, people who are *kutumba* and people who are both. At this level to some extent membership overlaps, but despite this overlap there is a basic division into two categories,

nāta and *kutumba*, and this is in accordance with the idea of exogamous exchange marriage. At the level below, however, the situation is different. In particular, there is here a distinction between wifegivers (*sāurāli*) and wifetakers (*bhināju/juwāinchori*). Although this distinction in itself does not suggest any differences of status between the two types of *kutumba*¹¹ its existence does allow for such a difference. When the ritual roles of the people included in these two categories of affines are considered, such status distinctions between wifegivers and wifetakers do indeed seem to be present at this level. Further, the assimilation in different generations of wifegivers and wifetakers respectively, that is the inclusion of the WB and the WF as immediate wifegivers and the ZH and DH as immediate wifetakers, suggests that in two consecutive generations the direction of marriage should not be reversed. This observation is not only in accordance with certain trends in the marriage pattern, in particular a reluctance to marry someone who is classified as a closely related FZD, it is also supported by the terminological equation of SW with yBW and DH with yZH.

All this suggests that, at least, at the level of individual marriages and at the level of the *pariwār*, people might not, in fact, marry equals and that the act of marrying creates a relationship of unequal status between immediate wifegivers and wifetakers. While this is so at the level of the *pariwār*, the inclusion of both wifegivers and wifetakers in the general category of *kutumba*, together with the extension of *nāta* to these people and the rule of isogamous marriage ensure that at the level of the *kul*

and *bañsa* or subcaste as a whole distinctions of status disappear.¹²

The position of the sister should be seen from this latter point of view, i.e. of playing down the status distinctions between different kinds of affines. A sister is a *kutumba* in the sense of being a general affine, that is, she has been given away to and included into the general category of affines. This is despite the fact that in the marriage ritual the sister is worshipped as a divine gift, but in accordance with the fact that a sister is also *nāta*, a kinswoman of equal status by virtue of sharing substances with her brother. This dual quality of the relationship is passed on from one generation to the next for up to three generations. Thus, the relationship between ego and both his matrilateral and patrilateral cross-cousins contain this duality, which allows for the concept of *bhāibandhu* to be extended to these relatives as well.

But this is not all, for this duality when seen in relation to the way the marriageability of actual cross-cousins is expressed by Chetris and Thakuris, clarifies the inconsistencies between forms of behaviour as expressed in the marriage patterns and the way in which kin are categorised as expressed in the kinship terminology. The Chetri marriage pattern shows a reluctance to repeat any of the marriages made by members of the *pariwār*, whereas the Thakuri marriage pattern shows an acceptance of marriages with actual cross-cousins and of marriages in which sisters are exchanged. Both castes, however, classify cross-cousins, parallel cousins and siblings together terminologically and emphasise the dual

nature of the relationship between brothers and sisters. However, the difference expressed in terms of who you should and should not marry within the category of marriageable people suggests that Chetris and Thakuris stress different aspects of the *nāta/kutumba* duality. Thus, the fact that Chetris do not regard daughters of the actual mother's brother and father's sister as marriageable suggests that they consider, these relatives as *nāta* rather than *kutumba* and the Chetri concept of *dudhkul* supports this. On the other hand, the fact that for Thakuris actual matrilateral as well as patrilateral cross-cousin marriages are possible suggests that Thakuris emphasise the *kutumba* aspect of the relationship between cross-sex siblings once the sister has married.¹³ The Chetri acceptance of classificatory cross-cousins of both types in marriage does not contradict this, for *dudh* lasts three generations only, and after that people become, in this respect, *arko mānche*. Such *arko mānche* may of course, be both *nāta* in a general sense and *kutumba*, since the preferred marriage for both castes is isogamous with *calek kutumba*.

This different emphasis on *nāta* and *kutumba* for Chetris and Thakuris respectively also explains their different position with regard to exchange marriages where two men marry each other's sisters. Chetris exclude the possibility of such marriages when two sets of full siblings are involved, for such marriages would repeat a marriage made by the *pariwār* and cause confusion. When two sets of classificatory siblings are involved, however, the marriages are in perfect accord with the general ideology. The Thakuri acceptance of the

marriages involving full as well as classificatory siblings, on the other hand, is in accordance with the fact that in such marriages the spouses are related to each other as *kutumba*.

The Chetri emphasis on parents' cross-sex siblings and cross-cousins at *nāta*, consanguines, ensures that despite the status distinction between wifegivers and wifetakers at the level of the actual marriages made by the *pariwār*, such marriages are not repeated and in a general way an ideology of isogamous marriage is closely adhered to. On the other hand, the Thakuri emphasis on parents' cross-sex siblings and cross-cousins as *kutumba*, affines, allows for the possibility that what is suggested at the level of the *pariwar*, i.e. a status distinction between wifegivers and wifetakers, may break into a general pattern of a three-category distinction between agnates, wifegivers and wifetakers, as indeed it seems to have done in the past. In this event, the ideology of isogamous marriage disguises a hypergamous situation. Unless the isogamous ideology itself changes, however, clear distinctions of status between wifegivers and wifetakers generally do not emerge, for once marriage has taken place, a relationship between *kutumba* or equals has been created.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter 8, castes and segments of castes were described and the segmentary nature of such categories as *kul*, *bañsa*, *thar* and *jāt* was emphasised. This observation has also been made by Parry who writes about Kangra:

The whole system operates not in terms of firmly delineated groups which exist as substantial entities, but rather in terms of a whole series of shifting categories which are capable of almost infinite segmentation.

(Parry 1979: 279)

For Rārā along with the situation reported for both north and south India, concepts of kinship are of a segmentary nature. This means that people can be classified in different categories depending on the context and that affines at one level are kin at another. It has been already discussed how the two categories of *nāta* and *kutumba* overlap and how certain consanguines for up to three generations are both *nāta* and *kutumba*. This segmentary nature of the system and of concepts and categories of kin makes different emphasis possible without violating overall ideological rules and principles. Thus, hypergamy and isogamy can be accommodated within the same ideology and hierarchy and its corollary equality may also be expressed in other aspects of the kinship ideology.

This is the situation at Rārā where elements from both the Dravidian and the north Indian kinship models are present. Some of these elements promote equality and others promote hierarchy. However, differences between the two castes can be discerned as well. Thus, while Thakuri marriage patterns show the possibility of actual cross-cousin marriage and exchange marriage between two sets of full siblings, Chetri marriage patterns show that they refrain from a repetition of the marriages made by the *pariwār*,

but that aside from this, cross-cousin marriages and exchange marriages take place between people who are related in a classificatory manner. Although both Chetris and Thakuris give their daughters and sisters in *kanyādān*, the difference between them with respect to the worship of the wifetakers is illuminating. The Thakuri bride and groom both have their feet ritually washed by the wife-giving *pariwār*, the *sāurāli* of the groom. Further, the feet of the bride are also washed by her close agnates and by the heads of all the households in the localised segment of the *bañsa*. Amongst the Chetris only the feet of the bride are washed ritually by her *pāriwar* and the feet of the groom are not washed at all. The prestations of the wifetakers to the wifegivers also take a different form and are made at different times by the two castes. While Chetri wifetakers make prestations at the beginning of the *bihā* to all those who later contribute to the dowry, the return gift from Thakuri wifetakers to their wifegivers is made when the *bihā* is all over and is given by the son-in-law to his parents-in-law only. Finally, there are differences between Chetris and Thakuris with respect to the acceptability of consecutive marriages of men and women and the status of the offspring from such unions.

These differences point to differences in the emphasis Chetris and Thakuris place on status distinctions. Chetris who generally play down status distinctions between themselves are also unconcerned about the differences of status between wifegivers and wifetakers. When these latter differences are acknowledged they involve the immediate *pāriwar*

only and the bride alone is worshipped for her purity. For the Thakuris, who also draw sharp distinctions between different kinds of Thakuris, status distinctions between wifegivers and wifetakers involve the localised segment of the *bañsa* as well as the wifetakers par excellence.

The point which emerges is that marriage prohibitions do not straightforwardly and totally divide people into those who marry and those who do not. Rather, the only relatives who are strictly prohibited as marriage partners are those who are *bansa* and *gotra* members and who share the actual substances of bone, blood and flesh. With those who are *nāta* and share substances derived from breastmilk, there is more scope for variation and interpretation. These ideas about whom one should or should not marry give rise to a paradox when seen in relation to the rest of Thakuri and Chetri kinship and show how neither Thakuris nor Chetris conform to either of our Indian kinship models. Despite the prohibition on marriage with close consanguines, Chetri ideology is more in accordance with the Dravidian model, whereas despite allowing marriage with close consanguines Thakuri ideology is more in accordance with the north Indian model.

On the other hand, Chetri ideas and practices at all levels adhere more closely to the ideology expressed by the Rārāls collectively. The reluctance in repeating marriages of the *pāriwar* and the acceptance of repetitions and reversals of marriages made by the *bañsa* and the *kul* as a whole, is to some extent in accordance with the paradox found in the kinship terminology; namely that, although affines of

affines are kin, cross- and parallel-cousins are classified with own siblings. There still remains the problem that even classificatory cross-cousins who are marriageable are classified as siblings. This problem vanishes when one considers indigenous concepts and categories of kinship.

The emphasis on all those people in the most inclusive category of *ista-mit* as *nāta* suggests that the relationship of shared substances provides an idiom for relations between individuals of different castes and subcastes. This does not mean, however, that such *nāta* are confused with the *nāta* who actually share physical substances derived from both parents. The distinction between full or *āphno* and classificatory or *gāunko nāta* is more than a superficial one and refers to the fact that while your cross-cousins are both *nāta* and *kutumba* to you by virtue of sharing substances, your classificatory cross-cousins do not share such substances. They are *kutumba* and *ista* and only *nāta* in the general more inclusive sense. The fact that cross and parallel cousins are classified with siblings terminologically reflects, rather unsubtly, the way the concepts of *nāta* and *bhāibandhu* are applied at these different levels.

The problem of how behaviour is articulated with kin classification has to be seen in relation to concepts of kinship and in the Rārā kinship ideology these concepts and categories betray scope for varying emphasis which is also reflected in people's ideas about the marriageability of consanguines. A kinship ideology is thus not one thing; rather a kinship ideology is constituted of different levels, some of

which can be opposed. As Good has observed, such inconsistencies may be essential “for rules must direct rather than describe behaviour” (Good 1981: 127). But such inconsistencies also leave scope for people to interpret rules differently and it is primarily in these interpretations that Thakuris and Chetris differ. Both Thakuris and Chetris show consistency in the interpretations they favour, and in the aspects of the ideology they choose to emphasise. Thus, generally Chetris emphasise equality. There are few suggestions of internal stratification in the Chetri caste as a whole and the inequality which is created between immediate wifegivers and wifetakers at the level of the *pariwār* disappear at the level of the *kul* and *bañsa* where a general exchange is adhered to. The Chetri marriage rituals and the prestations made at marriage also suggest moderation in matters of hierarchy. Thakuris on the other hand emphasise hierarchy. Their marriage ceremony and marriage prestations involve more than the immediate *pariwār* and therefore suggest the possibility of inequality not only between *pariwār* but also between segments of the *bañsa*. Further, Thakuris draw a sharp distinction between the Shahi Thakuris who plough and whose marriage practices resemble those of Chetris and the Shah Thakuris who do not plough and who distinguish themselves by emphasis on monogamy, by forbidding widow-remarriage and divorce and who do not accept a *ghar-juwāin* in their houses. Thus, the practice of exchange marriage and the separate equality of Thakuri wifegivers and wifetakers conceals the more fundamental distinction between those people who are of one’s own *bañsa* and *hār nāta* and those with whom one marries. This distinction may facilitate an

eruption into a general practice of hypergamy as has happened in the past.

Generally, Thakuris are more preoccupied with status than are Chetris. This is in accordance with their former position as aristocratic rulers and their ability to command the labour of others. The Thakuris also express their attitude to hierarchy in their choice of emphasis with regards to the kinship ideology. Thus, nowadays, they accept marriages between matrilateral and patrilateral cross-cousins as the second best choice to proper hypergamous unions and as this does not indicate any change in their attitudes towards hierarchy.

This different emphasis of Thakuris and Chetris, however, leads to further paradoxes for each of the two castes. Thus, while Chetris emphasise equality generally, they also consider the nuclear family acceptable and the idea that a man should wish to partition from his father is not disapproved of. Chapter 4, the Chetri *pariwār* tends to be a smaller unit than the Thakuri *pariwār*. This should be seen in relation to the Chetri emphasis on lineals to the exclusion of collaterals. The Thakuris, on the other hand, are pre-occupied with hierarchy, but they also consider the joint family of as many generations as possible for the ideal. They are able to trace genealogical relationships to a greater depth than are Chetris. They do not make the terminological distinctions between own father and father's brother or between own children and the children of same-sex siblings as regularly as do Chetris, and finally they exclude the possibility that a daughter should ever inherit. Indeed, many of the differences between

Thakuris and Chetris can be related to the position of women in the two castes. While a Thakuri woman cannot inherit, can only marry once and most likely has no influence over the choice of her husband, Chetri women, at least, in certain circumstances are considered to be structurally, equivalent to Chetri men and they can leave their husbands for another man without loss of status to themselves and their offspring. Further, while Thakuri women are supposed to be secluded and observe *purdah* strictly, Chetri women are often seen showing affection for their husbands and lovers in public.

That these differences are related to the different caste and political position of Chetris and Thakuris and in particular to the difference between them with respect to the command of labour. Thus, different position of Thakuris and Chetris with respect to ability to command the labour of others, accounts for their different involvement in the process of economic differentiation. Further, it is suggested that, because of the importance of political status in commanding the labour of others and because of the practice of primogeniture in inheritance of political position and office, Thakuris' emphasis on jointness and reluctance to partition could be seen as their way of maintaining the existing labour supply. For the Chetris, who draw their extra-household labour from their own ranks, such a labour supply is best maintained by the frequent partition of households.

In line with Hindus elsewhere, both Chetris and Thakuris are generally preoccupied with purity and status. Such preoccupation with status is, of course, in accordance with societies organised along caste

principles; societies which in terms of kinship may be different. It has been well documented that different castes in the same society pursue different marriage patterns and different ideas about kinship (Beck 1972, Gough 1956, Parry 1979, Pocock 1972). Here, I tried to show what these differences are for the Chetris and Thakuris of Rārā, but also tried to show how these different ideas and practices can be accommodated within the same overall kinship ideology. The Thakuris who are superior not only to local Chetris but also to other Thakuris in the area, emphasise caste principles to a far greater extent than do Chetris. Their emphasis on hierarchy is appropriate for aristocratic rulers who aspire to be Rajputs. In their case those who are equals are male members of the same patriline and those who are ranked in hierarchy are men related through marriage. For the Chetris these principles are attenuated, thus allowing for a general equality both between the sexes and between the people who intermarry.

Chapter 12

CONCLUSIONS

A view held by present and past Thakuri rulers in Nepal as well as by some European and Nepalese scholars is that the Thakuris who live in Nepal today have descended from Rajputs who in their flight from politically more successful Rajputs and Moghul invaders infiltrated and conquered the original Khas communities. In this view the arrival of the Thakuris in Nepal dates back to the Moghul invasions during the 15th century. This view accords well with the theory which ascribes the origin of caste to conquest. However, caste and Hindu beliefs can be shown to have existed in the trans-Himalayan region well before the 15th century. Thus, although constant migration northwards of more orthodox Hindus undoubtedly was taking place, the population there was already familiar with Hindu ideas and ideology. This indicates that the success of Thakuri rule in Nepal cannot wholly and satisfactorily be explained by reference to their military ability and conquest. The many kingdoms of varying size and grandeur which existed in the Himalayan region were similar in structure and although one dynasty might have become more powerful and successful than others at certain points in time, processes of internal

differentiation which both generated inequalities and allowed for conquest must have been taking place as well. The distinction between Shah and Shahi and between *tāgādhōri* and *matwāli* castes made in Karnali today point to the existence of such processes of differentiation. Indeed, it seems that without the existence of such processes no conquest would have been successful since the new rulers had to rely on the already existing internal divisions in order to collect revenue and taxes.

This study has been concerned with such internal processes of differentiation. Thus, the attempt is to elucidate the relationship between the economic category to which households belong and their caste status. In this suggestion has been that while the amount of extra-household labour a household can command is an important factor in determining its economic position, ideas about who should command the labour of others are also central to the caste hierarchy and are conceived of in terms of purity and pollution. Thus, the membership of a particular caste predisposes but does not determine households to membership in a certain economic category. On the other hand, the actual change of caste status involves many more factors than the ability to command the labour of others. Thus, the Shahi Thakuris practise marriages such as widow-remarriage and accept the *ghar-juwāin* whereas the Shah Thakuris do not. But the difference between these two types of Thakuris is first and foremost conceived of in terms of the differences between those who plough and those who do not.

The physical surroundings of Rārā lake and village are somewhat unusual for a Hindu community

in Nepal. As a result of the high altitude the land there is poor and the climate cold, allowing for only one major crop a year. Irrigation is not possible and cultivation of rice, for Hindus the most favoured grain, is not practical. Thus, despite being able to command the labour of others in the area, the Rārā Shahs have always been poor compared to other rulers elsewhere in Nepal. Correspondingly, their political position has been relatively insecure. Their isolation both from Kathmandu and from Jumla have the Shahs of Rārā managed to preserve their superiority for so long and even after the establishment of Panchayat Democracy in Nepal generally.

Nevertheless, as a result of changes which have taken place in the country generally even the position of the Thakuris at Rārā has changed during the last forty years or so. Indeed, a central theme of this study has been how and why such changes have taken place. The evidence for these changes can be discerned in two ways. Firstly, nowadays many Thakuris have unused land, and for some households unused plots amount to as much as 50 per cent of their total landholdings. There is no evidence that this was so in the past. On the contrary, Thakuris describe how in the past they had big workforces of *halis*, slaves and other labourers working for them, and that their land was cultivated exclusively by using such labour. Then they say, Thakuri women were able to observe *purdah* strictly and did no other work than cooking the daily meals when they were not polluted as a result of childbirth and menstruation. Nowadays, the bulk of the agricultural as well as household labour is undertaken by the Thakuri women, while

Thakuri men still remain relatively aloof from the labour process. Secondly, in the past forty years or so a change in the Thakuri marriage patterns has taken place. In the past they used to be able to give their daughters to prestigious wifetakers living to the south-east of Rārā in Pyuthan and Jajarkot. Nowadays, on the other hand, the most frequent wifetakers are Thakuri living to the south-west and these wifetakers are also nowadays, as they were in the past, wifegivers. Indeed, the genealogies show that these Thakuris werewife givers before they became wifetakers, thus indicating a change in the marriage practices of the Rārā Shahs. Further, the large number of unmarried girls past marriageable age at Rārā in 1977 suggests that the Rārā Shahs had difficulty in finding acceptable wifetakers. Thus, while still superior to both Chetris and Shahi Thakuris of the area in terms of caste status, there is evidence for a deterioration in the economic position of the Kalyal Thakuris of Rārā as well as for a deterioration of their status in the eyes of other Shah Thakuris. The Rara Thakuris opted for exchange marriage with their wifegivers and an ideology of isogamy as second best choice to hypergamous marriages with other Shah Thakuris from prestigious places, and that the kinship ideology generally allows for such changes.

The deterioration in their economic position is said by the Thakuris to be the result of their inability to command the labour of others on the scale to which they could do formerly, and this they see as being related to the changing and loosening of caste principles and divisions. However, my analysis also shows that labour plays a central role in the economy

and particularly in the process of economic differentiation. In agricultural production the crucial extra-household relations of production are the *hali-riti* and *sākhi* relationships. In these relationships one party renders labour to the other, who is also the owner of land and plough-animals. Further, the former may sometimes be indebted to the latter. This is always the case in Chetri *hali-riti* relationships, whereas nowadays Thakuris have to pay a wage to their *halis*, since very few of them are able to give *pāico*. In my economic analysis, the nature of these extra-household relations of production are shown by the clear tendency for membership of economic category 3 to correlate with *pāico*-taking and inadequate ownership of plough-animals.

One difference between the *sākhi* and the *hali-riti* relationships is that *sākhi* only involves people who are equals and is a relationship between two parties of different economic position both of whom may plough. The *hali-riti* relationship, on the other hand, may be one between people who are not equals in terms of caste status and because of the Thakuri prohibition on ploughing all Thakuri households are necessarily involved in *hali-riti* relationships. Thus, while *sākhi* may be, and indeed sometimes are, also close agnatic kinsmen, the relationship between *halis* and their *ritis* tends to be as relations between people from different castes. A further difference between the two relationships is that *sākhi* is restricted to an arrangement for ploughing and does not suggest a patron-client relationship, whereas *halis* may perform all types of agricultural labour and the relationship between them and their *ritis* tends to be long-term.

The *hali* may receive meals on special occasions, clothes and help to meet the expenses of marriages and funerals as well as grain for the day-to-day survival of him and his family from his *riti*.

Despite these differences in the ideological representation of the two relationships as well as in the position of the labouring party, that the two relationships exemplify two different stages of a process of economic differentiation of households. This process of differentiation develops in the following way. Once households partition economic equality between brothers breaks down and economic differentiation between the new productive units may come about as a result of demographic differences, natural conditions or differences in management and knowledge of agriculture. For these reasons some households may be forced to enter *sākhi* relationships and once *sākhi*, despite the claim that the parties are equals, the labouring household loses out economically by losing labour time for its own agricultural production. A continued *sākhi* relationship may then lead to the taking of *pāico* and eventually to indebtedness. One way to pay back a debt or part of a debt is to become a *hali* and accept the patronage of a *riti*. Finally, the position of the bondsman may be indistinguishable from that of a slave.

This process is of economic differentiation, but that it affects households of different castes to varying degrees. Thus, if some households are prohibited from performing certain types of agricultural labour they start out at an advantage and because of the Thakuri prohibition on ploughing they are at such an advantage. Thus, the Thakuri requirement

for *halis* and other labourers has meant that they are likely to be superior in terms of economic category. This position further increases the likelihood of them being *pāico*-givers, recruiting more labour, and thus increasing their wealth further. In the past this position of the Thakuris was also reinforced by the ability of some of them to legitimately command some labour from all Chetri and Dom households. This position was a result of them being tax-collectors and political officials.

In this analysis of the process of economic differentiation I made the assumption that the exchange of a certain amount of grain for that amount of grain plus 25 per cent is not an equal exchange. This assumption is supported by my own data as well as by the data of others (Breman 1974, Kumar 1965, Hjejle 1967, Habib 1963-64) which suggests that households who are indebted tend to increase rather than decrease their indebtedness. A similar assumption should in my opinion be made for the exchange of labour for political protection and the safeguarding of justice, a position some of the Thakuris enjoyed and abused in the past. Even the exchange of three months' labour for a payment of Rs. 100-120 which takes place between many Thakuri *ritis* and their *halis* nowadays must be considered an unequal one. This price is fixed through a process of bargaining and haggling as well as by reference to people pay. It is not even comparable to the daily wage paid by the government to a labourer; nor is it in any way sufficient to feed the average family for the three months that the work lasts. Finally, the unattractiveness of the proposition is evident in the difficulty with which Thakuri *ritis* nowadays find *halis*.

My thesis then, is that the deterioration of the Thakuri economic position is a result of their loss of command over the labour of others, but that this is mainly a result of their changing political position rather than a change in caste relations. Indeed, the Thakuris at Rārā are still considered superior in terms of caste status. Nowadays they cannot easily command the labour of others, and their position with respect to the process of economic differentiation is becoming much more similar to that of the Chetris and Shahi Thakuri, but they still have not started ploughing themselves.

More specifically, several changes which have taken place nationally in Nepal have affected and limited the political position of the Thakuris at Rārā, which reached its last apotheosis with the 1904 order making some of them the sole intermediaries between the central government and the cultivators. Firstly, the abolition of slavery affected the labour force available to the Thakuris drastically. Indeed, when Jung Bahadur referred to the relative advantage of a "free" labour force he was referring to the Kathmandu Valley and the Tarai rather than to remote areas such as Karnali where even in 1977 wage labour had not become a viable alternative to the cultivation of one's own land. Secondly, the establishment of Panchayat Democracy and the subsequent presence in the area of central government officials achieved a centralisation never seen in Nepal before and consequently limited the autonomy of the Rārā Shahs. The ideology of the Panchayat system, although not resulting in significant economic changes, has at least given every individual the right to vote so that the support and loyalty of

Chetris and Doms has taken on a new importance for those Thakuris who run for political office. Finally, the establishment of the National Park has put Rārā and Chapru together with the other villages in the area under official scrutiny. It was no coincidence that the last tribute was taken illegally by one of the Thakuri households from the inhabitants of Chapru in the same year the National Park warden moved into his newly constructed quarters. As a result of these changes the political authority of the Thakuris at Rārā has become slowly but surely eroded and the prohibition on ploughing which used to be an advantage is increasingly becoming a liability. Thus, those Thakuris who have not managed to secure for themselves some kind of government employment and a regular salary are increasingly caught between their ambitious caste status and their economic incapability. No wonder that some of these Thakuris considered the resettlement plans a timely escape.

But even those Thakuris who nowadays rely on a salary in money rather than on high grain yields for their income experience difficulties. Everybody owns some land, and a general reluctance to sell land is discernible in all three economic categories. One result of these circumstances has been the relatively slow development of a free labour force and since labour is still largely recruited in traditional ways no practice of wage labour has developed. Thakuris still hold on to their extensive landholdings despite not being able to command enough labour for its cultivation and yet they do not consider that agricultural labour should be paid for in money. On the other hand, those who can only survive by

engaging in a certain amount of extra-household labour do not sell their land because there is no viable alternative to secure a sufficient income.

Given the inequality and economic differentiation which exists at Rārā and also elsewhere in India and Nepal, one may well wonder how this type of society could ever have become a model for the "communal mode of production" as it did in the early writings of Marx. The idea that the state is the landlord presiding over corporate village communities does not take account of the real nature of the economy. In Rārā the communal aspect is mainly expressed in the kinship ideology. Thus, the concepts of *bhāibandhu* and *nāta* embody notions of sharing and cooperation between people who are kin. In the actual organisation of agricultural production such sharing and cooperation is absent. It has already discussed how ownership of means of production is individualised and how there is economic differentiation between individual households or units of production and even between units in which the heads are close agnatic kinsmen. As already explained how these conditions are allowed for by the existence of individual rights to property and the sale and transfer of these rights (mortgages, *pāico* and usurer's capital).

At Rārā the two main castes, the Shah Thakuris and the Chetris, differ with respect to the emphasis they place on jointness and cooperation between kinsmen. Thus, the Thakuris favour the inheritance by a male collateral rather than a daughter, consider the joint family of as many generations as possible the ideal and make no distinction between subcastes.

Chetris, on the other hand, accept the daughter as an heir if there are no sons and the partitioning of a married man from his father and brothers once he has had children. Further, for them the subcaste of *thar* is the most important caste division, although no general order of ranking can be agreed upon. These differences between Thakuris and Chetris are also reflected in the terminological distinctions they make with respect to children of same sex siblings and parent's same sex siblings. Finally, that the Thakuri emphasis on jointness should be seen in relation to the practice of primogeniture in the inheritance of office. Since the holding of political office has been crucial to the amount of labour they could command, to stay joint has been the best way for Thakuris to maintain the largest possible labour supply.

This difference in emphasis on jointness by those who can command labour and those who cannot, suggests a solution to the confusion in the so-called "asiatic mode of production" between the "communal" and "individualised" aspects and also elucidates the relationship between the various forms of traditional Indian landtenure. There seems to be some evidence that the three different systems of landtenure—*rayatwari*, *pattidari* and *bhaiachara*—can be seen as variations rather than separate types. These variations are a result of history, conquest or the way in which villages were founded. This was recognised by Baden-Powell who also recognised the possibility of one system of landtenure changing into another (Baden-Powell 1896). The differences between the three systems is the manner in which ancestral land is held and divided over generations. *Rayatwari*

refers to individual landownership, whereas in *pattidari* and *bhaiachara* some principle of jointness is involved. In these latter two systems land may be held by individuals, but the ancestral land is divided according to different principles. In *pattidari* individuals inherit as a result of their genealogical position whereas in *bhaiachara* all descendants from one or more ancestors are allocated plots of equal size.

It seems to me questionable whether any of these landtenure systems can be defined as communal. Firstly, a rule of inheritance for ancestral land and even restrictions with respect to the alienation of such land does not necessarily mean that the rest of the economy is organised along communal lines. Rārā is a case in point. Secondly, although of ideological importance, land is not a direct factor in the process of economic differentiation of the peasantry. As we have seen how ownership of other means of production and ability to command labour are much more important factors in such differentiation. This means that the manner of inheritance and distribution of land is not a direct indication of the extent of economic differentiation. Thirdly, from Baden-Powell's account it is clear that when he talks about *pattidari* and *bhaiachara* as systems of joint ownership, he does not refer to a village or a society where land is communally owned by all individuals and households. Rather, Baden-Powell points out that both these types of landtenure are associated with conquest, land grants and foundation of new villages, and do not necessarily refer to the people ruled by the conquerors or founders (Baden-Powell 1896: 184). Thus, it is

clear that joint landtenure as in *pattidari* and *bhaiachara* and even the right of brothers to inherit equal shares of the ancestral estate does not necessarily indicate equality between all cultivators with respect to economic category.

In Rārā where ancestral estates are inherited in a *pattidari* manner and where alienation of land is restricted although not impossible, households are differentiated economically as a result of the general conditions of the economy. However, despite these general conditions of the economy and despite the importance of primogeniture in inheritance of office the Thakuris show a preference for joint households, joint ownership by all members of the household and the pooling of resources. In this they appear to be similar to rulers and conquerors elsewhere in Nepal and India. It is this correlation between political superior status and emphasis on jointness and the existence of ideological concepts such as *bhāibandhu* which have given rise to erroneous interpretations of caste communities being “communal modes of production”.

Indeed, in this general analysis of the kinship ideology of Chetris and Thakuris revealed the segmentary nature of the concept of *bhāibandhu*. Thus, while at one level *bhāibandhu* refers to brothers and sisters as well as to the children of parent's same sex and opposite sex siblings, at a more general level those who are *bhāibandhu* are descendants of a common male ancestor, members of a *kul*, a *bañsa* or all those who can claim membership of the same *jāt*. In this, however, there are differences between Thakuris and Chetris. For Thakuris *bhāibandhu* are

first and foremost the agnatic descendants of a common male ancestor excluding married sisters and daughters and their children. The latter are *kutumba* rather than *nāta*, although the duality is discernible. For the Chetris, on the other hand, the idea that married sisters and daughters and their children are *bhāibandhu* is emphasised and Chetris also consider these relatives *nāta* rather than *kutumba* and they prohibit marriage between full patrilateral and matrilateral cross-cousins as well as exchange marriage between two sets of full siblings. Despite their emphasis on the jointness of the patriline, in the relationship between *kutumba* Thakuris emphasise inequality whereas the Chetris, despite the tendency for frequent partition between brothers and fathers and sons, emphasise relations of equality with their *kutumba*. This is in accordance with the differences in caste status between them. The Thakuri emphasis on hierarchy is appropriate for people who claim to be aristocratic rulers and who enjoy an amount of superiority and deference from others. The Chetri emphasis on equality is in accordance with their position as an inferior caste.

The marriage practice of the Thakuris has changed from being one which favoured hypergamous marriages to one which nowadays favours isogamous exchanges. This change has been allowed for by the general kinship ideology. Thus, there is no indication that the ideology itself has changed. Rather, it is the practice of the Thakuris which has changed and in some ways they have now become more like Chetris. However, the Thakuri acceptance of cross-cousin marriages between people who are considered full

rather than classificatory relatives and of exchange marriage between two sets of full siblings revealed paradoxically their continued emphasis on hierarchical relations between people who marry. This paradox was also seen to be a result of the idea that marriage should be an isogamous affair between people who already have intermarried.

In arguing that caste distinctions are statements about what the division of labour should be and who should do what work for whom the attention back to the so-called “*jajmāni*” system. Analyses of this have not escaped the duality remarked upon by Dumont and others. This duality is that of religion on the one hand and economics and politics on the other, or as Dumont expresses it, of the encompassing and the encompassed (Dumont 1970). It is also the duality of the king and the Brahmin, the *jajamān* and the *purohit*. Dumont and Pocock have emphasised religion as the encompassing and the Brahmin as occupying the highest position in the hierarchy as a result of his purity. In accordance with this, Pocock considers the term *jajmāni* to apply to relationships between priest and sacrificer and only by extension to relations between other occupational specific castes (Pocock 1962). For Rārā the so-called *jajmāni* relations (referring to all relations between occupational castes) must be considered together with other labour relations. Thus, at Rārā, ideas about polluting and inappropriate work are extended to include agricultural work generally. Caste differences, even between Shah and Shahi Thakuris and Chetris, who all employ Brahmins and Doms, are conceptualised in terms of those who plough and those who do not. In this

respect the Shah Thakuris being politically dominant and, therefore, the *jajamāns* par excellence, identify themselves with Brahmins vis-á-vis all other castes. All work which is performed by these other castes is *chui* and indicates loss of status for the Shahs.

The consideration of all relations of production together does not, however, appear to reduce the duality which is also expressed by the Rārāls themselves. Thus, they distinguish between the householder's role as a *riti* and as a *jajamān*. The *riti* is the patron or master of a *hali*, of a slave, of a *bhyāl*, of a *lohar* and of a *damāi* and the relationship tends to be long-term and personal. Specific payments, if they are made, are made annually or twice annually and are subject to bargaining. On the other hand, the *riti* may also supply his labourer with grain for the latter's day-to-day survival. The relationship between a *riti* and his labourer can best be described as one between a patron and his client, in which the former can command some or all of the labour of the latter. In each case the amount of labour is not strictly defined. A *hali* or a slave may also mend his *riti's* tools if he is of appropriate caste, and *lohars* and *bhyāls* may also perform agricultural work such as harvesting, carrying and threshing. As *jajamān*, on the other hand, the householder arranges for a *purohit* to perform life-cycle rituals and other religious ceremonies. This relationship tends to be short-term and payment is made in the form of *dān* and *dacchinā* immediately after the occasion. There is no question of the *jajamān* commanding the labour of his *purohit* since the rendering of labour is inappropriate for someone of such a high caste status. Indeed, the

purohit himself, who as a Brahmin does not plough and who must not perform polluting and violent tasks, is also a commander of labour. In this sense, the position of the *purohit* and the *jajamān* is similar and the duality has been reduced.

In the area around Rārā the relationship between Brahmins and Shah Thakuris thus exemplifies the conceptual duality between king and priest referred to above. Although the *Rārāls* themselves express this dualism, it is also clear that neither the *riti/jajmān* distinction nor other aspects of the data from Rārā stands in complete agreement with Dumont's conception of Indian dualism. On this point, however, the remarks must necessarily remain tentative, since too little contact with Brahmins to offer, anything but some very general and speculative pointers to the way the problem of dualism may be approached.

In terms of commensality the situation at Rārā to some extent supports Dumont's emphasis on the superiority of the Brahmin. Thus, Shah Thakuris eat rice cooked by Upadhya Brahmins whereas the latter do not eat rice cooked by the Shahs. Nor do Upadhya Brahmins smoke a pipe passed to them by a Shah without changing the cloth. In other contexts, however, these Brahmins behave deferentially to the Rārā Shahs. Thus, when arriving at Rārā or Raunteri, the Shahs' *aula* settlement, even Upadhya Brahmins greet the Shahs with *darśan* or *dhok*. Further, parallel to the situation noted by Sanwal (1976), not all Brahmins are even commensally most superior. Thus, Jaisi Brahmins who are astrologers, are not acceptable as *purohits* to the Shahs, nor will the latter eat rice cooked by Jaisi Brahmins. To the Shahi Thakuris and

Chetris, on the other hand, both Upadhyas and Jaisi Brahmins are acceptable as officiating priests at life-cycle rituals.

The material dependency of a *purohit* on his *jajamān* is notable. Thus, all the Brahmins with whom there had any contact were fairly poor and never met Brahmins who did not officiate as priests either in temples or as *purohitas*. In other words the Brahmins with whom the Thakuris and Chetris at Rārā interact are not owners of large amounts of land or producers of extensive surpluses of grain. Instead of being in a position analogous to their *jajamāns*, they are thus dependent upon the latter for *dān* and *dacchinā* (Fuller n.d.).

These circumstances are also expressed in the *kuldevatā* worship of the Rārāls. The *kuldevatā* is particularly responsible for the prosperity of those who worship. Both land and other property as well as the successful continuation of the line of shared substances are under the influence of the *kuldevatā* and in worship it is particularly important that the relationship between the land, the patriline and the *devatā* should be maintained. Thus, produce from ancestral land should be offered by each household to the *devatā* who was also worshipped by the ancestors. In this worship the role of the *purohit* is peripheral and indeed a *purohit* was not involved at all when the Shahs performed their *pujā*. The *pujā* itself is performed by the *dāgri* or *pujāri* who is the senior male agnate of the *kul*, and only he together with the *dhāmi* is allowed to enter the inner chamber of the temple whereas the *purohit* stays in the outer room and the *damāi* is seated outside the temple with

his drums. Thus, in worship directed towards the generation of wealth from the ancestral land, the *jajamān* manages without the services of a Brahmin.

The question of the relative superiority of the *jajamān* and the *purohit* is thus not straightforward. On the one hand, the *jajamān* (and particularly the Shah Thakuris in the area around Rārā) are the landowners par excellence. On the other hand, their privileged position as commanders of both caste specific and agricultural labour in the area is maintained with reference to ideas of purity and pollution and according to these ideas the Brahmin and the *purohit* occupy the most superior position. Extra-household labour can be recruited in different ways. It can be recruited as a result of land-ownership as is the case for the *jajamān* and the king, as a result of caste status as is the case for the Brahmins as well as for the Thakuris and Chetris. Lastly, extra-household labour can be recruited by anyone who is able to give *pāico*. This analysis shows that either of these positions is likely to lead to enhanced economic status, since they all are likely to lead to further recruitment of labour through *pāico*-giving. However, in terms of the accumulation of wealth and the reinvestment of surplus grain in *pāico*, the ideal of the *jajamān* and the *purohit*, of the Kshatriya and the Brahmin, are different.

According to several writers (Heesterman 1964, Parry 1980, Fuller n.d.) the ideal Brahmin is identified with the renouncer. Thus, Heesterman notes that: "Manu 4.7 gives a hierarchy of Brahmins: according to the stores they possess, the smaller the store the higher the Brahmin, the highest Brahmin has no provisions for the

next day.” (Heesterman 1964: 29) Thus, while the ideal *jajamān* and Kshatriya may use his wealth to generate further wealth, the ideal Brahmin should not employ his wealth in this way. His wealth should free him from the preoccupation with worldly matters and eventually be renounced altogether. Indeed, both Fuller and Parry (1980:106) consider that the practising pries can never come close to this ideal precisely because of his dependence on his *jajamān*.

This indicates that Dumont’s emphasis on the superior position of the Brahmin priest and on religion as encompassing political and economic matters is at best too simplistic. As Burghart has observed: “... by secularising power and incorporating it within the caste system, Dumont has deprived politico-economic power of its former religious status.” (Burghart 1978:528) The economic position and economic ability of households is related to their caste status and that the caste hierarchy contains safeguards for generally ensuring that those (except the Brahmin priest) of higher purity and status can command some of the labour of others and thereby maintain their position. Power, wealth and purity are thus maintained together and the acquisition or possession of amounts of anyone of these qualities tends to lead to the acquisition of the others. Thus, as a result of the ability of the Shahs of Rārā to remain a politically dominant caste, they are also considered superior in terms of purity by both the Chetris and the Shahi Thakuris. Dumont sees the caste system as a hierarchy with the Brahmin priest at the top largely because he neglects and delegates to a different sphere the political and economic aspects of caste.

Burghart, on the other hand, goes to the other extreme and considers the existence of three separate hierarchies. Thus, Burghart states:

The Brahman claimed his superiority according to the hierarchy of the sacrificial body of Brahma; the ascetic claimed his superiority according to the hierarchy of the cycle of confused wandering; and the Hindu king claimed his superiority in terms of a tenurial hierarchy which was derived from his lordship over the land.

(*Burghart 1978: 520-21*)

At first glance aspects of the relationship between Shah Thakuris and their *purohits* appear to accord with Burghart's ideas. Thus, when the *purohit* arrives at Rārā at the place of residence of his Thakuri *jajamān* (structurally equivalent to the royal court) he performs *darśan* towards his *jajamān*. On the other hand, the separate nature of the hierarchies cannot account for the situation at Rārā where all agricultural relations of production are considered to derive from differences between castes in terms of purity and pollution.

This lack of separation between the religious and non-religious spheres and hence a reduction of the duality, has also been remarked upon by other writers. Thus, Marglin considers that those groups who have greater purity and status also have "certain privileges in terms of access to women, occupation and wealth." (Marglin 1977: 269) The Brahmin enjoys power as well as wealth and in this respect there is

nothing which is accessible to the *Kshatriya* that is not also accessible to the Brahmin. The caste positions of both are sustained by their purity as well as their privileged position with economic and political relationships and the command of labour. While the superiority of one over the other may be a matter of context, as Burghart seems to suggest, the similarity in some aspects of their positions is crucial, because it indicates that, conceptually at least, the Brahmin and the king and the hierarchies in which each is superior, are not separate and compartmentalised. Mariott has elaborated this point in an attempt to construct a monistic model for Indian transactions (Mariott 1976). Thus, Mariott concludes:

Transactors and transactions are oriented ultimately neither toward 'purity' nor toward 'power' as usually understood in social science, but toward a unitary Indian concept of superior value—power understood as vital energy, substance-code of subtle, homogenous quality, and high, consistent transactional status or rank. All these are regarded as naturally coincidental or synonymous.

(*Ibid.* 137)

The main cause for disagreement between these writers is the nature of the conceptual order of Hindu society. While Dumont suggests that this order is arranged in a hierarchical manner with the brahmanical ideal as encompassing and Burghart considers the conceptual order divided into three separate spheres, Marglin and Mariott consider the

Brahmin at the apex of a monistic order either as a result of his purity which also yields power and wealth (Marglin) or as a result of his most consistent use of an optimal strategy in transaction with others (Mariott). Despite their differences, however, all these writers share a common emphasis on ideological representations. They all examine the conceptual order from the "inside" and consider transactions and social relationships accordingly. Thus, both Dumont and Burghart consider the king as "lord of the land" and neither examines the economic relationships in detail. In the case of Mariott this bias is also evident. Mariott divides the media of transactions (substance-codes) into a hierarchy ranging from relatively gross to relatively subtle, according to Hindu ideas rather than according to the place such media occupy in the process and relations of production (Mariott 1976: 110). Thus, grain and land are more subtle substance-codes and may therefore appropriately be given up the hierarchy, whereas cooked food and garbage are so gross and defiling that they can only be accepted from purer and hence superior individuals. In other words, items such as land, grain and uncooked food and labour can be given to superiors without the latter losing their purity or their position in the caste hierarchy. Transactions in more gross substance-codes, on the other hand, confirm and ensure this hierarchy. If one accepts these terms as most Hindus and as the Rārāls certainly do, then the conceptual order is a monistic one and both Dumont's and Burghart's failure to grasp this is related to their inability to see political and economic processes operating in all social relationships. According to this model, the Brahmin is still at the top, but there is no

dualism; rather, the diversity in relations between castes is achieved through transactions in substance-codes (ibid.: 113).

If, on the other hand, transactions in more subtle substance-codes such as land, grain and manual labour are analysed, the reverse aspect of these hierarchical relationships emerges. Thus, my analysis of the relations of production at Rārā indicates that the higher the status of a caste the more likely this caste is to be removed from the labour process and to be dependent on the labour of others. The Shah Thakuris' refusal to plough and perform other agricultural labour not only indicates their superiority but also their dependence upon their clients who must perform these tasks for them. Indeed, their superiority, relative independence and autonomy is a result of their dependence on others to perform defiling work for them. Thus, when venturing outside the ideological representations of social relationships to an analysis of relations of production, the monistic order is again challenged by the existence of a duality in the nature of Hindu social relationships. On the one hand, inferior castes are dependent upon their superiors for day-to-day existence, for ownership of land, for access to the Gods, for political protection and for the continued existence of the cosmos. On the other hand, these superior castes cannot maintain their relative independence and autonomy if they do not receive labour, grain and uncooked food from their inferiors.

In this way, there is a tendency for dependence on others, politically and economically, to be denied in the higher realms of the caste hierarchy. Superior

castes aspire to an ideal of autonomy and independence and this ideal is precisely what is achieved in its purest form by the *sanyasi*. By renouncing the world altogether the *sanyasi* achieves total separation from social relationships. Thus, Das considers the *sanyasi* an asocial category because it stands above the structural distinctions operating within society (Das 1977: 45). On the one hand, the *sanyasi* is the final fulfilment of the ideal of independence and autonomy; on the other, the *sanyasi* is also the most forceful negation of the reality of social relations of dependence. The superiority of the Shah Thakuris to their *purohits* in certain contexts should be explained with reference to this dual nature of Hindu social relations so forcefully negated in the ideal of the renouncer. The *purohit* in the area around Rārā and the Brahmin priest generally is dependent on a *jajamān* for material support. His position is not independent and autonomous. The wealthy *jajamān*, on the other hand, particularly the one who can command a large labour force, is able to perceive the social and economic relationships in which he is involved in terms of his own autonomy and the dependence of his labourers, his artisans and even of his *purohit*. In achieving this autonomy he is in ideological terms at least, closer to the ideal of the renouncer than any other castes except the Brahmin who does not officiate. In reality, however, he is sustained by the economic relationships in which he is involved.

The question of the superiority of the king or the Brahmin must be related to the category of the renouncer as well as to the particular relations of production which exist between castes. Ideologically

the Brahmin may be superior, but his superiority is not just a result of his purity, but also of his ability to wield political and economic power. This analysis of the political and economic aspects of the social relations at Rārā suggests that the category of the renouncer embodies the highest ideal for all castes. This ideal is a negation of social relations of dependence and hence independence from economic and political relationships altogether. A separation of the economic-political from the religious thus has no place in social relations; rather the existing duality is that between the social and the asocial.

With respect to the relations between king, Brahmin and renouncer, the data from Rārā suggests these conclusions. Their further demonstration would require more contact with Brahmins and renouncers than an analysis of people's own ideas on these matters. But this would be the subject of another study.

APPENDIX A

RUKKĀ OF 1904 AD ISSUED TO THREE THAKURIS AT RĀRĀ

Rukkā issued by His Highness Maharaj Chandara Shumsher Jung Rana Bahadur. Letter issued to the said effect by *swasti sri* Prince Commander-in-Chief General Bhim Shumsher Jung Rana Bahadur:

I greet you all —Devi Prasad Shahi, Nara Prasad Shahi and Bhim Bahadur Shahi¹ —with appropriate words. Now, we have received a petition filed by Devi Prasad Shahi. In the petition he has stated: “We had been collecting the income of four villages in Jumla Gandara for and on behalf of *jimwāls* of those four villages. All collected revenue but 16 Gandi², Rs. 25 was given to my father under the provision made by the Lal Mohar (royal seal) of the year 1900 v.s. We enjoyed that for twenty-four years, beginning from 1900; but the practice was discontinued by the inspection of 1925 v.s. I am suffering a lot by this decision. I beg you to make an arrangement under which I could receive 16 Gandi, Rs. 25, and could give the rest—16 Gandi, Rs. 25—to the *jimwāl*. Or you could be kind enough to make arrangements under which out of Rs. 124 from all four villages, the income of

three villages could be paid to the *jimwāls* and the income of one village, Chapru, could be exempted in favour of me.”

We have gone through this petition. Since the practice has been discontinued by the inspection of 1925 there now seems no necessity of collecting income and handing it over to the *jimwāl* who has the ultimate responsibility of depositing it at the district quarters. Therefore, we have made the following provisions for the below mentioned four villages. You had been enjoying a part of the revenue of the said four villages as your ancestral property which were 3 I III ke pai 16 Gandi Rs. 5½ pai Gandirupees 4 II; total 16 Gandi rupees 9 II 2/2.³ This has now been scrapped by us. In its place we have revived the old practice. Accordingly, keeping in the spirit of the previous Lal Mohar, you are entitled to 16 Gandi ke 16 rupees. The rest of the revenue should be paid at district headquarters on year-to-year and instalment basis. You will be responsible for it from the season crop of 1961 v.s. You are authorised to collect revenue from the subjects on the fixed rate. You take 16 Gandi ke 16 rupees and conduct business according to our order.

This provision was made by His Highness on Thursday 29th day of *poush* in the year 1961 v.s. Accordingly, a team of employees of *sadar dafdar khana lagal bandobasta paila adda* (revenue office) consisting of *subba* Trailokeschwor Lal, *kharidar* Devi Bahadur, *nayab dittha* Hari Kumar, *mukhiya* Ramlal Padhya and *mukhiya* Bakhar Sundar prepared this document and asked

for my signature if I wished to give one. I find this document clear and authentic and therefore, hereby, give my assent. Do as ordered.

Details

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Total revenue of Rārā village | 63 III 3/3 |
| Total revenue of Chapru village | 167 III 3/1 |
| Total revenue of Murma village | 43 III II/3 |
| Total revenue of Ruma village | 36 II 3/12 |

Notes

1. The fact that these Thakuris are referred to as Shahis suggests that in the eyes of the central government they did not qualify for the status they claimed locally.
2. *Gandi* is old Nepalese currency.
3. There are 16 *annas* in one rupee; 4 *paisā* in one *anna*, and 4 *dām* in one *paisā* (Regimi Miscell. Series 1979, vol. 2: 4).

APPENDIX B

ECONOMIC DETAILS OF HOUSEHOLDS

| <i>Households</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> |
|--|----------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Caste | T | T | T | T | T |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 141¾ | 67¼ | 52¼ | 75¼ | 64¼ |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | 0.92 | 2.0 | 8.5 | 14.9 | 4.0 |
| Oxen | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| Cows | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Water buffaloes | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Sheep & Goats | — | 5 | 5 | — | — |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 150 | 52 | 77 | 67 | 45 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 92 | 51 | 56 | 79 | 76 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | -2 | -4 | -1 | -4 | -5 |
| Extra labour man/days | +184 | +83 | +144 | +160 | +86 |
| Labour: | -25 | -3 | -5 | -4 | -3 |
| Cost/income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | | Rs.120 | Rs. 160 | Rs 204 | Rs.120 |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | +30 | -6 | +15 | -20 | -39 |
| Other income | shop | 200 | shop | shop | |
| | | Rs/month | 425 | 175 | 475 |
| | | | Rs/month | Rs/month | Rs/month |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | — | — | — | — | 20 |
| Pāico (<i>muri</i>) | +40 | Takes | Gives/ takes | Gives/ takes | Takes |
| Land bought or sold | Bought | Bought | Bought | — | Bought |

| <i>Households</i> | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--|-----------------|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Caste | T | T | T | T | T |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 40¾ | 65¾ | 75 | 109 | 81 |
| Land <i>aula</i> | 0.92 | 20.5 | 2.7 | 12 | 7.75 |
| (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | - | - | - | 22 | 6.0 |
| Oxen | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Cows | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Water buffaloes | - | 1 | - | 3 | - |
| Sheep & goats | - | - | - | 8 | 16 |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 38 | 78 | 57 | 222 | 106 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 40 | 61 | 60 | 125 | 72 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | -2 | -8 | - | -18 | -14 |
| Extra labour man/days | -34 | + 135 | + 64 | + 587 | + 84 |
| Labour: Cost/ income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | -1 Rs. 120 | -4 Rs. 120 | -3 Rs. 100 | -47 Rs. 200 | -6 Rs. 140 |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | -5 | + 5 | -6 | + 28 | + 14 |
| Other income | 175 Rs/month | 225 Rs/month ¹ | - | 175 Rs/month | 350 Rs/month |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | - | - | - | 40 | - |
| Pāico (<i>muri</i>) | Takes | Gives/ takes | Takes | +20 | Takes |
| Land bought or sold | - | Bought | Sold | Bought | - |

| <i>Households</i> | <i>11</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>14</i> | <i>15</i> |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Caste | T | T | T | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 142¼ | 56 ⁵ / ₈ | 71¼ | 5 | 35 |
| Land <i>aula</i> | 3.8 | 2.9 | 2.9 | - | - |
| (<i>mato muri hal</i>) | - | - | 18 <i>bigha</i> ² | - | - |
| Oxen | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 |
| Cows | 3 | 1 | 2 | - | - |
| Water buffaloes | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 |
| Sheep & goats | 3 | - | 2 | - | 4 |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 69 | 28 | 193 | 10 | 33 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 40 | 27 | 133 | 27 | 64 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | -6 | -3 | -4 | - | - |
| Extra labour man/days | + 105 | + 38 | + 762 | - 250 | - 90 |
| Labour: Cost/income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | -15 | -1 Rs. 90 | -57 Rs. 120 | + 5 | Rs. 630 |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | + 8 | -3 | + 19 | -12 | -31 |
| Other income | Shop: Rs. 525 /Month | - | 475 Rs/Month | 1200 Rs/Year | 240 Rs./Month |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | 40 | - | - | - | - |
| Pāico (<i>muri</i>) | + 12 | Takes | + 7 | Takes | Takes |
| Land bought or sold | Bought | - | Bought | - | - |

| <i>Households</i> | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------|-------|--------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 31 | 37 | 5 | 21.5 | 54 |
| Land <i>aula</i> | — | some thru' | — | — | — |
| (<i>mato muri</i> | — | DH | — | 8.5 | 14 |
| <i>hal</i>) | | | | | |
| Oxen | — | 1 | — | 1 | 2 |
| Cows | — | — | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Water | — | — | — | — | — |
| buffaloes | | | | | |
| Sheep | — | 15 | — | — | 16 |
| & goats | | | | | |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 10 | 31 ³ | 6 | 38 | 86.5 |
| Costs: seed & | 9 | 58 | 18 | 39 | 80 |
| consumption (<i>muri</i>) | | | | | |
| Share-cropping | — | — | — | — | + 2.5 |
| costs (<i>muri</i>) | | | | | |
| Extra labour | — | -14 | -90 | — | -4 |
| man/days | | | | | |
| Labour: | — | + 0.35 | + 6 | — | — |
| cost/income | | Rs. 90 | Rs. 120 | | |
| (<i>muri</i>), rupees | | | | | |
| Surplus grain | + 1 | -27 | -6 | -1 | 9 |
| (<i>muri</i>) | | | | | |
| Other income | — | — | 180 | — | — |
| | | | Rs/year | | |
| Surplus ghee | — | — | — | — | — |
| (<i>māna</i>) | | | | | |
| Pāico (<i>muri</i>) | Takes | Takes | Takes | Takes | Takes |
| Land bought | | | | | |
| or sold | — | — | — | Sold | Bought |

| <i>Households</i> | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
|--|--------|-----------|------|------|-----------------------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 30 | 42 | 44 | 38 | 70.5 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | — | — | 1.6 | — | 4 |
| Oxen | 10 | — | 21 | 8 | 18.5 |
| Cows | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Water | 8 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| buffaloes | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| Sheep & goats | 32 | — | — | — | 20 |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 53 | 28 | 36 | 34 | 122 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 63 | 31 | 40 | 23 | 98 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | — | -90 | — | + 40 | + 123 |
| Labour: cost/income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | — | Rs. + 630 | — | -1 | -90 -9 +630 Rs. |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | -10 | -3 | -4 | + 10 | + 15 |
| Other income | From | portering | — | — | 200 |
| | milk | | | | Rs/month |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | 69 | 10 | — | — | — |
| Pāico (<i>muri</i>) | — | Takes | — | — | +10 |
| Land bought or sold | Bought | — | Sold | — | Bought |

| <i>Households</i> | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|--|------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 37.5 | 34 | 80.5 | 38 | 20 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | 4.2 9.5 | 4.2 4.5 ⁴ | 26.5 2.2 | 18.0 1.5 | — 0.9 ⁴ |
| Oxen | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Cows | 2 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| Water buffaloes | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 | — |
| Sheep & goats | 20 | 20 | 40 | — | — |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 36 | 49 | 143 | 47 | 12 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 33 | 77 | 87 | 28 | 25 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | — | + 50 | + 20 | — | -90 |
| Labour: cost/income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | — | -11 | — | — | +5 |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | + 3 | -39 | + 56 | + 19 | -8 |
| Other income | — | 137 | Sells ghee | — | — |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | 10 | 50 | 75 | — | — |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) | Gives | Gives | Gives | — | -10 |
| Land bought or sold | Bought | Bought | Bought | — | Sold |

| <i>Households</i> | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 30.5 | 22.5 | 16.0 | 32.5 | 29.0 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | 0.3 4.5 | 0.15 2.5 | 0.63 - | 2.3 8.5 | 0.6 8.5 |
| Oxen | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Cows | 2 | 3 | - | - | 1 |
| Water buffaloes | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| Sheep & Goats | - | - | - | - | - |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 38 | 27 | 17 | 16 | 28 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 31 | 35 | 29 | 14 | 26 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Extra labour man/days | + 34 | -34 | -5 | -7 | + 14 -7 |
| Labour: cost/income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | - | - | - | + 0.18 | - |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | +7 | -8 | -12 | +2 | +2 |
| Other income | - | - | Portering | Portering | - |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) | - | - | Takes | Takes | Takes |
| Land bought or sold | Bought | - | - | Sold | - |

| <i>Households</i> | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
|--|----------------|---------------|--------|------------------|-----------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 24 | 62 | 20 | 38 | 34 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | 0.5 8.0 | 2.3 14 | — — | 4.5 — | 2.25 — |
| Oxen | — | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Cows | 1 | 5 | — | 2 | 1 |
| Water buffaloes | — | 7 | — | 1 | 1 |
| Sheep & goats | 1 | 22 | — | 40 | 20 |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 33 | 128 | 11 | 48 | 40 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 41 | 78 | 16 | 44 | 32 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | — | + 141 | -141 | — | -14 |
| Labour: Cost/ income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | — | -13 | +2 | — | — |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | -8 | + 37 | -3 | +4 | +8 |
| Other income | Herds Sheep | Sells Ghee | — | 137 Rs/ Month | Portering |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | — | 90 | — | — | — |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) | takes | + 30 | + 10 | gives/takes | takes |
| Land bought or sold | — | Bought | Sold | Bought | Bought |

| <i>Households</i> | <i>41</i> | <i>42</i> | <i>43</i> | <i>44</i> | <i>45</i> |
|--|------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 30 | 41 | 29.5 | 23.5 | 21.5 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | 1.25 — | — — | — 11.5 | — 5.5 | — 6.5 |
| Oxen | 2 | 1 | — | 2 | — |
| Cows | 2 | 2 | — | 3 | — |
| Water buffaloes | 3 | — | — | — | — |
| Sheep & goats | — | — | — | 25 | — |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 67 | 45 | 40 | 47 | 28 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 80 | 51 | 49 | 37 | 34 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | — | -4 | — | + 59 | - 59 |
| Labour: cost/income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | — | — | — | — | — |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | -13 | -6 | -9 | + 10 | -6 |
| Other income | Portering 175 Rs/Month | 312 | — | — | Sells Apples |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) Land bought or sold | Takes Bought | -4 Sold | Takes — | — Bought | — — |

| <i>Households</i> | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
|--|-----------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 30 | 30 | 18 | 46 | 20 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | — 16.5 | — 9 | — 6 | — 16 | — 4 |
| Oxen | 2 | — | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Cows | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | — |
| Water buffaloes | — | — | — | 1 | — |
| Sheep & goats | 35 | — | 19 | 12 | — |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 46 | 32 | 24 | 77 | 25 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 40 | 17 | 38 | 56 | 30 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | + 60 | + 42 | -42 | — | + 32 |
| Labour: Cost/ income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | — | — | — | — | — |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | + 6 | + 15 | -14 | + 21 | -5 |
| Other income | — | — | — | — | — |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) | — | + 5 | -5 | + 20 | takes |
| Land bought or sold | Bought | Bought | Sold | Bought | — |

| <i>Households</i> | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 |
|--|--------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 22 | 19 | 31 | 32.5 | 18.5 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | — 6 | — 4 | — 16 | — 16.5 | — 8.5 |
| Oxen | 2 | — | — | 3 | — |
| Cows | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Water buffaloes | — | — | — | — | $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Sheep & goats | — | — | — | — | 7 |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 35 | 26 | 50 | 67 | 14 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 34 | 30 | 54 | 64 | 35 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | — | -32 | — | — | — |
| Labour: Cost/ income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | — | — | — | — | — |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | +1 | -4 | -4 | +3 | +5 |
| Other income | — | Portering | — | Portering | Portering |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) | Takes | Takes | -3 | — | — |
| Land bought or sold | Sold | Sold | — | Bought | — |

| <i>Households</i> | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 |
|--|----------------|----------|----------------------|----------|-----------|
| Caste | C | C | C | C | C |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 18.0 | 20.5 | 28.5 | 19.5 | 30.5 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | — 8 | — 7.5 | — 15.5 | — 3.5 | — 14.5 |
| Oxen | 1 | 1 | 4 | — | — |
| Cows | 1 | 3 | 6 | — | — |
| Water buffaloes | 1/2 | — | — | — | — |
| Sheep & goats | 9 | 12 | 20 | — | — |
| Yield (<i>muri</i>) | 35 | 35 | 112 | 22 | 48 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 20 | 30 | 58 | 30 | 51 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | — | — | + 425 ^s . | -60 | — |
| Labour: Cost/ income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | — | — | -22 | + 2 | — |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | + 15 | + 5 | + 32 | -6 | -3 |
| Other income Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | portering — | — | — | — | — |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | + 70 | -10 | Takes |
| Land bought or sold | — | — | Bought | — | — |

| <i>Households</i> | <i>61</i> | <i>62</i> | <i>63</i> | <i>64</i> | <i>65</i> |
|--|-----------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Caste | C | D | D | D | D |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 21 | 16.5 | 25 | 12 | 22 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Oxen | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| Cows | — | — | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Water buffaloes | — | — | — | — | 2 |
| Sheep & goats | — | — | — | — | — |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 25 | 23 | 34 | 17 | 31 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 39 | 25 | 49 | 38 | 44 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | -60 | -153 | -60 | -157 | -90 |
| Labour: cost/income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | +2 | +3 | +3 | +2 | +2 |
| | | | | Rs. 100 | |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | -12 | +1 | -8 | -18.5 | -10 |
| Other income | — | 2 <i>muri</i> ⁶ | 4 <i>muri</i> | 1 <i>muri</i> | 1 <i>muri</i> |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | — | — | — | — | — |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) | Takes | Takes | Takes | Takes | Takes |
| Land bought or sold | — | — | — | — | Bought |

| <i>Households</i> | 66 | 67 ⁷ | 68 ⁷ |
|--|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Caste | D | D | D |
| Land (<i>hal</i>) | 8 | 6 | 10 |
| Land <i>aula</i> (<i>mato muri</i> <i>hal</i>) | — 8 | — — | — — |
| Oxen | — | — | — |
| Cows | 3 | — | — |
| Water buffaloes | 1 | — | — |
| Sheep & goats | — | — | — |
| Yields (<i>muri</i>) | 10 | 6 | 10 |
| Costs: seed & consumption (<i>muri</i>) | 19 | 18 | 29 |
| Share-cropping costs (<i>muri</i>) | — | — | — |
| Extra labour man/days | -19 | -19 | -115 |
| Labour: cost/income (<i>muri</i>), rupees | + 2 Rs. 180 | + 2 Rs. 100 | + 1 |
| Surplus grain (<i>muri</i>) | -5 | -9 | -15 |
| Other income | + 2.5 <i>muri</i> | Portering + 1 <i>muri</i> | + 3 <i>muri</i> |
| Surplus ghee (<i>māna</i>) | — | — | — |
| <i>Pāico</i> (<i>muri</i>) | Takes | Takes | Takes |
| Land bought or sold | — | — | — |

Notes to Appendix—B

1. This household also has the additional income of two administrative salaries.
2. The 18 *bighā* owned by this household are situated in the Tarai and is excluded from the general economic analysis.
3. The household also enjoys an income of grain from the *aula* land, but since the amount of *aula* land is unknown, the total yield of this household cannot be estimated.
4. These two households also have other *aula* land but the amount is not known.
5. The high number of extra-household labour/days received is a result of a servant living permanently in this household.
6. Received in *anna* from *ritis*.
7. These are Chapru households.

APPENDIX C

TERMS OF ADDRESS AND GREETINGS

1. THAKURI AND CHETRI TERMS OF ADDRESS

| <i>Term of Reference</i> | <i>Term of Address</i> |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>bāje</i> <i>bajai</i> | <i>bāje, hajur, didju, buwā</i> <i>bajai, hajur, didju, muwā</i> |
| 2. <i>buwā, bā</i> | same term as term of reference |
| <i>muwā, āmā</i> | same as term of reference |
| <i>jetho buwā/kancho</i> | |
| <i>buwā, jetho bā</i> | |
| <i>thulo bā/kākā</i> | same as term of reference |
| <i>jethi muwā/kānchi</i> | |
| <i>muwā jethi āmā/</i> | same as term of reference |
| <i>kānchi āmā</i> | |
| <i>māmā</i> | same term as term of reference |
| <i>māiju</i> | same as term of reference |
| <i>phupu</i> | same as term of reference |
| <i>phupāju</i> | same as term of reference |
| <i>Sasurā</i> | <i>sasurāju, sāurāju</i> |
| <i>sāsu</i> | <i>sāsuju, brāju</i> |

māuli sasurā
phupu, sāsu

sasurāju, sāurāju
sāsuju

3. *dāi*

bhāi

dādju

same as term of reference

bhāju

same as term of reference

buhāri

same as term of reference

didi

didju, āju

bahini

same as term of reference

bhināju

same as term of reference

juwāin

same as term of reference

jethan (ms)

jethan hajur (ms)

sālo

same as term of reference

jethāli

sāsu hajur

sāli

same as term of reference

saru dāi

jaisāb or *dādju/bhāi*

jethan (fs)

no term

devar (fs)

bābu sāb

jethi lāliju (fs)

jethiju, lāliju

nanda

muniya sāb

srimān, logne

no term

srimāti, svāsni

no term

samdhi

samdhiju

samdhini

samdhiniju

4. *choro*

name or according to
order of seniority

chori

name, *muniya*

bhatija

name

bhatiji

name, *muniya*

bhadau

name

bhadai

name, *muniya*

bhadau sālo

same as term of reference

bhadai sāli

same as term of reference

| | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| <i>bhānja</i> | name |
| <i>bhānji</i> | name, <i>muniya</i> |

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| 5. <i>nāti</i> | same as term of reference |
| <i>nātini</i> | same as term of reference |

2. GREETINGS

Information on greetings is important in understanding the way kinship terms, particularly terms of address are used. Greetings are formal statements about the inequality in social relationships.

The people of Rārā use three basic greetings. In the first type of greeting, the *namaste*, the palms of the hands are held together and lifted up towards the face and the head may be bent down simultaneously. The second greeting is *daršan garnu*, which involves curbing the right hand (or both hands) and with stretched arm moving it from the receiver's feet (or from the direction of receiver's feet) towards one's own forehead. The feet of the receiver are not necessarily touched. The third greeting is called *dhok garnu* and refers to a bow where the greeter places his forehead on the feet of the receiver. The three greetings should all be performed wearing some sort of headcover; men wear a *topi*, a Nepali hat, and women wear a *pacheuro*, a shawl. When women perform *daršan garnu* they hold a corner of the *pacheuro* in the hand which is used in the greeting. The *namaste* is reciprocal and performed simultaneously by both parties. During the other greeting the receiver simply nods or waves his right hand or does nothing at all. This behaviour suggests that relations of superiority and inferiority are expressed.

Informants claimed that *daršan* and *dhok* can be used interchangeably as one wishes, but it has been distinguished them, not only because the two are distinct in name, but also because the two were sometimes, although not always, used in different contexts. This can be seen from the following.

Daršan or *dhok garnu* should be used towards senior kin or affines. Everybody of generation +2 and +1 are greeted in this way, whereas everybody of generation -1 and -2 should greet ego in this manner. In this context too, the most interesting relationships are those of ego's own generation. The basic rule in this generation is the same as the one which should be observed generally, namely that one should show respect and obedience towards a senior. Thus in generation 0, people who are designated a kin term of seniority and addressed as such (kin = term plus *ju* or *hajur*) are greeted by *daršan* or *dhok*, whereas those who are designated a term for a junior relationship to ego should greet ego in this way. There are three exceptions. The HyB and the eBW both do *daršan* or *dhok* to each other as do the HyZ and the eBW. Similarly, the two pairs of parents-in-law greet each other in this way simultaneously. On the other hand, the WB should be greeted by *daršan* or *dhok* if he is WeB and should greet ego in this way if he is WyB, and the same goes for eZH and yZH. There is no permanent relationship either towards the wifetakers or towards the wifegivers displayed in greeting, rather the inequality expressed depends on the age difference between siblings. The HyB/eBW and the HyZ/eBW are easy-going friendly relationships who joke and flirt with each other on certain occasions. The HeB, although avoided by the yBW is still greeted by her respectfully from a distance.

The *namaste* greeting is generally used outside the kinship context towards strangers and *mit* relations. It may also be used between castes, particularly when the greeting person does not consider himself inferior to the person he is greeting. The Shah Thakuris greet a Brahmin in this way at rituals, whereas the Chetris use *daršan* on the same occasions.

The *darsan* and *dhok* are not confined to relations of kinships and affinity. These greetings are also appropriate between castes conveying inferiority and superiority. Thus, the Chetris and Dom should always greet Thakuris with either *dhok* or *daršan*; and Brahmins do the same when they were not performing a ritual. Chetris greet Brahmins and Dom greet Chetris in this way.

Within the village, people do not greet each other whenever they meet. If someone comes back to the village after a visit to somewhere else he should greet his kin and superiors and should be greeted by those inferior to him in the appropriate manner. At all occasions where *achetā* is given the greeting should be performed by the person who receives the *achetā*. If an important person leaves the village he should be greeted in the appropriate manner by those who stay behind.

To an extent the choice whether to perform the *dhok* or the *daršan* is an individual decision, but on some occasions the former is more correct. *Dhok* is always performed towards one's own father and mother and their same-sex and opposite-sex siblings, whereas classificatory fathers and mothers may be greeted by *daršan*. There appears to be a tendency to use *daršan* towards affines such as WF, WeB and eZH and *dhok* towards senior kin; but *daršan* is used

more often towards woman by men, whereas women may use *dhok* towards each other particularly towards female kin of the husband.

Generally, the choice depends on the inequality of the relationship and, except in some circumstances such as towards own F or towards a king, *rājā* is not a fixed measure; rather it waxes and wanes according to context and individual perception. As headman and senior Thakuri of the senior patrilineal line, the *jimwāl* should be greeted by *dhok* both by junior kinsmen and other castes. Chetris may however, use *darśan* if the greeting does not mark any special occasion and the *jimwāl* is conceived of as any other Thakuri. When he acts in the role of a political official or in a religious capacity, as *dāgri*, he is greeted by *dhok*. Doms perform the *darśan* towards all Thakuris, but the Thakuris with whom they have a particular relationship, either as ploughman *hali* or as service caste *bhyāl* or *lohar*, are greeted with *dhok* without of course, actually touching the feet of the receiver. On the other hand, *dhok* could be used whenever *darśan* is used, if one wishes to impress.

GLOSSARY

- achetā:* A blessing in which rice offered in worship is placed on the forehead of the worshippers.
- adhiyā:* “Equal partnership”—a type of taxation in which the cultivator pays 50 per cent of this produce to the state or landowner.
- amāli:* Taxcollecting official at the district level.
- Aula:* A place or land at lower altitudes.
- āphno:* “own”, used about full kinship relationships.
- anna:* “Food”, “grain”—the regular payment to a blacksmith, leatherworker or tailor.
- bār:* Enclosure, hamlet.
- birta:* Landgrants made by the state to individuals.
- bhyāl:* Leatherworker.
- Bābuko bhāg:* Land which is inherited patrilineally.
- baithak:* Outer room of a house.
- bāli:* crop.
- bandha:* Bondage, mortgaged land, the owner of which has become a bondsman.
- bañsa:* Patriline, descendants; also spelt

- bhāibandhu:* *vasna* and *bamsa* in standard Nepali. Brotherhood, relationship between people who reckon themselves to be full or classificatory siblings.
- bhārdār:* A great man, a noble, a governor.
- bhāt:* Cooked rice.
- bhināju / juwāinchori:* Sister's husband and daughter's husband, the immediate wifetakers of a family.
- bhoj khānu:* A feast which takes place after most life-cycle rituals.
- bratabandha:* The ceremony in which a young man puts on the sacred thread for the first time.
- caleko kutumba:* Affines who have been married before; from *calaunu* "to use".
- chito halnu:* Purifying ritual in which someone who is pure pours water over the hands of someone who accidentally has become polluted.
- chui:* "touch", "contact", used to refer to the polluted state of women during menstruation and childbirth and to Dom generally.
- chutyāunu:* To separate, to divide, to partition.
- chutto-chutto:* "Separate", used about brothers who have partitioned.
- dacchinā:* Payment to a *purohit*, a ritual payment to daughters and sisters at *bratabandha*, *bihā* and *srādha*.
- dāgri:* A senior male of the patriline who

officiates at the worship of the *kuldevatā*.

- dāijo*: Dowry.
- damāi*: Tailor and drummer.
- dān*: Gift to a superior.
- darśan garnu*: To greet a superior using deferential gestures.
- dasāi*: Festival in honour of Durga in late September or early October.
- dhāmi*: Spirit medium.
- dhān*: Unhusked rice.
- dhārni*: Measurement of approximately 3 lbs.
- dhok garnu*: To bow down in greeting of a superior.
- dudh*: Milk, uterine relationship.
- dudhkul*: A category of kin including a man's brothers, sisters, mother, mother's brother, mother's brother's children, mother's sister, mother's sister's children and mother's mother.
- gāu*: Village.
- gāuko nāta*: Classificatory kinship.
- ghar-juwāin*: A man who lives uxorilocally.
- gor dhunu*: Ritual washing of feet.
- goth*: Cowshed under the house.
- gotra*: Patriline identified with sages.
- Guthi*: A landgrant made for religious purposes.
- hal*: Amount of land one man using two oxen can plough in one day.
- hali*: Ploughman.

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| <i>hār:</i> | Bone. |
| <i>hār nāta:</i> | Relations of the bone, agnates excluding married sisters and daughters. |
| <i>ista-mit:</i> | Friends and relations. |
| <i>jagerā:</i> | Landgrants made by the state to individuals on which the state still claims certain taxes. |
| <i>jajamān:</i> | Sacrificer, employer of <i>purohit</i> . |
| <i>jamindar:</i> | Landlord. |
| <i>Janai:</i> | Sacred thread. |
| <i>jāri:</i> | Adultery, divorce. |
| <i>jāt:</i> | Species, caste, subcaste. |
| <i>jetho:</i> | Eldest. |
| <i>Jhārā:</i> | Forced labour. |
| <i>jimwāl:</i> | The one who is responsible, headman and taxcollector. |
| <i>jokho:</i> | Pure food. |
| <i>jutho:</i> | Impure food or substances. |
| <i>jutho māju:</i> | To observe pollution. |
| <i>kāncho:</i> | Youngest. |
| <i>kanyā dān:</i> | The gift of virgin. |
| <i>kāmi:</i> | Blacksmith. |
| <i>khāsās:</i> | Original inhabitants of western Nepal. |
| <i>khet:</i> | Land which can be irrigated. |
| <i>kiriyā:</i> | Death rituals. |
| <i>koseli:</i> | Marriage in which brideprice is given, prestation made by wifetakers to wifegivers in the beginning of Chetri wedding. |
| <i>kul:</i> | The people who worship together and who usually are descended |

- from a common male ancestor.
- kuldevatā:* God worshipped by the *kul*.
- kumāro:* Slave.
- kutumba:* Affinal relative, from *kutumb* “family” or “relatives”
- lābhra:* Basketmakers.
- lekha jaggā:* Land which is situated at high altitudes.
- lohar:* Blacksmith.
- madat dinu:* To give help, reciprocal arrangement between households in agricultural production.
- māgnu:* To ask for, to beg, to borrow, used about the borrowing of oxen for ploughing.
- mahādev:* Shiva.
- māilo:* Next-eldest.
- māiti:* The houe of woman’s father.
- mana:* A measurement used for grain, equal to approx, 1lb.
- māsu:* Meat, flesh.
- mat:* Land which has been bought.
- matwāli:* Drinking castes; castes who do not wear the *janai*.
- mukhi:* Head of household, head of *kul*.
- muniyako dān*
khānu: “To eat the price of daughter”, referring to marriages in which brideprice is given.
- muri:* A measure of volume containing 20 *pāthi* or 80 *māna* at Rārā. Officially a *muri* contains 160 *māna*.

- muri māto*: Unit of measurement equivalent to 1,024 square feet.
- namaste*: Greeting between people of equal status.
- naigalo*: A share of the ancestral inheritance to which the eldest brother is entitled.
- nāta*: A relationship of shared substance.
- pāico*: Loan of money or grain on which an interest is charged.
- pākha bajarko*: "Land which has been stamped or knocked together", land which has been newly broken.
- pākho*: Land which cannot be irrigated.
- pariwār*: Family, household.
- pāthi*: A measure of 4 māna at Rārā, officially a measure of 8 mana.
- pewā*: A woman's property.
- pinda*: Balls made from rice flour and milk offered to the ancestors during *srādha*.
- pujāri*: The officiating priest at *kuldevatā* worship.
- purohit*: Family priest, who performs all the important life-cycle rituals.
- ragat*: Blood.
- raikar*: Land on which taxes are collected from the individual landowners usually by the state.
- rakam*: Forced labour due to the government involving a stipulated number of days every year.

- ritauni:* Prestation of few rupees made to a young man at his *bratabandha*.
- riti:* Master of a ploughman, slave, labourer or service caste.
- rukhā:* A written order from the government.
- sadasya:* Councillor.
- sājhā:* Partner, sharecropper.
- sākh:* Close agnates.
- sākhi:* Arrangement in which one household without plough-animals borrows plough-animals from another. In return for this the former household is responsible for ploughing the land of both households.
- salāmi:* Tribute, a gift given to a political superior.
- sañlea:* Exchange marriage between two pairs of opposite-sex siblings.
- sanpun:* Special foods such as fried bread used in rituals.
- sansarga:* Association of brothers who have not partitioned their joint property.
- sārki:* Leatherworkers.
- sau:* Money and grainlender.
- sāurāli:* The immediate wifegivers of *pariwār*.
- Sermā:* A tax on land.
- shākhā:* Branch.
- sikh:* Food offered to the *kuldevatā* and redistributed.
- srādha:* A ceremony performed in honour of and for the benefit of one's deceased mother and father.

- sutak*: Pollution incurred at the birth of death of a kinsman.
- tāgādhāri*: Castes who wear the sacred thread.
- talukdār*: A headman of a clan or village, a person who is invested with authority and jurisdiction.
- thāni*: Local term of Brahmin derived from *thān*, “temple”, “shrine”. This term can be used to refer to a Brahmin who is a *purohit* or who acts as a priest for a temple.
- thar*: “species”, “subcaste”.
- thek thiti*: A tax assessment based on a fixed rate (*thek*).
- tiruwā*: Stonemasons.
- tumaro*: Untouchables who do not serve a *riti*, but who may cultivate their own land.
- vamsa*: Descendants, patriline.
- vamsāvāli*: Genealogy.
- zamindar*: An official responsible for the collection of revenue from peasants living in the villages under his jurisdiction, usually also a landowner in the area.

NOTES

CHAPTER 2

1. Since the late King Mahendra of Nepal visited the location in 1964 the lake has also been called Mahendra Thal.
2. Jumla is very similar to Belaspur, the town described by Caplan (Caplan 1975).
3. STOL is a “short take-off or landing” runway and such an airstrip cannot take planes over a certain size.
4. A good description of panchayat politics at the local level is given by Borgström (Borgström 1976).

CHAPTER 3

1. Older writers such as Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick 1811), Hamilton (Hamilton 1819) and Hodgson (Hodgson 1864) refer to the language as *parpatiya bhāṣā* (“mountain language”) as well as *khās-kurā*.
2. Mahadeo or Shiva is nowadays an important Chetri *kuldevatā*.
3. Chinasim is in Jumla.
4. This story is related in a chronicle provided by Shree Virandra Shah of Jumla to Yogi Naraharinath (Naraharinath 2013 v.s.).
5. I do not know the location of this place.

6. At Rārā, Dasai involves sacrifices of castrated goats to the female goddess Durga. This festival is mainly celebrated by Thakuris.
7. Most Burha Chetris in Jumla are *matwāli* ("drinking castes"), as are ethnic minorities such as Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs and Limbus in Nepal generally (Fürer-Haimendorf 1957).
8. In Nepal, land granted by the state to individuals was known as *bhirta* and *jagerā*. *Birta* could be given to anyone the government thought deserved such a grant whereas *jagerā* was given mainly to government employees and officials. The difference between these two types of landgrants lies in the extent to which grantees could enjoy the various revenues levied themselves. The *birta* owner had the most autonomy. They received all taxes and levies except a regular land-tax, *sermā*, which went to the government. A *jagerā* grant, on the other hand, yielded less to the grantholder, particularly as the bureaucracy became more centralised. Endowments of land to religious institutions were called *guthi*. Such grants were made in order that the grantor would acquire religious merit and were made by the State as well as by individuals. Taxes from *ghuthi* land went to the grantee and thus did not yield any revenue to the State (Regmi I.; 1963–68, 1976).
9. All these offices are actually different from each other. The traditional village headman was known as *talukdār* or *jimwāl*. In areas other than Karnali *jimwāl* also refers to a village headman who collected taxes from his village usually on behalf of some other official.

In Karamali, as will be described, the *jimwāl* collected revenue from a number of villages. *Thāni* was a Brahmin who was a village-level functionary in Jumla, but he would also be a village headman or *talukdār*. Finally *mukhiya* was a term used to refer to village headmen in hill districts all over Nepal.

10. One *rupiyā* was then divided into 16 *anna*, one *anna* into 4 *paisā* and one *paisā* into 4 *dām*.
11. The units of measurement of volume in this area were then and still are *muri*, *pāthi* and *manā*. 20 *pāthi* constitute a *muri* and 4 *māna* constitute a *pāthi*. Officially today there are 8 *māna* in a *pāthi* and thus the Rārā *pāthi* and *muri* are half that of the official *pāthi* and *muri*.
12. As mentioned above the *jimwāl* in the north-western part of Nepal is different from the *jimwāl* of the central hill region. The latter is the headman of one village, whereas the former collected revenue from a number of villages.
13. The *Amāli* was the chief revenue collection official of the district.
14. See note 9.
15. Other states which were not Hindu have existed in this part of the Himalayas. The most famous of these were the Newar states in the Kathmandu Valley. These non-Hindu states are excluded from the present analysis.

CHAPTER 4

1. There is one household of Yogis in one of the 22 villages. Yogi is a separate caste but I did not have contact with them and their position in the caste hierarchy is not clear to me.

2. Chetris are also referred to as *thari*. They are the only people who have *thar*.
3. Further, a field, such as in Sija and in the Khater Valley there are villages inhabited by all four castes. In these villages the four castes live in clearly defined separate hamlets.
4. Although I have no extensive data about landholdings for any other village than Rārā the information I do have and my general impression of surrounding villages is that almost everyone in this area owns some land.
5. Unfortunately it was impossible to check the accuracy of this as the names of these ancestors were not known in all cases, nor could these names, when they were known, be found in the land records.
6. 15 households, including 50 Thakuris, have stopped cultivating at Rārā altogether and a majority of these constitute the population of Raunteri. In the land records some of these Thakuris still appear as landowners, but in actual fact their land is now being used exclusively by their agnates, who still live at Rārā. Because it was impossible to obtain accurate estimates of the size of landholdings and yields of these households, they are excluded from the economic sample. Thus, whereas the Thakuri sample for the economic data is 13 households including 133 individuals, for the data on kinship and marriage discussed in Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 the sample includes 28 households and 183 individuals.
7. This area is by some considered to be larger. Thus Regmi (Regmi 1976) states that one *mato*

- muri* is 1.369 sq.ft. The measurement in terms of *mato muri* has only been adopted in Karnali recently. Before *aula* rice land was measured in *khet*, one *khet* being the area which yields 100 *muri* of seed.
8. 100 *hal* is approximately 6 acres and 100 *muri* approximately 3 acres.
 9. 1 *bighā* in the Tarai is estimated to be approximately 5 *hal* at Rārā.
 10. It is possible that those Thakuri households who have moved elsewhere compare more favourably in terms of landholdings with other Thakuris in the area.
 11. When *dān* was made to people who were not considered to be of religious status the grantee was obliged to pay tax on the land to the state.
 12. For a more detailed description of the position of the eldest son see Chapters 8 and 9.
 13. This system is thus similar to *pattidari* land-tenure reported from India (Baden-Powell 1996, Maine 1881).
 14. In Nepali *chutyāunu* means “to divide”. Locally the expression is “to be separate”, *chutto chutto hunnu*.
 15. Berreman notes that in Sirkanda brothers inherit after a man’s son or designated son surrogate. Although Berreman does not mention the son’s son, his statement implies that brothers inherit before a son’s son. As I have shown this is not the case at Rārā.
 16. As noted above, for the kinship data the number of households is, the following: 28 Thakuri households, 50 Chetri households and 7 Dom households.

17. Some of these households did, in fact, appear in the land records as owning land at Rārā, but in this there is a discrepancy between the arrangement which has been established at partition and that which was recorded when the question of land compensation or resettlement came up.
18. Supplemented nuclear families consist of “a nuclear family plus one or more unmarried, separated or divorced relations of the parents other than that of their unmarried children.” (Kolenda 1968: 346).
19. Dom have a high proportion of supplemented nuclear households too, but the sample of Dom households is so small that it is difficult to say whether this is a real tendency.
20. Kartik Puni is a major Chetri festival in which the *kuldevatās* are worshipped. It takes place around the full moon in Kartik (mid-October–mid-November.)
21. A “per capita” division in which all male descendants receive an equal share may impede partition. A “per stirpes” division, on the other hand may provide greater incentive for one segment of the joint household to demand partition. Thus, I suggest that the Thakuri emphasis on *pagdband* is another aspect of their emphasis on jointness.

CHAPTER 5

1. At Rārā there are three types of wheat. They are sown together but have different names. *Bhoktia* is a type of wheat with a short “beard”, whereas the “beard” on *silim* and *jhāla* (all local

- terms) are longer and *jhāla* is very similar to barley in appearance.
2. There are different types of lentils. The lentils grown at Rārā are called *mussora* and are reddish-brown in colour. *Aula* the black *māss* is more common.
 3. Although all land at Rārā is *lekha* when compared to *aula*, when at Rārā the highlying land there is also referred to as *lekha*.
 4. Cotton for this purpose is given to the Thakuris by *aula* villagers.
 5. This astrologer was a Jaisi Brahmin from Guma.
 6. Labour is here considered a force, not a means of production.
 7. Sugar is sold in the two shops at Rārā and sometimes itinerant traders carry it to the village and offer it for sale. This sugar is white sugar from India.
 8. People who provide the labour for others often bring their masters presents of special foods. Thus, Doms often bring such small gifts to Thakuri households.
 9. The most important difference between measuring wealth in terms of yields rather than area of land is that the former gives some of the relationship between the amount of land owned and the labour available to particular households.
 10. For Rārā I have estimated the annual consumption needs of one adult to be 9 *muri* of 2 *māna* a day. A child is counted for half an adult. Since I am using the 80 *māna muri* also called *khal*, commonly used in this area of Karnali, my estimate is similar to those made

by Caplan (Caplan 1972: 21) and MacFarlane (MacFarlane 1976: 164).

11. I am here talking about *muri* as a measure of capacity. At Rārā there are 20 *pāthi* in one *muri* and 4 *māna* in one *pāthi*. Officially a *pāthi* contains 8 *māna*.
12. The Chetri distribution is thus in accordance with the overall distribution of households in the three categories.
13. The etymology of this term is not clear. It is probably derived from *sākh* (“dear”, “near blood relation”).
14. *Bāṅsa* refers to a patriline, lineage or clan. This concept is discussed in Part III, Chapter 8.
15. *Sājhā* can also be referred to as *kisān* “peasant” or as *pāni halne mānche* (“the person who pours water”).
16. I never heard Chetris use the term in this manner.
17. *Bišintalu* refers to either the new moon, *ausi*, or the full moon, *puny*, and the oxen should rest on these days.
18. This is the way equals greet each other. See *Appendix C*.
19. *Lohars* can also be referred to as *kāmi*, but the former is the local term. Similarly, people also understand the term *sārki* as referring to leatherworkers.
20. See also Sanwal’s Table depicting the traditional hierarchy of occupations in rural Kumaon (Sanwal 1976: 109).
21. Chetris always put on the *janai* at marriage and increasingly Thakuris, too, combine the *bratabandha* with *bihā*.

22. Meat is generally not eaten by *tāgādhāri* castes, but Chetris as well as Thakuris eat the meat of sheep, castrated goat (*khasi*) and wild boar. This meat is *jutho* and should be avoided on certain occasions.
23. Eggs are *jutho*, but *matwālis* and even unmarried Thakuri women and Thakuri boys who have not put on the *janai* eat eggs. Eggs must not, however, be cooked inside Thakuri kitchens.
24. The *gaidān* refers specifically to the ritual which takes place in the *goth* when someone has died and involves the giving of a cow to the *purohit*.
25. *Bhoj khānu* ("to eat a feast") is a meal at which agnates and members of other castes are fed. It usually punctuates occasions such as the *kiriyā*, *bratabandha* and *bihā*. Castes are served according to their position in the hierarchy and the food, always *bhāt*, must be cooked by a Brahmin.
27. Unfortunately I did not take my enquiries far enough on this point. Therefore, I cannot say whether this payment would have been made in this manner if the relationship to the *purohit* had been more permanent.
28. A *riti* is not only the master of a *hali* or a *dom*, this term is also used to indicate the owner of livestock.
29. *Hajur* is a deferential term of address and is always accompanied by the *dhok*.
30. *Sikh* is the term generally used for foodstuff produced from the local land and offered to any of the local gods.
31. Gaborieau reports that the payment to the *damāi* is called *neg* and consists of money in

Central Nepal (Gaborieau 1977: 38). I do not know whether the Rarals are familiar with this term, but in any case Gaborieau's material also points to the special position of the *damāi*.

32. There are also Dom who only beg (*māgnu*). At Rārā these are called *bharo*.

CHAPTER 6

1. See for example Wittfogel (Wittfogel 1957).
2. Not everyone falls into either of these two approaches. Thus, Neale stands in between, acknowledging the existing economic mechanisms while at the same time pointing to the incompatibility between Indian and western societies. One difference between Neale's material from the kingdom of Oudh and my material from Rārā is that in the former land could apparently not be bought, sold and mortgaged (Neale 1962: 28).
3. *Rakam* is unpaid and compulsory labour services due to the government from peasants cultivating *raikar*. This was a stipulated number of days every year. When the government and political officials needed more labour than this stipulated amount, such labour was called *jhārā*.
4. The taking of *sirto* ("tribute") was not always legal.
5. An oxen cost between Rs. 450–900.
6. See Chapter 3.
7. I know of 2 Doms and 2 Chetris who have left Rārā to work as labourers in India. They have not been back for 2–3 years.
8. According to my calculations some of the wealthier ghee-producing households can

manage to produce a surplus of 40–50 *māna* of ghee a year and this represents a sizeable income if they can actually manage to sell it all (see Appendix B).

9. There are, of course, more than 3 paid *halis* used by the Thakuris, but not all these are included in the economic sample because they come from other villages. All the 7 Doms at Rārā are *halis* but some work for *ritis* in other villages and do not receive a wage.
10. Kumar has included in the category of landless peasants all those who do not have enough land to support themselves (Kumar 1965). While Kumar is right in pointing out that such people are in a position similar to free labourers who are dependent upon selling their labour power, I would argue that when labourers own some land this constitutes a restriction availability of labour.
11. The household budgets I collected are on the whole fairly inaccurate and unreliable, because people did not like talking about these matters. However, I estimate that cash expenditure varies from several thousand rupees for the wealthy Thakuri households to Rs. 200–300 for some Chetris household and some Chetris and Doms spends even less.
12. The question of hypergamy is discussed in Chapter 10.
13. A cash loan is also referred to as *rin*.
14. These traders bring salt (*nun*) which they exchange for grain, usually rice. Some of this rice is sold on the journey. This also fetches woollen blankets.

15. All these transactions took place during the last ten years.
16. Indeed, most officials in the bureaucracy in Kathmandu and elsewhere are also absentee landowners.
17. Bhavani Masto is a well-known god from this area (Gaborieau 1976).
18. One Thakuri confided that he was glad to move out of Rārā because he believed that the government would provide the Thakuris with enough land to be able to support a couple of labourers as well as their own household. He thought that the Tarai was a better place to live, not just because of the availability of schools and hospitals but also because of the availability of labour.
19. The concept of simple commodity production was constructed by Marx (Marx 1971, Vol. 3) to refer to the existence of commodity production without the existence of wage labour and capitalist production. As I have shown, this concept describes the situation at Rārā well. However, I do not wish to enter the debate about “modes of production”. Thus, by limited commodity production, I loosely refer to a situation where goods and means of production are bought and sold and also produced for this purpose, but where a subsistence economy also continues to exist.
20. I am referring to Marx’s writing of 1853, and 1859. The 1953 writing constitutes articles written by Marx for the New York daily *Tribune* (Marx and Engels 1976: 27ff). The writings of 1859 refer to *Grundrisse* published in English

in 1964 under the title *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*.

21. Whether they actually do so or not depends on attitudes and practices with regard to the joint family and as I have shown these are different for Thakuris and Chetris.
22. *See also Dumont* (Dumont 1970a).

CHAPTER 7

1. See Lenin (Lenin 1967), Chayanov (Chayanov 1966, Harrison (Harrison 1976–77), McMichael (McMichael 1977), Charlesworth (Charlesworth 1978, 1979, 1980), Roseberry (Roseberry 1976), Cook (Cook 1976–1977) and Ennew, Hirst and Tribe (Ennew, Hirst and Tribe 1976–1977).
2. Since Thakuris do not plough this has only happened in cases in both parties were Chetris.
3. I am not sure when this developed. Generally it is difficult to specify the time of various events. Most people do not even know their own age. However, informants of about 40–50 years of age could remember when *halis* did not receive a wage.
4. *See below*.
5. Illegitimate descendants of Thakuri men and their female slaves and servants are often kept in the Thakuri household but their status is ambiguous. Such persons tend to become the labourers of their father's household.
6. The full economic survey of these households is presented in Appendix B. The numbers in the Table refer to the household numbers in this appendix.
7. This is relationship no. 4 in Table 13A.

8. See note 6.
9. See Part III, Chapters 8 and 11.
10. I am merely suggesting that such a process may take place generally. I am not suggesting that the two households involved are the same at all stages of this process.
11. The impact of such indebtedness on the Thakuris is, of course, less than it would have been if most of them did not have cash incomes.
12. Kumar (Kumar 1965) has shown that the number of landless labourers, i.e. labourers who did not have enough land to support themselves and who, therefore, were forced to be involved in relations of servitude, did not increase with the presence of the British in India. On the contrary, such landless labourers were a feature of the agrarian relations in India when the British arrived.
13. For a discussion of this in peasant economies generally see Cook's review of Hindess and Hirst (Hindess and Hirst 1975), (Cook 1977), and Ennew, Hirst and Tribe (Ennew, Hirst and Tribe 1976-77).
14. Chand was a dynasty which ruled Kumaon before the Nepalese annexed the area in 1790. In ideology and social organisation Chand was similar to the Kalyal dynasty which ruled Karnali before the Gorkhā conquest.
15. Incidentally, this household is also the one in which a senior agnate as *jimwāl* is said to have collected tribute from the cultivators of one village in the area as late as 1973.
16. I am not aware of any Rārā Chetri households owning slaves, although I have heard about

this from elsewhere in the area.

17. I shall later show that the giving of wives from Thakuris living in places such as Pyuthan and Jajarkot was in fact rare. In the past it was more usual for these Thakuri communities to be the wifetakers of the Thakuris at Rārā.
18. It is difficult to say when slavery effectively was abolished in the area. In 1977, there were a few slaves left at Rārā. I also heard about some cases of new slaves being taken in *bandha*. None of these involved the Thakuris or any other inhabitants at Rārā.
19. It is possible that this term has become more derogatory since the abolition of slavery.
20. A *kām garne mānche* and a *nokar* are usually addressed by name.
21. For various reasons the accuracy of this information is questionable. Firstly, I am relying heavily on what informants remember from their childhood. Secondly, the subject of slavery is an emotive one. While on the one hand, Thakuri informants were eager to emphasise the size of their workforce in the past, on the other, since slavery was made illegal more than 60 years ago, the slaves which informants remember are proof of the Thakuri reluctance to follow official legislation. Thirdly, since very few people know precisely how old they themselves are, it is difficult to estimate how many slaves were there at Rārā at any given time. The number of 62 refers to all those slaves about whom information was given. I estimate that my oldest informant on these matters was 65 years old. If informants answered

my enquiries according to my requests, namely relating to what they themselves remembered, then my information applies to the time after 1910.

22. Informants suggested that there is a relationship between the rate at which such rent was paid and the wage received by *halis* nowadays. However, no-one could mention any concrete figures.
23. Epstein is thus in effect using the model proposed by Chayanov.
24. Breman defines patronage in the following way: "By patronage I mean a pattern of relationships in which members of hierarchically arranged groups possess mutually recognised, not explicitly stipulated rights and obligations involving mutual aid and preferential treatment. The bond between patrons and clients is personal and is contracted and continued by mutual agreement for an indeterminate time." (Breman: 1974: 18).
25. A great deal of confusion has resulted for the various usages of the term *jajamāni* system. Breman uses the term to refer to the whole system comprising religious specialists, artisans as well as unskilled labourers.
26. This was unlikely. However, the fact that Thakuris held such beliefs is important for their position vis-à-vis Chetris and Doms.
27. Galey claims that indebtedness is not the case but the consequence of servitude. While indebtedness may be the result of the servile position of lower castes, the fact that indebtedness also by itself may result in

servitude is important for an understanding of how economic position and caste and political status influence each other.

28. The question of whether payments are made according to the marginal productivity of labour is not important for the argument. Since relations between patrons and their labourers are competitive, the final payment if it is not a fixed proportion of the crop is mainly a result of how much one party will give and how much the other party will accept. As I have noted for the relations between Thakuri *ritis* and their artisans this depends on various factors, one of which is how much other labour the patron can command.

CHAPTER 8

1. This is also expressed in the kinship terms siblings use towards each other. See Chapter 9.
2. I do know of, at least, one Chetri who considered that he could do better without his elder brother and three years after partition the two were *sākhi*, with the elder brother ploughing all the land.
3. The position of a wife is, however, ambiguous. Thus, Chetris allow a sexual liaison between a woman and her HyB and the latter is also likely to inherit his elder brother's widow.
4. This reflects another theory of conception also noted by Mayer (1960: 204) and Parry (1979: 223). According to this theory both parents contribute to the conception of a child.
5. Both death and birth pollution are referred to as *sutak*. I never heard the term *patak* which

elsewhere refers specifically to pollution caused by death (Parry 1979: 139). In everyday conversation the observance of pollution is referred to as *jutho mānnu* ("to respect dirt).

6. If, however, such a brother's son is the *kiriyā basne mānche* then he is also entitled to a payment, *kiriyā kharca* (standard Nepali) which should cover the expenses he has incurred during the ceremonies.
7. The etymology of the terms *sākh* and *sākri* appear to be the same.
8. Birth pollution affects the members of the *pariwār* only and the *sākh* are not involved.
9. Fürer-Haimendorf reports that these agnates are referred to as *tera dinka dāi bahāi* ("thirteen day brothers") (Fürer-Haimendorf 1966: 38). At Rārā I never heard this expression.
10. *Pujāri* is also the term used to refer to any Brahmin or person who is the custodian of a temple.
11. *Hom* is a sacrifice to the fire. It consists in throwing ghee into the fire and is usually performed by a Brahmin, who otherwise plays no role at the *kuldevatā* worship. The *dāgri* may also perform this sacrifice (Gaborieau 1976: 231).
12. Thus, some people perform *pujās* twice annually, once on *lekha* land and once on *aula* land.
13. Other people are unaffected by a *kuldevatā*. Thus, people do not observe the rules of pollution vis-á-vis other *kuldevatās* than their own, and those they worship for other reasons. Women who are *chui* can freely go near the shrines of such other *kuldevatās* and strangers may even defecate there.

14. As is reported by Gaborieau (1976: 221) this name refers to a multiplicity of gods. Bhavani is *bahini* of yZ and Masta is *dai* or eB.
15. Neither Gaborieau (1976) nor Winkler (1976) mention either of these gods. I did not carry my investigation far enough to be able to identify them.
16. Other people, such as the MMB and the MMZ are also considered *nāta* by virtue of the *dudh* relationship.
17. Fürer-Haimendorf calls these lineages (Fürer-Haimendorf 1966: 36).
18. I have not been able to locate this village.
19. It is my impression that only the Rawals, but not the Rokayas, of Rārā are considered of slightly lower status. I think that the fact that the Rokayas are one of the original *thar* explains this.
20. There are conflicting theories about how the Kalyals and the Rawals came to share Rabigotra. Local tradition has it that the Rawals were given the *janai* and Rabigotra by a Kalyal raja. This is, of course, the version favoured by the Thakuris. However, one chronicler (Nahararinath 2013 v.s.) also mentions that the Rawals in whose house Bali Raj was born (Chapter 3) already had the *janai* and was of Rabigotra.
21. The *jharra* and non-*jharra* distinction found elsewhere in Nepal (Gray 1981, Fürer-Haimendorf 1966) is not present at Rārā nor in the surrounding area.

CHAPTER 9

1. See for example papers by Vatuk (Vatuk 1969, 1972, 1975), Fruzetti and Östor (Fruzetti and Östor 1976), Dumont (Dumont 1953), Good (Good 1981) and Scheffler (Scheffler 1981).
2. The terms *bāje/bajai* can also be used for generations above +2. If the speaker wants to point out that the generation he or she is speaking about is further removed, the prefix *burho/burhi* ("old") may be added.
3. The MB and his wife of spouse are often spoken of as *māuli sāurali*.
4. In the local dialect the "s" sound often becomes "h"; thus *phupu hāsa*.
5. BWBW and WBW are referred to as *āju*. While all informants claimed this to be the same as *didi*, *āju* is not generally used for *didi*.
6. *Juwāin* also refers to DH and to distinguish the two the latter is called *juwāin-chori*.
7. This person is also commonly referred to as *dāi* or *bhāi*.
8. Turner (1931) translates this term as bride. At Rārā this person can also be referred to as *didi* or *bahini*.
9. If more precise description of which *buhāri* the speaker is referring to, the terms *buhāri* and *juwāin* may be used as suffix with *bhatija/bhatiji*, *bhānja/bhānji*, *bhadau/bhadai*, *nāti/nātini*, *palāti/palātini* and *jalāti/jalātini*.
10. *Jetho bā* is rarely used. Thus, FeB may be referred to as *kākā* and in most extensions such as MZH, MZHB, FBWZH, MBWB, etc., *kākā* is used irrespective of the age of the referent.

11. *Solti* is never used by Thakuris; in fact they disputed that it is a kin term at all.
12. I have never heard Chetris include these terms to refer to BS, BD(ms) and ZS, ZD (fs).
13. Descendants of generations below may also be referred to as *palāti/palātini* and *jalāti/jalātini*.
14. People were often puzzled when asked about such distant kinship terms. On such occasions the particular extension seemed more a matter of following a principle than of tracing a relationship to an actual individual.
15. Exceptions are perhaps the terminologies reported by Lall (1911) and Berreman (1963). But neither provides sufficient material for a full comparison with the Rārā terminology.
16. Apparently, a distinction made in this manner is typical to Tibeto-Burmese languages (Allen 1975, Benedict 1941).
17. This is contrary to what is reported by Vatuk (1969) and Turner (1975).
18. At this point I am unable to explain why the terms *jethan/sālo* should be isolated in this manner.
19. Thus, despite Scheffler (1981: 139–141), in the Rārā kinship terminology, at least, the distinction between same-sex and opposite-sex siblings is overtly made.

CHAPTER 10

1. Elsewhere Rajputs operate a four gotra rule which excludes certain other consanguines from marriage (Karve 1953, Tieman 1970).
2. I have not recorded one instance of actual MZD-marriage. Marriage to mother's

classificatory sister's daughter is, on the other hand, common.

3. Informants are not consistent as to which of such marriages will be good and which will be bad. If the marriages do not happen simultaneously, then the first marriage will be considered to have the best chance. The subsequent marriage may not succeed because the direction of marriage has been reversed.
4. Thakuris claim that they do not practise the giving of *tilak* ("blessing") or inflated dowries consisting of money. They have heard that this is practised in Kathmandu and in the south of Nepal.
5. Unfortunately I am so far unable to translate the name of this ritual adequately.
6. In Bengal this is called *ghara milanu* ("to match houses"). At Rārā this process is simply called *kojnu*, ("to seek" or "to look for") (Fruzetti and Öster 1976).
7. At this occasion the sisters and some classificatory sisters standing in a special relationship to the groom also receive *dacchinā*.
8. Genealogies were collected from all heads of households and their wives permanently residing at Rārā. These genealogies include information about 14 households which either have left the area altogether or live permanently elsewhere. In most cases, information about male agnatic ancestors goes back as far as seven generations whereas information about wives, i.e. where wives came from and where daughters and sisters have married, is not so extensive. Most people could only provide this kind of informa-

tion for three to four generations unless an extraordinary marriage had been made. There was also a tendency to forget daughters and sisters of older generations. These women have been sent away from Rārā when they were 7–10 years old and unless a repetition of some kind has been made, they tended to be forgotten. This is also the case with males and co-wives who have died without offspring. In taking the genealogies I enquired about where a wife had come from, or where a daughter or sister had married and about the name of the kingroups concerned, i.e. clan and status. In some cases all this information was not known or not given by informants and particularly where Shah is the only group affiliation given, my data is lacking. I collected genealogies from as many of the Thakuri wives as I could, but unfortunately many of these, aside from being short, contain the above mentioned shortcomings. The women's genealogies, however, also contain some useful information with respect to the repetition of marriages.

9. Pyuthan is situated in Rapti zone. Jajarkot is situated in Bheri zone.
10. There are only two cases of Thakuri men being *ghar-juwāin*, both of these men live away from Rārā.
11. Bilateral cross-cousin marriages have been and still are practised in Kathmandu between Ranas and Shahs. (Shah 1975 and personal communication)
12. *Bhāi-tika* is the ritual in which a sister worships her full or classificatory brother.
13. I do not know exactly where this village is situated.

14. Hamal Shahis are descendants of a Shah Thakuri man and a Brahmin woman.
15. I never heard the *jimwāl* himself refer to these half-siblings in this way. He is generally much more status conscious than his brothers.
16. Bajhang, Bajura and Accham districts are all situated in Seti zone, the one village which is not in Seti is Satis and this village is situated in Bheri zone.
17. The latter relationship is considered awkward.
18. I recorded a total of 225 marriages made by the Chetris at Rārā. This figure does not include marriages made by non-agnates. Although Chetris know more about non-agnatic kin than do Thakuris, the number of such marriages which were given in the genealogies is only 27, thus making the total number of marriages in the sample 251. 144 marriages involve a wife being brought to Rārā whereas 75 involve, a FZ, a Z or a D being given away in marriage. 123 of the marriages were made by Rokaya Chetris whereas 96 were made by Rawal Chetris and in both cases there is more information about wives who have come to Rārā than about the women who have married into other villages. In six cases information was unobtainable.
19. Humla district as a whole has also given and taken wives, but in most of these cases I did not obtain the names of the villages.
20. Gumta is situated in the Khater valley.
21. Sat Chetris live in the Khater valley, Batta Chetris live in Bhot, a name used by Hindus to refer to Tibetan areas nearer the Chinese border; Adhikari Chetris are found to the south

- in Jumla district, Banari Chetris in Balai village and Bista Chetris in Toplar village.
22. These figures mostly refer to Rana Rawals.
 23. The case of Kyber Jung's wife in Fig. 18 is not a full cross-cousin marriage, for Kyber Jung's father's sister was his wife's stepmother.
 24. Because this data could not in anyway be checked by me, and because women's genealogies tended to be much shorter than men's, I can here merely establish a tendency which is meaningful only when seen in relation to the rest of the Rārā data.
 25. I regret that I did not follow this up at the time of fieldwork. I presume, however, that the people from the six villages who marry are considered to be of different subclans in the same manner as the Rawals in the area around Rārā.
 26. One case includes one wife and two sisters.
 27. The last prestigious marriage made with Jajarkot took place five years ago, but before then none had been made for about twenty years.
 28. Gray considers this a result of the marriage rules. As I have indicated, and as I shall show in detail in Chapter 11, I consider the marriage rules and practices to be aspects of a general ideology which allows for emphasis on hierarchy and equality in different contexts.

CHAPTER 11

1. This is a different situation from that reported by Inden and Nicholas from Bengal where this category of people may be referred to by the compound term *jnati-kutumba* (Inden and Nicholas 1977).

2. Only people of the same sex can perform the *mit* ritual for each other.
3. For details on greetings see *Appendix C*.
4. Fürer-Haimendorf suggests that Rārā Thakuris are considered of lower status because their *kutumba* do not eat with them in their houses. (Fürer-Haimendorf 1971). However, my information indicates that the Rārā Thakuris also do not eat in the houses of their *kutumba*.
5. This category also includes the *juwāin* yZH. The DH is distinguished from the yZH by adding *-chori* as a suffix.
6. Sometimes Rarals refer to this as *nāta lagne thāu* (“the place where there is a relationship of shared substance”).
7. See in particular rules 4, 5a and 6 in Scheffler’s paper (Scheffler 1981: 143–144).
8. See for example Scheffler’s comment on Vatuk’s statement that “in certain circumstances” BS and ZS may be designated as S and BD and ZD and D (Vatuk 1969: 100). Whether this is based on the “status of the sibling’s child class as a subclass of a child’s class” (Scheffler 1981: 138) or not, depends to some extent at least on the usage to which these terms are put by the people concerned.
9. A similar point has been made by Allen in his analysis of both Byansi and Sherpa kinship terminologies (Allen: 1975, 1976).
10. Carter has also made this point (Carter 1974: 131).
11. Rather, the status differences articulated is that between elder and younger sibling of wifetakers

and elder and younger sibling of wifegivers.
See Chapter 9.

12. Similar conclusion have been reached by Gray for Kathmandu Chetris (Gray 1980).
13. When asked, Thakuris tended to refer to the relationship between cross-cousins as one between *kutumba* first and only mentioned the relationship of *bhāibandhu* on second thoughts. Chetris, on the other hand, insisted on the *bhāibandhu* relationship as well as on the *kutumba* relationship.

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