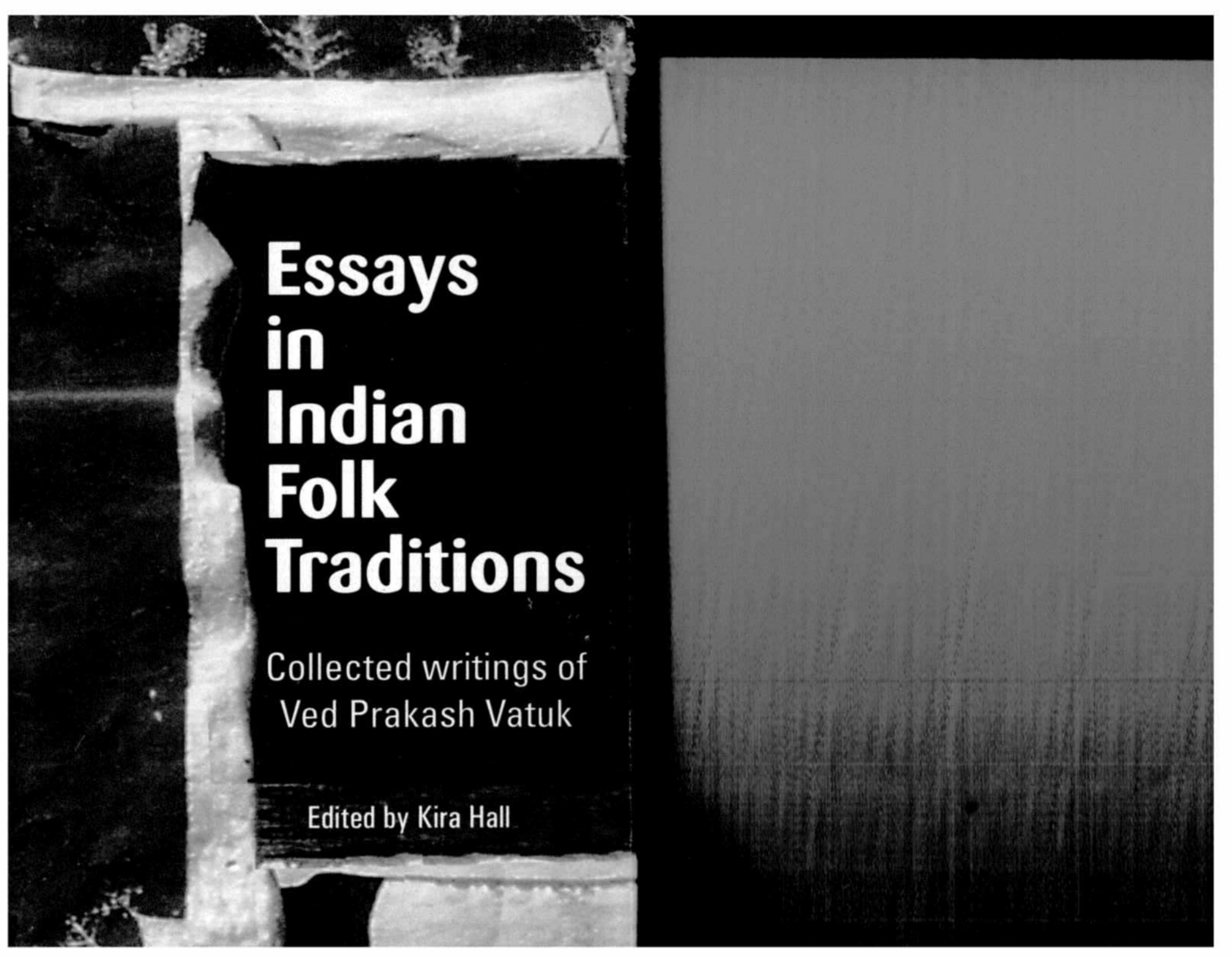




Essays in Indian Folk Traditions

Collected writings of
Ved Prakash Vatuk

Edited by Kira Hall

ESSAYS IN INDIAN FOLK TRADITIONS

**ESSAYS
IN
INDIAN FOLK TRADITIONS**

Collected Writings of Ved Prakaśh Vatuk

Edited by
Kira Hall

FOLKLORE INSTITUTE

- *Published by:*
FOLKLORE INSTITUTE
P. O. Box 1142,
Berkeley, CA, 94701, USA

- First Edition: 2007

JANANĪ JANMABHŪMISHCHA SVARGĀDAPĪ GARĪYASĪ
(Greater than even heaven are mother and motherland)

To the memory of my mother Kirpadai
—Ved Prakash Vatuk

- *Printed at :*
Paawan Printers
Meerut-250001 (India)

FOREWORD

On Life, Language, and Lore: The Writings of Ved Prakash Vatuk

Most academics would consider it a truism that the topics of scholarly inquiry are rarely arbitrarily chosen. But the themes of language and lore that frame the collected academic writings of poet, linguist, and folklorist Ved Prakash Vatuk are intimately and cohesively grounded in the author's life-long quest for social justice. What Vatuk realized early on as a child coming of age during the final years of British-ruled India is that this quest requires travel not through the elite corridors of legislators and politicians, but through the common hallways of everyday folk: the tired sugarcane workers of Western Uttar Pradesh who take 24-hour turns at the presses during harvest (Chapter 7); the highly skilled yet overlooked performers of local folk operas in eastern Meerut (Chapter 8); the poor women of a North Indian village who secure their futures by secretly stashing goods with a Brahman neighbor (Chapter 11). It is the collective voices of these ordinary actors—their songs, their dramas, their conversations—that fill the pages of this volume and provide the data for Vatuk's ongoing exposition and critique of social hierarchy, whether it surfaces in the dirty jokes of Hindi-speaking children (Chapter 10) or in the misguided assumptions of English-speaking academics (Chapter 4).

Vatuk's understanding of the intimate relationship between folklore studies and social activism no doubt finds its origins in a childhood infused with anticolonialist energy and unrest. The youngest of thirteen children, Vatuk was born on the thirteenth of April, 1932, fifteen years before India won its independence. Although his home village was far removed from the bustle of its closest neighboring city Meerut, the struggle for freedom impacted the lives of even the most isolated, fostering the development of diverse grassroot activities that permeated everyday life. Vatuk's father, for instance, had long engaged in freedom fighting at the local level, particularly with respect to caste discrimination.

Foremost to this effort was his founding of the first Arya Samaj temple in the area, which he established in opposition to the local Shiva temple's refusal to allow low-caste dalits to worship alongside other villagers. It was in this temple that a young Vatuk first encountered the inspirational poetry of the *bhajnopdeshaks*, professional folk composers and performers who sing social critiques in order to encourage reform. The very title of Vatuk's (1967) article "The *Bhajnopdeshak* as an Agent of Social Change," reprinted here as Chapter 18, reflects his conviction that something as purportedly "simplistic" as folksong can produce radical change with respect to systemic inequities: "The *bhajnopdeshak* is religious without being sectarian; he is an advocate of change, radical change, while insisting on the preservation of what he sees as the essentials of Indian traditional values. A study of his message and of the techniques he uses to communicate it to the people is an invaluable guide to the complexities of the course of social change in India." In fact, as Vatuk asserts in his autobiographical essay "Still Dreaming," it was precisely the spread of this "singing"—or rather, the jointly vocalized hope of a world based on social justice, equality, and freedom—that made his pre-Independence fellow Indians "free even in bondage, rich even in abject poverty" (1998a: 31). As the words of political activists ranging from Martin Luther King, Jr. to Mahatma Gandhi have so elegantly reminded us, social reform is always precipitated by hope.

While Vatuk is highly interested in the local folk performer, he is also crucially intrigued by the less celebrated "folk" who circulate oppositional stances through everyday interaction. His writings in the 1960s and 1970s illuminate an understanding of history that only in the 1980s came to be identified as *subaltern*: a theoretical perspective initially developed within South Asian studies that places non-elites at the analytical center as agents of social and political change. In Vatuk's own words, the true history of any people lies not with leaders like Nehru and Gandhi, but with the "the thousands of little Nehrus and Gandhis spread all over in the villages and towns of India" (Vatuk 2003). The origins of Vatuk's formulation of this perspective can again be traced back to the village of his youth, where his father, one of the village's few educated men, would read aloud the national Hindi weekly *Pratap* before a crowd of listeners every day at noon. It

was here "at the knees of my father and brother," as Vatuk remembers it, that he became aware that there are two distinct types of history: the master narratives learned through the literature associated with the educational system and the more localized subaltern narratives learned through the everyday exchange of story and song. His childhood memory of how villagers would circulate portraits of political reformers—among them Nehru and Gandhi—provides an apt metaphor for why he later came to embrace the study of folklore. "Through [the exchange of these portraits]," Vatuk recalls, "we learnt the history that was never taught in our school system" (1998a: 30). History in Vatuk's conceptualization is both learned and lived, the inevitable social result of everyday transaction. The essays in this book thus feature the voices of the little Nehrus and Gandhis whose memories of the past rarely make the pages of a textbook, ranging from villagers in northwest India who critique Western institutions in their tales and proverbs (Chapter 15) to East Indians in British Guiana who sing against the abuses waged by a century of indentured servitude (Chapter 16).

An alternative understanding of power is thus necessarily implicit behind the inquiries that frame this set of essays. For Vatuk, power is not the top-down prerogative of a select elite, but rather something that is available to all through the workings of social practice. This was clearly the philosophy behind the political activism of his oldest brother, who before Vatuk was even born had been sent to prison three times in his fight for Indian independence. In one of his autobiographical essays, Vatuk (2003) recalls a childhood moment when he watched his brother, Sunder Lal, rallying support from atop an elephant. His brother sat together with Chaudhari Charan Singh, the renowned farmers' leader from Meerut whose political convictions later won him notoriety, albeit brief, as India's first "peasant" prime minister. Boosted by a sound system and loudspeaker, the two freedom fighters were singing out songs of protest in the hope of inspiring their listeners to join the fight for Indian independence. "You have the power to bring the world to its knees," they sang, "if only you rise." It is telling that this is the phrase Vatuk chooses to remember in his essay, for the power his brother speaks of is the very kind of bottom-up power that is the focus of Vatuk's

academic writings. In many senses, his work stands as a forerunner to the expansive body of scholarship that in the 1980s and 1990s came to be known as “resistance studies,” an intellectual perspective that arose in tandem with subaltern studies and drew its inspiration from Foucault’s (1972, 1978) and de Certeau’s (1984) concern with everyday forms of resistance. Paralleling his brother’s activism, Vatuk’s scholarship focuses on the disenfranchised who counter injustice by using whatever they may have to express dissent. And what all people have—even the poorest of the poor—is a voice. The dominant dismissal of localized expressive genres as both trivial and common is precisely what gives these “weapons of the weak” their potential, to borrow a phrase from James Scott’s (1985) influential account of everyday peasant resistance.

Vatuk’s adult experiences in Britain and the United States also share important responsibility for the development of his interest in subaltern history and everyday resistance. After earning an advanced degree in Hindi literature from Punjab University in 1953 and an M.A. in Sanskrit from Agra University in 1954, Vatuk, lacking the usual elite connections, found himself without a job. Inspired by the traveling scholar Rahul Sankrityayan’s (1949) book *Ghumakkar Shastra* (Science of Wandering), he borrowed a bicycle from a friend and rode fifty miles a day to collect money for a world adventure. Although before this time he had hardly even travelled through India, it was only a matter of months before Vatuk boarded a Polish ship headed for Britain. He arrived in London eighteen days later with half a pound in his pocket, eager to take work wherever he could find it—grocery stores, offices, restaurants, factories. It was here that he eventually met his wife Sylvia Vatuk, an American anthropologist who coauthored several of the articles in this volume and later became the mother of his four children. But he also breathed in a hefty dose of Western-style racism, even at London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies, where he began work on his Ph.D. dissertation. The realities of London daily life compelled Vatuk to rethink his previous imaginings of both home and abroad, providing the creative impetus for the writing of hundreds of political poems. When he came to the United States to pursue graduate studies at Harvard University in 1959, he was already well on his way to becoming one of the most prolific and well-respected Hindi poets

writing today. An early 1960s American climate provided even more fuel for Vatuk’s rebellious artistry, especially when coupled with a burgeoning academic interest in the field of folklore. Most of the articles that appear in this collection were written during this decade, a time when a folk singer like Pete Seeger could wage as much influence as a racist governor in Alabama.

What is especially rebellious about the work collected in this volume, at least from the hypothetical perspective of a securely situated Western academic, is Vatuk’s own resistance to the elitist assumptions that guide academic scholarship. He is in this sense a protest singer in his own right, articulating ongoing challenges to a hierarchical institution that nurtures an inflated sense of its own benevolence. His attraction to folkloristics is clearly consistent with the kind of anti-elitism he espouses in these essays, particularly since the field emerged through the rejection of academia’s preoccupation with so-called ‘high’ forms of literature and poetry. But the heart of Vatuk’s rebellion lies in the details—for instance, in his exposition of the metrical complexity of Hindi folk riddles as rivaling what is found in classical Sanskrit (Chapter 4); in his critique of Sahlin’s (1965) cross-cultural account of gift-exchange in so-called “primitive” economies for relying too heavily on Western concepts of self-interest (Chapter 13); or quite simply in his decision to analyze the riddles of a 13th century writer like Amir Khusro, whose work has been overlooked by academics because it is written in “the language of the layman” (Chapter 3).

One of Vatuk’s primary strategies for challenging intellectual elitism is to incorporate marginalized perspectives into his scholarship. The most overt instantiation of this tactic surfaces in his deconstructions of the Western historical record, particularly with respect to academic accounts of the making of modern-day India (Chapter 15). By including everyday voices that counter dominant narratives of British rule in India, Vatuk situates the historical scholarship on India as fiction rather than fact, or at the very least, as just one of many perspectives. In short, Indian history as written by Westerners betrays a self-congratulating perspective that hardly reflects the experiences of a colonized “folk”:

At no point does the chasm between East and West seem more unbridgeable than when we compare the history of British rule in India as written by Western historians (and by some Western-educated Indian historians) with the same history as retold by the folk. Whereas the emphasis of the former is on the advantages of education, economic development, and modernization brought to the subcontinent, on the reform of the evils of a backward Indian society by enlightened representatives of a great civilization, the latter describes the mindless eradication of revered traditions and the destruction of a prosperous and highly advanced culture by greedy and immoral invaders. While the Western historian accedes to the British claim to have brought justice, peace, and the concept of social inequality to the Indian populace, the folk tell of British atrocities, injustice, and racism. (Vatuk 1969, reprinted as Chapter 15)

Yet Vatuk, ever the activist, does not position his critique only within the realm of scholarly inquiry. As he intimates in several of these essays, the interpretive discrepancy outlined in this passage is fostered by an educational system that maintains its own hegemony. For Vatuk, academia as practiced in the West creates its own kind of symbolic violence by suppressing the potential of dissident voices. His political activism in the early 1990s with respect to the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California at Berkeley provides a lived example of his drive to diversify the academic canon. Having held teaching positions at six different American universities, among them Colorado State University, University of Chicago, and University of California Berkeley, Vatuk was well positioned to notice systemic discrimination against Indian scholars in higher education. In a series of newsletters, articles, and public talks, Vatuk exposed the fact that Berkeley's program in South Asian studies had for thirty years tenured only white male professors to teach Indian languages, relegating persons of South Asian origin to temporary positions (e.g., Vatuk 1991, 1992). Although this highly controversial "protest song" no doubt won Vatuk a number of academic enemies, it ultimately propelled into motion a new

awareness of structural inequities at the institutional level, facilitating the introduction of subaltern voices into the established upper tier of South Asian scholars at Berkeley.

Part 1: Method And Interpretation

The voices featured in this collection thus challenge dominant narratives associated with varied discursive systems, whether within British colonialism or Western academia. The book is divided into five parts, each of which addresses a central theme in Vatuk's work. The two chapters in *Part 1: Method and Interpretation* set the stage for the sixteen chapters that follow in that they carefully outline a methodological approach to the study of social life. "Without initial preciseness," Vatuk warns, "all subsequent work lies on a foundation of sand." For Vatuk, this initial preciseness hinges on his conviction that the interpretation of society must be grounded in ethnographic method as opposed to armchair theorizing. But these methods must be carefully pursued. In Chapter 1, for instance, "Method and Interpretation in the Study of Folklore in India" (originally published in 1966 in the *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society*), Vatuk illustrates how the data collection methods of early Indian folklore have led to incorrect accounts of metrical patterning in Hindi folk songs. Scholars, catering to an ideology of linguistic purism that assumes the superiority of standard Hindi, analyzed not the messiness of actual oral transmission, but the more pristine edited transcripts that were intended to approximate such transmission. But because these transcripts were "cleaned up" to meet the expectations of standard Hindi, they failed to reflect the complicated rhythm and prosody of oral transmission. Folklorists thus mistakenly asserted that Hindi folk songs "lack meter," affirming a long-held, and markedly elitist, assumption that the only "true meters" are those that conform to the classical prosodic categories of *vāṃika* or *māṭrika*. Here, Vatuk brings to folklore an idea basic to the field of linguistics as it developed within Europe and the United States. "There is no such thing as pure speech, from a linguistic point of view," Vatuk argues. "The 'correct' form of any language is simply that form which is actually spoken by the members of a speech community, regardless of its diverse historical origins." Indeed, Vatuk's subsequent analysis of tape-recorded riddles collected during an

evening riddle session reveals that Hindi folk meters are in fact highly regular and structured, comparable to the most complex of meters in Sanskrit classical literature. Always attentive to the opinions of his informants, Vatuk adds that these riddlers share their own critique of linguistic purism, perceiving the *śāstrī bāt* ('scriptural riddles') of the educated man—necessarily articulated in standard Hindi—as both affected and prudish.

The articles in this section thus call for rigorous ethnographic sensibility with respect not only to linguistic transcription, but also to the subjective stances of the informants from whom the data are collected. This too is inherently an anti-elitist stance, for it places the perceptions of ordinary folk on equal footing with that of academic researchers. Chapter 2, for instance, entitled "Poetics and Genre-Typology in Indian Folklore" (originally published in 1967), offers a highly productive incorporation of what linguists now identify as "metalinguistic" interpretation. Building on his subjects' delineations of folksong into specific types (e.g., *ālā* 'war songs', *chōpī* 'songs sung by school students at Ganesh festivals', *bhajan*, *holī*, *sāngī*), Vatuk uncovers the complexity of metrical range and rhythm as a feature of genre. Where previous scholars dismissed "village people as blank when it comes to knowledge of the science of metrics" (Yadava 1960, quoted in Vatuk 1967), Vatuk here illustrates how attention to villagers' own folk categorizations reveals a sophisticated alternative metrics.

The tendency of Vatuk's contemporaries to focus on text instead of talk—or rather, on standardized transcriptions instead of the lived speaking event—led to a number of fundamental oversights, including the now well-researched finding that social factors such as age and gender contribute to linguistic variation. Although Chapter 2 was published long before gender became a vogue area of study in either folklore or linguistics (after all, Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* was not published until 1975), Vatuk hypothesizes that the primary reason his contemporaries characterized folk poetry as "without rhyme" is because they had examined only women's songs, which at the time constituted the bulk of Indian folklore collections. This archival imbalance was hardly arbitrary, as Vatuk notes, falling out from a prejudicial ideology that associates men with the "great" texts

of literature and women with the more mundane texts of everyday life. Analyzing a corpus of songs that he himself collected from men as well as women, Vatuk illustrates how rhyme operates differently across gendered genres. While women's folk songs do appear to rely more on repetition than on rhyme, employing rhyme only across stanzas (and thus leading to the academic perception discussed above), men's songs tend to feature heavy use of end-rhyme within a single stanza. Few studies of this time period so poignantly illuminate the importance of developing ethnographic methods that are sensitive to social as well as linguistic diversity.

Part 2: Riddles

The chapters that follow provide on-the-ground demonstrations of the methods and interpretive techniques set out in these two initial articles. In *Part 2*, Vatuk turns his attention to a genre that was instrumental to the early development of folklore studies: riddles. In the first article, "Amir Khusro and the Indian Riddle Tradition" (originally published in 1969 in the *Journal of American Folklore*), Vatuk analyzes what he identifies as "the earliest collection of secular folk riddles in a modern Indian language." Khusro, a court poet closely allied with the 13th century courts of the Delhi sultans, was a people's poet who bridged the gap between folk and literary traditions: "Whereas the riddles of the Sanskrit texts are obscure and complex, incomprehensible except to the literati, the riddles of Khusro are in the language of the layman, of the folk riddler." Vatuk illustrates how Khusro's riddles, because they incorporate locally specific elements, resist the universalizing structuralist classifications of folklorists such as Taylor (1951) and Georges and Dundes (1963). Vatuk thus questions the way in which the elite Sanskrit literary tradition has been held up as representative of the Indian art of riddling. But even more importantly, he characterizes Khusro's hybridizing of literate and folk riddle traditions as the norm and not the exception, predicting one of the mainstays of postmodernism when he calls for a more dialogic understanding of authorship.

In Chapter 4, Vatuk brings this critique to living folklore when he and his coauthor, the late Alan Dundes (1934-2005), analyze contemporary riddles from the Bulandshahr district of western Uttar Pradesh. It is not at all surprising that Dundes, one

of America's most accomplished and innovative folklorists, would find in Vatuk a special kind of intellectual camaraderie. The two published the article that appears here in 1974 in the journal *Asian Folklore Studies*, approximately a decade after Dundes joined the Department of Anthropology at Berkeley, ushering in a long and highly productive friendship. In fact, just four years later Vatuk published Dundes' (1978) book *Essays in Folkloristics* with the Folklore Institute, founded by Vatuk that has now published over twenty books by well-known social scientists. While Vatuk is at times critical of the universalizing structuralist and psychoanalytic perspectives that Dundes embraces, the two nevertheless share much common ground, particularly with respect to their ideological commitment to the importance of folklore. In this article, for instance, which carries the title "Some Characteristic Meters of Hindi Riddle Prosody," Vatuk and Dundes jointly criticize the way in which "metrics as an area of inquiry has been almost exclusively limited to literary materials." Their project is thus to establish the complex metrical features of these folk riddles, which they do in meticulous detail. The chapter's concluding sentences gets to the heart of why Vatuk and Dundes see this as a necessary undertaking: "Intensive metrical studies of folklore are bound to illuminate and enhance man's total comprehension of his poetic products."

Even though the focus of the chapter is on formal metrics, it also forwards several important observations regarding the interconnectedness between language and social life. For one, the authors stress the importance of examining these riddles within their natural context, explaining, for instance, how members of a group signal the beginning of a riddle session and make subsequent contributions. The attention they give here to the discursive norms of the speech event is methodologically consistent with the early subfield of linguistic anthropology referred to as *ethnography of speaking*. Research in this tradition, as set out by Dell Hymes (1962) in his foundational essay, seeks to oppose universal accounts of language use by providing more localized descriptions of linguistic behavior as practiced within particular speech events and communities. Vatuk and Dundes thus attempt to illustrate in this chapter how formal aspects of riddle structure correspond to norms in the native value system. With their combined strengths in the field of linguistics and folklore, the authors point out the

weaknesses associated with a linguistic analysis that ignores culture on the one hand and a folklore analysis that ignores linguistics on the other.

The fifth chapter, "Punjabi Riddles from the West Coast" (originally published in 1970 in the journal *Western Folklore*), serves as a companion piece to work published by Vatuk on the protest songs of first generation Indian immigrants in rural California (Chapter 17). Here, Vatuk's focus is on riddle-telling, specifically as practiced by Indian families in Yuba City and El Centro, California. While Vatuk is again concerned with establishing the existence of poetic meter for folk riddles, a second strength of the article lies in its focus on the sociolinguistic 'setting' of the speech event—a focus in keeping with the conviction expressed in previous chapters that folklorists must be attentive to oral renderings, not just written ones. As such, this chapter provides a compelling bridge between the microlinguistic claims of *Parts 1* and *2* and the sociological claims of the chapters that follow. Even more so than their technical prowess, Vatuk is interested in the ways that these speech genres create community. He notes that riddles, even obscene ones, are exchanged between grandparents and grandchildren in intimate after-dark settings, reflecting a larger cultural pattern of "freedom and intimacy" between persons two generations removed.

Part 3: Folksongs and Culture

The articles in *Part 3* directly address the interrelationship between language and community. Chapter 6, "Craving for a Child in the Folksongs of East Indians in British Guiana" (originally published in 1965), establishes this theme in its focus on ideologies of fertility in the folk songs of British Guianese Indians. But the community under study here is a transnational one, involving immigrants from Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar together with their descendants. Because the majority of these immigrants were brought from India to British Guiana between 1838 and 1917, Vatuk is especially interested in the potential of folk songs as "carriers of cultural values." Even though most of these singers have little to no connection with the Indian subcontinent, their songs articulate dominant Indian ideals regarding the necessity of children, and in particular the necessity of sons. This "craving for

a child," as Vatuk identifies it, has a distinct logic that materializes in the tropes that circulate through the songs. Drawing on a corpus of 900 tape-recorded folk songs that he collected in 1962, Vatuk identifies and explains these tropes: for instance, the *tight bodice* (indicating a woman's failure to conceive), the *mango blossom* (referencing the unborn child), the *coconut* (symbolizing fertility), and even the *pipal tree* (a sacred tree that is not found in British Guiana). While the article is largely descriptive in spirit, Vatuk seeks answers to a question that has become fundamental to contemporary transnational theory: How do diasporic communities maintain these kinds of ideological linkages across time, space, and place?

Chapter 7 again explores what Vatuk calls the "cross-fertilization of folk and literary traditions," but this time with respect to a genre of work song known as *malhor*. These loud and energetic songs, sung by sugarcane workers in Western Uttar Pradesh as they turn the presses throughout the long winter months, are structurally consistent with a traditional literary Hindi 'couplet' meter called *dohā*, which is itself consistent with the *shloka* couplets of Sanskrit philosophical riddles. After uncovering some striking parallels between the content of these songs and their two thousand year old predecessors, Vatuk turns his attention to an unexpected use of gender in a specific subgenre of these *malhors*: love songs. The *dohā* meter of Hindi folk poetry has long been associated with male songs, but these love songs are sung in the first person feminine, producing questions for traditional understandings of authorship. Yet by referencing cultural as well as structural information, Vatuk is able to explain why these highly emotional songs must be sung in a feminine voice, even if authored by men. Dominant understandings of masculinity are simply inconsistent with the kinds of lovesick "cravings" vocalized in these laments, where singers express pain and torment at being separated from a lover.

The folk operas that are the focus of Chapter 8, "The Ethnography of *Sāng*" have much in common with these work songs. For instance, the male actors known as *sāngī* not only recite their lines in *dohā* meter, they also use feminine voices when performing love stories. But what particularly interests Vatuk in

this article, which he coauthored with Sylvia Vatuk in 1967 and published in the journal *Asian Folklore Studies*, are the ways in which the folk opera performer acts as a kind of "cultural broker" between the modernizing forces associated with Westernization and the more traditional forces associated with orthodox Hinduism. This is Vatuk at his ethnographic best, as he and his coauthor uncover the social processes involved in becoming a *sāng* performer and expose the diverse social functions of *sāng* performance. Crucially, they illustrate how the long-practiced folk tradition of performing scenes of love and desire has now been rewritten as a Western import, fueling new forms of resistance from varied Hindu nationalist movements.

The remaining two chapters of *Part 3* extend the analysis of expressive "craving" to two other genres: folktales about the "lustful stepmother" in northwestern India (Chapter 9) and sexual joking among children in Western Uttar Pradesh (Chapter 10). Both of these discussions are positioned as countering certain universalizing theories prominent in the analysis of folklore. Chapter 9, also coauthored with Sylvia Vatuk, examines the materialization of the "lustful stepmother" motif in Indian folk literature in order to critique the structuralist classification of folktales in so-called "world literature." While acknowledging the similarity of this motif to the "evil stepmother" story of these folklore categorization systems, the authors expose the motif's more localized aspects, situating its meaning with respect to local ideas of womanhood as well as indigenous understandings of the conflict of society against nature. Chapter 10 is directed more towards Indian folklorists, who have tended to stereotype children's folklore as innocent and obedient. Vatuk throws a decisive wrench in this romantic characterization when he demonstrates the "triad of sex, shit, and sadism" that underlies children's joking practices. Ultimately, he argues that these kinds of verbal transgression represent a special kind of protest against the "authority and strictures" associated with adult morality. As in all of the articles in this section, Vatuk calls for a "fresh approach" to the analysis of language and lore that has ethnography as its analytical center.

Part 4: On a System of Saving

The chapters that constitute *Part 4* represent some of Vatuk's strongest ethnographic essays, seeking to expose the logic of diverse sociocultural "systems" ranging from gift exchange to sweet-addiction. There is a distinctive feminist subtext that runs throughout these articles, particularly in their attention to social hierarchy. Chapter 11, for instance, "On a System of Private Savings among North Indian Village Women" (coauthored with Sylvia Vatuk and published in 1971), attributes the village womens' establishment of private banking relationships to the insecurity and dependency created by discriminatory kinship practices. Chapter 13, "The Social Context of Gift Exchange in North India" (coauthored with Sylvia Vatuk and published in 1976), outlines the asymmetries that characterize gift-giving relationships in rural western Uttar Pradesh, among them age, sex, kinship, and status. Although Chapter 14, "The Position of Women in Hittite Laws and Manusmṛti" (originally published in 1967), is necessarily text-based as opposed to ethnographic, its exposition of the rules governing women, marriage, and inheritance in two classical societies provides vital data for the sociohistorical study of women and law. Even Chapter 12, which focuses on the north Indian phenomenon of sweet addiction, references "the conventional authority structure within the Indian family" as an explanation for why this addiction is considered a male, not female, disease. Women simply lack the luxury to become sweet addicts, their activities being more subject to surveillance within the extended family.

Chapter 12, coauthored with Sylvia Vatuk and published in 1967 in the *International Journal of the Addictions*, incorporates some particularly innovative research methods for work of this time period. Many of these methods fall from the authors' decision to discuss this addiction—known in Hindi as *chatorpan*—as a product of cultural perceptions. Referencing Hymes' (1962) call to expose "native contexts of use," Vatuk and Vatuk investigate the form and meaning of *chatorpan* as it materializes in interviews, proverbs, folk sayings, and folk beliefs, going so far as to ask members of a ninth grade class to write short essays in Hindi about the concept. While much research on addiction had been written from the perspective of psychoanalysis, including

Obeyesekere's (1963) early work on pregnancy cravings in Ceylon, the authors turn to ethnography to illustrate the ways in which addiction is ultimately social. It is no wonder that this article has captured the interest of hundreds of psychologists from Australia to the United States ('Prabhakar' 1992), given its more general import for the cross-cultural understanding of human addiction as a social construct.

Part 5: Thieves in My House

The final section of this collection, *Part 5: Thieves in My House*, features four of the studies that were highlighted at the outset of this introduction. The heading "Thieves in My House," which appeared as the title of an earlier collection involving these same four articles (Vatuk 1969), points to the domestic presence of a sinister and unwanted intruder, realized in these chapters as the colonizing British. As the heading suggests, the perspectives Vatuk explores here are not those of the historian or lawyer, but those of the everyday home dweller who has been "burgled," in a sense, and whose account of the incident no doubt differs dramatically from that of the self-protecting burglar. The "houses" in focus are situated on the Indian subcontinent as well as within diasporic communities, spanning the globe from Banaras to British Guiana to Berkeley. Chapter 15, as discussed earlier, explores how Indians living in Meerut District, Uttar Pradesh and Ludhiana District, Punjab represent the West and Western institutions in their proverbs and folktales. Chapter 16, in an extension of some of the themes addressed in Chapter 6, explicates how East Indians in British Guiana view the British-sponsored indenture system in their songs. A focus on the Indian diaspora is continued in Chapter 17, when Vatuk examines how the San Francisco-based Gadar Party of the early twentieth century viewed the British occupation in their published protests. Finally, Chapter 18 returns us to Meerut and Banaras in an analysis of the political "preaching" of the *bhajnopdeshaks*, traveling performers whose views of governmental and societal ills may well be in part responsible for Vatuk's initial interest in folklore.

Even though all four of these articles were published in the 1960s, as are the majority of articles in this volume, they offer insights on a number of theoretical concerns still in focus today,

especially regarding the relationship between language and culture. The first article is of particular interest in this respect. When outlining the differences between understandings of the historical record by Western historians and Indian folk, Vatuk makes the radically relativist claim that such differences are primarily "a matter of linguistic usage":

It is worthwhile pointing out that much of the difference between the Western historian's and the Indian folk view of Indian history is a matter of linguistic usage. The greater part of the vocabulary which is the stock in trade of the former—and of Western scholars who write about contemporary Indian problems—finds no place in folk recitals of India's past and present. For example, such terms as terrorist, political unrest, free enterprise, capitalist system, constitutional reforms, free world, underdeveloped nations, are either not used at all or are used with connotations opposite to that which the Westerner understands. And in their evaluation of Indian leaders, particularly of those who led them in the struggle for Independence, the distinctions so important to the Westerner between violent and non-violent methods, between extremist and moderate, find no recognition.

While the idea expressed here harkens back to the theory of linguistic relativism associated with early American anthropology (e.g., Sapir 1927; Whorf 1941), it also importantly predicts the poststructuralist interest in discourse as a producer of both subjectivity and reality. Most of today's linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists would readily support the assertion that concepts such as the ones mentioned in this passage acquire meaning only within particular discursive (and hence sociocultural) systems. But when Vatuk was producing these essays in the United States during the 1960s, the discipline of linguistics was busy defining itself against this very sort of approach, holding that language should be studied as a cognitive instead of social phenomenon. The antagonism towards socially oriented approaches that emerged in linguistics during this time period may well explain why Vatuk gravitated towards folklore, even when he held no degree in the discipline. Surprisingly, Vatuk's graduate work was almost entirely

concentrated in more formal areas of linguistics, especially historical linguistics. After earning his M.A. in Sanskrit, he completed two years of graduate studies in Slavic linguistics at Harvard University (1959-1961) and then went on to earn a D. Litt. from Agra University in 1972 with a dissertation entitled *A Comparative Study of Sanskrit and Old Church Slavonic Phonology and Morphology*. But the writings collected here are more closely allied with the pioneering sociolinguists of the 1960s who challenged the American linguistic mainstream, among them Bill Bright, John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, and William Labov. For Vatuk as well as each of these scholars, language is best studied in tandem with the social world that gives it meaning.

In fact, a number of American linguists are still in the business of denying the potential import of social and cultural variability, if the work of cognitive linguist and best-selling author Steven Pinker is at all typical in this regard. Listed as one of Harvard University's hundred most influential alumni (Andrews et al 2006), Pinker focuses on those linguistic features that are common to all human languages as support for his argument that language is an evolutionary adaptation. It is not so surprising, then, that in his widely quoted book *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*, Pinker attempts to debunk relativist Whorfian notions regarding the interrelationship of language and worldview. But he does this in part by asserting the universality of the very concepts mentioned by Vatuk in the above passage. "Since mental life goes on independently of particular languages," Pinker argues, "concepts of freedom and equality will be thinkable even if they are nameless" (Pinker 1994: 82). Yet the meaning of concepts like *freedom* and *equality* vary radically from society to society, as Vatuk insightfully points out, so much so that what is "thinkable" (if this is indeed even at issue) may in fact be something entirely at odds with the Western conceptualization of these terms. The import of this early insight is underscored by the ongoing rhetorical attention paid to both of these concepts in European and American justifications for war against nations perceived to be non-democratic. It is no small claim to say that Vatuk predicts the failure of the so-called "war on terror" here, but his argument regarding interpretive irreconcilability does just that.

Vatuk's analysis of Gadar protest songs in Chapter 16 is a fitting subject for the conclusion of this introduction, particularly since these songs in many ways capture the rebellious spirit behind much of the work reprinted in this volume. The article that appears here, coauthored with Sylvia Vatuk and originally published in a 1966 issue of the journal *Folklore*, represents the first scholarly examination of such songs. The Gadar movement, as Vatuk explains in this article and in several subsequent publications (e.g., Vatuk 1998b, 2003, 2006; see Assisi 2006), is an early 20th century freedom movement associated with Indians in California that seeded a diasporic uprising against British rule in India. Spearheaded by Indian immigrants and university students, its professed goal was to liberate India from British servitude using whatever means possible. As part of their mission to involve the Indian diaspora in the fight for independence, a group of San Franciscans published a number of political booklets between 1915 and 1918, distributing them to Indians everywhere free of charge. Although the protest songs included therein have been viewed as historically significant because they advocate the use of violence, Vatuk chooses to focus on the ways in which these songs inspired community. Specifically, the songs' poetic depictions of the nature of the British regime, the glories of India's past, and the desirability of freedom resonated with Indians at home and abroad, including those who advocated non-violence. Vatuk has since made it his life work to research and publish the histories of several of California's Gadar Party activists, among them Hari Singh Usman, a farmer in Southern California who sold all of his possessions so that he could sail to India and fight for independence, and Kartar Singh Sarabha, a UC Berkeley student who joined the revolution only to be hanged by the British at the age of nineteen. Many of these stories have appeared in *The Gadarite*, a quarterly publication founded by Vatuk in 1998 that is dedicated to the ideas and actions of the Gadar movement.

It makes good sense that Ved Prakash Vatuk—folklorist, Bay area resident, and author of over twenty internationally recognized volumes of political poetry—would be attracted to a San Francisco group that published folk poems written in revolutionary style for Indians in the diaspora. In fact, the term *gadar*, which literally means 'rebellion' or 'revolt', can be appropriately applied to almost

all of Vatuk's work, whether fiction or non-fiction. Just four years ago, Vatuk completed yet another revolutionary poem, but this time of epic proportions. Reviving an ancient Indian myth for a contemporary readership, Vatuk's *Bahubali* tells the story of two feuding brothers whose path to violence ends only when their subjects rise up in protest against the loss of innocent life. Winner of the Hindi Sansthan's prestigious 'Jaishankar Prasad Award' for the best epic of the year, the poem advocates for an alternative nonviolent society. The eighteen articles that appear in this volume, all written at a much earlier point in Vatuk's life, also offer their own sort of rebellion against injustice, even if only at the everyday level of song and story. In the most profound of senses, Vatuk is himself a modern-day Gadar hero, continuing the fight against social inequity through a shrewd use of pen and paper.

Acknowledgments

I gratefully acknowledge the support of several friends and graduate students who helped me with the writing of the introduction and editing of the volume, among them Donna Goldstein, Adam Hodges, Chad Nilep, Joshua Raclaw, Lal Zimman and Jenny Davis. Special gratitude also goes to Parmatma Sharan at Archana Publications, who shares my enthusiasm for the work collected here. I am honored to have had the opportunity to introduce the academic writings of Ved Prakash Vatuk in this way. I am indebted to him for his integrity, wisdom, and friendship.

REFERENCES

- Andrews, Jesse, et al (2006). "The Harvard 100: The Most Influential Alumni." *The World of Harvard: Premier Issue* 2006. 51-85.
- Assisi, Francis C. (2006). "Digging Desi American Freedom Songs." *Indolink*, September 20. www.indolink.com.
- De Certeau, Michel (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life* (trans. S. Rendall). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dundes, Alan (1978). *Essays in Folkloristics*. Meerut: Folklore Institute.

- Foucault, Michel (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (trans. A. M. S. Smith). New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, Michel (1978). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (trans. A. Sheridan). New York: Vintage Books.
- Georges, Robert A. and Alan Dundes (1963). "Toward a Structural Definition of the Riddle." *Journal of American Folklore* 76: 111-118.
- Hymes, Dell (1962). "The Ethnography of Speaking." In T. Gladwin and W. C. Sturtevant (eds.), *Anthropology and Human Behavior*. Washington, DC, 13-53.
- Isemonger, F. C. and J. Slattery (1999). *An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy (1913-1915)*. Berkeley: Folklore Institute.
- Lakoff, Robin (1975). *Language and Woman's Place*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Obeyeskere, Gananath (1963). "Pregnancy Cravings (*dola-duka*) in Relation to Social Structure and Personality in a Sinhalese Village." *American Anthropologist* 65: 323-342.
- Pinker, Steven (1994). *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*. New York: Harper Collins.
- 'Prabhakar', Kanhiyalal Mishra (1992). "About the Author." *SACA Newsletter*, January, p. 8.
- Sahlins, Marshall (1965). On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange. In M. Banton (ed.), *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*. 139-236. London: Tavistock.
- Sankrityayan, Rahul (1949). *Ghumakkar Shastra* (Science of Wandering).
- Sapir, Edward ([1927]1995). "The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society." In Ben Blount, ed., *Language, Culture, and Society*, 2nd ed. 29-42.
- Scott, James C. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Taylor, Archer (1951). *English Riddles from Oral Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Vatuk, Ved Prakash (1969). *Thieves in My House: Four Studies of Indian Folklore of Protest and Change*. Varanasi: Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan.

- Vatuk, Ved Prakash (1991). UN-Indian *Indian Studies* at U.C. Berkeley. *South Asian Studies Ist Past, Present, and Future: A Collection of Articles on the South Asian Studies Program at U.C. Berkeley*. Berkeley: Punjabi People's Cultural Association. 3-6.
- Vatuk, Ved Prakash (1992). "South Asian Studies at U.C. Berkeley: An Update." *SACA Newsletter*, January, pp. 8, 11.
- Vatuk, Ved Prakash (1998a). "Still Dreaming." *Samar Summer/Fall*, pp. 30-34.
- Vatuk, Ved Prakash (1998b). Foreword. In Isemonger and Slattery's *An Account of the Ghadr Conspiracy (1913-1915)*. Berkeley: Folklore Institute.
- Vatuk, Ved Prakash, ed. (1998c). *The Gadarite*. Inaugural Issue. Berkeley: Gadar Heritage Foundation.
- Vatuk, Ved Prakash (2003). "What Have They Done to the Dream? Remembering the Freedom Movement." *Siliconeer* 4(8), August.
- Vatuk, Ved Prakash (2006). "The Gadar Heroes: A Stirring Tale of Selfless Patriotism." *Siliconeer* 7 (8), August.
- Whorf, Benjamin ([1941]2001). "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language." In Alessandro Duranti, ed., *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. 363- 381.
- Yadav, Shankar Lal (1960). *Hariyānā Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya*. Allahabad.

Kira Hall

University of Colorado

INTRODUCTION

In one of his most famous articles the renowned folklorist Alan Dundes asked, "Who are the folk?" His answer, in the end, was, "We all are." Yet folklorists have long debated how to define this term, together with its companion, "lore." Influenced as they were by a Eurocentric perspective, early European and American scholars who studied Afro-Asian or Native American cultures with no written traditions were at one point content to define folk literature as a corpus of verbal arts transmitted orally from generation to generation. Yet this definition became meaningless when folklorists began to study the cultures of India, where all knowledge from the time of the Vedas until quite recently has been more or less transmitted orally. Certainly, no Indian scholar of Indian literature would consider classic texts such as the Vedas, Ramayanas, or other epic literature "folklore." A culture where *kavi sammelans* and *mushairas* thrive on rendering poetry orally could hardly subscribe to such a general characterization. Scholars of India subsequently argued that folk literature is better described as something composed in a "dialect" at a given time in history. Under this definition, anything composed in a language besides Sanskrit would have at one time been considered "folk." Yet if this dialect were then to develop into a language of the "elite," the literature composed in that language could of course no longer be considered "folk."

In contemporary Indian scholarship, what we consider folk literature is that which is composed in a regional dialect of any given standard language area. In short, oral transmission alone does not make a piece of literature "folk," nor does anything become "non-folk" simply by being written down. Furthermore, in the Indian context, the division between classical, popular, and folk culture is never complete. In a marriage ceremony, for example, the same message is repeated simultaneously in Vedic hymns, standard language such as Hindi, and songs sung in local dialects. An Indian man, even if he is illiterate, may carry all of these traditions simultaneously. Thus the only thing separating the sacred from the mundane is the context. A Brahman may be revered

when he is performing the pooja, but he can be the butt of jokes on other occasions. In fact, in popular understanding, a Brahman is often considered a fool who carries the burden of bookish knowledge with no practical wisdom.

I write these words simply to introduce myself as a member of that complex society where I am both an insider and outsider, an informant and informed. I am the "folk" as well as a student of folk traditions. My father, Pandit Krishna Lal, was a Sanskrit scholar on the one hand and a composer of folk *Holi sāngs* on the other. His *sāngs* were performed in the Falgun month of the Hindu calendar. He was also a reformist, active in social and political change. My eldest brother, the late Sunder Lal, was also involved in the social and political movements of the time. It was in the lap of my father and brother as a toddler that I learnt Vedic hymns in tandem with patriotic folksongs and songs of social change. My mother, Kirpa Dai, was a depository of all traditional songs. As a child, I followed her to attend many life-cycle ceremonies, where she was always in demand. It was from her that I learned my traditions of so-called "little culture." My elder sister, Narayani Devi, who is ninety years old and sings religious, social, and political songs with great joy even today, also had a great impact on me. And my Vedic scholar poet brother, Ram Niwas Vidyarthi, taught me about Hindi-Sanskrit poetics, inspiring me to begin composing songs of protest on the pattern of "folk poets."

Folklore did not come to me as a subject to be studied in graduate school. It was never a topic chosen to fulfill a requirement for an academic degree. It is a part of my life; I lived it. By writing these essays, I am giving back to my folks what I took from them. They are the tribute to my father, mother, sister and brothers.

Many of the essays were published in two books—'*Studies in Indian Folk Traditions*' and '*Thieves in My House*.' They were very well received. Since both of these books are out of print now, we are bringing them out in one volume. Other essays are added to them. My dear friend and colleague Dr. Kira Hall has kindly edited them. I very fondly acknowledge her loving dedication.

Introduction

During the academic life when these essays were written I was greatly encouraged by Sylvia Vatuk and Alan Dundes. Alan is no longer with us. But his memory will always be there. Along with my parents I humbly dedicate this volume to his sacred memory also. One essay in the volume was co-authored by him and some of the essays were jointly written with Sylvia Vatuk. I am grateful to her.

—Ved Prakash Vatuk

CONTENTS

Foreword: Kira Hall

vii

Introduction: Ved Prakash Vatuk

xxviii

PART I: METHOD AND INTERPRETATION

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Method and Interpretation in the Study of
Folklore in India: A Comment | 3 |
| 2. Poetics and Genre: Typology in Indian Folklore | 18 |

PART II: RIDDLES

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 3. Amir Khusro and Indian Riddle Tradition | 31 |
| 4. Some Characteristic Meters of Hindi Riddle
Prosody | 48 |
| 5. Panjabi Riddles from the West Coast of
the U.S.A. | 115 |

PART III: FOLKSONGS AND CULTURE

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 6. Craving for a Child in the Folksongs of
East Indians in British Guiana | 131 |
| 7. <i>Malhor</i> : Type of Work Song in Western
Uttar Pradesh, India | 159 |
| 8. The Ethnography of Sāng: A North Indian
Folk Opera | 188 |
| 9. The Lustful Stepmother in Folklore of
Northwestern India | 245 |
| 10. Let's Dig Up Some Dirt: The Idea of Humor
in Children's Folklore in India | 277 |

**PART IV: ON A SYSTEM OF SAVINGS AND
OTHER TRADITIONS**

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 11. On a System of Private Savings among
North Indian Village Women | 295 |
|--|-----|

12. <i>Chatorpan</i> : A Culturally Defined Form of Addiction in North India	311
13. The Social Context of Gift Exchange in North India	324
14. The Position of Women in Hittite Laws and Manusmriti	353

PART V: THIEVES IN MY HOUSE

15. An Indian Folk View of the West and Western Institutions	375
16. Protest Songs of East Indians in British Guiana	406
17. Protest Songs of East Indians on the West Coast, USA	430
18. The <i>Bhajnopdeshak</i> as an Agent of Social Change <i>Credits</i>	446 471

PART I

Method and Interpretation

Method and Interpretation in the Study of Folklore in India: A Comment

It is encouraging to the folklorist that the study of folklore in India has attracted a large following in recent decades (Kirkland, 1961; Upadhyaya, H.S., 1965; Upadhyaya, K.D., 1954). A number of voluminous collections of folklore from various parts of India have been made in recent years, many of these in the course of research for dissertations subsequently submitted to Indian universities for M.A. and Ph.D. degrees and then published. From this fact one might assume that the study of folklore on the Indian scene had ceased to be an amateur pursuit and had begun to take its place as a scientific discipline.¹ Unfortunately, however, such an assumption would be in error.

The field of folklore scholarship in India is characterised today, as in the past, by a number of basic defects which call into question the usefulness of much, if not all, of the published literature, either for informing the reader as to the actual nature of the oral literature of village India, or for drawing more general conclusions of a theoretical or historical nature. These defects are of several kinds, and I will summarize them briefly in the following paragraphs before going on to support my generalizations with specific examples from the recent folklore literature. Without wishing to single out particular scholars for castigation, I will confine myself mainly to the literature on the folklore of Western Uttar Pradesh, since this is an area in which I have personally carried on field research. I will center my discussion around a particular problem in folklore interpretation with which I have recently been concerned, that of meter in the folk poetry of the *Kaurvī* dialect of Hindi.

Inadequate field collection methods and improper handling of the raw folklore data appear to mark much of Indian folklore scholarship. It is of course not always possible in reading the literature to ascertain whether, or to what extent, this has occurred, unless one happens to be very familiar with the area in question. An obvious and flagrant example, not difficult to spot, is the tendency of many writers to alter the language of the folk material to conform to the usages of the local standard literary language, apparently in response to an attitude of linguistic purism. Perhaps there has not been sufficient stress given, in the training of Indian folklorists, on the necessity of accuracy in the transcription of folklore texts. This should be the very first admonition, since without initial preciseness, all subsequent work lies on a foundation of sand. Relevant to this also is the unfortunate fact that rarely is any information provided in this literature about the informants from whom folk material has been collected, nor is any attempt made to present differing versions of the same song, riddle or tale heard from different informants. All such defects in method create obvious barriers to interpretation of the folk material, for the collector himself and even more seriously, for subsequent scholars who might wish to utilize his data.

In the area of interpretation, there is among Indian folklorists an almost universal tendency to accept uncritically the previously published sources, particularly if these are by authorities regarded as eminent. This not only results in a lack of originality, but frequently threatens the consistency of a writer's argument, when completely contradictory statements from different authorities are accepted without comment in succeeding paragraphs or pages of a third work wherein the folk dramas *nautankī* and *svāṅ* are described (Gupta, 1965).

Careful reading of recent works on Indian folklore reveal a further fault, which is unfortunately not unique to this particular field: the improper use of sources. The very common occurrence of long quoted passages from other sources, taken verbatim, must be criticized because it reveals a lack of originality and poor writing technique. However, much more serious is the regrettably frequent incidence of outright plagiarism, whereby lengthy quoted passages are reproduced without quotation marks, footnotes, or

any other indication that the ideas and the very words of their expression are not the author's own. Where footnotes and bibliographies are provided, it is rare to find references which provide sufficient information for the curious reader to go back to the original source without considerable difficulty, if at all. Titles are reproduced inaccurately, as are names of journals. Dates are omitted or given incorrectly or do not correspond to the volume numbers. Page numbers are often cited incorrectly—more often they are omitted. Frequently when one does manage to locate the original source of a quotation or paraphrased passage, one discovers that the source has been misquoted, the original statement perhaps altered completely in meaning.

In general, Indian folklore scholarship seems out of touch with the developments of folklore scholarship in other parts of the world. Little attempt is being made to utilize either the methods of a rigorous discipline of worldwide concern, or of the theoretical insights which the reading of foreign research publications could provide. This may be partly a problem of the availability of library materials, but surely this problem is not so severe as to be responsible for the extreme isolation of so much of the current literature.

Recently with Alan Dundes I have been engaged in an investigation of folk meters as used in the riddles of the Hindi-speaking area of Western Uttar Pradesh, particularly Buland Shahar District. During the preliminary stages of my work, during which I reviewed the literature relevant to our problem, I found numerous baffling statements, particularly concerning meter in the folklore of this area. No thorough investigation of meter had been made by any folklorist working in this or adjacent areas, but this did not restrain them from expressing preconceived notions about the problem. In a study of the folklore of an area adjacent to that of my research, Yadava (1960) devotes exactly 12 lines out of 499 pages to the meter of the folksongs, all of them discrediting the folk use of meter. He writes (p. 236):

The bondage of meter in folksongs is very loose. In a way, it would not be an exaggeration to say that there is no meter in them The village people are blank when it comes to the knowledge of the science of meter (*pingala*).

They do not pay much attention to *vāmika* or *mātrika* meters.

Later in the same paragraph he seems almost to contradict himself.

However, anyone who has heard these songs (sung) will never feel a defect (*dosha*) of caesura (*yati*) or flow of rhythm (*gati*) in them. Even so, if we want to speak in the language of metrics, they can be called 'musical/sound meters' (*dhvanyātmaka chhanda*). That is why Pandit Ram Naresh Tripathi in his critical analysis (of the songs) said, 'In them there is no meter, only tune.'

Several fallacies seem to underlie such statements. First is the notion that there are no other kinds of meters, or in the strict sense "true meters," which cannot be fitted into the categories of *vāmika* or *mātrika* prescribed by classical Indian prosodists. Second is the paradox that when the songs are sung by the folk, they seem to have perfect meter, but when they are written down and read from a book they become "loose" in meter. In other words, the transcribed (and perhaps edited) versions of the songs do not fit the strict rules of the *mātrā* counts. The implication here is that the written word, rendered by the folklorist, must take precedence over the oral. Such a procedure defeats the whole purpose of the study of oral poetry.

Furthermore, even the classical prosodists have stipulated that the word as pronounced and *not as written* is the criterion of *mātrā*-counts in a metrical line. For example, the writer of *Prākṛita-Paṅgalam* says: "If the tongue reads any long vowel short, then that (vowel) also is short. Even three syllables read quickly can be counted as one syllable" (Vyas, 1959). To be stricter than this to the oral folk poet hardly does him justice.

If one is concerned with the lack of knowledge of the traditional science of metrics, it should be pointed out that most educated persons are as ignorant of this as are the folk. Shastri has complained that most critics, editors and even poets in Hindi are unaware of the rules of the classical metrical system as it pertains to the literature in their language (Shastri. R.N.).

Another example of the same type of error is that committed by K. D. Upadhyaya. Describing *birhā*, he has misquoted the description of the meter used in *birhā* to be found in an early paper by Grierson. Grierson (1886) wrote:

Regarding external form, a *birhā* consists of two pairs of two lines each, each pair being founded on the following scheme:

6 4 4 2, 4 4 3 instants,

or else 6 4 4 2, 4 4 4 instants.

In reading them, however, they will rarely be found to agree with this, unless we remember, as already noted, that many long syllables (i.e., two instants) must be read as short (i.e., one instant). Sometimes, too, there are superfluous words which do not form part of the meter. In regular poetry such superfluous words are technically known as *jōr*.

Now according to Upadhyaya (1957), Grierson has laid down the following rule for *birhā* in his 1886 paper:

"First <i>Charaṇa</i> (line):	6 4 4 2	16 syllables (<i>akshara</i>)
Second <i>Charaṇa</i> (line):	4 4 3	11 syllables
Third <i>Charaṇa</i> (line):	6 4 4 2	16 syllables
Fourth <i>Charaṇa</i> (line):	4 4 4	12 syllables" ²

Clearly these two versions of Grierson's rule do not agree. It is not that Grierson is unclear in his use of the words "syllable" and "instant." He states that a *long* syllable contains *two instants*. Yet Upadhyaya has counted only the 'syllables, not the instants; it is no wonder that he finds few *birhās* which conform to the "definition of Grierson" which he presents. Furthermore, using again a syllabic count, Upadhyaya has formed his own definition of *birhā*, gives two examples which fit his definition, but concludes that even the rules he has set up do not seem to be followed in every case (see p. 215). This again is hardly surprising, since in the first place the meter in these songs is based on *mātrās*, not on syllables, and in the second place, it is impossible to determine the meter by counting long and short syllables in texts written down in the standard language because, as has been pointed out

earlier, in poetry (folk and literary) the number of *mātrās*, in a syllable is based on its *pronunciation*. A syllable written long may have only one *mātrā* if pronounced short; a syllable written short may have two *mātrās* if pronounced long. Upadhyaya has given no indication of how his examples (and he gives only three) are actually recited or sung³.

Here a scholar has failed in the analysis of his material because he has relied on the interpretation of an earlier writer and that, too, in a garbled form. Even this misunderstanding of Grierson could have been less serious if Upadhyaya had carefully recorded his *birhās* according to their manner of recitation and had then himself investigated the nature of the meter occurring in them and the principle actually operative in their composition, i.e., *mātrā* count. If one does not take an analytical approach, one continues to perpetuate myths rather than discovering the present manner of recitation and then investigating the nature of the folk poetry and folksongs of India on the basis of the classical metrical rules. In our study we have incidentally examined all our riddles in the meter called *dohā* from this point of view. In a total of 19 we were surprised to find that, judging from *Prākṛita-Paingalam's* strict and artificial rules (with which the riddle composers are certainly unfamiliar), three would be classed as *Brāhmaṇī dohās* (of the highest order), and the remainder as *Kshatriya*. No examples of *Vaiśya* or *Shūdra dohās* were found in our collection.

A preconception most harmful to folklore scholarship is one concerning the question of purity of language. The eminent Indologist Vasudev Sharan Agrawal, in the foreword to Satya Gupta's work on the folklore of Meerut Division, writes the following:⁴

I, myself, was born in a village in Meerut District, which is between Hapur and Ghaziabad and is about a mile and a half from Pilakhuwa. Therefore, I know that in the **pure form** of *Kaurvī* speech (dialect) there is no tendency for geminates. In their own pronunciation the **pure form** is 'lotā' and not *lotāā*. But we should not forget that in this district there are many villages dispersed, whose dialect is influenced directly by the *Jātū* or *Bāgrū* speech. It seems

to me that in Kuru-Janapada (the Kuru District) the *Jāt* *jāti* or their speech has penetrated the people's tradition and language and both have been mingled. However, there remains even today a difference between the mother-tongues of *Jāts* and *Thākurs* (and of other peoples of the area) to which we must pay attention so that the pure form of *Kaurvī* can be revived.⁵

I must say at the outset that the attitude here revealed is most unscientific. There is no such thing as pure speech, from a linguistic point of view. The "correct" form of any language is simply that form which is actually spoken by the members of a speech community, regardless of its diverse historical origins. Even if words have "crept" into a given language from other languages, they must be considered as an integral part of that language if they are so used by its speakers. Otherwise one would have to remove from consideration all the words in Kaurvi whose ultimate origin is Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Portuguese and English. Such influences are a legitimate interest of historical and etymological study, but one should not conclude from them that in a description of the language some kind of "purity" should be sought or that revival of a "pure language" is desirable or even possible. What we, as folklorists, need is not to "revive the pure form of Kaurvi," but to record and analyse it as it is.

Regarding the presence of geminates in this dialect, all work done in the area by linguists has given results quite contrary to the assertions of Agrawal.⁶ Should one presume a Jat influence on the Prakrit or on Apabhramsha (both of which use geminates) from which Kalidasa was suffering in the fifth century? Or does he presume that the speech of certain educated Brahmins and Vaishyas, which tends to be somewhat "sanskritised" and "purist" should be taken as the correct or pure speech of the area. This would certainly be the speech of the minority. I made tape recordings during the past summer of the speech of Meerut District from the area near Agrawal's village (Atroli) and also from other areas including Meerut City proper, Dadri (near the border of Muzafarnagar District), Fazalpur (near Baraut), and Subhanpur (near Khekra). Included was the speech of Brahman, Baniya, Rajput and other castes, as well as Muslims. In all cases, geminates,

of the type to which Agrawal refers, are found in the dialect. It is possible, of course, that the closeness of Agrawal's village to a large business and industrial center has tended to modify the language spoken there in the direction of standard Hindi; but if so, it is an unusual case for this area.

Failure to base conclusions on actual field research is evident in much of the writing on Indian folklore. As an example I would like to quote a prominent folklorist of this area, Krishna Chandra Sharma 'Chandra'. In the sixteenth volume of *Hindī Sāhitya kā Vrihad Itihās*, devoted to Hindi folklore (which is one of the most disappointing pieces of work in this entire field), he writes of the Kaurvi language:

These people give new meanings to words with unique uses. About five years ago, the eldest son of the writer went to the village of one of his fellow students, an inhabitant of Meerut District. Both young men were entering the boundary of the village, when the voice of someone sitting in the field was heard: 'Is it *bachchā*? And who is this with you? Turn the face of this theatre-like boy toward me.' (*tan yā thetar se kā mū merī or pheriye!*)⁷.

Regardless of the accuracy of the quoted dialect passage, it seems obvious that the author has based his conclusions about the language not on his own research in depth, but on the incidental observation of his son during a casual visit to the area. How can such conclusions carry weight in scholarly discourse?

As I indicated above, a purist attitude toward the language of the folk and the tendency to "standardize" this language in transcribing the folk material is harmful because it results in inaccuracy. However, more seriously it makes it impossible to determine the structural features of the material and makes it appear formless, haphazard and, in fact, unstructured. To illustrate, I would like to give two versions of riddles from the same area, printed side by side. One version was collected by me during the summer of 1965. These are part of a large collection of folk material, recorded on tape. Most were collected in the natural setting, that is during evenings when riddle sessions were actually taking place, rather than being elicited directly from informants for my research purposes. The second version of the same riddles

has been reproduced from the only published book on the folklore of the area, that of Gupta (1965: 281-284). I have underlined the words which clearly betray the author's attempt at standardization, resulting from a purist attitude toward the dialect of this area. I have also indicated the *mātrā* count by writing "1" under the short syllables and "2" under the long syllables. The total number of instants is given at the end of each line. My version of each riddle is indicated by the letter "V", Gupta's version by "G".⁸

- (1) G: *idhara bhī khūṭā udhara bhī khūṭā*
 1 1 1 2 2 2 1 1 1 2 2 2 18
gāya marakha nī duddhā mīṭhā
 2 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 16
 V: *inghai khunṭā unghai khunṭā*
 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 16
gāya marakha nī duddhā mīṭhā
 2 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 16 -*sigharā*
- (2) G: *dhaulī dharatī kālā bīja*
 2 2 1 1 2 2 2 2 1 15
bovane vāle gāvē gīta
 2 1 2 2 2 2 2 1 16
 V: *dholī dharatī kālā bīja*
 2 2 1 1 2 2 2 2 1 15
bovane vāle gāvē gīta
 2 1 1 2 2 2 2 1 15 -*kitāb*
- (3) G: *lambā hātha*
 2 2 2 1 7
chhā hai nī
 2 2 2 6
 V: *lambā hai*
 2 2 2 6
Para chhā nī
 1 1 2 2 6 -*rasta*

(4) G:	janāba	ālī	sira	pat	jālī	
	1 2 1	2 2	1 1	2	2 2	16
	peṭa	khālī	pasālī	anagina		
	2 1	2 2	1 1 2	1 1 1 1	15	(no rhyme)
V:	janā	be	ālī	sira	pai	jālī
	1 2	1	2 2	1 1	2	2 2 16
	hadīvā	bahot	ai	peṭ	at	khālī
	1 1 2	1 2	1	2	2	2 2 16 - muddhā

It is clear from these examples that the standardization of language, whether on the part of the folklorist or of the linguistically sophisticated informant, leads to "faulty" meter even where the original dialect form would have been "correct." It is therefore necessary that the folklorist have as much data as possible about his informants' background, his education, and his attitude toward the language. That he should refrain from any alteration of the collected text should go without saying. The importance of social attitudes in influencing the type of folk material elicited is demonstrated forcefully by a verbatim tape-recording of a riddle session consisting of male Brahman, Tyagi and Baniya villagers in this area. Most of those present had little education, but a few were somewhat educated and conscious of the prestige associated with use of standard Hindi. Much derisive comment was heard from the others about the "*shāstrī bāt*" ("scriptural riddles," those recently composed in standard Hindi—the term implies a kind of reverse snobbery) offered by these educated informants. Similarly, several remarks suggested that the riddlers felt restraint in telling some of their more earthy or lewd riddles in the presence of these persons.

My study of Hindi riddles, folksongs and proverbs has shown rhyme to be an important element. That the folk are charmed by rhyme is illustrated by many proverbs.

However, K. D. Upadhyay (1954:214), in the above-mentioned volume, writes: "In folksongs generally there is no rhyme. Although rhyme is present in *birhā* occasionally, this should be considered the exception rather than the rule." Ten pages later (p. 224) he

expresses a somewhat different view: "Folksongs generally have end-rhymes, but the rule of rhyme is not followed strictly." And again (p. 226), discussing rhyme in Bhojpuri folk poetry, Upadhyay maintains: "The beautiful rhyming pattern is arranged in the first-second and third-fourth lines of *bārahmāsā*. In this song the rhyming pattern has come out beautifully. It seems to reach into the category of ornamented poetry." Further, he says, "In *birhā* rhyme is found in the first-third and second-fourth lines." He even complains on the same page that "at times nonsense words are repeated in an effort to make the lines rhyme." The examples of riddles which he has provided in the same volume (pp. 165-170) all rhyme with the exception of two, neither of which is a true riddle. One of these (p. 166) is a mathematical puzzle and rhymes internally. The other (p. 168) is a nonsense saying which requires no answer. The proverbs given by Upadhyaya in the same book (pp. 140-151) also rhyme. As further support for the importance of rhyme in Hindi folklore we can cite, for example, Sahal (1960), who has listed many proverbs of Rajasthan which include not only end-rhymes in proverbs of two lines, but even chains of internal rhymes in one-line proverbs.⁹ Thus we see that the concrete evidence of his own collection and the collections of others denies his preconceived statement quoted early in this paragraph. What we need, instead of generalized and thoughtless remarks of this kind which must later be contradicted, is a thorough investigation of the raw data, line by line and verse by verse, leading to some valid conclusions about the structure of the various folklore genres.

In an article on a folk drama of Western Uttar Pradesh (Vatuk, V. P. and Vatuk, S.), we have noted another serious shortcoming of much of the recent literature on Hindi folklore, and have given several specific examples which need not be repeated here. We are referring to the habit of many writers of quoting other authors verbatim and at length, sometimes with, but often without, attribution. This is fair neither to the author whose words are thus plagiarised, nor to the reader. The latter has no way of knowing whose words he is reading, whose ideas he is concurring with—or attacking—and he is unlikely ever to find out unless he is intimately familiar with all the literature on a chosen subject and has a good memory for the peculiar turn of phrase. When one finds even one such lapse in a volume by a heretofore

respected writer, one's regard for and faith in his other work is seriously diminished. Aside from this obvious disadvantage, one may find that by reprinting verbatim passages of other writers and not indicating their source, one's argument may finally be full of internal inconsistencies and contradictions, not to mention stylistic irregularities. The problem of inconsistency is, as noted above, a common one in this field of scholarship, and leaves the reader in doubt as to whether a book has been written on the basis of original field research and original analysis or simply from the judicious sampling and copying of other writers on one's subject. This is perhaps not quite as serious as a case which has recently been brought to our attention in which an entire article by another person was published in a respected Indian journal under the name of an eminent local scholar. However, it is my view that this type of practice is inexcusable even if it involves a single sentence, and no quotation should be allowed to stand without the provision of a complete reference to author, volume and page number.

Basically, all of my remarks seem to point to a critical need for rigorous, scholarly and disciplined training of young folklorists in India. It is unfortunate that where raw folk material is as abundant and varied as it is in India at the present time, there is not a single good book on principles and methods of folklore scholarship which is available for the training of scientific investigators. The amount of material already collected is voluminous (though not exhausting the possibilities of collection), but very few good studies have resulted from these collections. It is sad that after reading a number of books on the folklore of various areas one finds so little evidence of original thinking. This is partly due to poor training, to an exaggerated feeling of respect and loyalty to elder scholars, and to what must be called the laziness of many of the younger scholars. Clearly the academic profession in India suffers from shortage of finances for research, inadequate library facilities, and heavy teaching duties which make it difficult for an individual to devote all his potential to work of this kind. However, a basic change in attitude and the instilling of devotion to principles of objective scientific investigation would go very far to ameliorate the problems I have tried to point out in this paper.

NOTES

¹ For research in folklore and related subjects completed or in progress in Indian colleges and universities, see *Prāchi-Jyoti*, "Digest of Indological Studies," *Kurukshetra*, Vol. I, 1963 and succeeding issues.

² Note on page 214 that Upadhyay has quoted Grierson's above-cited passage as follows: "In reading them—Birhas—they will **really** be found to agree with this.." (bold mine), thus changing completely the meaning of the original.

³ In my research on *birhās* sung by Indians in British Guiana, I found that many fit the *dohā* meter. This could, of course, be the result of changes which could have taken place since these settlers or their ancestors left India in the late 19th century. However, further investigation is required. Note the metrical pattern in the following examples (*dohā* uses this scheme: 6 4 3, 6 4 1, repeated twice):

(1) *tuma panchi hama kevarā*
1 1 2 2 1 1 2 1 2 13

You are the bird and I am the pandanus flower.

sadā raho bharapūrā
1 2 1 2 1 1 2 1 11

May you always live in prosperity.

hama para kirapā rākhiye
1 1 1 1 1 2 2 1 2 13

Be kind to me.

kyā neṛe kyā dūra
2 2 2 2 1 11

Whether you live near or far.

(2) *bharra kaṭorā dūdha kā*
2 1 1 2 2 2 1 2 13

The bowl is full of milk.

jisamāi pākkai khīra
1 1 2 2 2 2 1 11

In which rice pudding is cooked.

kitaṇā āshika pī gaye
1 1 2 2 1 1 2 1 2 13

How many lovers have drunk it?

kitaṇā bhaye phakīra
1 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 11

How many have renounced the world?

⁴ For definitions of the various types of *dohā*, see Vyas (1959), p. 74.

⁵ Vasudeva Sharan Agrawal, "Pūrva-Bhumikā," in Gupta (1965), p. ū. The names *Kaurvī*, *Kurupradeshīya*, *Ādi Hindī* have been given to the dialect of this area by Sanskrit scholars without caring to find out what the folk of this area really call it. In an earlier article I have argued against these impositions on the

basis that not a single speaker of this dialect who has not been exposed to highly Sanskritized Hindi would understand the words used to refer to their language. Ironically I found that the folk term for Sanskritized usage of this kind is "angrejī bolnā" ("to talk English," i.e., a foreign language). I have suggested the use of the term *Nāgarī* for this dialect, since it is used by the folk in speech and in proverbs for their language. See "Sanskrit se Nāgarī," *Shikshā*, July 1961, pp. 11-12. In this regard, see also an article by Alan Dundes in *Monist*, October 1966.

⁶ For example, see Gumperz (1955), Sankrityayana (1951), Gupta (1965: 17) and Vatuk, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁷ Krishna Chandra Sharma "Chandra," "Kaurvī Lok Sāhitya," in R. Sankrityayana and K. D. Upadhyay eds. *Hindī Sāhitya kā Vrihad Itihās*, Vol. 16, p. 493.

⁸ Translation of these riddles follows:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| (1) Peg on this side, peg on that side
The cow bucks, but the milk is sweet. | — water chestnut |
| (2) The land is white, the seed is black
The sowers sing songs. | — book |
| (3) G: A long hand, no shadow.
V: A tall (man), but no shadow. | — road, path |

Another version of the same was collected by me from Panjabi-speaking Indians in California:

ikk ādmī lamā lamā A tall, tall man
par chā koi nā But no shadow.

- (4) Sir, you have a net on your head. You have so many ribs, but your stomach is empty. — a round wicker stool

⁹ For example:

Jāt re jā, tere sir pai khāt

"Jat, oh jat, on your head there is a cot!"

tellī re tellī, tere sir pai kollhū

"Oilman, oh oilman, on your head there is an oilpress!"

tuk nī lagī

"It doesn't rhyme."

tuk lago nā lago, bojhū to maraigā

"Rhyme or not, you will die of the weight."

REFERENCES

- Grierson, G. A. 1886. "Some Bhojpuri folksongs." *J. R. Asiat. Soc.*, n. s., 18: 212-213.
- Gumperz, J. J. 1955. "The phonology of a north Indian village dialect." *Indian Linguist.*, 16: 283-295.
- Gupta, S. 1965. *Kharī Bolī kā Lok Sāhitya*, Allahabad.

Kirkland, E. C. 1961. "A projected bibliography of the folklore of India." *J. Amer. Folklore*, 74: 413-418.

Sahal, K. L. 1960. *Rajasthānī Kahāvatē — Ek Addhyayan*. p. 60. Delhi.

Sankrityayan, R. 1951. *Ādi Hindī kī Kahāniyā Gīta*. p. iv. Patna.

Shastri, R. N. no date. *Hindī Chhand Prakāsh*. pp. 36-38. Delhi.

Upadhyay, K. D. 1954. "A general survey of folklore activities in India." *Midwest Folklore*, 4: 201-212.

Upadhyay, K. D. 1957. *Lok Sāhitya kī Bhūmikā*. p. 216. Allahabad.

Upadhyay, H. S. 1965. "A survey of Hindi folklore." *South Folklore Quarterly*, 29: 239-250.

Vatuk, V. P. and Vatuk, S. 1967. "The Ethnography of Sāng: A North Indian Folk Opera." *Asian Folklore Studies*, 26: 37 ff.

Vyas, B. S. (ed). 1959. *Prākṛita-Paingalam*, 1, p. 11, Varanasi.

Yadav, S. L. 1960. *Hariyānā Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya*. Allahabad.

2

Poetics and Genre: Typology in Indian Folklore

It is encouraging to the folklorist that the study of folklore in India and of India has attracted a number of scholars in recent decades. A number of collections of folklore from all parts of India have appeared, and research is being carried out in various Indian universities. However, in all this research it is difficult to find a single adequate study of Indian folklore in general or of a particular folklore genre from the structural point of view. Most of the folklore study in India has been approached either from a sentimental point of view, in which the relevant lore is lauded blindly as great art, or it has been discussed purely descriptively in the tradition of earlier scholars. Furthermore, since most collections of folklore in India seem to have been taken from women, some enormously mistaken notions have been set forth by scholars about the structural features of Indian folk literature, particularly folk poetry. Thus, Yadav in his *Hariyānā Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya* asserts without any substantiation:

The bondage of meter in folksongs is very loose. In a way it would not be an exaggeration to say that there is no meter in them ... The village people are blank when it comes to knowledge of the science of metrics.¹

Another author, K. D. Upadhyay, tells us:

In folksongs generally there is no rhyme. Although rhyme is present in *birhā** occasionally, this should be considered the exception rather than the rule.²

¹ Shankar Lal Yadav, *Hariyānā Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya*, Allahabad, 1960, p. 236.

*A particular kind of work song, sung generally by men of the cowherd caste (Ahirs).

² K. D. Upadhyay, *Lok Sāhitya kā Bhūmikā*, Allahabad, 1957, p. 214.

Ten pages later in the same work he asserts a contradictory view regarding rhyme in folksongs.³ The reason for this kind of confusion is simple. No scholar has actually examined closely the various genres of folk poetry with respect to the poetic features they display.

In this paper I will report on a preliminary investigation into this question, based on field research carried out among East Indians in Guyana in 1962 and in the Western Uttar Pradesh region of India in 1965 and 1966. The language involved is Hindi, although with considerable dialect difference in the two bodies of data. I will deal here only with that part of the material which is traditional folk literature, transmitted orally from generation to generation, and will further limit my discussion to poetic material, leaving aside for the present prose narratives. It will not be out of place, however, to indicate here that poetic passages are included in many of the prose narratives, and that when they are they serve to distinguish the moral tale from other types of tales. Such verses are ethical in nature, in the traditions of the *Jātaka* tales or the *Pañchatantra*.

One way to distinguish the various genres of Indian poetic folk literature is on the basis of the sex and age of the carriers. Thus certain songs are sung, and presumably composed, by men only. Others are sung by women only. A further category is that of children's rhymes and songs, not used by adults; some of these are further specialized by sex. Each of these categories can be shown to differ in structure both from the metric point of view and in the manner of recitation. We cannot deal with the latter question here.

Since the phonemic structure of most Indo-Aryan languages has a contrast in the vowel system between short and long vowels, the metric system of Indian poetry is based on vowel length rather than syllabic stress. It is therefore a quantitative rather than a dynamic metrical system such as is characteristic of English poetry. This type of meter seems to have been in use in Indian folk poetry at least as early as the 5th century, when the poet Kalidasa in his *Vikramorvashī* uses a meter based on instants or *mātrā* counts rather than a Sanskrit meter based on a fixed pattern of syllables.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

In this system each short vowel counts as one instant or *mātrā*, while the long vowel counts as two. The total number of *mātrās* with a fixed position for one or more caesurae makes up a particular meter. Most of the male folk poetry of the Hindi-speaking area has been found to be composed in the tradition of Hindi literary metrics; I have come to this conclusion through an examination of many collections of male songs of this area, my own and others, and would venture to say that this is probably true of the folk poetry of related North Indian languages. My study of certain Panjabi songs supports this hypothesis.⁴ Furthermore, many names of meters used in standard literary Hindi poetry are the same as the names of particular types of folksongs.⁵ Invariably a particular type of song uses the meter which is fixed for it by tradition.

There are thus two kinds of information which the name of a particular song type provides. On the one hand it tells something about the subject matter and contextual use of the particular song type; on the other hand it tells what meter or arrangement of different meters is to be used. For example, we may take the word *ālāhā*. This means a war ballad; it may deal with any war, but about no other subject. It is sung in the rainy season (approximately June-September). The name is supposed to derive from a 12th century hero of that name, but *ālāhās* are composed around the battles of the Second World War as well as the fighting between India and Pakistan in 1965. The meter contains 31 *mātrās* with a caesura on the 16th. Here is a case in which a particular meter corresponds to a particular genre.

kariyā bole tab(a) ūdal(a) se, kāyar(a) laṭ(a) mahobā jāy(a)
1 1 2 2 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 2 2 1 (31)

abhi to kuchh(a) bigarā hai nāhi, sab(a) kā mūrī lao kaṭivāy(a)
1 2 2 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 1 1 1 2 2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 (31)

Then Kariya said to Udal, "Go back to Mahoba, coward!"
"You haven't lost anything yet; should everyone's head be cut off?"

⁴ Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "Protest Songs of East Indians on the West Coast, U.S.A.," *Folklore*, 7 (1966), p. 370-382.

⁵ For a brief description of Hindi Metrics, see S.H. Kellogg, *A Grammar of the Hindi Language*, London, 1955, p. 546 ff.

Another example of this kind is *chōpī* (standard Hindi *chaupai*). This refers to a type of song sung by school students at the time of a festival worshipping the elephant-headed god Ganesha in the month of *Bhādrapada* (August-September). It also refers to the meter in which these songs are sung, that is, 15 *mātrās*.

par(a)tham(a) guru ko sīs(a) nivāū
1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 1 1 2 1 (15)

dūje siri bhag(a)vān(a) manāū
2 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 1 2 1 (15)

First I bow my head to my teacher,
Then I pray to the Lord.

In other cases, the name of a type of song suggests a number of meters which are to be used in a particular sequence. The song types *bhajan*, *holī* and *sāngita* are examples.⁶ I will not be able to go into details here, but suffice it to say that each name given to a particular folksong genre by the folk suggests to them the metrical pattern as well as the subject matter and the time and place of singing.

Riddles and proverbs in this language are also included in the poetic lore, but they differ from other folk poetry in that they are never sung, but are recited in prose style. Many proverbs contain only one or two lines of a metrical stanza which by definition is of four lines. This may be true of riddles also, although

⁶ For a description of *sāngita* meters, see Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "The Ethnography of *Sāng*: A North Indian Folk Opera," *Asian Folklore Studies*, 26 (1967), p. 37 ff. For the structure of *bhajans*, see Ved Prakash Vatuk, "The Bhajanopadeshak," *Journal of American Folklore*, 80.377 (1967), pp. 255-270.

Holī songs are composed in the following manner:

tek half a line, 14 or 16 *mātrās*, the last four of which consist of two long syllables.

kalī two lines of 28 to 32 *mātrās* (16 plus 12 to 16). Alternatively, there may be four lines, the two additional being as follows: 13 plus 8 plus 9 *mātrās*, followed by a line containing 22 or 24 *mātrās*. The first two feet of the third line must rhyme. Lines one and two must rhyme, as must lines three and four.

For 28-32 *mātrās*, 16 plus 12 to 16, as in *tek*. This line must rhyme with *tek*.

riddles are usually at least half a stanza in length, while proverbs are often only one line or one foot of a line in length.⁷

Women's songs can, for the most part, be classified in three categories: (1) life cycle songs, (2) work songs, and (3) seasonal songs. These three can be further subdivided on the basis of content and the time and place of singing. The correspondence between meter and song type is not as clear as it is in the case of male songs, but a certain metrical range and rhythm are associated with each type of song nevertheless. For example, most of the seasonal songs appropriate to the month of *Savan* are composed in a metric range containing 28 to 32 *mātrās* (generally 17 plus 15) and are called *malhār*. Whenever a new song is composed it is to fit into one of the three broad divisions, both from the content and poetic points of view. Grierson has pointed this out in reference to some Bhojpuri (Eastern Hindi dialect) women's songs.⁸ The following is an example of *malhār* recorded in 1965 in Western Uttar Pradesh:

rād(a)vā to rovai ādhī rāt(a) sup(a)ne māi dīkhī kāmānī
1 12 2 2 2 2 2 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 1 2 (32)

Example:

<i>tek</i>	<i>chala</i>	<i>jvāharā</i>	<i>gher(a)</i>	<i>māi</i>	<i>āyā</i>	
	1 1	2 1 2	2 1	2	2 2	(16)
<i>kali</i>	<i>āggai</i>	<i>āggai</i>	<i>chalyā</i>	<i>jāhriyā</i>		
	2 2	2 2	1 2	2 1 2		
	<i>us(a)tai</i>	<i>pichchhai</i>	<i>donnu</i>	<i>man(a) phūl(a)</i>		
	1 1 2	2 2	2 1	1 1 2 1		(16, 16 total 32)
	<i>us(a)tai</i>	<i>pichchhai</i>	<i>tir(a)khā</i>	<i>bāmhan(a)</i>		
	1 1 2	2 2	1 1 2	2 1 1		
	<i>chal(a)tū</i>	<i>chal(a)tū</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>gāi</i>	<i>phūl(a)</i>	
	1 1 2	1 1 2	2	12	2 1	(16, 16 total 32)
<i>tor</i>	<i>ghar(a)</i>	<i>māi</i>	<i>bāi(a)</i>	<i>bāmhanī</i>	<i>dekkhai</i>	
	1 1	2 2 1	2 1 2	2 2		
	<i>terā</i>	<i>bāp(a)</i>	<i>jalebbī</i>	<i>lyāvai</i>		
	2 2	2 1	1 2 2	2 2		(16, 16 total 32)

Jwahra came to the barn.

Jahariya walked ahead, both Manphuls walked after him.

After them followed Tirkha Brahmana, they felt sleepy on the way.

At home, the Brahmani waits, "Your father is bringing *jalebi* sweets."

⁷ On the metric structure of proverbs, see Kanhaiya Lal Sahal, *Rājasthānī Kahāvātī: Ek Adhyāyana*, Delhi, 1958.

⁸ George A. Grierson, "Some Bhojpuri Songs," *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 18 (1886), p. 210 ff.

koṇ(a) karaigā vāko pīs(a)nā, koṇ(a) rādhavai vāko bhāt(a)
2 1 1 2 2 2 2 1 2 2 1 1 1 2 2 2 1 (32)
sup(a)ne māi dīkhī kāmānī
1 1 2 2 2 2 2 1 2 (15)

The widower weeps at midnight, in his dream a beautiful woman appeared.

Who is going to do his grinding? Who is going to cook his rice?

In his dream appeared a beautiful woman.

In another type of *malhār* the poetic pattern is as follows: (1) fixed tuning words of 7 *mātrās*, generally *arī bhainā* or *maiya merī*, (2) *teka* of 17 plus 15 *mātrās*, (3) *kalī* of 20 *mātrās*, and (4) *tor* of 15 *mātrās*. Another version of the above song illustrates this type:

[arī bhainā] rād(a)vā to rovai ādhī rāt(a)
1 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 1
sup(a)ne māi dīkhī kāmānī
1 1 2 2 2 2 2 1 2 (32)
ghar(a) ghar(a) dīvā rī bāi ho ra-a-he
1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2 1 1 2 (20)
[arī bhainā] rād(a)ve kai ghar(a-a) ā-ādher(a)
1 1 2 2 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 (15)

sup(a)ne māi dīkhī kāmānī
1 1 2 2 2 2 2 1 2 (15)
[Oh sister!] The widower weeps at midnight, in his dream a beautiful woman appeared.

Each house is being lit (by the woman of the house),

[Oh sister!] But in the widower's house is deep darkness.

In his dream a beautiful woman appeared.

The use of rhyme seems to provide a line of division between male and female songs in these data. Male folk make ample use of end rhymes and consider rhyme an integral part of the song, as one of our proverbs indicate:

'jāt re jāī	"Jat, oh jat,
tere sir pai khāt	on your head there is a cot!"
tellī re tellī	"Oilman, oh oilman,
tere sir pai kollhū	on your head there is an oilpress!"
tuk nī lagī	"It does not rhyme."
tuk lago nā lago,	"Rhyme or not,
bojjhū to maraigā	you will die of the weight."

However, in the women's songs rhyme is not important, is not consistently used and is frequently absent. In place of end rhyme a pattern is displayed in which either the same word or words are used repeatedly at the end of successive lines or the same line is repeated in successive verses, with substitution of one or two words. These words in life cycle songs are generally the names of kin, in seasonal songs often the names of months, and in work songs the names of various household implements. This pattern is perhaps what led Upadhyay in the above-quoted passage to make contradictory assertions about the rhyming pattern in Indian folksongs.

In the following example we find a rhyming pattern in which the first and third lines of each stanza rhyme with the first and third lines of the other stanzas. The second line of each stanza is the same, as is the second half of the first and third lines of each, in the style of a refrain. Repetition is thus a dominant feature of the song, rather than rhyme. Within a given stanza, rhyming is absent.

1. *mātā dag(a)re māī bāg lagāya, mātā satjug(a) kī*
pher(a) pāchhā kyū nā dekho
koi lataka rahe kachanār(a), mātā satjug(a) kī
2. *mātā dag(a)re māī ūl(a) khudāya, (jo ū rī) mātā satjug(a) kī*
pher(a) pāchhā kyū nā dekho
koi dhūk(a) rahe panihār(a), mātā satjug(a) kī
3. *mātā dag(a)re māī gām(a) basāya, (jo ū rī) mātā satjug(a) kī*
[addhe māī bāmhana āddhe māī baniyā, rānī āddhe
māī chhatīs jāī(a)]

pher pāchhā kyū nā dekho
koi nagar(a) base hai guljār(a), mātā satjug(a) kī

Mother Goddess, plant an orchard on barren ground, Mother Goddess of the Age of Truth.

Why don't you turn around and see?

The *kachanār* trees are hanging with blossoms, Mother Goddess of the Age of Truth.

Mother Goddess, dig a pond on barren ground, (if you are really) Mother Goddess of the Age of Truth.

Why don't you turn around and see?

So many people have gathered to fetch water, Mother Goddess of the Age of Truth.

Mother Goddess, settle villages on barren ground, (if you are really) Mother Goddess of the Age of Truth.

In half Brahmans, in half Baniyas, oh Queen, in half the thirty-six castes.

Why don't you turn around and see?

The cities are settled and flourishing, Mother Goddess of the Age of Truth.

Another such example is:

(koi)om japyū gat(a) hoyā, om om jap(a)te raho
sās(a) susar(a) kī sevā kar(a)nā
(koi) man(a) ke uj(a)le bol(a), om om jap(a)te raho
jeth(a) jithānī kī sevā: kar(a)nā
(koi) un(a)se rakhiyo mel(a), om om jap(a)te raho
devar(a) durānī kī sevā kar(a)nā
(koi) un(a)ke dhovo pair(a), om om jap(a)te raho
nanad(a) nan(a)doiya kī sevā kar(a)nā
(koi) un(a)ko dījo tel(a), om om jap(a)te raho

Through the recitation of God's name, salvation will be attained.

Keep reciting God's name.

Serve your husband's father and mother.

Speak with a pure heart, keep reciting God's name.

Serve your husband's elder brother and his wife.
 Stay on good terms with them, keep reciting God's name.
 Serve your husband's younger brother and his wife.
 Wash their feet, keep reciting God's name.
 Serve your husband's sister and her husband.
 Give them clothes, keep reciting God's name.

In this example rhyme is not used, but a pattern of repetition of phrases with the substitution of kinship terms is seen. The kinship terms are repeated in descending order of seniority, an order which is predictable in all such songs.

As for the children's rhymes and songs in our data, these can be analyzed according to the pattern of 16 beats in four lines, noted by Burling as characteristic of children's rhymes of English, Chinese, Indonesian and other languages.⁹ The meter is thus based on stress, rather than quantity. Burling postulates this as a possibly universal metrical pattern for children's rhymes, and our data, which include game rhymes, taunts and girls' songs sung on festivals, seem to lend support to his hypothesis. However, most of our children's rhymes can also be analyzed in terms of quantitative meter and this seems to explain the alternative manner of recitation of many of these when recited or sung by older children.

The *chōpī* meter mentioned above is an example. The same meter, when used by younger children, is recited in 16 beat form with stressed syllables. These songs or rhymes also differ in content and length.

Example: A counting-out rhyme:

akkar bakkar pamme po (nonsense)

1 2 3 4

assi nabhai pure so Eighty, ninety, full hundred

5 6 7 8

⁹ Robbing Burling, "The Metrics of Children's Verse: A Cross-Linguistic Study," *American Anthropologist*, 68 (1966), pp. 1418-1441.

<i>so</i>	<i>sallita</i>	<i>tittar</i>	<i>letta</i>	Hundered (nonsense) pheasant
9	10	11	12	lay down
<i>ja marya</i>	<i>baniye ka</i>	<i>betta</i>		Went and killed the Baniya's son
13	14	15	16	

Example: A girl's song:

<i>ār(a)tā</i>	<i>ṛī</i>	<i>ār(a)tā</i>		I worship thee, I worship thee
1	2	3	4	
<i>sā jī</i>	<i>māṛ</i>	<i>ār(a)tā</i>		Mother Sanji, I worship thee
5	6	7	8	
<i>ār(a)te ke phūl(a)</i>				Flowers for worship
9	10	11	12	
<i>chamelī</i>	<i>kī dālī</i>			Come from the jasmine branch.
13	14	15	16	

As in Burling's examples, we also find couplets, consisting of half a verse, that is, 8 beats in two lines. A boy's taunt:

hādī kū hād pāyā, majai pāyā pīsā

1 2 3 4

hādī kai jūt lage, majai āyā jī sū

5 6 7 8

Bone-sucker found a bone, I found a coin.

Bone-sucker was beaten, I enjoyed it.

In comparing the above cited examples, we can see that boys' rhymes have a stronger rhyming pattern than those of girls, which tend, as do adult female rhymes, to use repetition and substitution of words.

In conclusion, I have tried to give some evidence from Hindi folk poetry to support the assertion of a close relationship in oral folk literature between content and style. This has been illustrated by examples showing correspondence between the various folksong genre of Hindi and the metrical and rhyming pattern which they display. I have also pointed out that structural features

such as the type of metrical system (quantitative or syllabic) and the use or non-use of end-rhyme and repetition of words and phrases can be regarded as distinguishing features of the genre of different sub-groups within the society, here divided on the basis of age and sex.

PART II

Riddles

Amir Khusro and Indian Riddle Tradition¹

Riddles are known to have been used in India since ancient times, reference being made to their use in ritual as early as the Rigvedic period.² The *Mahābhārata* contains a number of theological riddles. The use of riddles for amusement is mentioned in the literary works of classical Sanskrit poets like Bana (seventh century A.D.), and in works on the arts such as *Kāma Sūtra* by Vatsyayana. The literary value of riddles as figures of speech has been discussed in works on poetics, among them *kāvyaadarsha* by Dandin, *Sāhityadarpaṇa* by Vishvanatha, and *Kavyālankāra* by Bhamaha.³ However, perhaps the earliest collection of secular folk riddles in a modern Indian language is that of Amir Khusro. Unfortunately, Khusro's work on riddle has been generally neglected by scholars writing in English.

Amir Khusro (A.D. 1253-1325), whose real name was Abul Hasan Yaminuddin Khusro, was born in Patiali village in Etah district, Uttar Pradesh, the youngest son of Saifuddin Mahmud, a Turk who migrated to India during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah, and of an Indian mother. Closely associated with the court of the Delhi sultans, as his father had been, Khusro was a close observer of the reigns of eleven sultans during three succeeding dynasties. To six of the sultans he was a courtier. He was the royal tutor of Prince Muhammad, son of Ghayasuddin

¹ This is a revised version of a paper read at the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the California Folklore Society at Berkeley on April 13, 1968. If it were not for the interest of Archer Taylor, this paper would not have been written. I express my gratitude to him.

² Archer Taylor, *The Literary Riddle before 1600* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948), 13-17; Durga Bhagwat, *The Riddle in Indian Life, Lore and Literature*, (Bombay, 1965), 5-9.

³ Bhagwat, 10-29.

Balban, and subsequently enjoyed the patronage of Allauddin Khilji and Ghayasuddin Tughlak.⁴

A great scholar in music and history, a court poet and widely-reputed writer of his time, Khusro was the master of several languages, in which he wrote extensively. Some authorities have attributed to him ninety-nine books on subjects such as Sufi philosophy, love, and history.⁵ Whatever the validity of this figure, twenty-two works of Amir Khusro are extant and constitute important literary sources on the history of his time.⁶ He is considered to be the foremost Indian poet writing in Persian and has been nicknamed "the paraquet [parakeet] of India,"⁷ a reference to the beauty of his poetry. Traditionally reputed to have been the author of some half a million verses, he has been called "one of the most prolific poets that the world has ever produced."⁸

Khusro was court musician to Allauddin Khilji and is reputed to have been the inventor of the Indian stringed instrument *sitar* and the transformer of the South Indian drum *mridangam* into the *tabla*. Because of this he is called "the father of Hindustani style,"⁹ that is, the North Indian style of music. However, a leading musical scholar, Acharya Brihaspati, believes that Khusro's inventive role has been exaggerated. He points out the occurrence of the *sitar* in Iran long before Khusro's time and states that no mention is made of this instrument in any of Khusro's writings. According to Brihaspati, Khusro was indeed a musical genius, well-versed in Persian music, and born during a period when classical Indian music was decaying because of the hostile attitude of Muslim rulers. Khusro's role was to synthesize what he could learn of Indian music with the music of Persia and to develop many of the *rāgas* used by musicians of the Hindustani style today.¹⁰

⁴ R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Delhi Sultanate* (Bombay, 1960) 534-535.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 534.

⁶ Majumdar, 1-2; H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. 3 (Allahabad, n.d.), 67-92 and 523-566.

⁷ Ram Babu Saksena, *A History of Urdu Literature* (Allahabad, 1927), 10; Elliot and Dowson, 523.

⁸ Elliot and Dowson, 523.

⁹ N. M. Adyanthaya, *Melody Music of India: How to Learn It* (Mangalore, 1965), 138.

¹⁰ Acharya Brihaspati and Sumitra Kumari, *Sangit Chintāmani*, (Hathras, 1966), 47-50 and 265-270.

Although Khusro was primarily a Persian writer, he was proud of his Indian heritage. He praised the Indian languages above Arabic and Persian¹¹ and compiled a Persian-Hindi dictionary known as *Khālikbārī*. His popularity in India, particularly in the Hindi-speaking area, is due to a few scattered poems and to his collection of riddles in the language he called *Hindavī*. These riddles are "in the style of the common people,"¹² but most scholars believe they were composed by Khusro. Because of this work, Khusro is held to be the first poet of Khari Boli (the standard literary style of modern Hindi). There have been several collections of his riddles in manuscript and published forms, but the most complete is that of Brajratna Das, *Khusro kī Hindī Kavītā*, first published in 1922¹³. This paper is based on the riddles in that edition, and the numbers given with quoted examples are the numbers given by Das.

Khusro divided his 286 riddles into six groups, apparently on the basis of the structure of the riddle and the structure of the answer. The six categories are *būjh pahelī*, *anbūjh pahelī*, *kahmukrī*, *do sakhunā*, *nisbat*, and *dhakoslā*. Of these, only the first two are to be considered true riddles. Both called *pahelī*, which means riddle, the *būjh pahelī* is literally a solved riddle, because the answer is hidden in the riddle itself, whereas the *anbūjh pahelī* is not to be solved in this way. These *pahelīs* have a parallel tradition in literary Sanskrit works. However, whereas the riddles of the Sanskrit texts are obscure and complex, incomprehensible except to the literati, the riddles of Khusro are in the language of the layman, of the folk riddler. The subject matter of Khusro's riddles is secular; they describe things close to everyday events and household objects.

The words used for "riddle" in these first two categories are *pahelī*, *pahelā* (the masculine form, perhaps suggesting difficulty of solution but essentially used for rhyming purposes), *kahānī*, and *bāt*. The latter two words mean "tale." They are used with the same meaning even today in the western Uttar Pradesh and the

¹¹ Dharendra Varma (ed.), *Hindī Sāhitya Kōsh*, Part 2 (Varanasi, 1963), 19.

¹² Ram Chandra Shukla, *Hindī Sāhitya kā lūhās* (Kashi, 1955), 54.

¹³ Kashi, 1922.

Delhi area. It is interesting that both "riddle" and "folk narrative" are indicated by either of two words: *bāt* (literally, that which is told) or *kahānī* (literally, that which is related). The linguistic identification of these two genres appears to me to result from a perceived identity of style, function, and time of performance. Since secular riddling and tale telling occur in a similar setting in terms of kind of audience, time, and reciprocating behavior of the participants, they are lumped by the folk into a single category. Basically, both are part of household entertainment within an intimate gathering of family and friends, and both are appropriately told at night. This setting is suggested in the text of Khusro's riddles themselves, for example, in phrases such as "listen, my son", "I ask you, my friend," and in an admonition not to sleep before solving the riddle. One must be aware of the fact that the structure of the two genres is not identical; most riddles are in verse, whereas the narrative is in prose. But the riddle is not sung in this setting, and both require a response; the riddle requires an answer, the tale a periodic acknowledgment of attention. In another setting and with a function other than entertainment or amusement, riddles may be called *malhor*,¹⁴ *gāhā*,¹⁵ or *duhā*.¹⁶ Tales may also be given other names in a variety of contexts. But here the two are linked by a common set of names.

The *būjh pahelī* or solved riddle depends on word play, the use of a word or words with two meanings.¹⁷ The two meanings may be in the same language, or they may be homonyms in two different languages. Often one of the latter is a foreign word borrowed into Hindi, so that its meaning is known to a Hindi speaker. The language used throughout is colloquial. Although Khusro does not make any distinctions among the *būjh pahelī* he has included, an analysis shows that three devices are used in this

¹⁴ Vasudev Sharan Agrawal, *Prithivī Putra* (Agra, 1960), 340.

¹⁵ Agrawal, 340; Shankar Lal Yadav, *Hariyānā Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya* (Allahabad, 1960), 436.

¹⁶ Verrier Elwin and Shamrao Hivale, *Folksongs of the Maikal Hills* (Madras, 1944), 293-294. See also p. 213 where the word *birhā* is used for some riddle songs. *Birhā* songs are also sung by East Indians in Guyana and include many theological riddles.

¹⁷ In Sanskrit literature this kind of riddle is called *antarāpikā*. It is based mainly on the use of two figures of speech, *yamaka* and *shlesha*. See Taylor, *The Literary Riddle*, 16-17.

kind of riddle. In the first the answer is a word with two meanings. One meaning is the correct answer, while the same word with another meaning is contained within the text of the riddle. In this type of *būjh pahelī* the riddle can be interpreted in one way only. The answer may be further hidden by having it occur in the riddle text not in the form of one word but as a combination of two words or parts of two adjoining words. An example is No. 26 in Khusro's collection.

(26) *bi:sō ka: sir ka:t diya:*

twenty of head cut off

na: ma:ra na: khu:n kiya:

not killed nor blood made. — *na:khu:n*

The heads of all twenty were chopped off,

(But) killing was not done, nor was blood shed.

—finger-, toenails

In the second type of *būjh pahelī* the answer contained in the context of the riddle has two meanings, and thus one line of the riddle can be understood in two different ways. If the solver can discover the double meaning of this part of the riddle, he has guessed the answer.

(21) *andar hai aur ba:har bahe*

inside is and outside flows

jo dekhe so mori: kahe

whoever sees he "mine" says — *mori:*

It is inside and flows outside,

Whoever sees it, calls it his.

or

Whoever sees it, calls it "drainpipe."

—drainpipe (sham obscene riddle)

In the third type of *būjh pahelī* the entire riddle can be read in two different ways:

(II) *ba:la: tha: sab ke man bhaya:*

child was all of heart pleased

lighted was all of heart pleased

barha: hua: kisi: ka:m na: a:ya:
big became some work not came
extinguished some work not came

Khusro kah diya: uska: nã:v:
Khusro has told his name
Khusro says earthen lamp its name

arth karo nahĩ: chhoṛo gã:v
meaning do otherwise leave village

— diya:

— earthen lamp

When he was a child, he pleased every heart;
When he grew up, he came to no use.
Khusro has told his name;
Solve it or leave the village.

or

When it was lighted, it pleased every heart;
When it was extinguished, it was of no use.
Khusro says, its name is "earthen lamp."
Solve it or leave the village.

The *anbūjh pahelī* does not differ fundamentally from the *būjh pahelī*, except that the answer is not to be found within the riddle. For example:

(52) ek ra:ja: ki anokhi: ra:ni:
one king of strange queen
ni:che se vah pi:ve pa:ni:
below from she drinks water

— diya: ki: batti:

— lamp of wick

Strange is the king's queen;
She drinks water from below. — lampwick

Neither the *būjh pahelī* nor the *anbūjh pahelī* has a fixed opening or closing formula. Many begin with the words "A woman ..., " "A man..., " "An animal..., " "A tree..., " and so on. Some begin

"I tell you a riddle....," "A riddle is....," or "(Here is a) riddle...." Closing formulas vary also. Some simply direct "Solve my riddle," others praise the solver ("Only a learned man can solve this riddle"). Failure to solve it may be condemned ("One who does not solve my riddle is stupid and rustic"), and sometimes a threat of punishment is uttered ("Either solve it or leave the village"). In others abusive language is used or threatened ("Either tell my riddle or I will curse you," or "Three divorces for his mother who goes to sleep without telling the meaning of my riddle"). The latter type of curse, directed toward the hearer's kin, especially his mother, is common in Indian culture, and such threats are frequently found in the closing formulae of current riddles in this area. However, the threat of material punishment or of being forced to do a menial job, both very common in modern riddles, is not found in Khusro's collection.

The third category in Khusro's riddle collection is the *kahmukṛī*. This word means "she said and denied." It is a sham obscene riddle, apparently describing sexual acts, but the answer is a common object or ordinary thing. In most cases the riddle is phrased in terms of a woman telling another woman of her romantic experiences, and it is often called *sakhī*, which means a woman friend. All of Khusro's *kahmukṛīs* end with the following line:

e sakhi sa:jan, na: sakhi
oh friend lover, no friend
Oh friend, do you think it is my lover?
No, friend, it is —.

An example of the *kahmukṛī* is the following:

(148) pari: thi: acha:nak charh a:yo
lying was suddenly climbed came
jab utaryo to pasi:na: a:yo
when came down then sweat came
saham gai: nahĩ: saki: puka:r
shuddered went not could call

e sakhi: sa:jan, na: sakhi: bukha:r
o friend lover/husband no friend fever

As I lay, he climbed on me,
When he came down, I perspired,
I shuddered, so I could not speak.
O friend, was it my lover/husband? No friend,
it was fever.

The riddle known as *do sakhunā*, literally "two qualities," is the fourth category presented by Khusro. In this the answer is a statement that has two meanings, each appropriate to one of the two or more questions making up the riddle. The questions concern the activity or condition of various totally unrelated persons or objects, and the main word of the questions is "why." The answer is always "because there was no —," in Hindi "— *na: tha:*." In other words, it is a negative statement describing the absence of something.

- (224) *ana:r kyō na chakkha:*
pomegranate why not tasted?
vaz:ir kyō na rakkha:
Minister why not kept?
— *da:na: na tha:*
— seed not was
— intelligent not was

Why was the pomegranate not tasted?

It had no seeds.

Why was the minister not kept?

He was not intelligent.

Certain of Khusro's *do sakhunās* are written in a combination of Persian and Hindi, one line in each language. The answer is then based on a word that has two meanings, one in each language.

- (266) *quvat-e ru:h chi:st*
strength of soul what is

pya:ri: ko kab dekhiye
beloved to when should see

— *sada:*

— voice/always

What is the strength of the soul?

— the voice

When should one/you see the beloved?

— always

Nisbat is similar to *do sakhunā* in that a question is asked about various things in order to find something in common among them. But there is only one question, focused on "what" rather than "why." The single-word answer has two meanings.

- (258) *a:dmi: aur gehū: mē kya: nisbat hai*
man and wheat in what relation is?
— *ba:l*
— hair/ear of grain

What is the relation between (what is common to)
a man and a wheat plant?

Finally, Khusro presents the *dhakosfā*, which is a nonsense utterance, generally a short poem. Some of these *dhakosfās* appear to be meaningless but have in fact a meaning explained in the oral tradition.

- (283) *khi:r paka:i: jatan se*
pudding cooked care with
charkha: diya: jala:y
spinning wheel gave burnt
a:ya: kutta: kha: gaya:
came dog ate went
tu: baiṭhi: dhol baja:y
you sitting drum play
la: pa:ni: pila:
bring water cause to drink

Rice pudding was cooked with care,
Spinning wheel was burnt (as fuel);

A dog came and ate it up.
(Now) you sit and play your drum,
Bring me a drink of water.

The explanation of this is contained in a story telling of Amir Khusro's adventures in poetry-making. Once while traveling he is said to have felt thirsty. He went to a village well where four women were drawing water. Before they would give him water, they asked him to compose a poem on their favorite subjects: pudding, spinning wheel, dog, and drum. The above is the poem he composed on this occasion.

If we use Taylor's method of classification with regard to the true riddles in this collection,¹⁸ Khusro's *būjh* and *anbūjh paheli*, we find that out of 144 all but 12 make a comparison with a person, man or woman. Among the others there is no comparison, but often a simple statement that a flower, a tree, or some other object is being described. Of the *kahmukrīs*, of course, all seventy-nine use various aspects of the sexual act. Thus it seems to me that Taylor's type of classification is not very fruitful in dealing with this corpus of riddles. It should be noted—and this is doubtless true of riddles in other languages as well—that the presence of two genders in the Hindi language means that many riddles that do not actually specify a comparison with a man or a woman nevertheless imply such a comparison by the necessity of saying "he" or "she" rather than "it."

From the point of view of the answers to the riddles, it is interesting that in Khusro's collection (as well as in modern collections of riddles in this area) a large number of objects are used that Taylor finds rare in European riddles. For example, animals (20), caste or occupation (7), body parts (4), heavenly phenomena (8), foodstuffs, including fruits (11), occupational tools (11), household things (40), ornaments and clothing (19), and miscellaneous others.

In terms of Dundes and Georges' classification,¹⁹ most of the true riddles are to be classed as oppositional, although a few

¹⁸ Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951).

¹⁹ Robert A. Georges and Alan Dundes, "Toward a Structural Definition of the Riddle," *Journal of American Folklore*, 76 (1963), 111-118.

non-oppositional riddles are present. Several devices are used for contradiction in oppositional riddles. In some the opposition is rhetorical, in others it is based on the nature of the object of the riddle. As noted above, figures of speech on a variety of meanings for a word or word-group are common in both literary and oral traditions. The figure called *yamaka*, several uses of one word with two or more different meanings, occurs in many riddles, such as the following:

- (5) *paun chalat vah deh badha:ve*
wind goes she body increases
jal pi:vat vah ji:v gavā:ve
water drinks she life loses
hai vah pya:ri: sundar na:r
is she lovable beautiful woman
na:r nahī: par hai vah na:r
woman not but is she woman/fire
—a:g

As the wind blows, her body grows;

If she drinks water, she dies.

She is a lovable, beautiful woman;

She is not a woman, but she is a woman.

—fire

The word *na:r* occurs three times in this example. It means "woman" in Hindi and "fire" in Persian. In the answer the meaning "fire" is implied, although the obvious meaning is "woman." It should be noted here again that this figure is made possible by Khusro's use of two languages.

Examples of *shlesh*, a word used once with more than one meaning, have been given in the discussion of the *būjh paheli*. Another example occurs in the following riddle:

- (8) *tu:ti: tu:tke dhu:p mē pari:*
broken having broken sunshine in lay
jo jo su:khi: hui: bari:

as as dried became big/a kind of food made of lentils

—bari:

It was broken, and having broken it lay in the sun.
As it dried it became big.

—food made of lentils

The word *baṛī*, used only once, has two meanings. The correct answer is the latter meaning.

In addition to the opposition based on such linguistic devices, another important kind may be called cultural opposition; that is, two statements are made that do not physically contradict one another but do contradict one another in terms of cultural norms or expectations. Opposition of such a kind is, of course, culture bound. It is pointless (and therefore the riddle is pointless) in another cultural context. An example is the following:

(116) *ba:t ki: ba:t thatholi: ki: thatholi:*

riddle of riddle jest of jest

marad ki gā:ṭh aurat ne kholi:

man of knot woman by opened

—*ta:la/ta:li:*

It's a riddle, yet it's a joke.

A woman untied the man's knot (in the drawstring that holds his trousers).

—lock and key

In this sham obscene riddle a reversal of sexual roles is depicted. The culturally expected role of the woman in the sex act is a passive one; the man should untie the knot in the drawstring of her skirt. For her to take the initiative is culturally anomalous though physically possible. As in other forms of folklore in India, such a reversal of sex roles is a matter of humor. The basis of the male-female comparison for a lock and key is the gender of these words in Hindi, masculine and feminine respectively.

As several examples illustrate, oppositional elements may occur more than once in the same riddle, and more than one type of oppositional device may be used, for example, both cultural and linguistic opposition.

(43) *gori: sundar pa:tli: kesar ka:le rang*
fair beautiful slim saffron taking color

gya:rah devar chhorke gai jeth ke sang
eleven husband's leaving went husband's of company
younger elder
brothers brother/
May-June

—*arhar*

—a kind of yellow pulse

A beautiful, fair, slender, saffron-colored woman,
rejecting eleven husband's younger brothers,
went away with her husband's elder brother.

or

went away in the month of *Jeth*

(May-June, when this pulse is harvested).

Linguistic opposition occurs in the use of the word *jeth* with two meanings, "husband's elder brother" and "the month of May-June." Cultural opposition occurs in the strangeness of a woman going off with her husband's elder brother, with whom she has a strict avoidance relationship, to the neglect of her husband's younger brothers, with whom she may freely joke and who are in folklore potential sexual partners.

Since Hindi riddles are usually in verse form with rhyme, it is useful to analyze their metrical structure. In this collection, all *būjh*, *anbūjh*, *kahmukṛī*, and *dhakosṭā* are in a verse form based on *mātrika* meters. This is a quantitative metrical system. Like the Greek and Latin meters, the *mātrika* system uses *mātrās*, instants, as the unit of measurement. It is adapted to the vowels of Hindi and other Sanskrit-derived languages, in which a long vowel (*ā*, *ī*, *ū*, *o*, *e*, *au*, *ai*) is counted as two instants or *mātrās*, whereas a short vowel or a pause is counted as one *mātrā*. A short vowel followed by a consonant cluster is also counted as two *mātrās*. Each meter has its own rules governing caesurae, and most require a specific rhyming pattern. In the recitation of poetry, however, long vowels may be pronounced as short, or short as long, in

order to fit words into the desired meter. For this reason, the *mātrā* count does not always correspond exactly to the written vowel arrangement.²⁰

The meters used in Khusro's riddles are for the most part those used in Hindi folk and literary poetry. Ideally, each of these meters is based on a unit of four lines. Some have an equal number of *mātrās* in all four lines; in others the first and third are equal and the second and fourth differ but are equal to one another. However, when these meters are adapted to use in riddles, all four lines are not always included, as would ideally be the case in poetry. Khusro has forty-seven two-line riddles, two three-line riddles, eight six-line riddles, and one of eight lines. The remaining riddles (164) contain four lines.

The various types of riddles cannot be distinguished on the basis of metrical structure, since the same meters are used in a variety of riddle types. All *kahmukrī* riddles use a single meter, but it is also used for other riddle types.

The meters used by Khusro are few in number and are those popular among folk poets in Hindi as well as among the great literary poets. Most frequently used in his collection are three: the *chaupāī* of fifteen *mātrās* (No. 21 above), the *chaupāī* of sixteen *mātrās* (No. 11 above), and the *dohā* (Nos. 283 and 43 above), in which the first and third feet have thirteen *mātrās*, the second and fourth (the rhyming feet) eleven *mātrās*. One hundred seventy-nine riddles use these three meters. Seventeen riddles are written in *sāra* meter, with twenty-eight *mātrās*; seven are in the thirty-*mātrā lāvni* meter.²¹ The few remaining riddles utilize a variety of meters. In four of Khusro's riddles more than one kind of meter is used. It should be noted that the discrepancy between written and oral expression, referred to above, makes it difficult in some cases to be certain of the appropriate meter, unless modern oral versions are known.

²⁰ For a discussion of this problem, see Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Method and Interpretation in the Study of Folklore in India—A Comment," *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society*, 1 (1966), 161-165.

²¹ For definitions and examples of these meters, see S. H. Kellog, *A Grammar of the Hindi Language* (London, 1955), 573-582. Alan Dundes and I have also analyzed the meters in modern Hindi riddles from Western Uttar Pradesh. (see next chapter.)

I should emphasize that the use of *dohā*, *chaupāī*, and *chaupāī* meters is very extensive in the Hindi-speaking area. Khusro used *chaupāī* meter to write his *Khālikbārī*, the Arabic-Persian-Hindi dictionary. In modern times this meter is used in many of the ballads sung by school children on the occasion of the *Ganēsha Pūjā*, when the elephant-headed god is worshipped for the purpose of acquiring knowledge. In collecting I have found, however, that the oral recitation and singing of children actually is based on a four-beat system of metric stress rather than on a quantitative metrical pattern. This is true also of Indian children's taunts and nonsense rhymes, and in fact has been noted by Burling to be a fairly universal pattern for children's verse.²² Thus from the point of view of recitation styles for children, the eight to sixteen *mātrā* meters can be put in one category. But only children use the stress of the four-beat line. When the same lines are sung by adults, they become purely *mātrika* meters according to the poetic tradition. An example of the adaptation by adults of a stressed line to a quantitative meter was observed in the borrowing of the English nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb" by Indian migrants in Guyana, where adult women have changed it into a song in a *mātrika* pattern.

Those riddles not in rhyme are some *dhakoslās* and *nisbat*. Since the *dhakoslā* is intended as a nonsense utterance for pleasure only, some end abruptly, without rhyming. Most of them, however, are in perfect metrical form. Out of ten *dhakoslās* eight are of two lines and one is of four lines. One half of them are in *dohā* meter. *Nisbat*, as we have seen, is a prose question.

It is important to investigate the affinities of Khusro's riddles with the Sanskritic literary riddle tradition, on the one hand, and with the folk riddle tradition on the other. In the Sanskrit tradition the riddle is regarded as a kind of figure of speech. If we examine Khusro's riddles, we find that on the basis of subject matter, language, style, and meters used they do not conform to the literary riddle tradition. On the other hand, they appear to fit perfectly into the folk riddle tradition with some exceptions. Since

²² Robbins Burling, "The Metrics of Children's Verse: A Cross-Linguistic Study," *American Anthropologist*, 67 (1966), 1418-1441.

Khusro's knowledge of Persian is not shared by the folk, no folk parallels are found for some of his riddles. One of them is of a type valued in the literate tradition and frequently copied by literary school magazines and writers for school children, though rejected by the folk. It is a literary composition, based on the syllabic writing system of Hindi and Sanskrit. This means, of course, that it cannot have its roots in the folk tradition.

a:di kaṭe se sab ko pa:le
beginning having cut by all to nourishes

madhya kaṭe se sab ko ma:re
middle having cut by all to kills

ant kaṭe se sab ko mi:ṭha:
end having cut by all to sweet

Khusro va:ko ā:khō di:ṭha:

Khusro him by eyes saw
(in eyes) — ka:jal
 — eye-black

If its beginning is cut off, it nourishes all. jal (water).

If its middle is cut out, it kills all. ka:l (death).

If its end is cut off, it is sweet to all. ka:j (work).

Khusro has seen him with his own eyes.

or

Khusro has seen it in the eyes. ka:jal (eye-black).

The *kahmukṛī* is said by Tripathi to be popular in some folk cultures in India,²³ but to the best of my knowledge it is not found in the linguistic area represented by Khusro's collection. Some of them, however, are converted into true riddles by the omission of the fourth line.²⁴ This kind of figure-of-speech poetry was popular among the court writers, both in Sanskrit and Hindi. *Nisbat* is

²³ Ram Naresh Tripathi, *Grām Sāhitya*, Part 3 (Delhi, 1952), 323.

²⁴ See Joan Blank, "Some Riddles from Madhya Pradesh, India," *Western Folklore*, 24 (1965), Her riddle No. 10 is a combination of *kahmukṛī* Nos. 158 and 159 in Khusro's collection.

certainly literary, whereas *dhakostā* has been popular since the Vedic period and is found in the modern folksong of the *malhor* type in this area.

This issue is related to the larger problem of the source of the riddles found in the collection of Amir Khusro. Should we assume that Khusro composed these riddles? Did he collect and compile them and are they riddles that were current in the thirteenth century among the folk? Or is his collection made up of folk riddles and others he composed himself on the basis of a folk tradition with which he was familiar and a literary tradition he also knew well? Another possibility should also be considered. According to the Indian oral tradition—in which folk and literary elements are inextricably intertwined—the authorship of major literary works is not firmly established. There is a tendency for works by known authors—such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Valmiki—and by unknown authors as well, to be added to, changed, and expanded over the centuries, with various versions periodically committed to writing and forming a basis for later alterations. This process is of course typical of any folk tradition. A related phenomenon is for folk-composed poems, stories, and the like to be attributed to well-known literary figures of the past, so that, for example, many women's folksongs in this area are attributed in the text of the songs to the famous Tulsidas, writer of the Hindi *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is therefore not unlikely that over the ages riddles originating in the folk tradition were attributed to Amir Khusro and perhaps added to an original corpus of riddles that actually were his in terms of original composition or compilation. In this way there has certainly been a continuous give and take between the folk tradition and the literary (but folk-derived) tradition of the Khusro riddle book.

From the sociological point of view, it is fruitful to look at the selectivity of this interaction, to see what of Khusro is generally rejected by the folk tradition and what persists in the literate tradition. The nonliterate folk have the true riddle as a living and vital phenomenon; the schools and magazines have kept alive Khusro's literary riddle types. Amir Khusro is an important figure to the folklorist, whether of the literary or the anthropological school.

4

Some Characteristic Meters of Hindi Riddle Prosody

with Alan Dundes

The riddle as a form of folklore has long been a subject of considerable interest among folklorists, linguists, and specialists in area studies. Although most of the riddle scholarship thus far published appears to be little more than long lists of riddles, raw data presented with little or no analysis, there have been a number of excellent formalistic treatments of folk riddles. Most of these studies have been primarily concerned with delineating types and varieties of riddles.¹ Unfortunately, relatively few attempts have been made to analyze in detail the formal features of individual riddle types, such as the true riddle, for example. Moreover, when folklorists on those rare occasions have considered formal features, they have invariably addressed to folkloristic form rather than linguistic form. The concern has been with the nature of the riddle opening and closing formulae and with the types of semantic opposition discernable in the structure of riddle content.² The formal features of riddle *language*, that is, the linguistic characteristics of riddles, have been largely ignored by folklorists.

¹ Samples of this scholarship include: Robert Petsch, *Neue Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Volksrätsels* (Berlin 1899); Archer Taylor, "The Varieties of Riddles," in Thomas A. Kirby and Henry Bosley Woolf, eds., *Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies* (Baltimore 1949), pp. 1-8; Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, "Über das Volksrätsel," *Beiträge zur Sprachlichen Volksüberlieferung* (Berlin 1953), pp. 106-120; Laurits Bødker, *The Nordic Riddle: Terminology and Bibliography* (Copenhagen 1964); Mathilde Hain, *Rätsel* (Stuttgart 1966); Roger D. Abrahams and Alan Dundes, "Riddles," in Richard M. Dorson, ed., *Folklore and Folklife: and "Introduction"* (Chicago 1972), pp. 129-143.

² See Robert Petsch, *op. cit.*; Robert A. Georges and Alan Dundes, "Toward a Structural Definition of the Riddle," *Journal of American Folklore* 76 (1963), pp. 111-118; Elli König-Maranda, "The Logic of Riddles," in Pierre Maranda and Elli König-Maranda, eds., *Structural Analysis of Oral Tradition* (Philadelphia 1971), pp. 189-232.

With few exceptions, what little work has been done on riddle language or riddle texture (as opposed to riddle text and riddle context) is by linguists rather than folklorists.³ Yet in none of these textural studies does one find any extended consideration of the metrical characteristics of riddles. This is somewhat surprising in view of the fact that there have been metrical studies of other folkloristic materials. Most of these studies, however, have been limited to the genres of folksong and oral epic.⁴ Inasmuch as there has been some interest in the metrics of folk poetry, it is all the more striking that there has been no extensive investigation of riddle metrics, for it has long been recognized that riddles share many formal features with poetry.⁵

Meters of Hindi Riddle Prosody

Nowhere has there traditionally been more interest in metrical form than in India. There are literally dozens of treatises written on Sanskrit and Vedic meters.⁶ However, metrics as an area of inquiry is almost exclusively limited to *literary* materials (mostly classical and medieval). One looks in vain for any reference in the vast scholarship devoted to Indian literature for a discussion

³ The most impressive of the works devoted to riddle texture is Charles T. Scott, *Persian and Arabic Riddles: A Language-Centered Approach to Genre Definition* (Bloomington 1965).

⁴ Typical of the metrical scholarship in folklore are George T. Stewart, "The Meter of the Popular Ballad," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 40 (1925), 933-962; Robert Austerlitz, *Ob-Urgic Metrics: The Metrical Structure of Ostyak and Vogul Folk-Poetry* (Helsinki 1958); John L. Fischer, "Meter in Eastern Carolinian Oral Literature," *Journal of American Folklore* 72 (1959), pp. 47-52; Robbins Burling, "The Metric of Children's Verse: A Cross-Linguistic Study," *American Anthropologist* 68 (1966), pp. 1418-1441. For a sample of the extensive literature devoted to Slavic epic metrics alone, see Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New York 1965), p. 282, n.4.

⁵ Archer Taylor, "Riddles and Poetry," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 11 (1947), pp. 245-247. S. J. Sackett has attempted to delineate some of these shared features, but his metrical analyses are of English proverbs only and not of riddles. See his "Poetry and Folklore: Some Points of Affinity," *Journal of American Folklore* 77 (1964), pp. 143-153. For a recent analysis of the metrical features of a non-European riddle corpus, see Nha-Trang Cong-Huyen-Ton-Nu, "Poetics in Vietnamese Riddles," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 35 (1971), pp. 141-156.

⁶ Pingala, *Chhanda-shāstra* (Bombay 1938); H. D. Velankar, *Jāyadāmana: A Collection of Four Ancient Texts on Sanskrit Meters* (Bombay 1949); *Jānāshrayī Chhandovichitī* (Trivandrum 1949); *Ratnamanjushā* (Kashi 1944); *Kavidarpaṇa* (Jodhpur 1950).

of the metrical patterns underlying *oral* riddles. One reason for this may be the bias towards the study of literary rather than oral poetics. Certainly it is not because of any lack of riddles in the various Indic traditions. Indeed, the art of riddling is of considerable antiquity in India. The use of riddles on ceremonial occasions is described in the Rigveda, which dates from before 1000 B.C.⁷ Some of these same Rigveda riddles were employed in the Ashvamedha, an old Aryan ritual celebrating a king's domination over less powerful rulers⁸. The tradition of an association between riddles and religion continued well on into the eleventh century. Riddles in this tradition were primarily concerned with the nature of Brahman and the world.⁹

Equally important is the great literary use of riddles in India. In the epics, for example, the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, one finds hundreds of riddle verses. In the *Mahābhārata* it is explained why riddles are scattered throughout the work. Supposedly, at the author's request, Brahma asked Ganesha to act as scribe for the epic. Ganesha agreed, on condition that the author would dictate fast enough so that he would at no time have to stop writing. Veda Vyasa, the author, agreed to this, but countered with the stipulation that Ganesha should understand every word he wrote. The author periodically posed riddles, and while Ganesha pondered them had time to compose new verses.¹⁰

The important role of riddles in Indian rhetoric and poetics is also reflected in the fact that poets were specifically expected to know the art of riddle composition. In *Kādambarī*, a seventh century Sanskrit novel, riddling is mentioned as an integral part of the training of a poet. Apparently, poets in the royal courts sometimes held riddle competitions. Also, riddling was listed as

⁷ Archer Taylor, *The Literary Riddle Before 1600* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948), p. 13. See also Mathilde Hain, *op. cit.*, p. 52, for further references.

⁸ Verrier Elwin and W. G. Archer, "Extracts from a Riddle Note Book," *Man in India* 23 (1943), p. 316.

⁹ K. D. Upadhyay, *Lok Sāhitya kā Bhūmika* (Allahabad 1957), p. 161.

¹⁰ Durga Bhagwat, *The Riddle in Indian Life, Lore, and Literature* (Bombay 1965), pp. 10-29.

the twenty-seventh art of the sixty-four which females were urged to study in addition to the art of making love, in the *Kāma Sūtra*¹¹.

Despite the long tradition of riddling in India, there have been comparatively few extensive collections of Indic riddles. With respect to Hindi riddles in particular, probably one of the best known "collections" is the one by Amir Khusro (1255-1326), containing 295 texts.¹² From the district of Buland Shahar in the western part of Uttar Pradesh in north India there are few published collections of riddles. Yet riddling is very common in this district and continues to be popular among people of all ages and castes. A sample of this rich tradition may serve not only to illustrate the nature of the riddles typical of this and neighboring districts, but also to furnish an appropriate point of departure for a consideration of metrical patterns in riddles.¹³

The primary function of riddling in villages of this region of India combines competition and entertainment. After the evening meal, riddling may be begun. In home situations, the participants may be seated or they may be in bed, getting ready to go to sleep. All the members of the family and their guests, if any, may participate. Usually a person will pose a riddle to someone of the same age or younger than himself, although there are no formal restrictions as to who may address a riddle to whom (except in the case of the daughter-in-law, as noted below). An adult may ask another adult or he may ask a child to solve a riddle. When visitors—who are normally relatives—are present, informal teams may compete. Thus if one of the permanent residents of the house puts a riddle to a visitor, he expects the other members of the household to refrain from giving the answer, since they have presumably heard the riddle before. It is these occasions of visiting which provide an important source of new riddles for the village community.

Riddling may also take place outside the home, in which case there would be members of more than one family participating.

¹¹ See Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Amir Khusro and Indian Riddle Tradition," *Journal of American Folklore* 82 (1969), pp. 142-154.

¹² Brajratna Das, *Khusro kā Hindī Kaviū* (Kashi 1922).

¹³ The riddles were all collected by Kashi Ram Kaushik and Vatuk in the fall of 1964 and summer of 1965 from various individuals living near the village of Gesupur. We are very grateful to Kaushik for his valuable aid and support.

In the winter, a group would sit around a fire, the adults smoking their *hukkās* (water pipes). Informal competitions may arise in such a gathering, but these would rarely pit one family against another. An important distinction between the inside and outside riddling sessions is that women do not participate in the latter. Inside the home, however, women can pose riddles among each other and to male family members, subject to the conventional kinship avoidances governing affinal female speech behavior. In this region there is patrilocal residence, and a woman upon marriage goes to live with her husband's family. The daughter-in-law of the house is not permitted to show her face or to speak to a senior male member of her husband's household. Daughters of the household, on the other hand, are free to speak to older males and to participate in riddling with them. If a daughter-in-law has a riddle to offer, she may whisper it to a child or to her mother-in-law, or to a younger brother of her husband (a *junior* male member of the household), who can propose the riddle in her place. Similarly, if she wishes to give an answer to a riddle posed by someone else, she must utilize the same indirect communication channel.

There are a number of formal markers of a riddle session. A member of the group may signal the beginning of a riddle session by saying:

(Hindi) *mhārī bāt batāvāigā?*

(Literal translation) our matter will tell
(tale, riddle)

(Free translation) Will you guess our riddle?

Someone else, or several together, will enthusiastically answer:

hā

yes!

The initial speaker will then pose a riddle. If he thinks that one or more individuals present already know the answer to the riddle he may address them as follows:

tū nā batāvai!

thou not tell

Don't you tell!

If those trying to guess the answer to the riddle have proposed several incorrect answers, they may ask for clues:

atā patā?

whereabouts?

Any hint? (e.g., where is it found,
where does one use it?)¹⁴

The riddler normally answers this request with such general information as:

jangal mē

forest in

In the forest.

ghar mē

house in

In the house.

sab ke dhorai

all of near

Everyone has it.

If the guessers are still unable to answer the riddle, they may ask the riddler to tell them the answer. They may do this using any one of a number of phrases. For example, one such is:

ke hai?

what is?

What is it?

The riddler will then ask the following rhetorical questions:

hār gayā

defeated?

Do you give up?

¹⁴ One famous riddler is reported to end his riddles with the following formula:

So says *Ghāsī*, inhabitant of *Savāsī* village.

It's near, but you will find it after much searching.

See Ram Naresh Tripathi, *Grām Sāhiya*, Pt. III (Deihi 1952), pp. 321-323.

The unsuccessful guessers will answer affirmatively, *hā* (Yes!). At this point, the riddler may prolong the agony by asking additional rhetorical questions to which his victims must answer "yes" before they finally learn the answer. A typical example is:

jhak mār gayā?

whim is it killed?

Done your best? Had enough?

If the riddler wishes to humiliate his victims even more, he may ask,

kutte/billī ke gū mē laṭ gayā?

dog/cat of excrement in lay down?

Did you lie down in dog (or cat, or dog and cat) excrement?

After the guessers say "yes" to this, the riddler announces the answer. Usually there is some pleasurable surprise in hearing the answer. Occasionally there is some dispute about the aptness of the answer, and the riddler may even be asked to "prove" that his answer is correct. In this event, the riddler will either explain the riddle or fall back on the traditional "That's the way I learned it!"

If one of the guessers answers the riddle correctly, then there may be jubilant exclamations praising his cleverness by various members of the group. Anyone may then ask another riddle. There is no formal or necessary order of riddle asking.

As for the riddles themselves, the majority are metaphorical non-oppositional riddles.¹⁵ Few have opening formulae or introductory frame elements. On the other hand, there are fairly elaborate closing formulae or concluding frame elements. Typically, a prize is offered for the successful solution while a punishment is threatened for those who fail to solve the riddle. It is tempting to try to correlate the relatively higher frequency of closing formulae with general Hindu worldview. The end would appear to be more important than the beginning, but at the same time the end is much more rigidly bound by ritual formula. In any case, perhaps the most dominant stylistic characteristic of Hindi riddles is their

¹⁵ Georges and Dundes, *op. cit.*

meter. This will be discussed at some length. However, before discussing the individual riddle texts, it may be well to spell out some of the relevant metrical principles.

In Hindi poetry there are two kinds of metrical systems. One of these is *vārṇika*, which is based upon units of three syllables (*varṇas*). One unit of three *varṇas* is called a *gaṇa*. A *varṇa* (that is, a syllable) may contain either one long or one short vowel. Using the traditional Indic s-shaped line (S) to indicate a syllable with a long vowel and the traditional vertical line (|) for a syllable with a short vowel, one can indicate the eight possible *varṇa* combinations:

| S S
S S S
S S |
S | S
| S |
S | |
| | S
| | |

Whatever the sequence of *varṇas* in the first line of a poem, it is repeated in all succeeding lines of the poem. Thus, if the first line of a poem has a *varṇa* pattern of

| S |; S S |; | S |; S | S

then the second and following lines would have exactly the same pattern. *Vārṇika* meter is clearly quite sophisticated and it is, as a matter of fact, extensively used, both in Sanskrit and literary Hindi poetry. However, it appears to be a literary convention and is not found in Hindi oral poetry.

The second principal type of metrical system in Hindi is called *mātrika*. A *mātrā* is a unit of measure based upon the length of a short vowel. (The short vowels of Hindi are written here as "a," "i," and "u" and correspond roughly to the English vowel sounds in the words "but," "bit," and "put," etc.) A long vowel is considered to be twice the length of a short vowel, and

hence has the value of two *mātrās*. (The long vowels of Hindi are written here as “ā,” “ī,” “ū,” “ē,” “ō,” and “ai,” and correspond roughly to the English vowel sounds in the words “bar,” “beet,” “boot,” “bait,” “boat,” and “bat.”)¹⁶ A line of poetry, called a *pada*, is measured by the total number of *mātrās* contained in it. The number of *mātrās* may be spoken of as the “weight” of the *pada* or line. It is interesting that the term *mātrā* as used in Hindi poetics refers both to “measure” and “weight.” The English cognate “metric” also refers to poetic measure, but the notion of “metric weight” has become a native category separate from poetry.

A line or *pada* may have, *in theory*, from one to thirty-two *mātrās*. A *mātrā* count higher than thirty-two is referred to as *dandaka* and is rare in oral poetry. In fact, the occurrence of *mātrā* counts in riddles is not spread evenly over the thirty-two possibilities. Most popular are such *mātrā* counts as 15 (*chaupāī*), 16 (*chaupāī*), and 24 (*dohā*). Extremely rare are *mātrā* counts less than eight. The *mātrika* system is much more flexible than the *vārṇika* system because each individual line may have a different combination of long and short vowels. It is the total *mātrā* count in the line which is critical, not their order or the manner in which total is accumulated. For example, if the meter is one of eight *mātrās*, in theory any of the following thirty-four combinations could be utilized in succeeding lines:

[illegible]

16 There are several additional rules for counting *mātrās*. In one special case, a short vowel preceding a consonant cluster may be counted as a long vowel, that is, as two *mātrās* rather than one. This is so even though it is still pronounced as a short vowel. Further, both internal and final juncture is counted as one *mātrā* if the phoneme preceding the juncture is a consonant. The reason for this is historical; short vowels originally present in Sanskrit and/or Prakrit have been dropped in the Hindi derivatives. For example, *Rāmadāsa* (in Sanskrit) becomes *Rāmdās* (Rām + das +) in Hindi, each juncture counting for poetic purposes as one *mātrā*. It must also be realized that poetic license can also result in departures from the poetic "rules." A particularly frequent example is the pronunciation of Hindi long vowels as the corresponding short vowel ("a" pronounced as "a," "ī" pronounced as "i," for example), enabling the syllable to be counted as one *mātrā*. Thus in such particles as *kī* (meaning "of") or *kū* (meaning "to") we often find a shortening of the long vowel to *ki* or *ku* for the purpose of conforming to the desired metrical pattern.

This is only one small sample of the great range of choice in Hindi riddle metrics. Clearly, the greater the *mātrā* count, the greater the number of mathematical possibilities of forming appropriate line combinations of long and short vowels. The question, of course, arises as to just how many of the theoretically possible combinations actually occur in Hindi riddles. A problem in answering this question lies in the fact that one would need to have at least as many lines of riddle text as the total number of all possible *mātrā* combinations of from one to thirty-two *mātrās* in order to compare the actual with the possible. And since the number of possible combinations appear to total more than nine million, and since nine million lines of Hindi riddle text are not presently available, one can do little more than to note the more common combinations found in oral tradition. The theoretically possible combinations in lines containing from one to thirty-two *mātrās* may be indicated numerically as follows:

Number of <i>mātrās</i>	Number of possible vowel combinations
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	5
5	8
6	13
7	21
8	34
9	55
10	89
11	144
12	233
13	377
14	610
15	987
16	1,597
17	2,584
18	4,181
19	6,735
20	10,946
21	17,711
22	28,657

23	46,368
24	75,025
25	121,391
26	196,418
27	317,811
28	514,229
29	832,040
30	1,346,269
31	2,178,309
32	3,524,478
Total ¹⁷	9,227,463

Having sketched the theoretically possible range of *mātrā* count combinations, one has a better perspective from which to approach the various traditional meters actually found in Hindi riddles. As might be expected, the number actually found is a tiny fraction of those theoretically possible. There are many limiting factors. For one thing, although the overall *mātrā* count is primary, there are several special internal groupings of *mātrās* within the *pada* or line. In defining literary meters, Hindi prosodists customarily make use of *mātrā* clusters containing from one to six *mātrās*. The most common of these are 3-*mātrā* and 4-*mātrā* clusters. Possible 4-*mātrā* clusters are: SS, ||S, S||, and ||||. Equally possible is |S|, but this is regarded as unpopular or unaesthetic. Possible 3-*mātrā* clusters are S|, |S and |||. An example of a restrictive rule utilizing these *mātrā* clusters is that in *Arilla Pādākulaka* meter which is one of those based on a 16-*mātrā* line. Here the sixteen *mātrās* must be grouped in such a way that four consecutive groups of exactly four *mātrās* each are found (see riddle number 11, below). Thus it is often a question of the internal patterning or arrangement of a line (in terms of juncture, intonation, and rhythm) within the overall line *mātrā* weight which proves crucial in defining a given meter.

¹⁷ Formula: $\left(\frac{5 + \sqrt{5}}{10}\right) \left(\frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2}\right)^n$

If *n* is greater than 2, add the total of the two previous numbers. That is, the total possibilities for *n* is the total possibilities for (*n* - 2) + (*n* - 1). We thank R. Sherman Lehman for providing this formula.

Still another distinction in meter typology concerns whether or not all the lines or *pada* contain the same number of *mātrās*. If all the *pada* contain the same number of *mātrās*, then all the lines are said to have equal weight, and the meter would fall into the general category of *sama-mātrika* meter. Quite commonly, one finds two pairs of lines, each pair with its own distinct *mātrā* count. The most popular of such pairings opposes lines one and three to lines two and four. Such a combination, in which lines one and three are of one weight and lines two and four of another, would fall into the general category of *ardha-sama-mātrika* (*ardha* means half, and thus one has "half-equal-weight" in contrast to *sama-mātrika* or "equal-weight"). In addition to "equal-weight" and "half-equal-weight" meters, there is also an "unequal-weight" category of meters termed *vishama*. In riddles or poetry of this type one finds no regular *mātrā* patterning. In terms of the aesthetic value hierarchy, *vishama-mātrika* is considered the least desirable type of poetic meter. *Sama-mātrika*, however, is not rated higher than *ardha-sama-mātrika*.

The great importance of metrics in Hindi riddles is also evident when one examines other stylistic features, for example rhyme. In *vārnika* meters, rhyme is not essential. It does not occur at all in Sanskrit poetry and is found only rarely in contemporary Hindi poetry. In *mātrika* meters, however, rhyme is a significant characteristic. Even in *vishama-mātrika*, where the metrical patterning is irregular (e.g., each line of a fourline riddle may have a different *mātrā* weight), there may be a distinct rhyming pattern. The rhyme in Hindi riddles is normally end rhyme, but there are examples of internal rhyme as well.

Three degrees of rhyme quality are distinguished. They are, in descending order of quality: *uttama* ("best"), *madhyama* ("medium") and *adhama* ("low"). Distinctions are based upon both the quality and the quantity of the end rhyme of the two or more *pada* concerned. Quality refers to the degree of similarity of the rhyming units. Similarity might consist of the consonant preceding the final vowel being aspirated (or unaspirated), voiced (or unvoiced), etc., in each of the two or more rhyming *pada*. Another example of similarity would be parallel, or perhaps identical, consonant clusters preceding the final vowel. The greater

the similarity of both vowel and consonant phonemes, the higher the quality of the rhyme. Quantity, as opposed to quality, refers to the extent of the rhyme through time. Here is where the metrical characteristics become relevant. The greater the number of consecutive *mātrās* in the two lines which rhyme, the higher the degree of the rhyme. If the two rhyming lines have four or more *mātrās* of the same quality, then one has an example of *uttama* rhyme. If the rhyme were of only three *mātrās* duration, one would have an example of *madhyama* rhyme. Rhymes of two or only one *mātrā* would be classified as *adhama*.¹⁸

One other crucial stylistic feature of Hindi riddles is also intimately related to metrical matters, and that is the feature of juncture. In each *pada* there may be one or more rhetorical pauses. Such a pause, termed *yati*, is roughly equivalent to the caesura in Greek and Latin verse. In the light of the present study, it is necessary to observe that a meter may often be partly defined in terms of the location of the *yati* in the line. Thus, in riddle number 22, which has a 30-*mātrā* meter called *lāvanī*, the *yati* occurs after the sixteenth *mātrā*. If, however, the *yati* had occurred instead after the tenth and eighteenth *mātrās*, the meter would be a different one. It would still, to be sure, be a 30-*mātrā* meter, but because of the positioning of the *yati* would be of a different sub-type, called *chavapaiyā*.

Having briefly considered some of the general principles of Hindi riddle metrics, one may be better able to appreciate the metrical characteristics of individual riddles. The following texts are intended to illustrate some of the various meter types found in Hindi riddles. For the sake of economy, only one example of

¹⁸ It may be worth speculating that there could be a correlation between durational meter and durational rhyme. As meter can be durational rather than depending upon stress, so rhyme may be gauged in terms of duration rather than stress. In English, where meter is stress rather than durational, the principal types of rhyme are based upon stress positions: for example, masculine rhyme in which the rhymed syllables are the last syllables of the words in question. The length or duration of rhyme in this case is usually limited to two or three syllables. In contrast, when one has durational meter there is more freedom. Arabic appears to provide an example wherein durational meter works in concert with durational rhyme. See G. E. von Grunebaum, "Arabic Poetics," in Horst Frenz and G. L. Anderson, eds., *Indiana University Conference on Oriental-Western Literary Relations*, University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature No. 13 (Chapel Hill 1955), p. 28.

each meter is presented. However, if a particular meter is especially popular, this fact will be noted. In one instance, the case of the extremely popular *dohā* meter, more than one illustrative riddle text will be presented. After each meter type is named, the essential distinguishing characteristics of that meter will be given. These characteristics include the *mātrā* count(s) of the lines, the traditional internal sub-grouping of *mātrā* clusters within lines, and any other salient stylistic feature peculiar to that meter type. Inasmuch as non-natives may have difficulty in counting or perceiving the *mātrās*, these will be indicated beneath each line of text, using the | (short vowel or one *mātrā*) and S (long vowel or two *mātrās*) orthographic conventions. In addition, there will be both an interlinear, word-for-word translation (where possible) and a free translation of each riddle into English. Finally, each riddle will be explained at greater length, because even with a brief free translation the sense of the riddle or the relation of the riddle question to riddle answer may not always be obvious. Too often, scholars with linguistic rather than folkloristic or ethnographic interests paramount fail to provide sufficient explication of the cultural meanings of the texts they utilize. The lack of such minimal explanatory data seriously diminishes the value of the presentation of texts. It is hoped that the riddles reported here will be of interest to a wider audience than those primarily interested in studies of metrics.

1. Riddles in *sama-mātrika* meters

1. *Karimakarabhujā*. This is an 8-*mātrā* meter. Each *pada* consists of two groups of four *mātrās* (4, 4).

<i>din</i>	<i>kū</i>	<i>latkai</i>
	S	S
day	in	hangs
<i>rāt</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>atkai</i>
S		S
night	at	fastens

"It hangs during the day and is fastened at night."

— *sāṅkal*

— door chain

Normally, doors are locked only at night. This fact provides the wherewithal for a pretended-obscene riddle in which the phallus is apparently being described.

2. *Jambhedikā*. This is a 9-*mātrā* meter with an internal breakdown into four and five *mātrās* (4, 5). This means that if the third vowel in either line were long instead of short, then the metrical pattern would be broken—assuming that the first two vowels were as they are in the present text. Clearly, a long vowel in that position would result in a *mātrā* combination of |SS, which would total five instead of four. In *Jambhedikā* meter the first sub-unit of *mātrās* must be four.

<i>kharā</i>	<i>bhagat</i>	<i>jāy</i>
S		S
stands	running	goes

<i>mer</i>	<i>badhāt</i>	<i>jāy</i>
S		S
fence	tying	goes

"It stands and goes running and fence-building."

— *chākkī*

— hand grist-mill

The handle of a hand grist-mill, used for grinding flour in the home, stands perpendicular to the ground, but moves in a circle (normally counter-clockwise) in a place parallel to the ground. It thus stands but runs around. As a result of this circular grinding motion, an ever-increasing ridge or "fence" of flour is formed around the edges.

3. *Kāñchanalekhā*. This is a 10-*mātrā* meter with a six-four breakdown (6, 4).

<i>harī</i>	<i>harī</i>	<i>kyārī</i>
S	S	SS
green	green	field

<i>motiyō</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>bārī</i>
S S		SS
jewels	of	garden

<i>chandā</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>bahan</i>	<i>o</i>
S			S
moon	of	sister	and
<i>sūraj</i>	<i>kī</i>	<i>sārī</i>	
S	S	S S	
sun	of	wife's sister	

"A green, green field, a garden of jewels, sister of the moon and sister-in-law of the sun".

— *os*

— dew

First, notice that this is clearly a riddle in *sama-mātrika*, inasmuch as each line has the same number of *mātrās*, viz. ten. It is interesting that in line three, *chandā* has been counted as four *mātrās*. The "a" as a short vowel counts one, the "ā" as a long vowel counts two, and the juncture after "n" counts one. One may also compare the *ki* of line three with the *kī* of line four. The governing restrictions of a 10-*mātrā* limit required the shortening of the long vowel "ī" to "i" in the third line. With respect to rhyme, one can observe a fine example of internal rhyme in line one (*harī kyārī*). There is also the obvious linear rhyming scheme involving lines one, three, and four. One can also see the durational quality of the rhyme employed. Since the rhyme carries over for at least four *mātrās*, it qualifies as *uttama* rhyme.

Now for the explanation of this exceptionally beautiful riddle. *Kyārī* refers to a segment of cultivated land. After a field is sown, it may be divided into a number of smaller segments to facilitate watering and harvesting. The image of the glistening dew as a garden of jewels is a striking one. By calling the dew "sister of the moon and sister-in-law of the sun" a clever comparison is made between the dew's appearance vis-a-vis these celestial bodies and some stereotyped kinship patterns. Just as sisters may be freely seen by and with their brothers, the dew can be seen with the moon. However, since a man has a joking relationship with his wife's sister—*sārī*—it may cause gossip if he is seen too much with her. Likewise the dew cannot be seen too much with the sun. Still another facet of this exquisite riddle is the fact that in Hindu mythology the sun and the moon are brothers. Thus the sister of one could not be the sister-in-law of the other without

an act of incest. Thus the formal opposition in the riddle structure corresponds to a similarly patterned contradiction in the social structure. It might also be observed that if members of a culture elect to describe natural phenomena such as dew in terms of the finer points of kinship norms, this in itself may reflect the deep-seated importance of such norms in the native value system.

4. *Shashivadanā*. This is also a 10-*mātrā* meter, but it differs from riddle 3 in that the *mātrā* breakdown is four, four and two (4, 4, 2). The requirement that the last *mātrā* unit be two, in essence results in the last vowel in the *pada* being a long one.

<i>bāman</i>	<i>pyāsā</i>	<i>kyō</i>
S	S S	S
Brahman	thirsty	why

<i>gadhā</i>	<i>udāsā</i>	<i>kyō</i>
S	S S	S
donkey	sad	why

"Why is the Brahman thirsty? Why is the donkey sad?"
 — *lotā* *nā* *thā*
 jug/lying not was
 "There was no jug"
 "He was not lying down"

This is not a true riddle in as much as a "why" rather than a "what" question is asked. The riddler does not give a description for which the audience/addressees must seek the referent. Rather the riddler gives an answer or resultant condition and asks the audience to provide a description or explanation. In this joking or riddling question the answer depends upon two meanings of the word *lotā*. The noun *lotā* refers to the jug-like vessel normally used to fetch water. The verb form *lotā* is the past participle of *lotnā*, which means to lie down. The point of the riddle concerns the folk stereotype of the Brahman. In Hindi folklore, the Brahman as a folk figure exemplifies simple-mindedness. There is a proverb, for example, which refers to three castes: Baniya (merchant, shopkeeper), Jat (peasant), and Brahman (priest).

<i>āgam</i>	<i>buddhī</i>	<i>bāniyā</i> ,	<i>pachchham</i>	<i>buddhī</i>	<i>jāt</i>
beforehand	intellect	Baniya	afterward	intellect	Jat
<i>kabhī</i>	<i>nā</i>	<i>buddhī</i>	<i>bāmṇā</i> ,	<i>pūrā</i>	<i>sappamsāt</i>
ever	not	intellect	Brahman	complete	blank

"The Baniya knows beforehand (has foresight), the Jat learns later (has hindsight), but the Brahman will never know (either by foresight or hindsight), his mind is a blank."

It is clear that the folk stereotype of the Brahman is quite different from the European and elite stereotype of the Brahman as a wise intellectual. In the riddle the Brahman is paired with a donkey, an animal which is invariably conceived to be particularly stupid. In this instance it is assumed that donkeys enjoy lying down in the dust. The donkey's sadness is stupidly unnecessary as he could easily roll around in the dust if he wished. The Brahman is equally foolish. Travelers normally carried with them on their journeys a jug and a rope so that they may draw water to drink along their way. The Brahman, had he taken along his *lotā* or even borrowed one, could easily have quenched his thirst. To the folk, the Brahman, with his great concern for spiritual matters is little better than a donkey when it comes to satisfying physical needs.¹⁹

5. *Mārakritā*. This is an 11-*mātrā* meter with a four, four and three breakdown (4, 4, 3).

<i>choṭī</i>	<i>sī</i>	<i>tirvāl</i>
S S	S	S
small	-ish	tarpaulin

<i>baithe</i>	<i>hāi</i>	<i>gopāl</i>
S S	S	S S
is	sitting	Gopal

"There is a small tent in which Gopal is sitting".

— *jīb*
 — tongue

¹⁹ This kind of riddle where one answer applies to two separate questions is called *do sakhunā* (do meaning "two," *sakhunā* meaning "speech," "language") by Khusro. See Vatuk, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

The name *Gopāl*, which may have been used partly for rhyming purposes, is a man's name. It means "one who herds cattle," and is one of the names used for Lord Krishna. The fact that the answer, "tongue," is a word of feminine gender suggests that possibly the male name is intended to serve as a confusing device.

6. *Mahanubhāvā*. This is a 12-*mātrā* meter with alternative breakdowns, either four, four, and four, or six and six (4, 4, 4 or 6, 6).

<i>ek</i>	<i>jināvar</i>	<i>asī</i>	
S	S	S	
one	animal	real	
<i>jiske</i>	<i>haddi</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>pasī</i>
S			S
to whom	bone	not	rib

"It is a real animal which has no bones nor ribs."

—*jōk*
—leech²⁰

7. *Pushpamālā*. This is a 12-*mātrā* meter with a breakdown of three, six and three (3, 6, 3).

<i>hāth</i>	<i>vākai</i>	<i>pāy</i>	<i>nā</i>
S	S S	S	S
hands/arms	to whom	feet/legs	not
<i>satak</i>	<i>leto</i>	<i>khāy</i>	<i>nā</i>
	S S	S	S
swallow	takes	eats	not

"It has hands/arms, but no feet/legs. It swallows but does not eat."

—*koṭ/kurta*
—jacket/shirt²¹

²⁰ This riddle is widespread, not only in India, but in Europe and Africa as well. For reference to parallels see Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1951), p. 91. For an African text, see P. D. Beuchat, "Riddles in Bantu," in Alan Dundes, ed., *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs, 1965), p. 191.

²¹ For parallels see Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition*, op. cit., p. 12.

8. *Hākalikā*. This is a 14-*mātrā* meter with a four, four, four and two breakdown (4, 4, 4, 2).

<i>chorī</i>	<i>kī</i>	<i>nā</i>	<i>khūn</i>	<i>kiyā</i>
S S	S	S	S	S
theft	did	not	blood	did
<i>bīsō</i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>sir</i>	<i>kāt</i>	<i>diyā</i>
S S	S		S	S
all twenty	of	head	chopped	off

"They did not steal or murder, yet the heads of all twenty were chopped off."

—*nākhūn*
—fingernails/toenails

This riddle is a parallel to one found in Khusro's thirteenth century collection of Indic riddles. Noteworthy is the fact that the answer is concealed in the question. In line one, we find ".... *nā khūn*" meaning "not blood" but having the same sound as *nākhūn*, meaning "finger and/or toenails," which do not have blood! In Sanskrit, this technique of hiding the answer in the question is termed *antarāpikā* (*antar* meaning "within"), as opposed to *bahirāpikā*, "outside" the riddle.²² Khusro has called it *būjh pahelī* (riddle whose answer is given in the text itself).

9. *Chaupāī*. This is a 15-*mātrā* meter in which each *pada* must end in a long vowel followed by a short vowel (S|). This is one of the most popular meters in riddles and folk poetry.

<i>paṭak</i>	<i>podnā</i>	<i>lambī</i>	<i>pūchh</i>		
	S S	S	S		
dashing	wagtail	long	tail		
<i>nāy</i>	<i>batai</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>mā</i>	<i>tai</i>	<i>pūchh</i>
S	S	S	S	S	S
not	told	then	mother	to	ask

"A dashing small wagtail (*sylvia olivacea*) has a long tail. If you can't tell what is, ask your mother."

—*mūlī*
—radish (white)

²² See Hindi *Shabda Sāgara*, Vol. I, p. 29.

The formulaic "Ask your mother!" has a slightly insulting innuendo, implying that the addressee is still immature and has not yet grown up.

10. *Chaubolā*. This meter, sometimes called *hansī*, is a 15-*mātrā* meter which ends with a short vowel followed by a long one (|S). The only difference between this meter and the preceding one (*chaupāī*) is the ending.

<i>nadī</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>pār</i>	<i>pai</i>	<i>bok</i>	<i>chare</i>
S		S	S	S	S
river	of	bank	on	goat	grazes

<i>nadī</i>	<i>sūk</i>	<i>gāī</i>	<i>bok</i>	<i>mare</i>
S	S	S	S	S
river	dried	went	goat	dies

"On the bank of a river there grazes a goat. If the river dries up the goat would die."

— *diyā*

— earthenware oillamp

In this striking riddle the river is the oil and the goat is the wick. The flame, in Hindi folklore, is a metaphor for life. Thus when the river dries up the flame goes out, which means that the goat dies.

11. *Mātrāsamaka Pādākulaka*. In this 16-*matra* meter there are four subdivisions of four *mātrās* each (4, 4, 4, 4). Perhaps the major additional restriction is that there be no combination of short, long, and short vowels (|S|), termed a *jagaṇa*, at the beginning of a *pada*.

Other "rules" include the requirement that the ninth *mātrā* be short (|), and that the *pada* end with a long vowel (S).

<i>aṭsan</i>	<i>hālai</i>	<i>paṭsan</i>	<i>hālai</i>
	S S		S S
Atsan	shakes	Patsan	shakes
<i>lāl</i>	<i>haveī</i>	<i>kabhī</i>	<i>na</i> <i>hālai</i>
S	SS	S	S S
red	mansion	ever	not shakes

"Atsan shakes and Patsan shakes, but the red mansion never shakes."

— *gājar*

— carrot

This riddle comments on the fact that while the carrot top may shake in the breeze and the surrounding grass or weeds may shake, the root in the ground does not move. *Aṭsan* and *Paṭsan* are nonsense names.

12. *Chaupāī*. In this extremely popular 16-*mātrā* meter the *mātrās* are grouped in a very special way. In general, an even-numbered *mātrā*-cluster must be followed by another even-numbered cluster (though not necessarily the same even number). Thus a cluster of four *mātrās* might be followed by a cluster or two or four *mātrās*. According to the same general principle, and odd-numbered-*mātrā* cluster (usually a 3-*mātrā* cluster) must be followed by another cluster (again usually three). However, the second *mātrā*-cluster of such a sequence need not be followed in turn by a third matching it in terms of evenness or odd-ness of number. Examples of *chaupāī mātrā* subgroupings include the following possibilities:

(3, 3, 4, 4, 2) see the first *pada* of the riddle below;

(3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2) see the second *pada* of the riddle below.

It should be noted that two groups of two-*mātrā* clusters may be substituted for a four-*mātrā* cluster, and vice versa. However, in the event that the first cluster in a *pada* is a four-*mātrā* cluster, it would utilize the combinations of: SS, ||S, S||, or ||||. The combination |S|, the *jagaṇa*, is regarded as undesirable in the initial position of a *pada*. An additional *chaupāī* rule is that the final cluster in each *pada* must be a long vowel (S).

<i>ek</i>	<i>rāg</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>rahī</i>	<i>gāī</i>
S	S	S	S	S S
one	<i>rāga</i>	with	remains	singing
<i>chale</i>	<i>rāt</i>	<i>din</i>	<i>kahī</i>	<i>na</i> <i>jāī</i>
S	S		S	S S
goes	night	day	somewhere	not goes

"It goes on singing just one tune; it runs day and night and goes nowhere."

—gharī

—clock

To appreciate the first portion of this riddle one must know something about Hindi onomatopoeia. A native speaker of Hindi perceives the sound that a clock makes as *ṭik ṭik* (rather than as in English, "tick tock"). Thus the clock can play in only one *rāga*—there is no exact equivalent in English of this Indian musical concept—just the one note of "tune" of *ṭik ṭik ṭik*.²³

13. *Arilla Pādākulaka*. This 16-*mātrā* meter is similar to the *mātrāsamaka pādākulaka* meter described above (see riddle 11), but differs in that the ninth *mātrā* does not have to be an independent short vowel, and also in that each *pada* must end in this meter either with two short vowels (||) or with two long vowels preceded by a short vowel (|SS).

<i>kāla</i>	<i>bārā</i>	<i>lāl</i>	<i>nikārā</i>
S S	S S	S	S S
black	thrust	red	removed

<i>ukhū</i>	<i>baith</i>	<i>danādan</i>	<i>mārā</i>
S	S	S	S S
on one knee	having sat	violently	beat

"Thrust in, it was black, removed it was red. By someone squatting on one knee it was violently beaten."

— <i>luhār</i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>garam</i>	<i>phālī</i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>pītnā</i>
blacksmith of	hot	ploughshare of	beating		
—beating of a ploughshare by the blacksmith					

In this riddle there is a description of a black iron ploughshare being placed in the forge, where it becomes literally red-hot. Following this, the blacksmith hammers it "violently" on his anvil. This is a typical specimen of a pretended-obscene riddle. The flesh-colored phallus enters and becomes reddish. The verb *mārā*

means to strike or beat, but in colloquial usage it refers to a male's having sexual intercourse. Part of the humor of the riddle stems from the fact that a position of squatting on one knee is *not* a normal position for intercourse. Moreover, the position suggests an illicit situation in which neither time nor place would permit the more relaxed prone position.

14. *Chaupāī* and *pādākulaka*. Two meters are used in this riddle. *Chaupāī*, the most popular 15 *mātrā* meter, has already been described (see riddle number 9). The *pādākulaka* meter used in this riddle is one of sixteen *mātrās* arranged in four groups of four *mātrās* each, but lacks the various special characteristics of the *pādākulaka* meters described above as *mātrāsamaka* and *arilla* meters (see riddles number 11 and 13). One reason for the inclusion of this riddle is to remind the reader that the folk do not always make the fine distinctions between meters as do the literary prosodists. Combinations of different meters of the same or nearly the same *mātrā* counts are fairly frequent in riddles as well as in other folk poetic forms. Interesting is the fact that, due to the great popularity of the *chaupāī* meter among the folk, this text and others like it is thought of by the folk as being essentially an example of *chaupāī* meter, despite its composite features. The folk are of course not familiar with the names of all of the various meters, but know primarily only the more common ones.

<i>us</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>chhūte</i>	<i>dhote</i>	<i>hāth</i>
	S	S S	S S	S
it	to	touch	wash	hands

(*mātrā* count: 16)

<i>tab</i>	<i>bhī</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>rakhte</i>	<i>pās</i>
	S		S		S S
then	even	it	to	keep	near

(*mātrā* count: 15)

<i>jag</i>	<i>mē</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>kī</i>	<i>chāh</i>	<i>hai</i>	<i>bhārī</i>
	S		S	S	S	S S
world	in	it	of	wish	is	great/heavy

(*mātrā* count: 16)

<i>is</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>ḍarte</i>	<i>sab</i>	<i>nar</i>	<i>nārī</i>
	S		S		S S
it	with	fear	all	men	women

(*mātrā* count: 16)

²³ For a discussion of the concept of *rāga*, See W. G. Raffe, "Ragas and raginis: A key to Hindu aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 11 (1952), pp. 105-117, and Walter Kaufmann, *The Ragas of India* (Bloomington 1968).

"When they touch it, then they wash their hands. Even then they keep it near. It is greatly desired in the world, yet all men and women are afraid of it."

—*jūtā*
—shoe

The explanation of this riddle shows clearly why the presentation of text alone is not sufficient for an understanding of riddles. It is doubtful whether someone unfamiliar with the cultural context from which this riddle comes could fully understand the appropriateness of this description of the shoe. First, Indian men and women always wash their hands after touching their shoes or the shoes of others. The shoe is considered to be impure or dirty, in part because it is associated with the foot, the lowest-ranking portion of the human body. In addition, the shoe is commonly made of leather, an impure material. Still another reason for the shoe's low status is the fact that it comes into direct contact with a variety of culturally-defined dirty substances, such as mud, feces, and the like. It is for this reason that shoes are normally not worn inside the house. Even in a modern home (in which tables and chairs are used), where shoes may be worn indoors, one would refrain from wearing shoes into the kitchen. Food must be kept free from possible pollution at all costs.

But this is not the entire explanation of this riddle. What about the fear of the shoe? This does not refer simply to fear of contact with impurity or pollution. People are afraid of the shoe because it may be used to administer a physical assault or beating. A beating with a shoe constitutes a far greater insult than a beating with any other object, and even the threat of such a beating is considered highly insulting. For example, if a boy flirtatiously teases a girl, she may take off one of her shoes and wave it at him, or even actually strike him with it on his head. The head, as the container of the mind, is the purest part of the body and therefore touching it with the shoe would be considered a particularly humiliating act.²⁴

15. *Shakti*. In this 18-*mātrā* meter, each *pada* must end with a sequence of three short vowels (|||) or a short vowel followed by a long one (|S).

²⁴ For further discussion of this point, see G. Morris Carstairs, *The Twice Born* (London 1957), p. 79.

<i>harī</i>	<i>ḍibbī</i>	<i>lāl</i>	<i>ḍibbī</i>	<i>ras</i>	<i>ṭapkaī</i>
S	S	S	S		S
green	box	red	box	juice	drips

<i>māyke</i>	<i>kū</i>	<i>jāu</i>	<i>jab</i>	<i>man</i>	<i>bhaṭkaī</i>
S S	S	SS			S
woman's	to	I go	when	heart	wanders
natal	home				

"I am a green box, I am a red box, and the juice drips from me. When my heart wanders, I go to my natal home."

—*ām*
—mango

The first portion of the riddle describes the green, unripe mango fruit becoming ripe (red) and juicy. The second part refers apparently to the traditional custom of a wife's periodically visiting her parents for several months at a time. In patrilocal residence, a woman living with her husband and his parents tends to become homesick for her natal home (her "heart wanders"). The rainy season (June to September) is considered the romantic season. There is little work in the fields and husbands are home more often. After the rainy season, according to the traditional conception presented in folk and classical literature, the husband is away and the wife goes to visit her mother's home. All this constitutes a basic clue in the riddle. The mango grows during the rainy season. Presumably in terms of the riddle metaphor, after the rainy season, once the mango fruit is ripe it has been fulfilled and it drops to mother earth, its original "natal home." The word *māyke* literally means "of mother" or "Mother's home." In Hindi folk parlance, to die is to return home or to go to the place whence one has come. The mango's ultimate origin is in the earth and thus it yearns to return (fall) to the earth.

It might also be noted that one of the classic symbolic equations in Sanskrit literature (particularly in Kalidasa's *Shakuntalā*) is that of the mango (*chūta*) and its blossoming with the vagina and procreation. Possibly there is a play on this equation in the first part of the riddle. In any case, this tradition might explain why a maturing female could serve as a metaphor for a

mango, the word for which in modern Hindi is of masculine gender.

16. *Avālī*. This is a 20-*mātrā* meter with a breakdown of six, four, four, four, and two *mātrās* (6, 4, 4, 4, 2).

<i>janābyālī</i>	<i>sir</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>ūpar</i>	<i>jālī</i>
S SS		S	S	SS
'Your Honor'	head	of	above	net

<i>haddiyā</i>	<i>bahut</i>	<i>par</i>	<i>pet</i>	<i>hai</i>	<i>khālī</i>
S S			S	S	S S
bones	many	but	stomach	is	empty

"Your Honor, you have a net on your head. You have many bones, but your stomach is empty."

—*mūrḥā*

—wicker stool

The honorific vocative can be used sarcastically to mean just the opposite, as is the case in this riddle. The stool in question is of a hollow, cylindrical form, with wickerwork sides and a seat of flaxen webbing. The net is this webbing seat, the bones are the wicker, and the empty stomach refers to the hollow interior of the stool.

17. *Shāstra*. This type of 20-*mātrā* meter differs from *avālī* (see riddle 16) in that the *pada* must end in a short vowel preceded by a long vowel (S|). There are no other specific mandatory *mātrā*-cluster requirements.

<i>māṭī kā</i>	<i>maṭūlnā</i>	<i>lohe</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>lagām</i>
S S S	S S	S		S
clay of	clay horse	iron of		rein

<i>charḥ baithā</i>	<i>vā</i>	<i>pai</i>	<i>bhūbhariyā</i>	<i>paṭhān</i>
S S	S	S	S S	S
riding sat	it	on	ashy	Pathan

"There is a clay horse with saddle and reins of iron. On it rode a rough Pathan."

—*chūlhā, tavā, roti*

—fireplace, griddle, bread

This riddle is somewhat unusual in that it involves more than one object in the answer. The clay horse is the fireplace. The typical Indian cooking hearth consists of a clay, U-shaped, three-walled structure, open at the front. The saddle which sits on the horse is a round iron griddle, used for baking flat, unleavened bread. The rough Pathan (a Pathan is a Pashto-speaking native of the hilly area between Peshawar, West Pakistan, and Kabul, Afghanistan) is the bread, usually made of whole-wheat flour or other grains and similar to the Mexican tortilla. Most Indians regard the Pathan in stereotypic terms as a rough and ready character. According to a popular joke, if a Pathan robber shoots and kills a man, only to find his victim penniless, his only regret would be that he had wasted a bullet.

18. *Muktāmaṇi*. In this 25-*mātrā* meter the breakdown is into 13 and 12 *mātrās* (13, 12). A rhetorical pause, or *yati*, occurs after thirteenth *mātrā*. Here is one clear-cut case where a caesura demarcates a key *mātrā* division within the *pada*. In *muktāmaṇi* meter the *pada* must end with two long vowels (SS).

<i>chār</i>	<i>ṭāg</i>	<i>ik</i>	<i>sīs</i>	<i>hai,</i>	<i>ek</i>	<i>ṭāg</i>	<i>kī</i>	<i>nārī</i>
S	S	S	S,	S	S	S	SS	
four	legs	one	head	is,	one	leg	of	woman

<i>Shyām</i>	<i>varan</i>	<i>tāmas</i>	<i>bharī,</i>	<i>karo</i>	<i>bhaiyo</i>	<i>vichārī</i>
S		S	S,	S	S	SS
black	color	darkness	filled,	do	brothers	thinking

"A woman with four legs and one head is a single leg. It is black and full of darkness, brothers, ponder it."

—*ṭog*

—clove

In this interesting riddle, the characteristic four sepals of the dried clove are visualized as legs, while the bulbous bud is depicted as a head. Then the stem is also described as a leg, and the whole clove as a woman. The word *tamas* means "darkness," but its implications here cannot be fully understood without reference to a whole system of native categories. Folklore in general, and riddles in particular, represent prime source material

for the discovery, identification, and study of native conceptual categories. Such categories are both implicit and explicit in folklore. In this case, there is a tripartite categorical scheme involved: *satva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. According to the terms of this important Indic philosophical system, *satva*, which means "essence", refers to the highest qualities of mind and to those materials which lead to the attainment of higher spiritual levels. *Rajas* refers to balanced sexual pleasure and the enjoyment of life. *Tamas* refers to the lowest level of existence, which includes ignorance, intoxication, and overt sensual pleasure. Foods are classified in Indian thought in a number of different ways (e.g., as to whether they are "hot" or "cold" foods), and one of these ways is according to this tripartite scheme just outlined. According to this scheme, all spices are classified as *tamas*, leading to increased sensual craving (beyond the balanced *rajas* desire). Spices, for example, red chili peppers, are considered to be "hot" as well, and supposedly affect one's mind adversely, as chili supposedly makes one lose one's temper easily (become "hot-tempered"). The relationship perceived to exist between food type and mental or emotional state is suggested in the following proverb from this region:

jaisā	ann
as	food
vaisā	mann
so	mind/heart

Loosely translated, "You are what you eat!"

In the second part of the riddle, the audience is given the clue that the referent is black in color and is in the *tāmas* category. Thus one may guess that the object sought is a black food of the *tāmas* type and that the word for it is in the feminine gender.²⁵

19. *Dvipathaka*. In this 26-*mātrā* meter there is a *yati* after the sixteenth *mātrā*. The basic subdivision is into sixteen *mātrās* and ten *mātrās* (16, 10). Within these subdivisions the following rules obtain. The 16-*mātrā* group breaks down into three 4-*mātrā* clusters followed by two long vowels. The 10-*mātrā* group consists of two 4-*mātrā* clusters plus one long vowel.

²⁵ For further discussion of the *tamas/tāmas* category, see Radha Krishnan, *History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western*, Vol. I (London 1957), p. 249.

itt	gadeli	utt	gadeli,
S	SS	S	SS,
on this side	pit	on that side	pit
bichō	bich	haveli	
S		SS	
middle	middle	mansion	
yā	kānī	kā	arath batāde, tujhe dūgā dhelī
S	SS	S	SS, S S SS
this	riddle	of meaning	tell to you I will give half-pice
"A pit on either side and in the middle a mansion. Guess this riddle and I will give you half a pice!"			

—belan

—rolling pin

From the perspective gained from the center of the rolling pin, the two handles represent sudden drops in height ("pits"). The description is confusing principally because a fine house would not be likely to be flanked by pits. A man wealthy enough to afford a "mansion" would in all likelihood have such pits filled and leveled. A "pice" is an older Indian coin, about the size of an old British penny. It was worth about 1/64th of a rupee. A "half-pice" was about the size of a British halfpenny.

20. *Sarasī*. This is a 27-*mātrā* meter with a sixteen and eleven *mātrā* breakdown (16, 11). A *yati* occurs after the sixteenth *mātrā*. In *sarasī* meter each *pada* must end with a short vowel preceded by a long vowel (S|).

ek	pitā	ke	do	larke	hai,	roz	dikhāte	khel
S	S	S	S	S	S,	S	SS	S
one	father	of	two	boys	are	daily	show	game/show
kadhī	na	unko	larke	dekha,	aisā	un	mē	mel
S		S	S	S S,	SS		S	S
ever	not	them	fighting	saw	such	them	between	unity

"Two sons of a father are seen playing every day. No one has ever seen them fighting, so harmonious is their relationship."

—*sūraj aur chād*

—sun and moon

As was explained in riddle 3 above, the sun and moon are considered brothers. This is definitely a didactic riddle, intended to remind the young males of a family (including cousins as well as siblings) that they should not fight with one another.

21. *Sār*. This is a 28-*mātrā* meter with a breakdown of sixteen and twelve *mātrās* (16, 12). A *yati* occurs after the sixteenth *mātrā*. Each *pada* ends with a sequence of two long vowels (SS).

<i>ek</i>	<i>sakhī</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>lāhgā</i>	<i>pahire</i>	<i>chhai</i>	<i>laṭkāvai</i>	<i>nāre</i>
S	S	S	S	S,	S	SS	SS
one female	two	skirts	wears	six	hang	drawstrings	friend

<i>yā</i>	<i>kānī</i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>arath</i>	<i>batāde,</i>	<i>tum</i>	<i>jīte</i>	<i>ham</i>	<i>hāre</i>
S	SS	S		SS,		SS		SS

this riddle of meaning tell you have won we have lost

"A lady wears two skirts with six drawstrings. If you answer this riddle, you win and I lose."

—*tarājū*

—balance scale

The typical balance scale is made of two identical round and slightly concave containers, suspended from each end of a horizontal, cylindrical bar on three cords. These cords are made of cotton and are similar in material to that used for the drawstrings of a woman's skirt. In terms of the riddle metaphor, the balance scale is the woman, the skirts have each three drawstrings instead of the usual one.

22. *Tātanka*. This is a 30-*mātrā* meter with a sixteen and fourteen *mātrā* breakdown (16, 14). A *yati* occurs after the sixteenth *mātrā*. Each *pada* ends with three consecutive long vowels (SSS).

<i>ek</i>	<i>per</i>	<i>jāngal</i>	<i>mē</i>	<i>thādā,</i>	<i>thādā</i>	<i>moj</i>	<i>urāne</i>	<i>ko</i>
S	S		S	S S,	S S	S	S S	S
one tree	woods	in	stood	stood	enjoyment	flying	for	

hāth pāy ke kole karkai, chamṛā chālā bikāne ko

S | S | S SS | S, | S | S S

arms legs of coals having made skin set out selling for

"A tree stands in the woods enjoying itself. Then its arms and legs are burnt to coals and its skin is put up for sale."

—*san*

—flax plant²⁶

After the useful stem fibers have been removed, the remaining portions of the flax plant may be used for fuel. Striking in this riddle is the sharp contrast between the original beauty of nature and the ugliness of man's despoliation of that nature for his various needs. The word *hāth* is an interesting example of folk anatomy. The way in which the human body is perceived and subdivided varies from culture to culture. Here, *hāth* can refer to the hand, as when one is told to wash one's hands (cf. riddle 14, above). The word also refers to a Hindi unit of measure, the distance from the fingertips to the elbow. And it can in addition, as here in this riddle, refer to what in English would be the hand plus the arm. Similarly, *pāy* may refer to the foot alone or to the whole leg. The phrase *hāth pāy* in idiomatic Hindi connotes the whole body, furthermore, and thus in this riddle context the total destruction of the flax plant's "body" is described.

23. *Kukubh*. In this 30-*mātrā* meter there is a sixteen-fourteen breakdown, with the *yati* after the sixteenth *mātrā* (16, 14). Each *pada* ends with a 5-*mātrā* sequence of a short vowel followed by two long vowels (|SS).

chād sā mu hai sab tan jar kā, bin pāvō

S | S | S || || || S, || S S

moon like face is whole body silver of without feet

vo chālā hai

S | S S

he walks

²⁶ For parallels to this riddle, see Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition*, op. cit., p. 294.

sab kā pyārā rājadulārā, sāl sāl mē barhtā hai

|| S SS S|| SS S| S| S || S S
all of beloved king's dear child year year in increasing is

"Its face is like the moon, its body made of silver. It walks without feet. It is like a beloved child to all; it grows year by year."

—rupayā

—rupee

In this description of the basic coin in Indian currency, one finds the comparison of a person's face with the moon, one of the most popular similes in Hindi poetry. It signifies great beauty. The year-by-year growth refers to the ever-increasing number of coins in circulation, caused by the cumulative result of annual mintings. Texturally noteworthy is an occurrence of internal rhyme: *sabkā pyārā rājadulārā*.

24. *Lāvanī*. In this 30-*mātrā* meter one finds a sixteen-fourteen breakdown, as was the case in the *ṭāṭanka* and *kukubh* meters (riddles 22 and 23). Predictably, a *yati* occurs after the sixteenth *mātrā*. However, this meter is less restrictive (and more popular) than the other 30-*mātrā* meters, in that there are no terminal bound-*mātrā* slots. *Lāvanī* meter does not require that *padas* end with the *ṭāṭanka* pattern of three consecutive long vowels or with a short and two long vowels as in the *kukubh* meter.

The fact that the caesural *yati* occurs after the sixteenth *mātrā* (as in all the meters of twenty-six or more *mātrās*—at least those represented in the present riddle corpus) suggests a definite poetic penchant or pattern. The preference for groupings of sixteen *mātrās* is also evident in the great number and popularity of 16-*mātrā* meters (see riddles 11, 12 and 13). A grouping by eights is also clearly manifested in the structuring of internal rhyme. In riddle 11 the first line consists of two units of eight *mātrās* which rhyme with each other. In the first line of riddle 13 one finds a similar rhyming scheme. In riddle 16 one finds an internal rhyme between the portions preceding the eighth and twentieth *mātrās* (*janābyālī ... jālī*). Another internal rhyme is found in riddle 19, with *gadeli* at the eighth and sixteenth *mātrās*, *havellī* at the end

of the first *pada*, and *dhellī* at the end of the second. In the internal rhyme in riddle 23, the rhymes also end at the eighth and sixteenth *mātrās*. In connection with this general pattern, one may remark that the basic range of linear *mātrā* counts, as noted previously in the calculation of the more than nine million theoretically possible vowel combinations, extends up to thirty-two. (Actually, the practical range may be considered to be from eight—see riddle 1—to thirty-two). The preeminence of eight and other multiples of four seems to be a consistent feature in Hindi riddle metrics.

shām bhāt sannāvan lāgo, kūd paro kāu nagar mē
S| |S ||S|| SS S| |S S| ||| S
evening became buzzing began jumped fell some city in
rājā kāt kachairin kātī, rānī kātī mandar mē
S S S| |S || S S, S S S S ||| S
king having bitten court bit queen bit palace in

sāp jāy bābī mē kato, nāhar kato jangal mē
S| S| SS S SS, S|| SS ||| S
snake having gone anthill in bit lion bit forest in

dass hāt hāthī se larkai, rahtā sāt samandar mē
||| S| SS S || S, ||S S| ||| S
ten hands elephant with having lives seven seas in
fought

"As evening fell, it began buzzing and descended upon the city. It bit the king, it bit the court, it bit the queen in the palace. It bit the snake in the anthill, it bit the lion in the jungle, and it fought with an elephant ten hands in height. It lives on the seven seas."

—machchhar

—mosquito

This extended description of the mosquito appears to be related to the popular European and African riddle of the fly who comes uninvited to the king's table.²⁷ The Hindi word *kāt* means both "cut" and "bite," and the metaphor is thus more ambiguous in Hindi than the English translation would at first suggest.

²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 266.

II. Riddles in *Ardha-sama mātrika*

25. *Vidyullatā*. In this meter there are, in principle, four *padas* grouped in such a way that the first and third *padas* each have a *mātrā* count of eleven, while the second and fourth *padas* each have a *mātrā* count of ten. Generally speaking, in *ardha-sama mātrika* meters, one assumes that there are four *padas* in which the first and third have equal numbers of *mātrās* and the second and fourth have equal numbers of *mātrās*, but in which the *mātrā* count of the latter is different from that of *padas* one and three. Normally, also, *padas* two and four rhyme. In theory, it would be possible to group the four *padas* into two-line units which, having the same total *mātrā* count and rhyming, could logically be construed as exemplifying *sama-mātrika*. However, both literary and oral tradition indicates that there are four rather than two *padas* involved. There are, for instance, four distinct terminal junctures, rather than two terminal (after lines two and four) and two medial pauses or caesurae (after lines 1 and 3)²⁸.

<i>kitek</i>	<i>sī</i>	<i>sūtārī</i>
S	S	S S
how big like	thread	(woman)

<i>kitek</i>	<i>jār</i>	<i>bār</i>
S	S	S
how big	lover	door

<i>kitak</i>	<i>duniyā</i>	<i>mar</i>	<i>gai</i>
	S		
how much	world	has	died

<i>kitek</i>	<i>honhār</i>
S	S S
how much	to become

²⁸ The problem is analogous to the vexing question in the study of English and Scottish ballads as to whether one has four lines, the first and third with four stresses, the second and fourth with three, or two lines, each with seven stresses. Again, the actual oral performance provides the only clearcut criteria for metrical distinctions. Writing or printing conventions are too often *a priori*. See Gordon Hall Gerould, *The Ballad of Tradition* (New York 1957), pp. 124-125.

"What a thread-like (thin) woman, and what a big lover at her door! How much of the world has already died, and how much more is to be conceived!"

—*kumhār kī dorī aur chāk*
 potter of thread and wheel
 —potter's thread and wheel

In this pretended obscene riddle the process of making pottery is described. After the newly formed pot has been shaped on the wheel, it is removed by passing a strong cotton thread between the wheel and the base of the pot. Thus, the rapprochement of the thread-woman and her lover, the wheel, produces a newborn pot. The second part of the riddle is a philosophical commentary, no doubt alluding to the common Indic motif of God the Creator as a potter. The potter's wheel is the world (both revolve) and to leave the potter's wheel is a metaphor for death. Here is an excellent example of how riddle texts can provide insights into world view, in this instance into the folk concept of the lifespan. Clearly, the riddle suggests that the lifespan of man is short. To be born is to die. The moment of creation is also the time one is forced to leave the wheel. On the other hand, the outlook is not one of pure pessimism. There inevitably remains much more clay to be molded into pots through new (pro) creative acts. "How much of the world is already dead," refers to all the pots which have ever been made: "how much more to be conceived," refers to all those which will be made in the future.

26. *Atibaravai*. This meter entails two segments, each of which has twenty-one *mātrās*. Each segment consists of two *padas*, the *padas* separated by a *yati*. The first *pada* has twelve *mātrās*, the second has nine. An additional requirement is that the second and fourth *padas* end with a *jagana* (|S|).

<i>kāre</i>	<i>kāre</i>	<i>baṅgan</i>
SS	SS	S
black	black	eggplants

<i>sitāre</i>	<i>bhare</i>	<i>jā y</i>
S		S
stars	filled	go

<i>rājā</i>	<i>ḥī</i>	<i>māgē,</i>	<i>to</i>
S S	S	S S	S
king	sir	asks	then
<i>diye</i>	<i>bhī</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>jāy</i>
S	S		S
given	even	not	go

"The black eggplants are full of stars; my husband desires them, but I cannot even give them to him."

—*ākhē*
—eyes

The eggplant is black and egg-shaped, and inside it are small, round seeds ("stars"). The eyes also have an oval shape and are dark in color. The word *siṭāre* means both stars and the pupils of the eyes.

27. *Bhramaraviṭāsa*. In this meter the first and third *padas* have fourteen *mātrās*, the second and fourth *padas* have eleven *mātrās* each.

<i>bar</i>	<i>ḍāt</i>	<i>lambī</i>	<i>pūchh</i>	<i>hai</i>
	S	S	S	S
big	teeth	long	tail	is
<i>lank</i>	<i>pahārīn</i>	<i>dhāy</i>		
S	S	S		
Lanka	mountains	breaks		
<i>rāmāyaṇa</i>	<i>mē</i>	<i>dhūḍo</i>	<i>mat</i>	
S S	S	S S		
Ramayana	in	search	not	
<i>hanumān</i>	<i>hai</i>	<i>nāy</i>		
S S	S	S		
Hanumana	is	not		

"It has big teeth and a long tail, and it breaks the Lanka mountains. Do not search in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, because it is not Hanuman.

—*jeli*
—pitchfork

The apparent referent in this riddle is a character in the celebrated Sanskrit epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. Hanuman is supposed to be a monkey god, with a long tail and large teeth. The last part of the epic, in which Hanuman has a major role, takes place in Sri Lanka. However, the correct answer to the riddle is the farmer's pitchfork. The handle is the long tail, the prongs are the big teeth. The pitchfork is used to separate the wheat from the chaff by throwing forkfuls up into the air. The initial pile of wheat mixed with chaff is the "mountain" broken by the pitchfork.

28. *Dohā*. This meter is not only the most popular *ardha-sama mātrika* meter, but probably the most popular meter of all those found in this oral tradition. It is one of the relatively few meter names which is widely known among the folk. In *dohā* meter, the first and third *padas* have thirteen *mātrās*, the second and fourth have eleven. (There is a related reverse form of this meter in which the first and third *padas* have eleven *mātrās*, while the second and fourth have thirteen. This meter, known as *sorathā*, is found in Hindi literature, but rarely if ever in oral poetry.) There are a number of other rules for the ideal *dohā* meter. Within the *padas* the internal break-downs are as follows: in the first and third *padas* there should be six, four, and three *mātrās*; in the second and fourth *padas* there should be six, four and one. The second and fourth *padas* each ends with a long vowel followed by a short vowel (S|), and these *padas* rhyme. One negative rule for *dohā* meter is that the first and third *padas* may not begin with the specific sequence of a short vowel, long vowel, and short vowel (|S|).²⁹

²⁹ For a representative discussion of *dohā* meter, see S. N. Ghosal, "Dr. M. Jacobi's Introduction to the *Sanaikumaracharitam*, II Metre," *Journal of the Oriental Institute, M. S. University of Baroda* 7, no. 1-2 (September-December 1957), pp. 41-43, and Bholā Shankar Vyas, *Prākṛita Paingalam*, Vol. II (Varanasi 1962), pp. 540-547.

Because of the great importance of *dohā* meter in Hindi riddles and folk poetry, it might be worthwhile to examine examples of it in some detail. First of all, an attempt will be made to see how closely the folk specimens of *dohā* meter—as found in Hindi riddles—follow the canons of ideal *dohā* form as described above. Literary purists, unfamiliar with the beauty and sophistication of oral poetry, sometimes tend to demean the composition and quality of such materials. In this case, some nineteen *dohā* riddle texts will be presented and examined in the light of the standard literary definition of *dohā* meter. An additional analysis will be made of the actual permutations of *mātrā* combinations within the six-, four- and three-*mātrā* clusters.

<i>janani</i>	<i>jano</i>	<i>nā</i>	<i>bhū</i>	<i>paṛo</i>
	S	S	S	S
mother	bore	not	earth	fell
<i>paṛo</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>har</i>	<i>kī</i>	<i>drisṭi</i>
S			S	S
fell	nor	God	of	sight
<i>sakal</i>	<i>jagat</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>khāt</i>	<i>hai</i>
		S	S	S
whole	world	to	eating	is
<i>jānat</i>	<i>hai</i>	<i>sab</i>	<i>srisṭi</i>	
S	S		S	
knowing	is	all	creation	

"No mother bore him, nor did he fall to the earth, nor did the glance of God fall upon him; yet he eats the whole world and knows everything in creation."

—*kāl*
—death

In this interesting philosophical riddle, death is depicted as being without beginning and without end. *Kāl* actually means both "death" and "time." The reference to not falling on the earth has to do with a childbirth custom. Except among westernized Hindus, the mother to be delivered of a child lies on her back on the ground. A birth is conceived of as entailing the falling of a body-soul

down from its original home in the heavens to the earth. Thus, since Death was not born, he (in the sense of his body-soul identity) did not fall to the earth. Death is further imagined to be without form and for this reason cannot be seen, even by God. Death eats everyone and every living thing. Whatever is born will die. Death, as Time, knows when an object has fulfilled its purpose and when it must be destroyed or removed.³⁰

29. (This and all following riddles through number 46 are in the *dohā* meter just described).

<i>pīū</i>	<i>pītā</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>peṭ</i>	<i>mē</i>
S	S	S	S	S
lover	father	of	stomach	in
<i>sutā</i>	<i>rahī</i>	<i>akuḷāy</i>		
S	S	S		
daughter	remains	tormented		
<i>pītā</i>	<i>marai</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>piu</i>	<i>milai</i>
S	S	S		S
father	dies	then	lover	meets
<i>sutā</i>	<i>bhasam</i>	<i>ho</i>	<i>jāy</i>	
S		S	S	
daughter	ashes	becomes		

"Her lover is in her father's stomach, the girl is tormented. Only if her father dies can she meet her lover, but then she would turn into ashes."

—*devayānī, shukrāchārya aur kachamana*
—Devayani, Shukracharya, and Kachamana

This type of riddle seems to be analogous to what Archer Taylor calls "special knowledge riddles."³¹ However, whereas special

³⁰ For a discussion of the conception of time in Indian philosophy, see Stanislaw Shayer, *Contributions to the Problem of Time in Indian Philosophy* (Krakow 1938). For other Indic riddles dealing with death see Durga Bhagwat, "The Riddles of Death," *Man in India* 23 (1943), pp. 342-346.

³¹ "The Varieties of Riddles," *op. cit.*, p. 6. See also Laurits Bødker, *op. cit.*, p. 72, for a discussion of "Pehrhaftes Rätsel."

knowledge riddles in English normally require a knowledge of Biblical history and the like, this one depends upon a familiarity with the *Mahābhārata*. The event in question concerns the struggle between the *suras* (gods) and the *asuras* (demons). The demons were aided by the fact that their mentor, Shukracharya, possessed the secret of *sanjivini*, a wondrous drug which could restore life to the dead. The *suras* sent a youth, Kachamana, to Shukrāchārya to try to learn this secret. Shukracharya's beautiful daughter, Devayani, was attracted to her father's new pupil. The demons, fearing that Kachamana would succeed in learning the secret of *sanjivini*, attempted to assassinate Kachamana. Twice they failed as Shukracharya, in response to his daughter's pleading, brought the youth back to life. The third time the *asuras* burned the boy and mixed his ashes in wine, which was then given to Shukracharya to drink. Thus when the boy was brought back to life he found himself lodged in Shukracharya's stomach. Devayani was in despair. If she did not have her lover, she would die of grief. On the other hand, her lover could only escape if her father died. If her father died, then she could not bear to live. (To "turn into ashes" means "to die," inasmuch as the Hindus practice cremation.) The solution to the dilemma came when Shukracharya entrusted the secret of *sanjivini* to Kachamana. Then the old man died in order to release the young man, who returned the favor by immediately reviving the former. However, in a startling dénouement, Kachamana refused to marry Devayani, arguing that inasmuch as he was "born" from out of Shukracharya's body, he was her brother. The riddle is used to teach children and others the mythical content of the epics.

30.

<i>pānī</i>	<i>mē</i>	<i>nisdin</i>	<i>rahe</i>
S S	S		S
water	in	night and day	lives
<i>jāke</i>	<i>hād</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>mās</i>
S S	S		S
to whom	bone	no	flesh

<i>kām</i>	<i>kare</i>	<i>talvār</i>	<i>kā</i>
S	S	S	S
job	does	sword	of
<i>phir</i>	<i>pānī</i>	<i>mē</i>	<i>bās</i>
	S S	S	S
again	water	in	living

"It lives in water night and day; it has neither bones nor flesh. It does the job of a sword and then lives in the water again."

—*kumhār kā dōrā*
potter of thread
—potter's thread

The potter's thread is normally kept in a bowl of water. It is, of course, taken out of the water when it is used to sever the clay pot from the potter's wheel (cf. the explanation of riddle 25, above). After "serving as a sword" the thread returns to its watery home.

31.

<i>ik</i>	<i>churail</i>	<i>har</i>	<i>ghar</i>	<i>basai</i>
	S			S
one	witch	every	home	lives
<i>jāy</i>	<i>lakhāi</i>	<i>dar</i>	<i>lāg</i>	
S	S		S	
who	sees	fear	sticks	
<i>haddī</i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>ras</i>	<i>chūs</i>	<i>kai</i>
S S	S		S	S
bone	of	juice	having	sucked
<i>mūh</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>ugle</i>	<i>āg</i>	
	S	S	S	
mouth	from	pours out	fire	

"A witch lives in every home. Whoever sees her is frightened. She sucks the juice out of the bone and fire pours from her mouth."

—*diyāsālāi*
—match

The *churail*, or witch, is often depicted as wearing a necklace of bones and eating flesh. Children under roughly eight years of age are normally not cremated when they die, but are buried instead. To prevent witches from robbing their graves for 'food', branches of thorny bushes or trees are placed on the grave. For the same reason, oil lamps may be placed on the grave, since witches do not like light. Witches are not typically found inside homes, and thus the initial portion of the riddle statement poses an implicit contradiction. The sucking of the juice out of the bone refers to the striking of the match and probably more specifically to the implosive effect caused by the initial flickering of a newly lighted safety-match.

32.

<i>jal</i>	<i>hī</i>	<i>mē</i>	<i>paidā</i>	<i>bhaī</i>
	S	S	S S	S
water	right	in	born	became
<i>jalai</i>	<i>dekh</i>	<i>mar</i>	<i>jāi</i>	
S	S		S	
water	seeing	dies		
<i>chaliyo</i>		<i>pancho</i>	<i>phūk</i>	<i>dē</i>
S		SS	S	S
let's go		judges/people	burn	let
<i>pher</i>	<i>amar</i>	<i>ho</i>	<i>jāi</i>	
S		S	S	
then	immortal	becomes		

"It was born right in the water, but seeing the water it dies. Brothers, let's go and cremate it; then it will be immortal."

-*ī*

-brick

Brick-making in India begins with taking mud out of a village pond. The mud is placed in a hollow rectangular wooden frame. After smoothing the top, the frame is removed and the brick-to-be is left to dry in the sun. Village homes are typically made of such sun-dried brick. Unfortunately, if rain falls on such a brick,

it will dissolve. Thus, though the brick is "born in water," it may die upon coming into contact with water again. There is, however, a way of preventing this catastrophe. By "cremating" or baking the mud brick, one renders it resistant to water and thus immortal. The suggestion that cremation ensures immortality is contrary to general eschatological theory inasmuch as everyone who dies becomes immortal. There is thus a philosophical contradiction in the second portion of the riddle statement. And even empirically there is a contradiction between an object's being cremated and thus utterly destroyed and that object's being made 'immortal' in the sense of existing and withstanding destructive forces.

33.

<i>mātā</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>nō</i>	<i>hat</i>	<i>nahī</i>
SS	S	S		S
mother	of	nails	hands	not
<i>beṭā</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>nō</i>	<i>bīs</i>	
SS	S	S	S	
son	of	nails	twenty	
<i>dharampitā</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>lar</i>	<i>rahe</i>	
S	S		S	
father	with	is	fighting	
<i>dekh</i>	<i>rahe</i>	<i>jagḍīs</i>		
S	S	S		
is	seeing	Lord		

"Mother has no hands or (finger-) nails; the son has twenty (finger-) nails. He is fighting with his father, while the Lord looks on."

—Fighting in the presence of Lord Rama between Hanuman and his son Makardhvaj, who was born from a fish.

This is another special knowledge riddle (cf. riddle 29), which in this case depends upon familiarity with the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Makardhvaj is the son of the monkey-god Hanuman's union with a fish. The fish lived in the lowest of the seven hierarchical levels of the world, the level called *Pātāl*. The act of

conception was accidental, inasmuch as it occurred when Hanuman was jumping over the waters and his sweat and seed entered a passing fish. Makardhvaj, not knowing that his father was Hanuman, later engaged him in battle in the presence of Lord Rama. The fight ended in a draw after the relationship of the principals was miraculously revealed, and reconciliation followed.³²

34.

<i>chalat</i>	<i>chalat</i>	<i>būdhe</i>	<i>bhaye</i>
		S S	S
going	going	old	became
<i>chalahu</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>ekahu</i>	<i>kos</i>
		S	S
went	not even	one	<i>kos</i> (length of two miles)
<i>unke</i>	<i>sut</i>	<i>aise</i>	<i>bhaye</i>
S		S S	S
his	sons	such	became
<i>chale</i>	<i>hazārō</i>	<i>kos</i>	
S	S S	S	
went	thousands	<i>kos</i>	

"Running, he became old, but he did not go even two miles. His sons were such that they went thousands of miles."

—*kumhār kā chāk*
potter of wheel
—potter's wheel

The potter's wheel rotates endlessly, but it does not move from its place. On the other hand, its products (the pots) may circulate all around the country. Apparently there is a consistent metaphor in which the potter's wheel is depicted as a masculine Creator (cf. riddle 25). Since the potter's wheel may also metaphorically-speaking be the world, it is significant that the world is perceived as a masculine creative force rather than a feminine one. This may be meaningfully correlated with the prevailing patrilineal social

³² This father-son combat is similar to those in European tradition. For a psychological interpretation of the significance of the pattern, see Alan Dundes, "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Grail," *Literature and Psychology* 12 (1962), pp. 101-112.

organization. Note also in this riddle the weakness of the father as opposed to the strength of the sons, a possible Oedipal theme in no way inconsistent with the overt father-son conflict in riddle 33.

35.

<i>lāl</i>	<i>mūrh</i>	<i>murgā</i>	<i>nahī</i>
S	S	S	S
red	head	cock	not
<i>sabz</i>	<i>pāy</i>	<i>nahī</i>	<i>mor</i>
S	S		S
green	feet	not	peacock
<i>lambī</i>	<i>pūchh</i>	<i>lāgūr</i>	<i>nahī</i>
S S	S	S	
long	tail	langur	not
<i>chār</i>	<i>pāy</i>	<i>nahī</i>	<i>dhōr</i>
S	S		S
four	legs	not	beast

"It has a red head, but it is not a rooster. It has green feet, but it is not a peacock. It has a long tail, but it is not a langur monkey. It has four legs, but it is not an animal."

—*karkaiṭa*
—chameleon

Of stylistic interest are the negative constructions which eliminate possible answers (cf. also riddle 27).³³

36.

<i>maṭṭī</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>paidā</i>	<i>bhaī</i>
S S	S	S S	S
dust/clay	from	born	became
<i>maṭṭī</i>	<i>mē</i>	<i>mil</i>	<i>jāy</i>
S S	S		S
dust/clay	in	will	minge

³³ For a parallel to this riddle, see the Indian folklorist Sarat Chandra Mitra's "Riddles Current in Bihar," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 70, pt. III (1901), p. 36.

<i>devakūvar</i>	<i>mo</i>	<i>phūk</i>	<i>de</i>
S	S	S	S
son of God	me	cremate	
<i>umar</i>	<i>baṛ</i>	<i>ho</i>	<i>jāy</i>
	S	S	S
age	big	will	become

"I was born in clay and will one day merge with the clay.
Oh man, burn me and my life will be greatly lengthened."

—*ṭī*

—brick

For a description of the brickmaking process and a similar play upon burning and longevity, see the commentary on riddle 32.

37. <i>it</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>āṭ</i>	<i>jāṭnī</i>
	S	S S	S S
this side	from	came	Jat woman
<i>ut</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>āyā</i>	<i>jaṭ</i>
	S	S S	S
that side	from	came	Jāt
<i>donō</i>	<i>aise</i>	<i>mil</i>	<i>gaye</i>
S S	S S		S
both	so	joined	together
<i>chākī</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>pāt</i>
S S	S	S	S
gristmill	of	like	stones

"From this side came the Jat woman, from that side came the Jat man. Both met in the way that the stones of a gristmill meet."

—*kivār*

—French doors

In this pretended obscene riddle, the protagonists are a man and woman of the Jat caste. In terms of the four *varṇa* system of

traditional Hindu society, the Jats consider themselves of the warrior (*Kshatriya*) *varṇa*. They are stereotypically considered as being obstreperous and rather coarse. When one Jat meets another, it is said that there is likely to be violence and noise. The riddle suggests that the Jat man and woman come together roughly. The rubbing of the stones of a hand gristmill, one against the other, is a common metaphor for sexual intercourse (cf. in English, the use of "grinds" in the phrase "bumps and grinds" used to describe the erotic body movements made by striptease and exotic dancers). The grindstones' movement is a somewhat misleading metaphor in terms of the riddle answer, inasmuch as the top-bottom positioning of the stones deceptively conceals the answer of the vertically positioned sections of the French doors.

38. <i>bel</i>	<i>paṛ</i>	<i>darmyān</i>	<i>mē</i>
S	S	S	S
ivy	lay	middle	in
<i>phūl</i>		<i>rahā</i>	<i>laharāy</i>
S	S	S	
flower		remained waving	(with happiness)
<i>ek</i>	<i>achambhā</i>	<i>māi</i>	<i>kahū</i>
S	S	S	S
one	wonder	I	tell
<i>phūl</i>	<i>bel</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>khāy</i>
S	S	S	S
flower	ivy	to	ate

"In the middle lies the ivy, the flower waves with happiness, I tell you a wonder, the flower eats the ivy."

—*diyā*

—oil lamp

In this unusual riddle the ivy is the cotton wick of the oil lamp, while the flower is that portion of the wick which is burning. The burning or flaming is depicted as the blossoming of a flower. The flickering of the flame is seen as analogous to the gentle swaying of a flower in the breeze. The catachrestic reference to the flower eating the ivy, alludes to the flame's burning of the wick. The

riddle involves a play on words, in that the word *phūl* in Hindi means both flower and the burning portion of the lamp wick.

39. <i>pīṛī</i>	<i>pīṛī</i>	<i>tīharī</i>	
S S	S S	S S	
yellow	yellow	woman	
<i>kesar</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>rang</i>
S	S	S	S
saffron	of	like	color
<i>gyārah</i>	<i>devar</i>		<i>chhorke</i>
S	S		S S
eleven	husband's younger brother		having left
<i>gaṛī</i>	<i>jeth</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>sang</i>
S	S	S	S
went	husband's elder brother	of	company

"A yellowish woman of saffron color, ran away with her husband's elder brother, having rejected the eleven younger brothers of her husband."

—*arhar*

—a kind of lentil,
citis cajan

This superb riddle is the kind of evidence which should be cited to those who fail to see the value of analyzing folklore. No doubt there are still many who think that riddles are little more than jocular trivialities. What a pity such unthinking critics could not have the pleasure of examining this riddle and seeing how much vital cultural data is packed into it. First and foremost, the riddle contains a remarkable play on the word *jeth*. A woman's *jeth* is any one of her husband's elder brothers. Normally a woman observes *pardā* when in the presence of this relative, covering her face with her veil or shawl. Other characteristics of this avoidance behavior pattern include the rule that the woman never addresses her *jeth* and therefore cannot develop intimacy with him. In contrast, the *devar* is any of a woman's husband's younger brothers. A woman enjoys a joking relationship with her *devars*. The overt

contradiction in the riddle comes from the woman's "avoiding" (rejecting the advances of) her *devars* and eloping with her *jeth*. (In other versions of this riddle there is a further addition to the text: "If a woman is pure enough to reject the overtures of her *devars*, how can she be so shameless as to run away with her *jeth*?") Note that if one were unfamiliar with the absolutely crucial kinship difference between a husband's older and younger brothers, one would have been able to discover it from this one riddle alone!

The play on words comes because the word *jeth* is also the name of the third of the twelve months of the Hindu calendar. The type of yellow lentil described in this riddle is planted in the *fourth* month of the year and harvested in the *second* month of the following year. The lentil then might figuratively and in a sense literally be said to be letting eleven months go by before going off in (with) the twelfth, that is, the third month, *jeth*. Thus this ingenious riddle not only displays a critical kinship distinction, but also describes the actual planting and harvesting details of the referent lentil.

The clever pun on the words for one of the months and for the elder brother-in-law is also utilized in a proverb employed primarily by women. The proverb, like the riddle, emphasizes the great social distance between a woman and her husband's older brother, as well as underscoring the necessity for deference behavior:

jeth kī saram to harar nai bī karī

jeth of shyness (emph.) lentil—even did

(*to* is an emphatic particle, modifying the preceding noun phrase. *nai* is a nominative indicator, used in the past tense, which signals that the preceding word, *harar*, is the actor in the sentence.)

In a free translation this proverb might be rendered: "Even the lentil is shy with her *jeth*". Literally, the proverb refers to the fact that because of the planting and harvesting schedule for the lentil, it is never seen in the presence of *jeth* (the third month). Metaphorically, the proverb suggests that if even so insignificant an item as the lowly lentil must be shy of its *jeth*, how much

more important is it that this custom be followed by a grown woman.

40. <i>mē h</i>	<i>parā</i>	<i>thā</i>	<i>rāt</i>	<i>ko</i>
S	S	S	S	S
rain	fallen	was	night	at
<i>sab</i>	<i>jag</i>	<i>diyā</i>	<i>ḍubāy</i>	
		S	S	
whole	world	gave	sunk	
<i>gharā</i>	<i>bharā</i>	<i>nahī</i>	<i>nīr</i>	<i>se</i>
S	S		S	S
jug	filled	not	water	with
<i>panchhī</i>	<i>pyāsā</i>	<i>jāy</i>		
S S	S S	S		
bird	thirsty	goes		

"It rained at night and the whole world was drowned, but the jug was not filled with water and the bird remained thirsty."

— os

— dew

This is a more literal description of dew than the "garden of jewels" metaphor in riddle 3. Still there is an apparent contradiction between heavy rainfall and insufficient water to fill a jug or quench a bird's thirst.

41. <i>mēh</i>	<i>parā</i>	<i>thā</i>	<i>rāt</i>	<i>ko</i>
S	S	S	S	S
rain	fallen	was	night	at
<i>sab</i>	<i>jag</i>	<i>diyā</i>	<i>ḍubāy</i>	
		S	S	
whole	world	gave	drowned	
<i>peran</i>	<i>pānī</i>	<i>charh</i>	<i>gayo</i>	
S	SS		S	
trees	water	climbed	went	
<i>ghorā</i>	<i>mal</i>	<i>mal</i>	<i>nhāy</i>	
S S			S	
horse	rubbing	rubbing	bathed	

"It rained at night and the whole world was drowned. The water climbed way up on the trees, but the horse was enjoying a bath."

— os

— dew

This riddle is obviously a variant of the preceding one (riddle 40). In this case, the state of inundation is not denied by an empty jug or a thirsty bird, but is affirmed by the image of water rising to the tops of the trees. Despite the apparent flood, the horse is enjoying a bath. An Indian bath consists of first pouring water over one's body and then rubbing the body briskly with the hands. The horse, covered with dew, uses his tail as a kind of washcloth to rub his body.

42. <i>pān</i>	<i>sarā</i>	<i>ghorā</i>	<i>haṭā</i>
S	S	SS	S
betel leaf	rotted	horse	regressed
<i>vidyā</i>	<i>nisphal</i>	<i>jāy</i>	
S S	S	S	
knowledge	fruitless	went	
<i>chūlhe</i>	<i>mē</i>	<i>roṭī</i>	<i>jalai</i>
S S	S	S S	S
fireplace	in	bread	burns
<i>chela</i>	<i>arth</i>	<i>lagāy</i>	
SS	S	S	
pupil	meaning	attached	

"The betel leaf rotted, the horse was no longer in condition, learning became fruitless, and the bread burned in the fireplace, while the pupil figured out the meaning of all this."

— *phera*

nā

thā

— rolled/exercised/reviewed/turned

not

was

The betel leaf was not rolled, the horse was not exercised, the lesson was not reviewed, and the bread was not turned over. This riddling question, like riddle number 4, has a multiple-meaning answer. The four distinct, though related, meanings of

pherā are used in the answer: (1) rolled. Betel leaf, chewed on numerous social occasions, is stored in a damp cloth to keep it fresh. It is rolled so that it will stay moist longer. If it is left flat the moisture would evaporate more quickly. Several rolls of betel leaves are placed in the same damp cloth. Failure to roll the leaf would increase the chances of dry rot; (2) exercised, or taken around. A horse which is not taken out to be exercised soon gets out of shape; (3) reviewed. One cannot remember and put to use what one learns unless one reviews it again and again; (4) turned or rotated. The typical bread, round and flat and unleavened (cf. riddle 17), must be slowly turned or rotated on the griddle so that all sides are baked evenly, and must be turned over to bake both sides.

43. <i>gharrāṭā</i>	<i>kartā</i>	<i>huā</i>	
S S S	S	S	
noise	making		
<i>jātā</i>	<i>kos</i>	<i>hazār</i>	
S S	S	S	
goes	two miles	thousand	
<i>gire</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>chaknāchūr</i>	<i>ho</i>
S	S	SS	S
falls	then	broken into pieces	becomes
<i>kyā</i>	<i>yah</i>	<i>kaho</i>	<i>vichār</i>
S		S	S
what	this	tell	having pondered

"It goes thousands of miles making a great noise. If it falls, it will be shattered to pieces. Tell me after pondering what it is."

—*havāī jahāz*

—air plane

In this riddle the onomatopoeic word *gharrāṭā* signifies the sound of a motor (i.e., that of an automobile or airplane).

44. <i>ṭīn</i>	<i>netra</i>	<i>chhai</i>	<i>charan</i>	<i>hāī</i>
S	S	S		S
three eyes	six	feet	are	

Some Characteristic Meters

<i>do</i>	<i>mukh</i>	<i>jibbhyā</i>	<i>ek</i>
S		S S	S
two	mouths	tongue	one
<i>yā</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>arath</i>	<i>lagāy</i> <i>kai</i>
S	S		S S
this	to	meaning	having attached
<i>pandit</i>	<i>kahiyo</i>	<i>dekh</i>	
S	S	S	
learned man	tell	having seen	

"There are three eyes but six feet, two mouths but one tongue. Having pondered it, oh learned man, tell me what it means."

— <i>kāṇe</i>	<i>shukrāchārya</i>	<i>medhak</i>	<i>kī savārī</i> <i>par</i>
one-eyed	Shukracharya	frog	of riding on
—one-eyed	Shukracharya	riding on his frog	

This is another special knowledge riddle depending upon familiarity with the *Māhābhārata*. Shukracharya is an important character in that epic (cf. riddle 29), and his principal distinguishing features are his one eye and his traditional means of transportation, a frog.

45. <i>ulī</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sīdhī</i>	<i>karī</i>
S	S	SS	S
upside-down	from	right-side-up	made
<i>diye</i>	<i>masosā</i>	<i>chār</i>	
S	S	S	
gave	knee-blows	four	
<i>apno</i>	<i>kām</i>	<i>banāy</i>	<i>kai</i>
	S	S	S
own	work	having	made
<i>bhāgī</i>	<i>lāhagā</i>	<i>jhār</i>	
S S	S	S	
ran	skirt	shaken	

"It was righted from its upside-down position and given several blows. The lady (who did it) fulfilled her task (using it) and ran away shaking her skirt."

— *kāthautā*

— a large, shallow,
wooden tub

This appears to be a pretended obscene riddle for the vagina. The word *ulīṭ* means "lying face down." The word *kām* means both "work" and "sexual desire" (cf. the *Kāma Sūtra* [of Vatsyayana]). The answer is a large oval-shaped wooden tub in which laundry is washed. The tub is normally kept face-down on the ground when not in use. A woman wishing to launder her clothes would first turn the tub right side-up and dump the clothes in. After pouring in enough water to wet the clothes and soaping them with a bar of laundry soap, she would literally beat the clothes in the tub with her fists to remove the dirt. This is done in a kneeling or sitting position. After several more rinsings and beatings the clothes are adjudged clean and the woman rises to return home. Since her skirt has been in contact with the ground, she shakes it to remove any dirt or grass.

46. <i>bābī</i>	<i>vākī</i>	<i>jal</i>	<i>bharī</i>
S S	S S		S
anthill	his	water	filled
<i>ūpar</i>	<i>bārī</i>	<i>āg</i>	
S	S S	S	
on top	lit	fire	
<i>jabai</i>	<i>bajāī</i>	<i>bāsurī</i>	
	SS	S S	
whenever	played	flute	
<i>nikalā</i>	<i>kālā</i>	<i>nāg</i>	
S	SS	S	
came out	black	snake	

"His anthill is full of water, a fire is burning on top of it, (and still) whenever the flute is played, the black snake comes out."

— *hukkā*

— hookah ("hubble-bubble")

In this very popular riddle, the anthill is the container in which the water for cooling the smoke is placed. This container, like the anthill, is round at the base, rising to a single peak. Above it is a hollow pipe (of cane or bamboo), and above this is the *chilam*, a funnel-shaped container in which the tobacco is burned. Thus a fire is burning on top of an anthill full of water. From the hollow pipe leading from the water container runs another pipe. This one is somewhat longer, and it is through this pipe that the smoker inhales the smoke. The inhalation causes the water to bubble and the black smoke to appear. Thus "playing the flute" makes the "black snake" come out.

According to Archer Taylor, an earlier reported Hindi version of this widespread riddle has the pipe as the black snake. Clearly, however, it is the smoke which is referred to as the snake. A clever feature of this snake-charmer riddle is the fact that anthills are believed to be the abode of snakes. Flute-playing is a traditional means of enticing snakes, not only domesticated snakes in street shows, but also to capture untamed snakes at large in the woods.³⁴

Nineteen riddles in *dohā* meter have been presented; each has four *padas*, thus a total of seventy-six *padas* have been shown. As previously mentioned (see riddle 28), the first and third *padas* in *dohā* meter have *mātrā gaṇa* breakdowns of six, four, and three. In the nineteen riddles presented, all of the first and third *padas* (thirty-eight lines in all) have this prescribed pattern. The second and fourth *padas* in *dohā* meter are supposed to have a six, four, one breakdown. Sixteen of the nineteen riddles (thirty-two lines) conform to this rule. In riddles 40, 41, and 43 there is some deviation from this in one *pada*. Here the total is the "correct" eleven *mātrās*, but the prescribed breakdown is absent. In riddles 40 and 41 (which are actually two versions of the same riddle) the initial *gaṇa* of the second *pada* does not end with the sixth *mātrā* as it should. Instead, it ends with the seventh *mātrā*. In riddle 43 the same discrepancy occurs in the fourth *pada*. In these three riddles it is only one *pada* which differs from the ideal *dohā* form. The other *padas* in these riddles conform perfectly. Certainly the fact that 73 out of a total of 76 riddles *padas* follow

³⁴ For parallels to this riddle, see Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition*, op. cit., p. 595-598.

perfect *dohā* form is a remarkable indication of the stability of this meter. The folk do not consciously count in *gaṇas* or *mātrās*, but apparently the metrical structure is culturally binding all the same.

The question of the relationship between possible combinations of *mātrās* and actual combinations of *mātrās* cannot be answered with any degree of accuracy. However, even this small corpus of nineteen *dohā* riddles is sufficient to indicate several trends. The possible combinations of *mātrās* in *gaṇas* of six, four, and three *mātrās* will be listed below, followed by the number of times the particular combination actually occurred in the nineteen riddle corpus. In addition, the frequency of occurrence will be compared to a similar statistical count of *dohā mātrā-gaṇa* combinations made in written as opposed to oral tradition. Bhola Shanker Vyas, in his edition of the Prakrit treatise on metrics, *Prākṛita-Paṅgalam*³⁵ noted all the verses in *dohā* meter in the treatise (used to describe meters, *dohā* and others) and counted the frequency of occurrence of *mātrā-gaṇa* in them. Certain combinations of *mātrās* within *gaṇa* divisions appear to be more popular than others. For example, in the six-*mātrā gaṇas*, thirty-two out of seventy-three examples begin and end with long vowels (SSS, S||S). This may be compared to ten out of seventy-three which begin and end with short vowels. Forty-four begin with a long vowel, while twenty-nine begin with a short vowel. Fifty-one end with a long vowel, while twenty-two end with a short vowel. From similar data in the four-*mātrā gaṇas*, it would appear that ending a four or six-*mātrā gaṇa* with a long vowel is more popular than ending it with a short vowel. The three-*mātrā gaṇas* abundantly confirm this tendency, with thirty-six out of thirty-eight examples ending with a long vowel. Of course, the other thirty-eight *padas* (the second and fourth *padas* of each riddle) end with a short vowel as dictated by the requirements of *dohā* meter (6, 4, 1).

As for the comparison of folk with literary distribution of *mātrā-gaṇa* combinations, it is interesting that the two most popular folk combinations in the four-and six-*mātrā gaṇas* were the same. The absence of a particular combination is just as obvious. Thus,

³⁵ 2 Vols. (Varanasi 1959, 1962), Vol. II, pp. 541-542.

in the four-*mātrā* combinations the sequence of a short vowel, long vowel, and short vowel (|S|) did not occur in the riddle corpus and occurred rarely in the literary sample. The principal difference between the folk and literary utilization of possible *mātrā* combinations concerns extensive use of sequences of short vowels. The folk do not appear to use such sequences, whereas literary authors do.

Possible Combinations of Six <i>Mātrās</i>	Times Used in Riddle Corpus	Times Used in Prakrit
SSS	18	22
SS	8	13
S S	6	0
S S	14	44
S	5	19
SS	3	1
S S	5	19
S	1	10
SS	3	16
S	2	17
S	2	0
S	4	12
	2	15
Total	73	188

Possible Combinations of Four <i>Mātrās</i>	Times Used in Riddle Corpus	Times Used in Prakrit
SS	39	34
S	24	117
S	0	1
S	8	16
	2	12
Total	73	180

Combinations of Three <i>Mātrās</i> in the Odd <i>padas</i>	Times used in Riddle Corpus	Times used in Prakrit
S	0	0
S	36	13
	2	77
Total	38	90

(Final vowel in all second and fourth *padas* is short.)

Another salient characteristic of *dohā* meter, as defined by literary metricists, concerns the number of short vowels used in the total of forty-eight *mātrās* in the four *padas*. In essence, the fewer the short vowels, the better the *dohā*. Since folk poetry is frequently denigrated by students of written literature on the basis of such literary features as meter (often without actually examining folk materials), it may be of interest to see how well or how poorly the oral riddles in *dohā* meter fare when measured by such standards. If the total of short vowels is twelve or less, the *dohā* verse qualifies as *brāhmaṇī dohā*; if the total is between thirteen and twenty-two, inclusive, it is called *kshatriyā*; between twenty-three and thirty-two the verse is *vaishya*; and verses with over thirty-three short vowels are considered *shūdrā*. The parallel between the names for the hierarchy of quality in meter construction and the *varṇa* names for the traditional four ranked orders of society is an interesting example of the extension of principles of social organization into literary aesthetics. There is even a poetic analogue for the "outcaste" or "untouchable" social category, *chāṇḍālānī*. If any of the four-*mātrā gaṇas* contains the sequence short-long-short (|S|), the *dohā* verse is called *chāṇḍālānī*, which is to say that it falls outside the range of desirable form. According to this classification the riddles in this corpus are:

Riddle Number	Number of Long Vowels	Number of Short Vowels	Name	Category
1.	13	22	<i>madakala</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
2.	15	18	<i>nara</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
3.	16	16	<i>karabha</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
4.	13	22	<i>madakala</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
5.	16	16	<i>karabha</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
6.	16	16	<i>karabha</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
7.	13	22	<i>madakala</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
8.	14	20	<i>markaṭa</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
9.	17	14	<i>markaṭa</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
10.	19	10	<i>shyena</i>	<i>brāhmaṇī</i>

11.	15	18	<i>nara</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
12.	18	12	<i>maṇḍūka</i>	<i>brāhmaṇī</i>
13.	16	16	<i>karabha</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
14.	14	20	<i>marālā</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
15.	19	10	<i>shyena</i>	<i>brāhmaṇī</i>
16.	17	14	<i>markaṭa</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
17.	15	18	<i>nara</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
18.	17	14	<i>markaṭa</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>
19.	17	14	<i>markaṭa</i>	<i>kshatriyā</i>

Total: *brāhmaṇī dohā*, 3

kshatriyā dohā, 16

No examples of *vaishyā*, *shūdrā*, or *chāṇḍālānī*

It should be clear then that even by the somewhat artificial standards for good *dohā* meter, the meter of these folk riddles rates as excellent. Only examples of *dohā* or high *varṇa* are present in this corpus.

III. Riddles in *vishama* meter

In *vishama* meters the four *padas* do not have equal weight (as in *sama-mātrika* meters), nor are there any first-third or second-fourth *pada* pairs (as in *ardha-sama-mātrika*). In *vishama*, or unequal-weight meters, each *pada* can in theory have its own *mātrā* count. However, more commonly there is some consistency among *padas*. For example, three lines may have one weight, while the final line has another (cf. riddle 49). Strictly speaking, if two *padas* in a verse exemplify one *sama-mātrika* meter and the other two *padas* exemplify a different *sama-mātrika* meter, the complete four-line verse would be considered *vishama*, not *sama-mātrika*. This would be the case, for example, with riddle 14, which is technically in the *vishama* category.

47. *Karimakarabhuja* and *chaupāī*. For descriptions of these two *sama-mātrika* meters, see riddles 1 and 2 above. One might

want to consider this riddle as simply an example of *Chaupāī* in which the first half of the first *pada* is missing.

<i>chha</i>	<i>pāy</i>	<i>chhapkī</i>		
	S	S		
six	leg	lizard		
<i>ghar</i>	<i>kan</i>	<i>khāy</i>	<i>parosan</i>	<i>lapkī</i>
		S	S	S
home	of	eaten	neighbor	dashes

"A six-legged lizard, having eaten the members of its family, dashed to the neighbors."

—*tarājū*
—scale (balance)

The six-legged lizard refers to the balance scale, the legs being the cords suspending the scales from the bar (cf. riddle 21). Balance scales are in great demand, especially in those areas where barter in kind is commonly practiced. Not all families possess a scale of their own; furthermore, these scales come in a variety of sizes, appropriate for a variety of goods, and few families in any case own scales of all sizes. For this reason, these scales are frequently being borrowed and lent from one household to another. Naturally, the scale would be used by the owner before he allowed it to leave his premises. He would "feed" the scale by placing on it the goods to be weighed—commonly a quantity of grain (which makes the metaphor of "eating" most appropriate). Then he may lend it to other households.

48. *Sarasī* and *dohā*. For a description of these meters, see riddles 20 and 28.

<i>goy</i>	<i>mararkai,</i>	<i>sāp</i>	<i>sararkai,</i>	<i>nāhariyā</i>	<i>dakrāy</i>	
S	S	S	S	S S	S	
ray	breaks under pressure	snake	glides	tigress	cries	
<i>sunīyo</i>	<i>rājā</i>	<i>bhoj</i>	<i>yah,</i>	<i>kon</i>	<i>jināvar</i>	<i>jāy</i>
S	S S	S		S	S	S
listen	King	Bhoj	this,	which	animal	goes

"The ray breaks under the pressure, the snake glides and the tigress roars. Listen, oh King Bhoj, what animal is this?"

—*charas*
—leather bucket
(used to draw water for irrigation)

This riddle is based upon an important agricultural technique. It concerns drawing water from a well into adjacent irrigation ditches. A leather bucket full of water is pulled to the top of the well by a team of bullocks. When the bucket is at the top, a man tips it towards him and then places his right foot on top of the bucket to help push it over. Emptied, the bucket collapses. Here, the bucket is the ray which breaks under the (foot's) pressure. The rope, which is tied at one end to the bucket and at the other to the bullock's yoke, is the snake. When the bucket is being emptied, the man emptying it may signal to his companion handling the bullock team, directing him to release his end of the rope. The emptied bucket is then thrown down the well again, its weight causing the rope to come sliding along the ground towards the well (the "gliding" of the snake). After the release of the rope from the yoke, the man in charge of the bullocks may whip the team to head them back towards the well, in order to harness them again for raising another bucket of water. This whipping may result in a bellow or two from the bullocks, thus the "roar" of the "tigress" in the riddle.

King Bhoj is a legendary king, who delighted in visiting his subjects incognito. He disguised himself in order to learn about the welfare of his people. Here in turn, perhaps, the people are disguising something in their life from the king. The man from the royal court, wise as he is, may not be familiar with the mechanics of rural daily life. The name of King Bhoj, along with the names of other legendary kings, frequently appears in riddles and other forms of Hindi folklore.

49. *Mahānubhāvā* and *mangalāvātī*. For a description of the first meter, see riddle 6. The second meter, *mangalāvātī*, is an eight-*mātrā* with a five and three breakdown.

<i>yāhu</i>	<i>nāy</i>	<i>vāhu</i>	<i>nāy</i>
S	S	S	S
here	not	there	not

<i>rājā</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>des</i>	<i>nāy</i>
S S	S	S	S
king	of	country	not

<i>sakal</i>	<i>supārīyā</i>	<i>mē</i>
	S S S	S
whole	betel-nut	in

<i>guthaliyā</i>	<i>nāy</i>
S	S
pit	not

"Not here, not there, nor in the king's country. In the whole betel-nut there is no pit."

— *olā*

— hailstone

The first part of the riddle alludes to the fact that hailstones are not found on the earth. The betel-nut is a round, very hard nut.

From these few examples of *viṣhama* riddles, one is tempted to speculate that the slightly over-long first two lines (over-long, that is, with respect to the last two lines) may be the result of achieving internal rhyme. For example, in riddle 48 the *mararkai sararkai* rhyme, and in riddle 49 the rhyme *yāhu nāy vāhu nāy*.

It should be pointed out that the folk, unlike literary perfectionists in poetic composition, do not always compose riddles of two or four *padas*. There are a number of riddles in this corpus which consist of only one *pada*. Obviously in such cases such an extra-metrical characteristic as rhyme cannot occur.

50. *Chaupāī*. For a description of this meter, see riddle 12.

<i>bhāis</i>	<i>bhajādī</i>	<i>gobar</i>	<i>duh</i>	<i>lo</i>
S	S S	S		S
buffalo	chased away	dung	milk	take

"The buffalo is chased away; now milk the dung."

— <i>shahad</i>	<i>kī</i>	<i>makkhī</i>	<i>aur shahad</i>
honey	of	fly	and honey

— honey-bee and honey

The water-buffalo, a domesticated animal, is used as a source of milk. Its dung is used for fuel and for fertilizer. Milking dung, however, is clearly a profitless venture. In India, the honey-bee is black, as is the water-buffalo, and the honey is conceived of as the excrement of the bee.³⁶

51. *Chaupāī*. For a discussion of this meter, see riddle 9.

<i>tīn</i>	<i>akshar</i>	<i>kā</i>	<i>merā</i>	<i>nām</i>
S	S	S	S	S
three	syllable of		my	name

<i>ult</i>	<i>śīdhā</i>	<i>ek</i>	<i>samān</i>
S S	SS	S	S
reversed	straight	one	equal/alike

<i>ātā</i>	<i>hū</i>	<i>khāne</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>kām</i>
SS	S	SS	S	S
coming	am	eating	of	work

"My name is a three-syllable word. It is the same whether you read it backwards or forward. I am meant to be eaten."

— *dāldā*

— Dalda

(a brand of vegetable shortening)

This riddle consists of three *padas* in *chaupāī* meter. Since written Hindi employs a syllabic orthographic system (called *devanāgarī*), rather than a system of letters like English, the first clue is in terms of syllables. The riddle type is, however, analogous to letter riddles in English.³⁷ The palindrome clue further limits the possibilities to such words as, for example, *jahāj* ("ship"), *rabar* ("rubber"). The final clue concerning the object edibility poses a further limitation. The answer is a popular brand of vegetable shortening used in cooking.

³⁶ Cf. Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition*, *op. cit.*, p. 138, no. 407.

³⁷ Taylor, "The Varieties of Riddles," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

52. *Atibaravai*. For a description of this meter see riddle 26.

<i>dūd̥h</i>	<i>kī</i>	<i>nā</i>	<i>mūt</i>	<i>kī</i>
S	S	S	S	S
milk	of	nor	urine of	
<i>ṭhādī</i>	<i>chuchyāy</i>			
S S	S			
standing	drips			

"It is good neither for milk nor for urine, yet it stands and drips."

— *chhappar*

— thatched-roofed hut

This riddle looks like half of an *ardha-sama-mātrika* riddle. But there are no third or fourth *padas*. A most interesting feature of this riddle is the ingenious use of a proverb within the riddle. The first *pada*, by itself, is a proverb, used in reference to something which is useless (not being good even for urine is meant facetiously). The proverb seems to suggest the two obvious possible answers (cow or buffalo), but at the same time it eliminates them.

On the basis of the material and analysis we have presented here, we feel justified in claiming that Hindi folk poetry does possess clear-cut metrical patterning. Literary academicians in India have tended to argue that folk poetry lacks systematic metrics. The folk are thought to pay little or no attention to metrical factors in composing poetry. It is not our contention that Hindi riddlers are necessarily conscious of the elaborate and complex metrical features present in their riddles, but only that the metrical features themselves are empirically demonstrable through the kind of analysis we have undertaken and hence are indisputably present in this oral genre. It is indeed doubtful that the folk have any great insight into folk metrics as a systematic science. While some are familiar with the names of certain popular folk meters (which have literary analogue as described herein), they are hardly conversant with the variety and complexities of literary metrics, even though the application of metrical principles is quite evident in the riddles analysed here.

By emphasizing metrical features in these riddles, we have unfortunately been unable to give adequate attention to other textural features of this poetic genre, such as alliteration, assonance, and a whole variety of figures of speech. A full-fledged rhetorical investigation of all of these features of Hindi riddle language would be well worth undertaking, and our study has admittedly a narrow focus from this perspective. On the other hand, the detail required for the examination of just one element of prosody, namely metrics, may give one pause.

It is our hope that our delineation of the metrical characteristics of Hindi riddles may encourage studies of the metrics of other genres of Hindi folklore as well. If riddles demonstrate metrical patterning, surely sung genres, such as *hoṛī*, *bhajan*, *malhor*, and others could be similarly analyzed with profit³⁸.

One question which must await such research is the relationship, if any, of the Hindi riddle metric patterns to the metrical patterning in other genres. Some of the meters discussed here, for example the *dohā*, are certainly to be found in folksong. It is quite likely that metrical patterns are part of a folk poetic system in a particular language rather than peculiar to a single genre of folk poetry.

Ideally there should also be studies undertaken of comparative metrics across language lines. This is of particular concern as we are dealing in India with folk traditions sharing in common an elite literary tradition with a highly developed and scientific approach toward metrics. Important questions to be asked would be: What are the similarities and differences, if any, between Hindi riddle metrics and the metrics of riddles in other Indo-Aryan languages, on the one hand, and non-Indo-Aryan (e.g., Dravidian, Munda) languages on the other? Are there distinctive North Indian as opposed to South Indian metrical patterns? Or are there certain pan-Indian metrical patterns to be found in folk poetry of the various language families? Answers to these questions must of course await similar analyses of other riddle corpora in

³⁸ A collection of 59 *malhor* texts together with a discussion of their metrical pattern may be found in Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Malhor: A Type of Work Song in Western Uttar Pradesh, India," *Asian Folklore Studies* 29 (1970), pp. 251-274.

India. Once such detailed studies of particular genres have been made, it will be possible to undertake a truly comparative study of folk metrics. Meillet has tried to show the Indo-European origin of classical Greek meters.³⁹ In similar fashion it may one day be possible to show historical relationships between apparently disparate folk metrical systems and between these and the literary metrics of Sanskrit and Prakrit poetry. In any case, intensive metrical studies of folklore are bound to illuminate and enhance man's total comprehension of his poetic products.

³⁹ Antoine Meillet, *Les origines indo-européennes des mètres grecs* (Paris 1923).

5

Panjabi Riddles from the West Coast of the U.S.A.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century a small migration began from the Indian subcontinent to the West Coast of the United States and Canada. This migration continued for the next thirty years, bringing several thousand immigrants to this area; however, many returned to their place of origin after a few years abroad. The Immigration Laws of 1924 prohibited further immigration of Indians into the United States, and therefore the influx of these migrants was severely curtailed until after the Second World War, except for illegal entrants and those who could enter on student visas. In 1946 these immigration restrictions were relaxed and the flow of Indians and Pakistanis was resumed. The fact that the quota for each country was set at one hundred a year means, however, that this flow remained small until the 1960s.

I collected the riddles which I shall discuss from persons of Indian origin in Yuba City and El Centro, California, during 1965. The language of the riddles is Panjabi, which is spoken by approximately twenty-eight million people in northwestern India and in Pakistan, and which is the mother tongue of most of the Indian settlers in these towns in California. The majority of my informants were elderly people, although some were in their twenties and thirties. All were India-born. Most are engaged in agriculture, but a few are students or employed in other occupations.

Since all the riddles in this collection were brought from India, it would not be out of place to discuss briefly the background of the Indian art of riddling. Riddles have been used in India since ancient times. Reference has been made to their use in ritual as early as the Rig Vedic period,¹ and the ceremonial use of

¹ Archer Taylor, *The Literary Riddle Before 1600* (Berkeley, 1948), pp. 13-17.

riddles at the rites of passage has been described by several authorities on folk literature.²

The use of riddles as amusement is mentioned in such literary works as *Kādambarī* by Bāṇa (seventh century A.D.)³ and in works on the arts, such as Vatsyayana's *Kāma Sūtra*.⁴ The merits of the riddle form are discussed in the epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*,⁵ and its literary value has been assessed in such works on poetics as *Kāvyaadarsha* by Dandi.⁶ The earliest collection of secular folk riddles in a modern Indian language are the Hindi riddles of Amir Khusro, a thirteenth-century writer.⁷ Many of the riddles of Khusro are still popular among the folk of northern India.

Few studies of modern Panjabi riddles are available. Some collections have been made, the most important of them by M. S. Randhava in his book *Panjābī Lok Gīt* ("Panjabi Folk Songs"),⁸ where 117 texts, in Panjabi only, are given. The ten riddles collected by M. B. Emeneau and Archer Taylor are printed in English translation without the original texts.⁹ These ten riddles are the only ones accompanied by extensive comments.

Three words are used in the texts and by informants to refer to riddles. The two used in the texts are *kath* and *bāt*, both of which in other contexts mean "tale" or "saying" also. *Kathā* (equivalent to the Panjabi *kath*) and *bāt* are also used in the Hindi-speaking area of India. However, in Hindi *kathā* means a religious story. *Bāt* means both "riddle" and "tale" or "story," and also has several other meanings, such as "thing" and "matter"

(e.g., *kyā bāt hai?* "what is the matter?"). In the Panjabi texts I also found the diminutive form *kathollī* used; this usage is not found in the languages of the surrounding area. The informants used the word *bāt* for "riddle", but sometimes qualified this term with the adjective *bujjhanvālī*, from the verb *bujjhanā*, "to ask, guess, solve." Thus a tale in which a solution is asked is a riddle.

Informants also used the term *bujhārtā* for riddle, as does Randhava.¹⁰ This word comes from *bujjhanā* also.

It is an interesting phenomenon that the words for tale and riddle are the same in many Indian languages. This reflects their functional identity, the fact that they are used in the same setting and for a similar purpose. In the evenings, after dark, children gather around their mother or more commonly their grandmother; later, when they are older, young people come together in their own groups, to tell tales and ask riddles. The fact that riddles are most frequently exchanged between people of the same age and generation or between the generations of grandparents and grandchildren throws some light on a prevailing cultural pattern of freedom and intimacy between persons two generations removed which does not obtain between persons of adjacent generations. Moreover, the appropriateness of riddling with the grandmother reflects the more formal relationship of children with their elder male kin. In many dialects children use the formal forms of address to their male relatives of ascending generations, while the informal or intimate forms are used with female relatives. It is also suggestive that no married woman in her husband's home (patrilocal residence being the rule in north India) would pose a riddle to an elder affine, male or female, unless she does so through a child.

In the setting of California, these customary patterns no longer hold. But riddling itself is less frequent among the young people and children in the California Panjabi community. The older people still take great pleasure in riddling and show much enthusiasm in riddle sessions; the younger generation, particularly those born in the United States, do not share this feeling, although they may enjoy riddling if drawn for some reason to engage in it.

¹⁰ P. 553.

² Durga Bhagwat, *An Outline of Indian Folklore* (Bombay, 1958), pp. 43-48, and "The Riddle in Indian Life, Lore and Literature," *Folklore* 4 (1963): 63-67; Verrier Elwin, "A Note on the Use of Riddles in India," *Man in India* 23 (1943): 318-319.

³ Trans. C. M. Ridding (Bombay, 1956), p. 71.

⁴ Chap. 1 describes 64 arts for women, no. 27 being riddle art.

⁵ *The Mahābhārata*, 1. 1. 74-83.

⁶ 3. 96-123.

⁷ Braj Ratna Das, *Khusro ki Hindi Kavitā* (Kashi, 1953).

⁸ M. S. Randhava and Devendra Satyarthi, *Panjābī Lok Gīt* (New Delhi, 1960), pp. 553-563.

⁹ "Annamese, Arabic and Panjabi Riddles," *JAF* 58 (1958): 12-20.

The kinship setting in which riddling generally occurs is reflected also in the fact that some riddles use kinship terms either to show the immaturity of the person questioned or to tease him by pretended obscenity. Here again it is feminine kin terms, like *mā* ("mother"), that are used more frequently than are terms for male kin. In times of stress, sickness, or the like, the word *mā* is a frequent exclamation—to call for *mā* shows immaturity, dependence, or the need for comfort or shelter. *Mā* and *bahan* ("sister") are used in the riddles as in colloquial conversation as cursing words also. Depending on the context, the use of these kin terms is an insinuation either that the speaker has had an illicit sexual relationship with the mother or sister of the person addressed or that the person addressed has had incestuous relations with his own mother or sister. To use these words in address implies an intimate relationship or a socially standardized joking relationship between the speaker and the person addressed, and thus the presence of these curse words in the riddles reflects the fact that riddling is considered to be appropriate among intimates or "joking" relatives.

The terms *kuṛī* ("small girl") and *kākkā* ("small boy") are also used frequently in these riddles. Besides showing obvious contradictions in terms of the accomplishments to be achieved by small children, these terms also suggest that riddles, along with folktales, are used to give encouragement to young people for attempting things that might be regarded as being beyond their capacity. In folk stories it is always the youngest son or daughter who is the success, the winner. That these stories are told to young people is one reason why the young heroes always win.

Other cultural values can be studied as they are expressed in the riddles. An example is the preference for light skin. In riddle 13 the desire for a son fairer in color than the father is expressed. Mention of dark-skinned babies occurs only in oppositional phrases, as "even though he is not fair in color, he is loved."

Certain opening formulas recur in Panjabi riddles. One of these is "From the mountains came...." The mountains are close to Panjab; therefore where we find in the plains the phrase "It

came from the fields (*jāgal*)....," the Panjabi version mentions mountains. A similar opening remark is "From outside came...." Making a comparison with something small, some riddles begin with the formula "Such a little girl (boy)..." Another common opener is "I tell you a riddle, I tell you a riddle, to the riddle I attach..." Here a word is supplied which will rhyme with the final word of the second line. This type of set phrase or formula, as Lord would call it,¹¹ is found not only in Panjabi riddles but also in a particular type of Panjabi dance song called *giddhā* or *pindā* in which the opening line begins:

Among the villages is heard a village,

A village is heard...

The blank here is filled with a word rhyming with the second line.¹² A similar riddle-opening formula is found in other parts of India as well. In riddles collected during the summer of 1965 in western Uttar Pradesh, a Hindi-speaking area, the following formula was found in many riddles:

bāt kahū, bāt kahū bāt

riddle I tell, riddle I tell, riddle

Closing formulas sometimes call for punishment if the riddle is not solved. This may involve the loss of something, monetary compensation, or physical punishment, or mental humiliation. One characteristic punishment is the demand for sweets. As I have shown elsewhere, the use of sweets in this culture has far more significance than its consumption as a food would suggest.¹³ Sweets are closely linked in folklore as in cultural perception with pleasurable feelings in general. One is therefore not surprised to find a riddle which closes with the demand for 10 pounds of *gur* (unrefined brown sugar, the staple sweet of peasants in Panjab and northern India) if the riddle is not solved.

After a riddle has been posed, the audience ponders over it. If an answer is slow in coming, the riddler may tease his listeners with such expressions as:

¹¹ Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New York, 1965), pp. 30-67.

¹² See Randhava and Satyarthi, pp. 234-241.

¹³ Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Jane Vatuk, "Chatorpan: A Culturally Defined Form of Addiction in North India," *The International Journal of the Addictions* 2 (1967): 103-113.

ha:r gia:

defeated

"accept defeat! give up!"

bujjhi: ni: gai:

solved not gone

"You couldn't figure it out!"

The listener may ask for clues, with a phrase such as:

kitthe kitthe

whither whither?

To which the riddler typically gives a vague answer like:

itthe utthe

hither thither!

Finally the riddler tells the answer, which may be the source of pleased surprise, for the object of the riddle is so often a thing much seen and used in daily life. If the answer is not clear, however, the riddler may be challenged to explain why the answer is correct, how the object named corresponds to the description contained in the riddle. I observed this in the case of riddle 23, in which the riddler was forced to prove *how* a tongue is higher than a mountain, etc. The riddler in this case could not give a satisfactory answer and in the end he simply said that this was the way he had heard it. Thus tradition in the end was called upon and ultimately provided satisfaction for all the listeners.

Alan Dundes and Robert Georges have shown that structurally riddles may consist of a simple statement or description of an object, or may involve compound statements, one part of which negates the other.¹⁴ The latter type, termed oppositional riddles, are less frequent in my collection than are examples of the nonoppositional type, although this is not necessarily true of Indian riddles in general. It would be possible to analyze this corpus in terms of the structural types outlined by Dundes and Georges, but rather than do this I would refer the reader to the texts themselves and will discuss briefly another structural approach to

¹⁴ "Toward a Structural Definition of the Riddle," *JAF* 76 (1963): 111-118.

the riddles which has particular relevance to the study of riddles in Indian languages. This is the matter of poetic meter.

Riddles in the Indian languages are generally poetic in form, contain a metrical pattern characteristic of nonriddle poetry in the same language and make extensive use of rhyme. Metrics in Panjabi poetry has developed from a number of sources and is more complex than that of Hindi.¹⁵ The primary source has been the metric systems of Persian and Arabic—such Perso-Arabic meters have been used most extensively in Panjabi by Muslim writers, although others have utilized them as well. Poets using these meters have also tended to use a language heavily larded with Perso-Arabic vocabulary, a legacy of the foreign-derived Islamic literary tradition. The Panjabi riddles do not seem to have drawn from this source for their metrical structure. They have similarly neglected to utilize two other metrical systems of indigenous origin which are common in Panjabi poetry: the *vārṇika* and *gaṇa* systems. The former is a syllabic system, where the meter is determined by the overall syllable count. In the latter, syllables are also the unit, but not only are there an equal number of syllables in each line, but their order in terms of short and long syllables is fixed. The metrical system found to be represented in these riddles is the *mātrika* system. Here the unit is an instant or mora (*mātrā*). The so-called "short" vowels (i, u, a) are counted as one *mātrā*. The "long" vowels (ā, e, ī, o, ū, au, ai) and vowels preceding a consonant cluster are counted as two *mātrās*. Each line is divided into feet; thus a line of sixteen *mātrās* may be broken down into seven plus nine or eight plus eight, and so on. Each foot is marked by a poetic caesura. Rhyming is generally end-rhyming and is usually present. Internal rhyming is also frequent, usually in the first line.

The more common meters are named and their identity is known to literary persons, though not to the folk who use them in these riddles. The riddle texts have been arranged according to their metrical structure, and the name of the meter and the metric count has been indicated with each. It may be noted that certain meters have an equal number of *mātrās* in each line, others

¹⁵ For a brief description of the Panjabi metric system, see Kartar Singh, *Panjābi Pingal* (Ludhiana, n.d.), pp. 5-83.

do not. However, if the *mātrās* are distributed unequally, it is usually the case that either the second line has exactly one and one-half times the *mātrā* count of the first, or that the extra *mātrās* are all contained in a single word used at the beginning of the second line, which, if not counted, would leave the two lines exactly equivalent. A number of riddles have three or four lines, but it will be noticed that the bulk have two lines. In the printed collection of Randhava a number of riddles are provided which are over four lines in length, but none of this kind appears in my collection.¹⁶

A single caution should be given with respect to the determination of the *mātrā* count in these or other riddle collections when only the printed source is available. Poetic license allows the composer and reciter to alter vowel length (pronouncing short vowels as long, or long vowels as short) in order to fit the desired words into the metrical scheme he has determined to use. For this reason, it is necessary to hear the riddle (or other poetic selection) being recited in order to be sure what meter is being used. This collection has been made orally and the determination of meter made on this basis—the *mātrā* count may therefore not always correspond to the *written* assortment of vowels. An attempt to count *mātrās* from a printed text may cause difficulties, even to a person closely familiar with Panjabi poetic style, and this difficulty may account for the tendency of many students of Indian folk literature to deny the presence of metrical regularities in various folk genres.¹⁷

One-Line Riddles

1. *tu: chal māi a:ya: du:va:r*
You be on your way and I will follow you. door
2. *ò gia: ò gia: ... nigà:*
Here it goes, there it goes. ... eye-glance
3. *teri: mā: ne khu: lattā: kà kàra:*
Your mother has a well around her legs. skirt

¹⁶ P. 553-563.

¹⁷ For a brief description of this problem, see my "Method and Interpretation in the Study of Folklore in India—A Comment," *The Journal of Indian Anthropological Society* 1 (1966): 155-166.

4. *kukkā: mā:r paha:rō likri: relgaddi:*
She ran out of the mountains with a shriek. ... train
5. *mā: janmi: nā: puttār koṭṭhe te agg da: tūā:*
Mother is not born yet, the son has climbed the roof. ... Fire
and Smoke
[Smoke is compared to a son here. Both are masculine gender in Panjabi. Fire, which is mother, is feminine gender. Fire gives birth to smoke, and yet the smoke is seen first.]
6. *ka:li: chaddar sunairi: bu:ṭṭiyā: ... ratt aka:s*
There is a black shawl with golden embroidery on it. ... night
sky
7. *Chunne di: koṭhari:, darva:ja: koi na: ... a:nḍa:*
There is a room made of white cement which has no entrance.
.... egg
8. *ikk a:dmi: lamma: lamma:, par chhā: koi na: rasta:*
There is a tall tall man which has no shadow. ... path/road
[*lamma:* in Panjabi means 'long', but in the case of a man it also means tall. The path is long, the man is tall. The word *lamma:* satisfies both meanings.]
9. *ra:ni: bujjhe ra:ja: nū: us birachchha da: na: ki: jede*
bin pattiya: de chhā: ... kari:r
The queen asks the king, "What is the name of the tree which gives shade without leaves?" ... bamboo
10. *nha: tōke ba:mhan a: gia: pa:ni: dā: kàra:*
Brahman has come after cleaning himself and after a bath.
... water-jug
[Everyone, but particularly a Brahman, is supposed to take a bath in the morning. When invited to a feast, the Brahman is punctilious about bathing before he comes. The Brahman is compared here with the water-jug, which is always scoured and rinsed thoroughly each morning before being filled with water from the well to be brought home for household use.]
11. *teri: mā: chòte na:l kùle ... chakki:*
Your mother is struggling with a male buffalo. hand
gristmill.

[Grinding of wheat in India is done by women early each morning. The hand gristmill is compared here with male buffalo, as it needs a lot of strength to operate. The word *kulna*: also means to be engaged in sexual enjoyment, and thus this riddle is a pretended obscene riddle. By using mother as the subject, the intensity of the obscenity is increased. However, everyone's mother has to struggle with the gristmill every morning, and this indicates the true solution of the riddle.]

Two-Line Riddles

12. *nikka: jiha: ka:kka:*
ò bu:e da: ra:kkha: ... ta:la:
 A little baby boy
 is the keeper of the gate. lock
13. *kôp'ra : tō kôp'ra:*
betā: ba:p te gora: ... na: riyal
 There is a bowl within the bowl;
 The son is fairer than the father. ... coconut
14. *agg lagi: gu: ra:i:ĩ*
tũā: likrya: butara:ĩ ... hukka:, chilam
 Gurain (village) caught fire;
 The smoke came out in Budhrain (village). ... pipe/hooka
15. *agg lagi: jigara:vē*
tũā: likre bhopare ... hukka:
 Jigrava (village) caught fire;
 Smoke came out in Bhopara (village). ... pipe/hooka
16. *sukka: ũgar dē bare*
kotta: hai banera: nahi ... ũolak
 Dry [dead] wood, big body [fig.: Though skeleton, fat body],
 A room, but no parapet, cylindrical double-ended drum
 [Here unlike most riddles, the listener is expected to be deceived by figurative (but idiomatic) meaning of the phrase in the first line.]

17. *paha:rā: a:i: ũbri:*
chhai lattā: ikk puchchhari: tara:jjū
 A fox came from the mountains,
 (she) has six legs and one tail. balance scale
18. *paha:ra: ae: chōtte*
kadi: ma:re kadi: moṭte charas
 From the mountains came a male buffalo,
 Sometimes weak [thin], sometimes fat, leather bucket for irrigation.
19. *kā: tō kākāri kũma:ve*
chu:ha: ũlki: baja:ve rai:
 The squirrel turns around in her skirt [she dances],
 [And] the mouse plays the drum. ... butter churn
20. *ba:ra: kolu: chhe chu:ga:thā:*
charkhe kadde tinn so sa:thā: ... baras
 There are twelve mills with six frames;
 The turned out 360 spinning wheels. year
 [The Indian year has 360 days.]
21. *ba:rō a:ye do malanga:*
usdi: ṭoppi: usde ranga: bata:ũ:
 From outside came two rogues.
 The hat of the one matches the other. ... eggplant
22. *chitti chitti kukkari: chitte chitte pair*
chal meri: kukkari: sairō sair rupia:
 White hen, white feet:
 Go on, my hen, from city to city. ... (silver) rupee
23. *uchche te uchchā: na: parbat na: paha:r*
sada: mũ: addia: na: giddar na: bakia:r chimṭa:
 It is the highest, but it is not a mountain.
 Its munnth is always open but it is neither a jackal nor a panther. ... tongs

24. *bing tarangi: lakri: uspai baithya: ka:ji:*
piḍ da: sir mundī: da: metā : hogya: ra: ji: belṇa:
 There is an uneven wood, on which sits a [Muslim] judge.
 The head of the sheep is shaved and the ram is happy.
 rolling pin
25. *hari: si: man pāri: si: nolakh moti: jari: si:*
ra:ja: ji: ke ba:g mē dusa:la: lai: khari: si: ... challi:
 I was green, I was happy, decorated with 900,000 pearls
 I stood in my darling's orchard, in my shawl. ... corn
26. *a:r ḍanga: pa:r ḍanga: bichch ṭallam ṭalliyā:*
a:n kunja: deṇ bachche nadi: na:n challyā: ... rahaṭ di: ma:l
 A pole on this side, a pole on that side, in the middle tinkling
 bells;
 The cranes come, give [birth to] children, bathe in the river.
 ... Persian wheel
27. *kath pa:vā: katholli: pa:vā: kath nū la:vā: a:dda:*
potte potte bya:le kua:ra: raigya: da:dda: kumha:r da: chakk
 I tell you a riddle, I tell you a riddle
 To the riddle I attach ginger;
 Grandsons got married,
 [But] grandfather remained a bachelor. potter's wheel
28. *kath pa:vā: katholli: pa:vā: kath nū la:vā: kunde*
sada: kuri: nū bya:n challe chokhutta: de munde.... gāid
 I tell you a riddle, I tell you a riddle—
 To the riddle I attach a latch;
 To marry an ever-virgin girl,
 The boys set out from all directions. ball
29. *add sama:ne goḷa: ḍig gia:, ḍig gia: sir de pa:r*
jadd ò ò nū chi:raṇ lagge, chappa: chappa: ba:l amm
 Right in the middle a bomb fell, fell through the head.
 When they begin to operate on him, every particle became
 hair. ... mango

Four-Line Riddles

30. *pahile baṇi: māi nimm niboli:*
pher baṇi : māi tok ṭikoli:
pher baṇi : māi la:l ba:ṇa :
lok ni chhadde bachcha: kha:na: mirc
 First I became a *niboli* [green],
 Then I became a *dhakoli* [yellow],
 Then I became red-bodied.
 Grown-ups will not leave me, but children will not eat me.
 ... red chili pepper.
31. *ikk chor srinagar te pāggia:*
ka:npur bichch pakria: gia:
hastna: pur bichch mukaddama: hoia:
na:gpur bichch maria: gia: ju:
 A thief ran away from Srinagar,
 Was caught in Kanpur,
 Was tried in Hastnapur,
 Was hanged in Nagpur. louse
 [A head (*sir*) louse caught near the ear (*ka:n*) is placed on
 the palm (*hatt*) and is killed by placing it on the thumb nail
 with a pressure (*nakk*) of another thumb nail. In this riddle
 these parts of the body are used with the suffix *nagar* or *pur*
 ("city"). Of course, there are famous cities with these names.
32. *itthe nahī : utthe nahī:*
ra:ja: de darba:r nahī :
ò chijj kha:uṇi:
jinn bichch chhill nahī:.... gare
 It is not here, it is not there;
 It is not in the king's court.
 Such a thing I want to eat
 Which has no skin. ... hail-stone
33. *neṛe nahī: tarere nahī:*
ba:ḍsa: de ḍere nahī:
è chijj bujjá
jis de bichch getak nahī: ... ola:

It is not near, it is not far;
 It is not in the king's camp.
 Tell me that thing
 Which has no stones. hail stone

Uneven Mātrās

34. *tittar khambi:*
sone rangi:
jeri: meri: ba:t na bujji:
sava: pēli: tāni: ... ann
 It has wings like pheasants;
 It has color of gold.
 If you can not solve my riddle,
 You will have to give a lump of sugar. Wheat stalk
35. *eddi: kuri:*
lai para:nda: turi sui: ta:ga:
 Such a small girl
 Ran with a long yarn braid needle and thread.
36. *ainni: ku kuri:*
sir pai laikai turi: tokari:
 Such a little girl—
 She put it on her head and ran. ... basket
37. *kare pai kara:*
la:l kabuttar khara: ... di:va:
 On the jug there is a jug:
 There the red pigeon stands. earthen lamp
38. *tar tar di: ja:ve*
gin gin a:nde tarti: ja:ve su:i:
 The girl goes brr brr (quickly)
 And lays the eggs counting (systematically). ... needle
39. *itana: ku behua: dab dab karada:*
na: dubbda: na: tarada: ... makkhan chatti: vichch
 Such a tiny bowl makes the noise *dab dab*;
 It neither sinks nor floats. ... butter in the buttermilk

PART III

Folksongs and Culture

6

Craving for a Child In the Folksongs of East Indians in British Guiana

With the abolition of slavery in the British Colonies, a shortage of labor was acutely felt by the owners of sugar plantations in the Caribbean.* The ex-slaves abhorred the work in sugar which they associated so intimately with their former condition of servitude. To replace them, a new system of near-slavery, the indenture system, was instituted.¹ Under this program, 238,960 persons were brought from India to British Guiana between 1838 and 1917.² During and after this period only 75,236 indentured laborers returned to India.³ The remainder either died in bondage or stayed on in the colony after serving their terms of indenture. They and their descendants make up almost half of the British Guianese

*The research on which this paper is based was done with the help of a travel grant from the Colorado State University Research Foundation. I would like to express here my thanks to this institution and particularly to Dr. Maurice Albertson, former Director of the Research Foundation, for his help and encouragement in this project. Thanks also go to Sylvia Vatuk for her assistance in the conception and execution of this paper. The term "East Indians" is used in British Guiana and the Caribbean area to refer to persons who originate from the Indian Sub-Continent, and to distinguish them from the aboriginal American Indian population. In this paper I will use the term "Indian" throughout to refer to the descendants of migrants from India and from what is now Pakistan.

¹ Chief Justice Beaumont, in his book *New Slavery* (London, 1871), called the indenture system "a monstrous, rotten system, based on slavery." Quoted by Peter Ruhomon, *Centenary History of the East Indians in British Guiana 1838-1938* (Georgetown, 1946), p. 118.

² Chandra Jayawardena, *Conflict and Solidarity in a Guianese Plantation* (London, 1963), p.15. For a complete breakdown of the figures, year by year, see Dwarka Nath, *A History of Indians in British Guiana* (Toronto and New York, 1950), pp. 170-180.

³ R. T. Smith and C. Jayawardena, "Marriage and the Family amongst East Indians in British Guiana," *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 8 (1959), 321.

population today, and it is with these people that the present paper will deal.

The data on which this paper is based are some 900 tape-recorded folksongs collected in British Guiana in August and September, 1962. They were collected in various parts of the country from people in many different walks of life, and represent a good sample of the folksongs currently sung by Indians in British Guiana. Most of the singers were themselves migrants, or were descendants of migrants, from Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar, areas where the Bhojpuri dialect of Eastern Hindi is spoken. The songs were sung in this dialect, or, in the case of more recent compositions, in standard Hindi, often with an admixture of English. They were sung by Muslims as well as by Hindus.

The majority of the songs in this collection are songs brought from India by the migrants and retained essentially unchanged until the present time. A smaller number show more recent composition by their content and language. These deal mainly with the trials of the indenture period and the demoralization of modern civilization in British Guiana. As Karve has pointed out,⁴ the Indian folk tradition has been created and preserved mainly by women, and the older songs express overwhelmingly the viewpoint of the fair sex. Only the more recent British Guianese compositions and some Indian religious and festival songs show marks of male authorship. This distinction in the sex of authorship is also significant in a comparison of the content of the older folksongs with the ancient Indian literary tradition, which is also a male vehicle of expression. It may influence the form which the craving for children takes in any particular instance.

From early times, beginning in the Vedic period, the birth of a child, particularly of a son, has been considered necessary for the social and spiritual fulfillment of an Indian man or woman.⁵ Although celibacy has been an important theme throughout Indian tradition, spinsterhood was never encouraged, and most men were expected to take on the duties of a householder for at least a

⁴ Iravati Karve, *Kinship Organization in India* (Poona, 1953), p. 131.

⁵ *Rigveda*, tr. by R. T. H. Griffith (Benaras, 1893), III.16.5; VII.1.11; X.85.45; et al. *Manusmṛiti* (Bombay, 1913), IX.96. *Mahābhārata: Shānti Parva* (Gorakhpur, n. d.), 60.7; et al. Shiv Raj Shastri, *Rigvedik Kāl Me Pārvārik Sambandh* (in Hindi) (Meerut, 1962), p. 164.

certain period of their lives.⁶ For a woman, marriage was an obligatory sacrament: thus if she, by refusing to marry, should refuse to bear legitimate children, she was considered almost sinful.⁷ And in the social arena, the greatest individual achievement and social privilege for a woman was to attain motherhood.⁸

Indian tradition considered it a religious and social duty for a man to father a child.⁹ The belief that through one's children one reincarnates himself and thus secures immortality and salvation is commonly expressed in Indian traditional literature.¹⁰ Through his heir a man could continue the family name and prestige and keep the ritual fire burning.¹¹ Without an heir a man's ancestors would be in peril, for there would be no one to offer the gods *pinḍa* and *shrāddha* (funeral cakes) in their behalf.¹² Many myths relate instances of the most learned and celibate sages being turned back from the gates of heaven for having neglected to secure peace for their ancestors in this way.¹³

The folk tradition echoes this theme. Even in everyday greetings the desire for children is manifested. Elderly ladies in British Guiana, like their Indian counterparts, bless their youngsters with the wish that they prosper through children.¹⁴ At the time of marriage a bride asks, among other things, for a child who will play in her lap and fill her whole house with joy. And in the

⁶ *Manusmṛiti*, VI.87-90. *Mahābhārata: Ādi Parva*, 16.

⁷ *Manusmṛiti*, III.61-62; IX.27,90,93. *Mahābhārata: Shalya Parva*, 52. Shastri, p. 233. Ram Mohan Das, *Women in Manu and his Seven Commentators* (Varanasi, 1962), p. 112. Pandharinath H. Prabhu, *Hindu Social Organization* (Bombay, 1958), pp. 149-150.

⁸ *Mahābhārata: Anushāsana Parva* 105-116. *Rigveda*, X.86.23. Shastri, p. 279.

⁹ *Mahābhārata: Ādi Parva*, 14,228; *Shānti Parva*, 60-67. Shastri, p. 135.

¹⁰ *Mahābhārata: Ādi Parva*, 48, 52, 64, 74, et al. *Rigveda*, V.4.10

¹¹ *Mahābhārata: Ādi Parva*, 228. Prabhu, p. 197.

¹² *Mahābhārata: Ādi Parva*, 14.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, 228; *Shalya Parva*, 52.

¹⁴ Tripathi believes that the blessing "*dūdho nahāo pūtō phalo*" (may you bathe in milk and prosper through children) implies that bathing in milk is a folk medicine used for obtaining children. However, I think that milk is used here in a symbolic sense as a symbol of prosperity and health. See Ram Naresh Tripathi, *Grām Sāhiya* (in Hindi) (Prayag, 1951), p. 67. Also *Rigveda*, X.85.

ceremonies surrounding marriage the older people give her their best wishes for achieving motherhood. The principal aim of marriage is felt to be the creation of children and not just sexual pleasure.¹⁵ Folksongs, particularly those sung on the occasions of birth and marriage, support the literary and folk traditions in this respect.

After marriage, the woman is shown to be dissatisfied until she becomes pregnant. In one song Sita, the womanly ideal of Hindu society, complains to her mother-in-law that due to the negligence of the latter's son she—Sita—still wears her clothes tight. This is all the more painful because—according to the song—she comes from a large family of seven brothers and many nephews. She returns for a visit to her natal home to play with her brothers' children. However, as she has not yet proved her own marriage successful by bearing a child, the earth sinks wherever she walks and she does not feel welcome for long even in her natal home.

In another song, Sita is heard lamenting to her husband, Rama:

What difference does it make, oh Rama,
If you stay home or go abroad.
I have seen neither a mango nor a mango blossom,
I have not worn a red *sāñī*, nor have I sat on the
pūjā seat.
Not a single desire has been fulfilled.

Here the mango symbolizes a child; the mango blossom is an unborn child. On the occasion of birth a woman wears red or yellow clothing as she performs the worship (*pūjā*) of God. Later in the same song, Rama replies:

"What difference does it make if you stay here,
Or go to your natal home?
Not a single tender babe have you borne,
Not a single time have I had the joy of hearing the
sohar songs."

(*Sohar* refers to the songs sung at the time of birth.)

¹⁵ *Mahābhārata: Shānti Parva*, 61.10 *Rigveda*, X.85.27, 36, 42. Shastri, p. 278.

Many songs describe the plight of a couple who have a home full of silver but who also have empty hearts because they lack a son. In one lament a woman cries that it is of no use to have a house full of nephews and nieces when she has no children of her own. Her co-wife's child is no consolation, for he will not carry her through the river of the world after death.

In the classical literature it is generally the men who are shown to be concerned about the birth of a child and they are the ones who perform austerities and penances in their desire for progeny.¹⁶ This is perhaps because of the male authorship of this literature. Prominent among the rituals intended to increase fertility was the sacrifice called the *putreshti yajna*.¹⁷

In the folksongs, however, it is the woman who is moved to action by her failure to conceive. She promises to serve her in-laws faithfully and to win over her husband's sister with kindness. She asks her husband to dig a well and plant fruit trees for passers-by so that, having eaten the fruit, the travelers will bless them with children. She asks him also to plant ivy and water it regularly, so that with its blessing the family will spread as does the ivy. She is pictured eating coconut, a fruit which mythologically is supposed to fulfill all desires. She worships many gods, goes on pilgrimages to sacred places, and goes through certain fasts prescribed by religion.

The home where a son has just been born is described in the folksongs as containing a scene of extreme joy. The child's paternal grandmother, usually a stern figure, is wild with happiness and distributes jewelry, gold, silver, cows, and uncounted cash with abandon. The father's sister dances as she fetches the water, and the midwife joyfully fights for her reward. Of course, the proudest character in the drama is the mother herself. As she declares in one song:

My life is fulfilled, oh friend, today my life is fulfilled.
I served my husband in a golden plate and he ate with
great dignity.

¹⁶ The *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyana* and *Raghuvarsha* of Kalidas contain numerous examples.

¹⁷ C. R. Rajagopalachari, *Rāmāyana* (Bombay, 1963), pp. 17-18.

In a golden jug I served him Ganges water, which he drank with great dignity.

I gave him betel leaves with cardamom, which he chewed with great dignity.

I prepared his bed with flowers; with great dignity he slept.

Oh friend, today my life is fulfilled.

In another song, a new mother says to her husband's sister:

Whatever you will ask, oh *nanad*, I will give you.

Just sing the *mangal* song [an auspicious song].

There is little doubt that the birth of a son is preferred to that of a daughter,¹⁸ and the songs which express joy at childbirth generally assume the birth of a son. In fact, at the birth of a daughter among Indians in British Guiana, as in India, the prolonged singing which marks the birth of a male child is omitted. Occasionally in these folksongs we find open hostility toward the birth of a daughter. A man tells his wife he will leave her if she gives birth to a girl; this accords well with the rulings of the ancient lawmakers who permitted a wife to be superseded if she bore only daughters.¹⁹ On the birth of a daughter, the songs describe the new father shuddering and trembling, instead of expressing joy. There is no distribution of jewels and wealth, no insistence from the *nanad* or *dhāya* (midwife) for a reward, no singing or ceremony. The husband who had promised his wife a new dress after the birth of their child, now threatens to take a second wife.

The reason for this attitude in the folksongs seems in part to be the belief that it is only a son who can continue the family line and appease the gods on behalf of the ancestors.²⁰ The social liability represented by a daughter is, however, also stressed. The girl is described in the songs as a guest of the family, belonging to someone else, a bird waiting for her wings to grow before she

¹⁸ *Atharvaveda*, tr. by R. T. H. Griffith (Benaras, 1896), III.2.32. *Mahābhārata: Adi Parva*, 173.10. Das, p. 43. See also Burton Benedict, *Indians in a Plural Society* (London, 1961), p. 94.

¹⁹ *Manusmṛti*, IX.81.

²⁰ *Mahābhārata: Anuśāsana Parva*, 125.

flies away. She is of no help in one's old age (because she is then living in her husband's home and has the duty of caring for her parents-in-law), and no spiritual benefit can derive from her birth. She must be cared for and protected until maturity, and then the serious problem of her marriage looms ahead. A suitable husband must be found, the amount of the dowry settled, and a marriage feast provided. And then the parents must worry about the treatment of their daughter in her new home. One example may illustrate the concern felt by the parents of a daughter:

Above a room on the sixth story

There is a small room on the seventh story of the palace.

There the beloved bride and her father are sleeping.

The marriage party is approaching, and the bride wants to wake her father.

"Wake up, father, what a sleep you are sleeping.

The party is approaching."

"I am somewhat asleep, somewhat awake, oh daughter.

How can I sleep with a young unmarried daughter, oh sweet?

Lucky are those who have given birth to a son,

Who head the marriage party, riding a horse, with a golden umbrella over the head.

But unfortunate are those who give birth to a daughter.

Even if you have made jewelry worth millions,

It is never enough."

The father of the bride always remains in a somewhat subordinate position to the groom's father before and after the ceremony. As in the *Mahābhārata*,²¹ so also in the folksongs he and his relatives tremble before the marriage is completed, hoping that nothing will go wrong with the arrangements. In one illustrative song, the groom's party, consisting of many elephants, horses, vehicles and so on, is too large for the bride's family to accommodate, and so is the demand for dowry. The girl is so grieved that she refuses to marry at all.

²¹ *Mahābhārata: Sabhā Parva*, 119.35-36.

However, the lot of an issueless couple is far worse even than that of the parents of a daughter. A woman suffers especially from the stigma of barrenness, and it is generally assumed in these songs that failure to conceive is due to some inadequacy, physical or spiritual, on the part of the woman. Many songs express the belief that the sight of a barren woman is an inauspicious omen. Her face should not be looked upon in the morning, nor should her shadow fall upon children. She is compared to a snake, whose embrace may destroy a family. Her failure to conceive makes her responsible for the extinction of the family lamp and the bringing of darkness into the home. She is shown in the songs to be continually tortured by her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law (that is, her husband's sisters). Her husband's brothers' wives want to prevent her from having a role in the management of the joint family, for fear that her barrenness may cause her to treat their children unfairly. She is called *braj bāsin* (a nun), and her husband threatens to bring home a second wife. In one song (which again utilizes part of the tale of Rama, as do a great number of these folksongs) King Dasharath is informed that his newborn child will bring misery and even death to him. Here it is meant that when Rama is grown he will have to go into exile, thus causing his father's heartbreak. The King comforts his wife with the thought that at least the blot of her previous barrenness will have been erased.

Queen Kaushalya writes a message; King Dasharath reads.

"Oh King, when Rama attains the age of twelve he will be banished to the forest."

The King comes to reassure her:

"Oh Rani, even if it is true,

The curse of barrenness is washed away.

Let us love and embrace Rama."

In another song a woman urges a carpenter to carve a child out of wood; she will set it up in the back yard and love it as a real child.

If nothing else succeeds, it is often felt, according to the songs, that such a woman would rather take her own life than to live in social disgrace.

Amidst the high waves of Mother Ganges a woman weeps.

"Oh, Mother Ganges, engulf me in your waves."

"Are you tortured by your parents-in-law, or is your natal home far away?

Oh woman, has your husband gone to another land?

What makes you weep like that?"

"I am not tortured by my in-laws, nor is my natal home far away,

Nor has my husband gone to another land.

Oh, Mother Ganges, my lap is empty.

I cry of the pain of my womb.

I am sad and unfulfilled."

In another song a woman tries to commit suicide, but a lioness refuses to devour her, a snake to bite her, and the earth to cover her. All are afraid that her touch will make them barren too.

The curse of barrenness also has repercussions for the man of such a marriage. The belief is expressed in song that a childless man will be reborn as a poisonous snake after his death, causing untold trouble for others. In one song a woman of the sweeper caste tells her husband that it is inauspicious for them, untouchables, to see the face of the issueless king in the morning.

The songs discussed here present a picture of a strongly patrilineal society, characterized by patri-local joint families containing as many as three generations in one household. Monogamy appears the rule, although polygyny is permitted, especially in cases of failure to produce children or sons. A strong dowry system is indicated by the songs, with higher status accorded to wife-takers than wife-givers. Within the household the bride is subservient to her husband's parents, particularly to her mother-in-law. This subservience becomes less onerous when she succeeds in bearing a child, preferably a male.

The songs also place stress on the importance of an after-existence, in whatever way this may be conceived, and in the

continuance of lines of relationship through males. The general social disapproval of childlessness cannot be divorced from religious disapproval. In failing in her social duty to propagate the race, the barren woman fails in her spiritual duty to her husband and his ancestors. She is therefore inauspicious; she is possessed of a negative supernatural power which can cause, through sight or touch, the same socio-religious misfortune in others.

All possible ritual means are exhausted by the women of the folksongs to attain motherhood: little search for a physical source of difficulty is evidenced. Without success in the primary aim of existence for a woman in this society, suicide may be the best recourse.

It is an interesting question how far these folksongs and the society they describe help us to appreciate the actual society of the British Guianese Indians who sing them. The songs differ little, if at all, from their Indian originals and therefore seem to imply that the society of Indians in British Guiana, at least in regard to family structure and values concerning the family, retains many features of Indian society. The work that has been done in this area, notably by Smith and Jayawardena,²² indicates that much of the family structure and many of the values expressed in these songs remain valid for British Guianese Indian life today. But certainly there is the need for further research into this problem, into the problem of the persistence of Indian social structure and values in overseas communities, and into the general problem of the role of folksongs as carriers of cultural values and reflectors of cultural reality.

TEXTS

Many of the folksongs of the traditional type discussed in this paper are variations on the very popular stories about Rama and Sita or about Lord Krishna. Sita is used throughout to symbolize the ideal in womanhood, and the relationships described between the actors in these stories represent ideal kin relations in the Indian and British Guianese Indian value system. The cast of characters in Rama's story are: King Dashrath (Rama's father), Queen Kaushalya (his mother), Queens Sumitra and Kaikai (her co-wives), Lakshman (Rama's younger brother), Sita (his wife) and

²² Smith and Jayawardena, pp. 321-376.

King Janak (her father). In the story of Krishna, the names of Yashoda, his foster mother, and Nand, his foster father, frequently appear.

(All words italicized or marked by an asterisk may be found in the glossary.)

1

The first text is a marriage song, in which the ideal marriage situation for a girl is depicted. It is sung by the assembled women at the time the ceremony is taking place.

Sita is asking the first favor, oh Lord.

Fulfill it somehow.

She wishes for the Kingdom of Ayodhya,*

And the *darshan* of holy men.

Sita asks for the second favor, oh Lord,

Fulfill it somehow.

She wishes King Dashrath for her father-in-law,

Kaushalya as mother-in-law.

Sita asks for the third favor, oh Lord.

May it be fulfilled, somehow.

She wishes Rama for her husband,

And (his) brother Lakshman for her *devar*.

Sita prays for one more favor, oh Lord.

May it be fulfilled, somehow.

She asks for a son to hold on her lap,

A son to play and laugh with joy.

Gathering around her, the friends ask Sita

What her wishes are.

2

The following song expresses the fact that a barren woman is considered a bad omen for others. The tight bodice refers to the wife's failure to conceive.

Kaushalya is sitting on a *machiyā*;

Sita says humbly to her:

Oh, mother-in-law, my life is passing by,

Alone, without Raja Rama.

Tightly I tie my bodice and shawl.

Oh *bahū*, your life will be spent

Alone, without Raja Rama.

Soon it will come to an end.

When you cease wearing a tight bodice and shawl,

Their knots will be loosened.

I will not live, oh mother-in-law,

Alone, without Raja Rama.

I am the sister of seven brothers.

I will go to my natal home.

You will play, oh *bahū*, with nephews in your lap.

Your life will pass by.

Wherever Sita sits, the ground sinks.

Oh *sāsū*, the people of my natal home wonder, in pain,

"When will Sita go back to her home?"

3

This next song covers most of the aspects of the attitude toward child-bearing discussed in this paper. It shows the craving for a child experienced by the barren woman, the attitude of her husband, the ritual means undertaken to ensure conception, and finally the joy and celebration attendant upon the birth. The

symbolism of the mango is frequently found in reference to child-bearing. The mango fruit here refers to the child, the mango blossom to the unborn child. The Sanskrit words for mango tree and for the female genitalia are the same, and poets like Kalidas have used this symbolism as do the folk poets.

In the courtyard of King Dashrath

Rama is brushing his teeth.

Bending over, Queen Sita is fetching the water.

Her golden jug is on the well.

Hurriedly she raises the jug over her shoulder.

"I will go, oh Rama, to Madhuban;

I will go, oh Rama, to the forest.

What difference, oh Rama, does it make,

If I live at your home or go to Madhuban forest?"

"What difference does it make, oh Rama,

If you stay home or go abroad?

I have seen neither a mango nor a mango blossom,

I have not worn a red *sārī*, nor have I sat on the *pūjā*
seat.

Not a single desire has been fulfilled."

"What difference does it make if you stay here,

Or go to your natal home?

Not a single tender babe have you borne,

Not a single time have I had the joy of

hearing the *sohar* songs."

When Sita heard this,

She called for her natal home's *kahārs*.

"Take me home, to my natal home;

Prepare a palanquin right now."

Through one forest she went, through a second she went.
The third is her mother's.

"Mother, why did you bear me?
My man speaks harsh words to me."

"Be quiet, daughter, be calm.
Take some rice and offerings
And worship the Sun God."
She calls out to the Sun God,
"Do something, oh Lord,
My man speaks harsh words to me."

Early at dawn *horil* is born,
Instruments begin to play congratulations.
"Oh brother Lakshman, go and ask your *bhaujī*
What color *sārī* she wants to wear.
Lakshman, oh friend of my misery,
Call for Rama to hear the *sohar* Songs."

"Let a garden grow
In front of the window,
So my treasure will see the mango flower
And will sing the *sohar* songs."

One who sings this *mangal*
And sings for others to listen,
Tulsi* offers his life for him.
Let every wish of his come true!

4

In the first line of the following song a woman speaks of the drums that are played in celebration by members of the sweeper caste for a number of days after the birth of a child. She is lamenting her childlessness, and the fact that drums have

never been played for a child of hers. She decides to run away with the sweeper rather than to remain barren at home.

"In everyone's town the kettledrum is being played.
Why, oh sweeper, why don't you play it in my town?"

"I will come, oh queen, to your palace,
If you will come with me."

"How, oh sweeper, how can I go with you?
Rājput sleeps on the edge of my shawl."

"Take, oh queen, a pair of golden scissors
And cut the edge of your shawl."

She goes through one forest, she goes through two.
In the third she sees a herdsman.
"How far, oh herdsman, is the palace of the sweeper?"

"Pass by one forest, pass by the second.
In the third you will find the straw hut of the sweeper."

"Put away your shawl, oh treasure, wear a ragged skirt.
And go to graze the pigs."

"Burn my fate, oh sweeper, that I came to you.
Had I known, oh sweeper, that you would do such a thing
to me,
I would have drunk poison and died."

5

A son is expected to help his mother in her old age; such help is also expected of a co-wife's son if a woman has no son of her own, but in fact aid is not always forthcoming. In any case,

the status of an issueless woman whose co-wife has children is low. Also, according to religious beliefs, a son is necessary to assure one's place in heaven through his offering of the *pindās* (funeral cakes), which can be offered by no other person.

Hunger cannot be satisfied by eating betel leaves,
Thirst is not quenched by licking one's lips.

A co-wife's son, oh brother,
Does not help one along life's path
And beyond.

6

The *chunarī* is dyed red or yellow at the time of the ceremonies performed after a child's birth. It is said that a girl should serve her parents-in-law if she wants to bear a child, because it is through their blessing that she conceives. Therefore, by extension, it is said that the colors of the *chunarī* grow in the parents-in-law's garden.

In whose wood is the betel nut grown?
In whose wood grows the coconut?
Oh my friend, in whose are grown the flowers
With which I can dye my *chunarī*?

In mother-in-law's wood grows the betel nut.
In father-in-law's wood grows the coconut.
Oh, my friend, on their trees are the blossoms
With which I will dye my *chunarī*.
For myself I will have a *chunarī* dyed,
For my lord a lovely bedspread,
And then, oh my friend,
I will have a *fulvār* dyed for my sweet babe.
How sweet and pleasing to the eye!
My husband will tie on his turban.

I, his treasure, will wear my *chunarī*.
Oh my friend, if my baby wears his *fulvār*
How sweet it will be when we take a stroll!
On one side will walk my darling,
On the other, I, his treasure.
Oh, my friend, in the middle the sweet babe.
How wonderful, how wonderful it is!

7

Fruit, particularly the coconut, is often used to symbolize fertility. The pipal tree, a common Indian tree, is regarded as sacred and is worshipped by Indian villagers. As far as I know it is not found in British Guiana. This song illustrates the respect and attention accorded to a woman by her husband's family after she has borne a son.

Having grazed the horses, the father-in-law came.
"Oh dear daughter (-in-law), what fruits have you eaten
That such a nice son is born to you?"
"I drank the milk of the cow,
I ate the fruit of the pipal tree.
Oh father-in-law, I have eaten coconuts, piece by piece.
That's how I got such a nice son."

Having grazed the horses, the *bhasrū* came.
His joy knows no bounds.
"Oh wife of my little brother, what kind of fruit have you
eaten
To get such a sweet son?"
"I drank cow's milk, oh *bhasrū*,
I ate the fruit of the pipal tree.
Breaking the coconuts, I ate them piece by piece
To get such a sweet son."

The *devar* has come home, but *bhaujī* is proud
 And does not notice him.
 "Oh *bhaujī*, what fruit did you eat
 To get such a sweet son?"
 "I drank cow's milk, oh *devar*,
 I ate the fruit of the pipal tree.
 Breaking the coconuts, I ate them piece by piece.
 That's how I got such a beautiful son."

8

My birth is fulfilled today,
 Oh friend, my birth is fulfilled.
 Call Hari, blessed are Nand and Yashoda
 In whose house Hari is born.

Oh come and read the good fortune,
 This day when Hari gave his *darshan*.
 Again and again let us go to Nand's house,
 Nand has become father of a son.

To Yashoda, who is bestowing motherly love,
 Send friends there, to celebrate the birth of Hari.

9

Every whim of the *gotinī* and the husband's sister is to be
 satisfied after the birth of a son. Their demands increase and
 tempers rise, but the husband tries to keep peace so that the
 women will bless the child whole-heartedly.

The *horil* is being born,
 Oh, the *horil* is being born,

He is so pleasing.
Horil, our *gotinī* is sulky,
 And sister wants her due.

"All my life I carried you, played with you.
 Oh brother, you got a son through long nights of prayer.
 Brother, give me lots of gold now.
 Long live this couple!"

"I will come," says the *gotinī*,
 "If you send me an umbrella
 Covered with gold."
 "Oh, *horil*, it is raining, *jhim jhim*.
Gotinī is not coming."

"Build me a house, build me a hut.
 And send umbrellas to every house in the village.
 Then the *gotinī* will come."

Spreading the new yellow sheet
 They are seating the *gotini* with respect.
 Touching her feet, looking with affection,
 Brother seats his sister.

10

"Bring water from the Holy Ganges and the River Jamuna
 Oh, get up and give me a hand!
 My life is coming to an end!"
 Father-in-law and mother-in-law are sitting on the *machiya*.
 Mother-in-law comes down near her feet.
 "My life is coming to an end!"
 Mother-in-law, who sits on the *machiya*,

Takes her to her cot and rubs her feet.
 Lo! *Horil* is born!
 Oh sister, instruments began to play,
 To celebrate.
 Whoever sings this song, the *sohar* song,
 And sings for others to listen,
 He will go to heaven,
 And obtain all the fruits of life.

11

From house to house the *nāin* is going.
 Come, oh friends, you all come.
 The *gotini* has sent for you.
 Today my Sita is celebrating the *nachur* ceremony.
 Who offers a ring? Who offers silver?
 Who offers jewels and other valuable things?
 The winnowing basket is full.
 Kaushalya offers a ring, Sumitra offers silver.
 Kaikai offers jewels and other valuable things.
 The winnowing basket is full.

12

This song shows the privileges and pleasures accorded to a woman who has borne a son; it also points up the difference in attitude when she gives birth to a daughter.

No one knows how proud are the eyes of my *jachchā*.
 She gave birth to a son.
 She was placed high on a bed
 And ruled the household from there.
 No one knows how proud are the eyes of my *jachchā*.
 When she gave birth to a son

She was offered food, *ghevar* and *anirī*.
ghī in unlimited quantities was poured into her plate.

No one knows how proud are the eyes of my *jachchā*.
 Refined sugar, flour and rice
 Were offered to the goddess
 For the long life of the mother and child.
 No one knows how proud are the eyes of my *jachcha*.
 When she gave birth to a daughter
 She was seated on a low stool,
 Lowered in the eyes of everyone.

13

This song concerns the celebration on the birth of Lord Rama.

Drums are being played,
 In happiness and congratulations in Ayodhya.*
 Who is giving away freely unlimited wealth and gold?
 Who in Ayodhya is giving away the *Kāmadhenu* cow?
 Kaushalya is giving away freely
 Unlimited wealth and gold.
 In Ayodhya, Sumitra is giving away the *Kāmadhenu* cow.

14

Let us go, let us go, oh friends.
 Let us go and see the four sons of Dashrath.
 A child like Rama, a child like Lakshman.
 Dashrath is coming, carrying them on his shoulder.

Rama has given salvation to Ganika,* to the eagle, to
Ajamil.*

He saved his devotee Prahlada.*

Saved the *yajna* of Kaushika,*

And made Gautama's wife* alive.

Let us go, let us go, oh friends.

Let us go and see the four sons of Dashrath.

15

Here a woman who has just given birth to a son asks her husband's sister to sing her a *sohar* song, a song sung to celebrate the birth of a boy. In return for her blessings the new mother is willing to give to her husband's sister anything she desires.

"Whatever you demand, oh *nanad*, I will give.
Just sing me a *mangal* song."

"I will sing, oh *bhaujī*, I will.

I will sing for you to listen.

But give me a *chunārī*,

A necklace for my baby,

And a horse for my husband to ride."

16

This song refers to Lord Krishna, who was brought up as a cowherd. This is an example of the lullabys which invariably speak of a boy baby. There are no similar songs referring to a baby girl, and through this absence the preference for male children can be inferred.

Kanhaiya is swinging in his cradle,

Kanhaiya is swinging in his cradle.

The cradle is made of sandalwood,
The rope is made of silk.

"Who else is swinging?

Who makes them swing?

Which friend's sweet son is swinging?"

"Cowherd children swing,

The young girls make them swing.

The sweet son of Yashoda is swinging,

Swinging in his cradle."

17

In this song a spoiled baby is not considered a burden by the mother, but rather as an object of pride. The fact that he is spoiled shows that he is well-loved and cherished. Lord Krishna, about whom this song tells, is supposed to have been a very troublesome child, and his mischievousness is described admiringly in the religious books, especially the *Bhāgawat*, which is read in public performances in India and in British Guiana.

Yashoda shines, holding her son on her lap.

He does not drink milk,

He is not pleased on her lap.

How spoiled is our baby!

Call the goddess down from heaven

And tell her our baby is spoiled,

Our baby is spoiled!

18

This marriage song expresses the concern felt by all the members of the bride's family that the marriage celebrations should go off well and that nothing go wrong.

His hands are trembling,
 His knees are trembling.
 Seeing the dust of the *samdhī*'s vehicle,
 The father of the bride is trembling
 In the marriage tent.
 "How will I give the girl away?"

With shaking hands
 And a shaking jug of water
 The mother of the bride shudders.
 "How will we give the girl away?"

19

"What will you do, oh father,
 Sister (Sita)* has lifted the bow?"
 Hearing this, the father repents within his heart.
 "Oh daughter Sita, I have searched in Gokul,
 In Mathura I searched.
 But there is no groom worthy of you."

"Father, you searched in Gokul,
 You searched in Mathura.
 But you did not go to Ayodhya.*
 Rama is a bachelor there."

20

Here a father has had to marry his daughter to a poor man, although he himself is rich. The daughter complains, but her father urges her to be satisfied with her lot. This song emphasizes the difficulty of a father, even a rich one, in assuring his daughter's happiness after marriage.

"Father, you looked neither for orchard nor garden,
 Nor for a rosebed of wealth.
 Where will my palanquin descend?"

"Daughter, I looked for neither orchard nor garden,
 Nor for a rosebed of wealth.
 Your palanquin will descend in a marriage tent."

"Father, you looked neither for rooms, nor a multi-storied
 home,
 Nor are there thirty-two doors.
 Where will my party go?"

"Daughter, I looked neither for rooms, nor a multi-storied
 home,
 Nor for thirty-two doors.
 Your party will go to the marriage tent."

"Father, you looked neither for a well nor a well rim,
 Nor for water carriers.
 Where will my party go?"

"Daughter, I will build a well and a well rim for you,
 And employ many water-carriers."

"Father, you looked neither for a yard guarded by elephants,
 Nor for jewelled cloths to spread over them."

"I will build a yard with elephants to guard it,
 And will make you jewelled clothes.
 In the marriage tent your party will go."

The day Rama took birth, oh sister,
On this earth, slowly.
Oh sister, taking two babies in her arms
And full of joy in her heart,
Queen Kaushalya has written a letter
Which Queen Sumitra is reading.

"Sister, Kaikai is full of pride,
She did not come to see my Rama."
"Do not burn your heart uselessly,
I have come to see your Rama.
But sister, when twelve years have passed,
He will go into exile in the forest."

Queen Kaushalya writes a message; King Dashrath reads:
"Oh King, when Rama attains the age of twelve he will
be banished to the forest."

The King comes to reassure her:
"Oh Rani, even if it is true,
The curse of barrenness is washed away.
Let us love and embrace Rama."

GLOSSARY AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

Ajamil: an atheist who called out his son's name (Narayan) on his deathbed and was saved from going to hell because this name is one of the names of Lord Vishnu, of whom Rama was an incarnation.

anirī: a sweet which is especially liked.

Ayodhya: the holy city in Eastern Uttar Pradesh in India, where Lord Rama was born.

bahū: wife, here son's wife.

bhasrū: husband's elder brother.

bhaujī: elder brother's wife. (#3) Here Rama is talking to his younger brother about his wife, Sita.

chunarī: a veil or shawl.

darshan: literally, view, sight. Used for seeing someone important and pious.

devar: husband's younger brother. A married woman has particularly close relations with her *devar*, and joking of a sexual nature is permitted and indeed expected between them. In ancient India, and in some castes today, levirate marriage with the *devar* was permissible for a widow, as it is in British Guiana today.

fulvār: a silken embroidered shawl.

Ganika: a prostitute who taught her parrot to recite the name of Rama and thus gained salvation.

Gautama's wife: Sage Gautama's wife was turned to stone because the Moon God, disguised as the sage, had intercourse with her. Rama touched her, bringing her back to life.

ghī: clarified butter.

ghevar: a kind of sweet which is especially liked. It is eaten in the rainy season, the romantic time of the year.

gotinī: literally, woman of the same *gotra*, or clan: husband's brother's wife.

Hari: God, Lord Krishna.

horil: a new-born baby.

jachchā: a woman who has just given birth.

jhim jhim: the sound of the rain.

kahārs: the caste of water-carriers and palanquin bearers.

Kāmadhenu cow: a mythological cow, said to fulfill every desire.

Kaushika: sage Vishwamitra whose ritual sacrifice was guarded from evil demons by Rama.

machiya: a type of cot.

mangal: an auspicious song. *Sohar*, meaning birth song, is called *mangal* also.

nachur: a ceremony performed on the 6th day after the birth of a child.

nāin: barber's wife, who has the role of messenger at the time of childbirth and marriage.

nanad: husband's sister.

pūjā: worship; here it is meant that she has not had the opportunity to take part in the ceremonies held after a child's birth.

Prahlada: a devotee of the Lord whose father forbade him to worship, but who was saved through Rama's intervention.

Rājput: a caste name. Women sometimes call their husbands by the caste name or as "son of ..." (mentioning the caste name)." *Rājputs* are well known for their bravery and the fierceness of their revenge.

samdhi: the father-in-law of one's child.

sārī: woman's dress.

sāsū: mother-in-law.

Sita: Sita succeeded in lifting a heavy bow presented to her father by Lord Shiva. None of the princes were able to lift it, much less use it, and her father was thus presented with the problem of finding a husband who could match her accomplishment. Only Lord Rama succeeded, and thus saved Sita's father, King Janak, from the misery of being a spinster's father.

sohar: song sung at the birth of a son.

Tulsi: Tulsi Das, the great poet of Avadhi (a dialect of Hindi), who wrote *Rāma Charit Mānas*, the epic describing the life of Lord Rama. This epic is read in every household in the Hindi-speaking area of India. Thus any song about Rama may traditionally mention Tulsi as author, although he is not the author of these songs.

yajna: a religious ceremony, sacrifice.

7

Malhor: Type of Work Song in Western Uttar Pradesh, India¹

In Western Uttar Pradesh, India, sugarcane is a major cash crop, and the process of converting the raw cane into the crude sugar 'called *gur*', is one that involves many men in cooperative labor during the winter sugar harvest season. The sugar presses, owned jointly by groups of cultivators, are located outside the village. At these presses, called *kolhūs*, groups of cultivators gather, providing their labor on a cooperative basis and bringing teams of bullocks to turn the huge press. In the area where this research was done, these cultivators include members of Brahman, Jat, Raya Rajput and other castes. Members of certain service castes also work at the sugar presses: Chamars (traditional dealers in skin and hides) put the fuel into the large pit oven used to boil the sugarcane juice; Dhivars, the water-carriers or basketmakers in this area, prepare *gur* from the cooked juice. These workers formerly did their tasks as part of the reciprocal economic exchange of the *jajmānī* system;² now, however, they work, at least in part, for cash wages. One farmer sits under a plank, joined to the iron press, which is turned by the bullocks. One tends the large earthen pot, placed in a hole in the ground, which receives the fresh juice. Behind the press itself, another collects the discarded sugarcane fibres. Groups of men, each made up from four or more peasant families, take twenty-four hour turns in this venture, which occupies them throughout the four long winter months.

In order to remain alert through the nights the men sing a particular type of song, called *malhor*, *palhāvā* or *gāhā*. This kind of song is a short couplet, complete and independent within itself. Anyone may sing; the songs are sung solo, but generally all present take a turn sometime during the night. As one of my informants put it, "Whenever you are in a really colourful mood, with five

or six young men around, you begin to sing *palhāvās*." The style of singing is loud and energetic. The best singer is the one with a strong voice and the force to bring emotions to the surface, and these are the qualities that are admired by the enthusiastic audience. Each singer is urged by the others to "beat out" the tune with remarks such as:

*bahot jor ka: rahgya:*³

hā: ka:dh de dharti: ka: ba!

pahlai: pahlha:ve geren de

That was really very forceful!

Beat out all the strength you find in the ground!

Everything else later, first let him sing *palhavas!*

Each evening the singing begins with one or more invocational songs. Following these, *malhors* of many other types are sung. While in the background the man prodding the oxen makes a loud "burr-burr," and the man near the *kolhū* shouts for another bundle of sugarcane, while another farmer shouts for a change of bullocks and the Dhivar is urged to empty the full pot, a singer raises his voice strong and high, and his song echoes for miles through the cold night air:

1. *dhan khere ke bhu:miya: dhann basa:vanha:r*
bravo hamlet of a local god bravo founder
dhan khere ke chodhari: khera: basai gulja:r
bravo hamlet of headman hamlet be beautiful,
settled flowery

Praise to the hamlet and its god,
Praise to the one who founded it,
Praise to the headman of the hamlet,
May your hamlet be prosperous and beautiful
(like a garden).

Since several groups may be working simultaneously in widely separated fields, two or more singers in different groups may alternate in their singing. Particularly certain pairs of *malhors* which consist of the theological questions and answers, or which are linked by their subject matter, may be sung in this way.

2. *koṇ jagat māi ek hai koṇ jagat māi doṇ*
who world in one is? who world in two?
koṇ jagat māi ja:ga: koṇ rahya: paṛ soy
who world in is awake? who remained lying slept?
3. *ra:m jagat māi ek hai, chanda: su:raj doṇ*
Rama world in one is, moon sun two,
pa:p jagat māi ja:ga:, dharam rahya: paṛ soy.
sin world in is awake, *dharmā* remained lying slept.

Who is one in the world? Who are two?

Who is awake in the world, who is sleeping?

God is one in the world, Sun and moon are two.

Sin is awake in the world, *dharmā* is sleeping.

In structure, the *malhors* can be divided into three parts. First are the words used for tuning, which are not counted in the meter, and which are frequently drawn out long and musically ornamented. Such words are "e-ī," "are" (simply exclamations), *bīrā* (brother), or *kahī* (somewhere). One or more of these words precede the main body of the song. This part of the *malhor* tells a simple story, asks some questions, or expresses some philosophical thought. It consists of two lines, in a standard metrical form, called *dohā*, which is described below. The final part of the *malhor* is the refrain, which consists of a standard phrase:

..... *meri : ba:vali: malhor* [this is] my silly nonsense

Although our informants modestly protested their ill-training in the refinements of poetic meter, and called their *malhors* simply *tukbe se mila:ne*, "putting a little rhyme together," the recorded songs are almost perfect examples of the traditional literary Hindi meter called *dohā*. This is perhaps the oldest meter in Hindi poetry. It is first used by Kalidasa in his fifth century play *Vikramorvashī* in the language of Apabhramsha, or Old Hindi, which according to most authorities was the language of the common people of the time, as opposed to the language of the elite classes. *Dohā* soon achieved the popularity in Apabhramsha

which *shloka* meter achieved in classical Sanskrit, and which *gāthā* enjoyed in the Prakrit language. Each of these meters consists of two (equal) parts, and as Sanskrit writers made extensive use of *shloka* even in non-literary writings like those on medicine and grammar, Hindi writers used *dohā* for the same purposes. Through the medium of *dohā*, a single thought is expressed in one couplet. Many anthologies are available, collections of independent *dohās*; among them collections of the *dohās* of Kabir, Bihari, Tulsidas, Rahim and Vrind are very much in vogue among Hindi-speaking people. With the exception of Bihari, these poets wrote ethical *dohās*, but Bihari used this form to convey feelings and emotions of every kind. Tulsidas used *dohā* meter in his famous *Rāmcaritmānas*, more popularly known as *Rāmāyaṇa*. The same tradition of using *dohā* along with the *chaupāī* meter in a literary epic occurs in modern times in Dvaraka Prasad Misra's *Krishṇāyaṇa* (*Life of Krishna*). In folk poetry *dohā* meter is commonly used as an introduction to a new subject or a new song. The singers of *sāṅg*⁴, a Hindi folk opera, introduce their performance with one or more couplets in this meter and almost all *bhajan*, or devotional singers, and singers of ballads begin in the same way. *Dohā* is without doubt the most popular meter in both classical and folk poetry in the Hindi-speaking area.

As its name suggests, *dohā* or *doharā* (two-fold), is a meter divided into two equal hemistichs. Each hemistich consists of 24 *mātrās* or instants. A *mātrā*, which literally means quantity or weight, is defined by the time consumed in uttering a "short" vowel, that is the vowels /a/, /i/, and /u/, and the terminative juncture. The vowels /a:/, /i:/, /u:/, /e/, /ai/ and /o/ are considered "long" vowels, and are counted as two *mātrās*. Furthermore, when a short vowel is preceded by a non-semi-vocalic consonant cluster, it counts as two *mātrās*. In poetry, the long vowels /e/ and /o/ are often contracted in pronunciation and are therefore counted as one *mātrā* only. They may even be replaced by /i/ and /u/ respectively.

The 24 *mātrās* of each hemistich are grouped into two parts, the first containing 13, the second containing 11 *mātrās*. Each hemistich must end in a short vowel and rhyme. The following example will illustrate the metrical form:

4. pa:ṭṭa: tuṭṭya: da:l(a) tai, le gayi pavan(a) uḍa:y(a)⁵
 2 2 2 2 2 1 2 2 1 1 1 1 2 1
 leaf broke branch from taking went wind flying
 ab(a) ke bichare na: milāi, du:r(a) parāige ja:y(a)
 1 1 2 1 1 2 2 1 2 2 1 1 2 2 2 1
 now of separated not meet for will fall having gone

The leaf fell from the branch,
 The wind blew it away,
 "After this separation we will never meet again,
 Far far away I will go."

With the exception of the invocational verses, the *malhors* in this collection fall into three categories, in terms of their subject content. The first category is that of the theological riddle, an example of which has been given above, another of which may be found in the Appendix, Part II. This type of *malhor* occurs in pairs, the first *malhor* containing the riddle question, the second its answer. There are few of this type in my collection. A second category includes those *malhors* which tell of an event or situation in human life; the majority of those deal with love problems (notably the situation of separation from the beloved), but many are statements of a philosophical or ethical nature; others refer to such things as the delicacy of kinship avoidance relationships. An example of this type is:

5. kagge chuṇ chuṇ kha:iye tan ka: sa:ra: mā:s
 crow selected eat body of whole meat
 do naina: mat kha:iye piya: milan ki: a:s
 two eyes do not eat darling meeting of hope

Oh crow, you may eat the whole meat from my body;
 Choosing whatever you wish,
 But I pray to you not to eat my two eyes,
 There is still hope of seeing my lover.

In some *malhors* of this type, traditional stories from the Epics and the *Purāṇas* are related, or incidents from the popular Epic literature are referred to:

6. *ikali: lakari: na: jalai, na:y uja:la hoy*
 single stick not burns not light be
lachhman bi:ra: ma:rkai ra:m akela: roy
 Lakshmana brother having Rama alone weeps
 been killed

A single stick will not burn,
 There will be no light,
 A brother like Lakshmana having been killed,
 Rama weeps alone.

(Further examples may be found in the Appendix, 11-15.)

The third category consists either of secular riddle (not to be confused with the theological riddles discussed above), or of apparent nonsense rhymes, with no discernable meaning. *Malhors* of this type have in fact a deep philosophical meaning, beyond that of “nonsense” or the “answer” of the secular riddle. Such a meaning refers to basic religious or philosophical premises shared in the culture; the tradition of expressing significant thoughts about life and the nature of the world in the guise of nonsense is an ancient one in India, and will be discussed more fully below.

7. *ba:bal mera: bya:h karde anja:ya: bar ty:a:y*
 father my marriage do unborn groom bring
anja:ya: bar na: milai tera:i mera: bya:h
 unborn groom not found yours mine marriage
 Father arrange for my marriage
 Bring me an unborn groom
 If you can not find an unborn groom
 Let there be a marriage between you and me.⁶

(The Appendix, 52-59, provides further examples of this type.)

These three categories of *malhors*, while not distinguished as such by the folk, seem to be traceable to three diverse traditions in the folk and literary poetics of Hindi and Sanskrit. The three

words used—interchangeably—by the folk for this type of song, are clearly also evidences of the merging of these somewhat separate traditions into the distinct folksong genre of the *malhor*. A discussion of this phenomenon sheds considerable light on the extensive cross-fertilization of folk and literary traditions which has often been referred to with respect to India as well as to other “peasant” societies.⁷

The tradition of the first type of *malhor* is represented by the word *pathāvā*, which appears to be a derivative of the Sanskrit *pravalhikā*, meaning “riddle.” Sanskrit riddles, which appear first in the Rigvedic period, and a number of which are contained in the *Mahābhārata*, represent the earliest evidence of this still persisting tradition. The theological riddles closest to the *malhor* riddles are found in the *Yakshaprashna* of the *Mahābhārata*. Here the *yaksha*, a demigod, asks Yudhisthira, eldest of the Pandava brothers, to solve riddle-questions in order to bring his dead brothers back to life. These questions, and their answers, are contained in a pair of *shlokas* (which corresponds in Sanskrit to the *dohā* of the *malhor*). The first *shloka* of the pair contains four questions, the second four answers:

Who is heavier than the earth?
 Who is higher than the sky?
 Who is faster than the wind?
 Who is stronger than man?

Mother is heavier than the earth,
 Father is higher than the sky,
 Mind is faster than the wind,
 Worry is stronger than man.⁸

A comparison of this verse with examples 2 and 3 above and 9 and 10 of the Appendix will demonstrate my assertion that the latter represent a continuation by the folk of this more than two thousand-year-old literary tradition. It is preserved by the folk not only in the *malhor*, however, but in other folk usages as well. Similar questions are asked by a shaman in this area of a patient believed to be possessed by a ghost. The worship of *yakshas* (demi-gods) is performed mainly by this type of question and

answer. In fact, the word *brahmodaya*, used in Sanskrit for Vedic ritual riddles, has its counterpart in the folk language as “*Yaksha* question.”⁹

The second word for the *malhor* is *gāhā*, which is derived from the Sanskrit *gāthā*. The word *gāthā* was used during the Vedic period for a verse which did not belong to the main body of the Vedas. The *gāthā* singers were called *gāthin*, and they could be said to correspond to the modern folk minstrel singers, as against the literary poets. The parts of the Buddhist *Jātaka* tales, which were in poetic form, were also called *gāthās*. *Gāthā* in Prakrit came to mean both the subject matter of an independent couplet, and the meter in which it was phrased. The best example of this kind of literature in Prakrit is Hala’s *Gāthā Saptashatī*. *Gāthā* is also used in Hindi to mean ballad.

It may be relevant to mention that in the Hindi and Punjabi speaking area, the word for riddle, short poetic ballad and story is the same. In the Haryana area, near Delhi, when someone asks another to solve a riddle, he says “open the fruits of my story,” (*gāthā*). It is perhaps more suitable to translate *gāhā* as riddle story.

The *gāhā* represents a secular tradition from very early times, and forms the great body of the modern *malhors*, a predominance which is illustrated in the texts from this collection. It is interesting to examine these song texts as means of cultural expression. The majority are love verses—most of the rest are statements about the nature of the world, framed in homely language, philosophical in intent, but not obscure in formulation. An interesting feature of the love verses is the fact that they describe the love situation almost invariably from the point of view of the woman. Such a manner of expression would seem inappropriate in songs which are composed and sung exclusively by men. Of their male authorship there is little doubt: the songs are sung only in the setting described, where women have no role in the work to be done, and where an adult woman would under normal circumstances never spend the night. Further evidence of male authorship is the use of the *dohā* meter, a structural characteristic of male songs in Hindi folk poetry, never found by me to occur in women’s songs in the Hindi-speaking area or among Indians in British Guiana (where

I have made an extensive folksong collection). The use of this meter appears to be one of the distinctive features of men’s versus women’s songs in the Hindi folk tradition.

Love songs of this type do not simply *describe* the feelings of a woman in love—they are generally framed in the first person, with feminine verb forms where appropriate:

8. *soti: thi: roti: uṭhi; malati: thi: do ā:kh*
 sleeping was weeping got up, rubbing was two eyes
supne maĩ pi:tam mile, kar na saki: do ba:t
 dream in beloved met, do not could two talks

I was sleeping, crying I woke up,
 I rubbed and rubbed my eyes,
 In a dream I saw my darling,
 But could not talk to him.

It is possible to speculate about the possible reasons for the placing of love verses in the mouths of women, although a definitive explanation is difficult to find. One element may be the culturally characteristic notion of the insatiability of the desires of the woman—the notion that a woman’s lust is uncontrollable, and that it is she, not the man, who is “by nature” the aggressive partner, the seducer to the love act. Related to this is, of course, the idea that a woman is untrustworthy, and easily swayed to betrayal by the force of her desires. Proverbs collected in this area during this field research illustrate the same point, for example:

joru: jora ki:
 wife strength of
ni: to or ki:
 not then else of

Woman is yours, as long as you control her.
 Otherwise she will run away with someone else.

Consistent with this notion would be a feeling that it is the woman who is more susceptible to love’s pangs, and that therefore such emotions are most appropriate when expressed in a woman’s voice.

Perhaps more pertinent than this is the emotional lift that a lovesick woman’s yearnings give to the man who can imagine

himself to be their object. Thus the manner of framing these verses may be seen as serving as a kind of ego-gratification for the male. To put such sentiments in a man's voice would demonstrate his weakness—no real man should let the emotions of love and desire overcome him. Though he may freely express—in song and in the casual banter of his equals—the pleasure he derives from sex, and though he is expected to boast of his sexual exploits (no matter how imaginary), it is inappropriate for him to admit discomfort and longing in the absence of the love object. To do so would make him an object of pity rather than of admiration. Such a view is again consistent with the image of woman as weak and dependent on the male for satisfaction, not only sexual satisfaction, but satisfaction of all her material and social needs.

Another significant element of the love *malhors* is that they most commonly describe love not within but outside of marriage. It is not the husband but the lover (*yār*) to whom the woman's yearnings are expressed, whom she tries to attract through jingling ornaments with whom she plans secret meetings. Such romance, in a culture which stresses perhaps more than most the sanctity of the marriage bond and provides the strongest social sanctions against pre-marital and extra-marital love, is clearly appealing to the young and old men, who compose and sing the *malhor*.

But, again, consistent with a dominant theme in Indian literary expression, the *malhor* rarely expresses the joy of union in illicit love. It is rather a lament in the face of hopeless separation. A number of examples may be found in the Appendix.

The other *malhors* which we have grouped according to the category of *gāhā* are those which express philosophical truths, commentaries on the nature of life. The themes expressed are many, but certain notions, consistent with the higher philosophy of Hinduism, but not unique to it, continually recur. Man has come to the world, sent by God—whatever worldly pleasures he may enjoy, whatever worldly goods he may possess, are his only by the will of God. Humility before God and one's fellow man is the greatest virtue. Position, wealth and power are double-edged swords—if not used with wisdom and generosity, they may be the cause of one's downfall, *māyā*, the illusory sensation that the world and its goods and pleasures are lasting and significant, veils man's

understanding of the ultimate truth. *Māyā*, which blinds man to the realization of the true value and purpose of his existence, must be overcome. Man is meant to worship God, and to worship God is to worship one's fellow beings, particularly those near and dear: the parents, and for a woman, the husband. The examples in the Appendix illustrate the expression of these ideas, and reveal the tendency to place philosophy in terms of the ordinary natural phenomena and household objects of the peasant's daily existence.

The third word used for these songs (and the word which occurs in the refrain of all) is *malhor*, derived from the Sanskrit root *malh*, which means "intoxicated with joy." The related word *malho* is used in the dialect of this area in the sense of crazy or nutty, but is used only affectionately. *Malhor* suggests the utterances of mad intoxication. In this tradition we would include those songs which seem on the surface nonsensical—which describe a donkey climbing a palm tree or a daughter giving birth to her father. Here also would be included the secular riddle used as a song. Both types of *malhor* contain an essentially philosophical content, which is to be uncovered by the listener.

Such a manner of expressing philosophical truths is related to an ancient tradition of "divine madness." In Vedic times Aitasha Muni is said to have enjoyed such a state, in which he uttered whatever came into his mind. These poetic utterances, which like the *malhor* have a deeper meaning than the ordinary person would detect, are called *Aitasha Pralāpa* (the Ravings of Aitasha) and are collected in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. The *tuṛya avasthā* in yoga philosophy is described as the age when nothing matters and the mind is totally free or divinely mad. Similar in some respects is the Tantric tradition, in which the search for truth leads to unorthodox uses of sex and intoxication. The Hindi poet-saint Kabir (1440-1518), who has clearly influenced considerably the folk poetic tradition to which the *malhor* is a part, spoke of the state of complete union of the soul (*ātman*) with God (*brahman*) as *gūnge kā gur* "the sugar of the dumb," who can only express his joy by uttering nonsense. In the *malhor* we find evidence of the absorption of this pattern of thought. The very closing formula of all types of *malhors* is an antithesis which in fact denies all that has been said: "This is my silly nonsense." In the same tradition

it is perhaps fitting to close with the words of the greatest of Urdu poets, Mirza Galib (1789-1869), when he said:

bak raha: hū: jānū: mē māi kya: kya:

kuchh na samjhe xuda: kare koi:

Whatever (nonsense) I am uttering in my craze

May by God's grace no one understand.

APPENDIX

Additional Texts

9. *kon tapasvi: tap karai, kon uṭhi: nit nha:y*
Who ascetic penance does who risen daily bathes
kon ratan ras u:gle, kon ratan sab kha:y
who jewel juice emits, who jewel all eats
What ascetic does penance (subjecting himself to heat)?
Who bathes daily, having arisen?
Who emits essence of jewels,
Who consumes all jewels?
10. *suraj tapasvi: tap karai, birma: nit uṭh nha:y*
sun ascetic penance does Brahma daily risen bathes
indar ratan ras u:gle, dharti: ratan sab kha:y
Indra jewel juice emits Earth jewel all eats
The ascetic sun subjects himself to heat,
God Brahma (the Creator) bathes daily, having arisen.
Lord Indra emits essence of jewels,
Goddess Earth consumes all jewels.
11. *devi: ke darba:r mē, ghantan ki: ghanghor*
goddess of court in, gongs of resounding
mor papa-ya: ku:kte, koyal karti: shor
peacocks wag-tails are cooing, cuckoo is making sounds
Gongs resound in the court of the Goddess.
Peacocks and wag-tails are cooing and the cuckoo is calling.

12. *devi: bhavan suha:vana:, hariyal pi:pal la:r*
goddess temple pleasant, green pipal tree row
parai pāja:li: pat ki:, jhullai ra:jkāva:r
hangs swing leaves of swings prince

The temple of the Goddess is pleasant and beautiful,
There is a row of green pipal trees.

A swing made of leaves hangs (from a branch),
The prince swings on it.

13. *satguru mera: su:mma:, karai la:kh māi choṭ,*
true teacher my hero, does 100,000 in charge,
golē ma:rai gya:n ke, dhaye bharam ke koṭ.
bombs hits knowledge of, shattered illusion of forts.

My venerable teacher is a real hero,
He charges among hundreds of thousands,
He throws grenades of knowledge,
And shatters the forts of illusion.

14. *ma:re tai la:gi: nahi:, bans nali: māi*
blowing by takes effect not, bamboo/lineage pipe in
phū:k
blowing/puff
guru: bicha:ra: ke karai, chelle hi:
teacher poor what should do, pupil (emphatic)
māi chu:k
in lack.

Blowing air through a bamboo pipe
Is of no use;
What can a teacher do
If the pupil himself is deficient?

15. *ra:m na:m ki: lu:t hai, lu:ti: jā:y so lu:t*
Rama name of loot is, looted can be that loot
ek din aisa: hoyaga:, jā:ge pira:ni: chhu:t
one day so will be, will go soul left

The name of God is being looted,
 You, loot, whatever you can,
 There will be a day,
 When the soul will leave you.

16. *ra:m bharose baiṭhke, sab ke mujare ley,*
 God faith sitting, all of salutation take,
jaisi: jiski: cha:kri:, vaisa: usko dey.
 as whose service, so him give.

Having faith in God,
 Accept the salutations of all,
 As is the service of one/to Him/
 So He repays.

17. *ra:m ra:m ratte raho, jab tak ghaṭ mē pra:n.*
 Rama Rama reciting keep, when till heart in soul,
kadhi: to di:na: na:th ke, bhanak paraigi: ka:n,
 sometime poor master of, sound will fall ears.

Keep repeating the Lord's name,
 As long as you live,
 There will surely be coming a time,
 When your call will reach the Lord's ears.

18. *ra:m badha:ye sab badhē, bal kar*
 Rama made to prosper all prosper, force having used

badhya: na koy
 prospered not anyone
bal karkai ra:vaṇ badhya:, chhan
 force having used Ravana prospered, moment
mē di:na: khoy.
 in gave lost,

With God's will all prosper,
 No one prospers by using force;
 Ravana prospered having used force,
 But lost everything in one moment.

19. *ma:ya: mari: na man mare, mar mar gaye shari:r,*
 illusion died not mind died, dying dying went bodies,
*a:sa: trashna: nahī mari:, kah gaye da:s kabi:r.*¹²
 hope craving not died, saying went slave Kabir.

Neither *māyā* died nor was the mind satisfied,
 Even if bodies have died, one after the other,
 Expectations and cravings don't die out,
 So said (the poet) Kabir, slave of the Lord.

20. *na:m ka:m tap ru:p dhan, ja:ti: kul*
 name deed mortification beauty wealth, caste clan
bal gya:n
 power knowledge

a:ṭh chi:z ka: ba:vaḷe, mat ki:je abhima:n
 eight things of ignorant, don't do pride

Never be proud of these eight things,
 Oh ignorant man,
 Name, deed, mortification, beauty,
 Wealth, caste-clan, power, and knowledge.

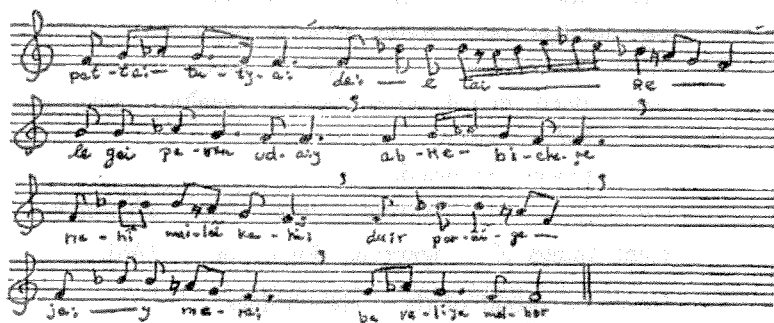
21. *kit boye kit u:paje, kahā: laḍa:vai la:d*
 where sowed where grew, where fondle love
kudrat ka: bya:ra: nahī:, kahā: khidaṅge ha:d
 God (fate) of known not, where scatter bone.

Where was a man conceived, where was he born,
 And where was he loved and fondled?
 Who knows about the ways of the Lord,
 Where is He going to scatter the bones?

22. *bara: bhaya: to kya: bhaya:, jaise per khaju:r*
 big became so what became, as tree date
panthi: ko chha:ya: nahī:, phal la:ge ati du:r
 traveler to shade not, fruit grow very far
 What does it matter if you became big,
 Like a date plam,
 The traveler gets no shade from it,
 And the fruits are so high.

MUSICAL NOTATION

This transcription has been made from the recorded version of one of the *malhors* in my collection by Mrs. Lillian Lehman. The *malhor* tune is not rigidly fixed, but all the *malhors* from this region are recognizable as variations of a single tune. This example is typical.



23. *ni:chi: teri: jhū:pari:, gal gadhiyū: ku: pa:s,*
low your hut, neck donkeys to leash,
karāige soi bharaige, tam kyū: bhae uda:s.
will do so will fill, you why became sad.

Your hut is on low ground,
The donkeys about it have leashes around their neck,
Do not let that make you sad,
As they sow so they will reap.

24. *ni:kki: bi: phi:kki lagai, bin mokke ki: ba:t*
excellent even vapid seems, without occasion of remark
jaise ban ras juddh mai,
as bravery poetic sentiment war in,
ras singar na suha:t
poetic feeling ornamentation not pleases

Even an excellent remark sounds vapid,
When uttered out of place,
As love songs are appalling in war time,
When poems of bravery are in order.

25. *ambar mai ta:re khilai, thal mai khilai babu:l*
sky in stars blossom, land in blossoms acacia
gori: ka: jobban khilai, khilai kamal
fair maiden of youth blossoms, blossoms lotus
ka: phu:l
of flower.

In the sky the stars blossom,
Acacia blossoms on the earth,
A fair maiden's youth blossoms,
Like the blossoming of the lotus flower.

26. *ratan katori: ghi: jalai, chullhai jalai kasa:r*
jewel bowl refined butter burns, hearth burns kasar
ghū:ga: mai gori: jalai, ya:ne hō bharta:r
veil in fair lady burns, young is husband

Butter burns in the jewelled bowl,
Kasar¹³ burns on the hearth
Behind the veil burns the fair lady,
Whose husband is (too) young.

27. *kallar sukki: kā:ga:ni:, dheru: sukke dha:n,*
barren land dried a grain, piles dried paddy,
gori: sukki: ba:p kai, kele kaisi: gobh.
fair maiden dried father at, banana like sapling¹⁴.

In the barren land the *kāngnī* dried up,
Piles of paddy dried up too,
A young fair maiden (tender as) a banana sapling,
Dried at her father's home.
[Reference here is to a young woman whose father has neglected to find a groom.]

28. *mahal jalai ma:dhi jalai, bich bich*
palace burns cottage burns, middle middle
jalai dila:n
burns front hall

ghū:gaṭ māi gori: jaḷai, jiske kant nada:n.
veil in fair lady burns, whose husband immature.

The palace burns, the hut burns,
And so does the front hall,
In the veil burns the fair young lady,
Whose husband is ignorantly immature.

29. joban tere laḍua: karū:, ras
youth thy sweets would make, sugarcane juice
badh ra:ndhū: khi:r
abundance cook rice-pudding
not jima:ū ba:maṇa:, sagi: naṇad
inviting would feast Brahman true husband's sister
ke bi:r
of brother.

I would make sweets out of you, oh youth,
I would make rice-pudding of you, abundant with juice,
Then I would invite the Brahman and feast him,
Who is no other than the brother of my very own naṇad.

30. jobban tere ka:ṇai, chhodde ma:i: ba:p,
youth your reason, left mother father,
sa:ttan chhoddi: sa:t ki:, hiraṇa: bargi: na:r.
companion left company of, deer like woman.

Oh youth, for you,
I left my parents,
I left my childhood sweetheart,
A doe-like woman.

31. koṭthe uppar koṭhari:, usmāi gharai suṇa:r
room above attic, that in fashions goldsmith
b:chhuve ghar de ba:jne, ya:r suṇai jhanka:r
anklets fashion give jingling, lover listens jingle

In the attic above my room,
A goldsmith works.

"Fashion me a pair of jingling anklets,
Whose jingles my lover can hear."

32. apne koṭthe māi khadi, khadi: suka:vū khes,
own roof I stood, stood drying hair,
ya:r dikha:i: de gaya:, bhar joggi: ka: bhes.
lover seen given went, filled ascetic of garb.

I stood on my roof,
Stood drying my hair,
I saw my lover,
Disguised as an ascetic.

33. jobban cha:lya: ru:skai,
youth went away having become displeased,
par liya: lambe ra:h
fall took long path
kyukkar pakarū: bha:jkai, mere godḍū māi
how should catch having run, my knees in
sat na:h.
essence not.

Youth is running away, displeased with me,
He is hurrying away on a long journey,
How should I run fast and catch him?
I have no strength in my knees.

34. jobban tha: jab ru:p tha:, ga:hak the sab
youth was then beauty was, customers were all
koy, ba:la: ratan gavā:y kai, rahi: nima:ni: hoy.
some, youth gem having lost, remained helpless become.
When I was young and beautiful,
Every one desired me,
Having lost the gem of my youth,
I am just a poor soul.

35. bhudde pai khetti: kari:, boy chane ka: sa:g
adobe-soil on farming did, sowed gram of green

jhuk jhuk torāi ka:mni:, dhann chane ke bha:g.
bending bending break beauties, blessed gram of fate.

They cultivated the adobe soil,
The *chana* was sown,

Lovely women bend over and pick greens.
How I envy the fortunate *chana*.

36. *pri:t karai aisi: karai, jaisi: lamb khaju:r*
love does such does, as tall date palm,
chadhai to meva: cha:khle, parai to chakna: chu:r
climbs then sweet tastes falls then shattered pieces.
dry fruit

Let the love grow like a palm tree, tall and high.
If one climbs, one will enjoy the fruit, sweet and dry,
If one falls, one will be shattered to pieces.

37. *sa:mman a:van kah gaye, bi:te ba:ra: ma:s,*
Sharavan to come tell went, passed twelve months,
chhapar pura:ne ho gaye, tarkan
thatched old become went, to crack
la:ge ba:s.
began bamboos.

He promised me that he would come in the month of
Shravan,

Twelve months have passed since then.
Thatched roofs have become old,
And their bamboos are beginning to crack.

38. *nadi: kina:re tokni:, jhilmil jhilmil hoy*
river on bank brass jug, blink blink becomes
tam vha: ho ar ham yahā, milna: kis bidh hoy.
you there are and we here, to meet what way be.

On the bank of the river,
My brass water vessel blinks (in the sunlight).
You are there far away and I am here,
I don't know how to meet you.

39. *sissi: bhari: gula:b ki:, patthar pai dū: phor,*
bottle filled rose-perfume of, stone on give break,
kaho tumha:re pya:r māi, kha:na: bi: dū: chor.
say your love in, food/eating even give leave.

The bottle of rose-perfume,
I would smash on a stone.
If you say so, I would even give up eating,
I love you so much.

40. *sissi: bhari: gula:b ki:, de bhejū: kis ha:t,*
bottle filled rose-perfume of, give send whose hand,
dhar hama:ra: yha: parya:, dil tumha:re sa:t
trunk our (my) here lay, heart your with
of body
The bottle is full of rose-perfume,
By whose hand should I send it to you?
My body lies here,
But my heart is with you.

41. *jo māi aisa: ja:nti:, pri:t kare dukh hoy*
If I so had known, love done misery be
nagar dhiḍora: pi:ṭti, pri:t na
city drum-proclamation and beaten, love not
ki:je koy,
do someone,
If I had only known
That love brings sorrow,
I would have proclaimed throughout the town
That no one should love anybody.

42. *jo māi aisa: ja:nti:, ā:gaṇ boti: khaju:r*
If I so had courtyard had date palm
known, sown
uspai chaḍhkai dekhti:, sa:jan kitni: du:r
on that having had lover/ how much far
climbed seen, husband

If I had only known
I would have sown a date palm in my courtyard,
I would have climbed on it and seen,
How far my lover was.

43. *patta: bola: birachh tai, suno birachh banra:y*
leaf said tree to, listen tree king of the forest,
abke bichhare nahi milai, du:r parāṭige ja:y
now of separated not meet, far will fall gone

The leaf said to the tree
"Listen, oh tree, king of the forest,
After this separation we will not meet,
I will go far far away."

44. *birchha: bola: pa:t te, sun pa:tte meri ba:t,*
tree said leaf to, listen leaf my saying,
is ghar ki: yahi ri:t hai, ek arvat
this house of this tradition is, one comes
ek ja:t.
one goes.

The tree said to the leaf,
Listen, oh leaf, to what I say,
This is the custom of this house,
That one comes and the other goes.

45. *apne kotthai māi khadi:, talai khadya: mera:*
own room's roof I stood, below stood my
jeth,
husband's elder brother
dha:i pa:t ka: odhana:, mū: dhak lyū: ak
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ length of head-shawl, face cover take or
*pet.*¹⁶
stomach.

I stood on the roof of my room,
Below stood my husband's elder brother.
My head-shawl is made of only two and a half lengths,
Should I cover my face or my belly?

46. *ni:r urai sarvar parai, amb gaye re du:b*
Nir this side Sarvar that side, Amba went oh drowned,
*imli: banja:ra: le gaya:, cha:rui bichhare khu:b*¹⁷
Imli Banjara take went, all four separated excellently

Nir is on this side of this river, Sarvar is oh that,
Amba drowned (in the middle),
Banjara has abducted Imli,
What a way for all four to be separated!

47. *sa:s maro susara: maro, bya:hata:ra:*
mother-in-law die father-in-law die, bridegroom
mar ja:y
die go
mat mariyo ek ba:ḍhiya:, charkha: diya: baṇa:y
don't die one carpenter, spinning-wheel gave made

I won't care so much if my mother-in-law
or father-in-law dies
Even my bridegroom may die,
But may the carpenter not die, oh Lord,
Who has made the spinning-wheel.

48. *chalti: cha:kki: dekhkai, rahe kabi:ra:*¹⁹ *roy*
going gristmill having seen, remained Kabir weeping
do pa:tū: ke bi:ch māi, jinda: bachai na koy
two stones of between in, alive remained not anyone
Seeing the grind stone in action,
Kabir* was crying,
From between the two stones
No one ever came out alive.

49. *cha:kki chalai to chalan de, pi:ssan de sab na:j,*
gristmill goes then go let, grind let all grain,
jo sa:ĩ: ke la:ḍle, rahe ki:lare la:g.
who Lord of beloved, remained peg attached.
- Let the grind stone run,
Let people grind the grain,
Those who are beloved of the Lord,
Will remain attached to the peg.
50. *jal janami: thal u:paji:, basi: nagar māĩ a:p,*
water was born land grew, settled city in self,
chambha: to māĩ yu: sunya:, betti nai bya:ya:
wonder (emphatic) I this heard, daughter by born
*ba:p*²¹
father.
- She was conceived in the water and born on land,
She herself settled down in the city.
I heard this very wonder:
The daughter gave birth to her father.
51. *bina: tol ki: ka:mani:, pa:ssũ: kai haja:r*
without weight of fairlady, ribs many thousands
bina: bhed puttār huya:, phurtan karyo
without secret son was born, immediately do
*vicha:r*²²
thinking.
- A woman weighing nothing
Has thousands of ribs,
No one knew and she gave birth to a son,
Please ponder it immediately.
52. *ki:ri: chudhi: paha:r pai, khinchan cha:lli: rel,*
ant climbed mountain on, to draw went train,
khĩ:chkhā:ch kai chal pañi:, anjan
having pulled all strength together go started, engine

*hogya: phel.*²³
became fail.

An ant climbed the mountain,
The train went to pull it down.
Somehow putting all it together the train started,
But the engine failed.

53. *ki:ri mari: paha:r pai, khinchan chale te*
ant dies mountain on, to draw went were
chama:r
leather workers
tha:ra: sau to charas bañe, jutti: kai: haja:r
eighteen 100 so bucket made, shoes many thousands.

An ant died on the mountain,
Leather workers went to remove it.
They made eighteen hundred leather buckets,
And many thousand shoes (with the ant's skin).

54. *ki:ri: bya:i: jhũ:d māĩ, khi:s diya:*
ant bore clump (of bushes) in, new milk gave
mañ ti:s,
maund thirty,
ha:li: pa:li: chhik gaye, khi:s rahya:
ploughmen cowherd satisfied went, milk remained
mañ bi:s
maund twenty.

An ant gave birth in a clump of bushes,
Gave thirty maunds of new milk.
All the ploughmen and cowherds drank to their fill,
Twenty maunds of milk remained.

55. *makora: chalya: susara:r ku:, pi:kai*
black ant went in-laws' home to, having drunk
no mañ tel,
nine maunds oil,

ha:tti ghore diye bagal māi, pichchhai
 elephants horses gave armpit in, behind
 ba:ndhi: rel.
 tied train.

A large black ant set out for his in-laws' home,
 After drinking nine maunds of oil.
 He put elephants and horses under his armpits
 And behind him he tied a train.

56. gadhaiya: chadhi: khaju:r pai, kha:ne lagi:
 she-donkey climbed date palm on, eating began
 ana:r,
 pomegranate,
 bha:gva:n tale ku utarya:, (koi) lega:
 fortunate down to descend, (someone) will take
 jevar ta:r
 ornaments remove

A little she-donkey climbed the date palm,
 And began to eat a pomegranate,
 "Oh fortunate lady, climb down
 Or some one will take your ornaments off."

57. kutiya: chali: baja:r ku:, bā:dh gale māi ī:t,
 bitch set out market to, tied neck in brick,
 sahar ke bañiya: nu kahai, lattha: legi ak
 city of shopkeepers thus say, muslin will take or
 chhi:t
 calico.

A bitch set out to the market
 With a brick tied around her neck
 Shopkeepers of the city ask her,
 "What can we sell you madam, muslin or calico?"

NOTES

¹ This is a slightly expanded version of a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Kroeber Anthropological Society in Berkeley, May 1966. The fieldwork was carried out during the summer of 1965.

² See William T. Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System*, Revised Edition (Lucknow, 1959) and Thomas O. Beidelman, *A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System* (New York, 1959).

³ The colon is used here to indicate vocalic length, and corresponds to the horizontal line above the vowel (ā, ī, ū) used for the same purpose in the body of this paper and customarily in the transliteration of Indian languages.

⁴ Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "The Ethnography of *Sāng*: A North Indian Folk Opera," *Asian Folklore Studies* 26 (1967), p. 37.

⁵ For the purpose of indicating clearly the *mātrā* count, the short /a/ following a final consonant has been included in the transliteration of this example, thus *pavan(a)*, rather than *pavan*, etc.

⁶ Here the father is *Brahman*, the self is *ātman*, marriage is union. If no other unborn (and thus immortal) entity is found, then inevitably the soul (*ātman*) must be absorbed by the Supreme Soul (*Brahman*).

⁷ Robert Redfield Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 3:53-73 (1954); McKim Marriott, "Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization," In: Marriott, ed., *Village India*, (Chicago, 1955) 171-222.

⁸ *Mahābhārata*, Vana Parva.

⁹ Vasudev Sharan Agarwal, *Prithivī Putra* (Agra, 1960), p. 340.

¹⁰ Shankar Lal Yadav, *Hariyāna Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya* (Allahabad, 1960), p. 436.

¹¹ In order to ignite a fire or to cause a fire to burn more brightly, it is usual to blow through an iron pipe. A bamboo pipe is a poor substitute because the joints hinder the passage of air, and because bamboo is extremely combustible. By analogy, a teacher who attempts to kindle the fire of knowledge in the heart of a pupil of intellectually inferior lineage (*bans*) will meet with failure.

¹² The main point here is that man continually seeks illusory materialistic gain, rather than trying to understand the true reality of this life. The word *mayā*: in folk usage refers not only to the philosophical concept of illusory reality, but also to a wealth. A recurring theme in folk literature is that it is *dharma* (duty) and *karma* (action) which will go with a man after his death, not his wealth. Therefore, while not denying the necessity to enjoy life, it is said to be futile to crave for excessive wealth.

¹³ A mixture of wheat flour, browned over a fire, with refined butter and sugar. It is often used for the purpose of ritual distributions.

¹⁴ In this verse a woman makes metaphoric reference of feasting the Brahman for attaining the goals of *dharma* (virtue, merit) and *kāma* (pleasure). Special sweets (*laduā*) and juicy rice-pudding (*khīr*) are the favourite foods of Brahmins according to local tradition. Reference is made to the husband by teknonymy, as a woman never refers to or addresses her husband by name or as "my husband." The use of the phrase *nand ke bīr*—"nand's brother" rather than "so-and-so's father," the usual manner of reference by a woman who has children—suggests a close relationship with the husband's sister, and an erotic-devotional relationship with the husband, rather than a relationship which stresses his role as father of her children.

¹⁵ The month of *Shrāvan* (July-August) is in the rainy season. It is conceived of as the most romantic period of the year. Traditionally, men who are employed away from the village will return during this month and a woman laments the long-delayed reunion.

¹⁶ This verse refers to the traditional avoidance by a woman of her husband's elder brother. By custom she is required to cover her face in his presence.

¹⁷ This verse recalls a well-known folk tale. See R. C. Temple, *The Legend of the Punjab*, Vol. III (reprinted, Patiala, 1963), pp. 97-125.

¹⁸ Reference here is to the economic importance of the spinning wheel. Its role in a woman's life is heightened by placing it above the lives of her husband and parents-in-law, who in this culture are the most respected and indispensable persons for a woman.

¹⁹ The poet and philosopher Kabir (1440-1518). The gristmill is the cycle of life and death from which none escape.

²⁰ In answer to the previous verse (50), the poet says that none who show devotion to God should fear this inevitable cycle.

²¹ This is a secular riddle, to which the solution is "brick." The last line refers to the fact that a house (in Hindi, masculine gender) is built from bricks (feminine gender). The theological interpretation of this verse depends on the metaphorical use of water to represent the concepts of *Brahman* and *ātman*. Free water represents *Brahman*, confined water *ātman*. *Ātman* is confined in the human body, thus "born on land."

²² Another secular riddle, to which the answer is "date palm." The phrase *binā tōl kī kāmānī* is a hyperbolic idiom commonly used in reference to a slim woman. The date palm gives fruit without conspicuous flowering, thus the point of the second line. In a philosophical sense, *kāmānī* is *māyā*, it weighs nothing, but creates thousands of illusions. The illusions of this world are created without the realization of the Self (*ātman*).

²³ This riddle and those that follow all point out the insignificance of the human being, and his ridiculous confidence in his own self-importance. The philosophical framework is again the illusion wrought by *māyā*. Man is represented by an ant, a donkey, and a dog in the various riddles here.

The Ethnography of Sāṅg: A North Indian Folk Opera*

with Sylvia Vatuk

India has a dramatic tradition, both literary and folk, of many centuries duration. Bharata Muni discusses the art of the drama in his *Nāṭyashāstra*, a work supposedly composed in the second century B.C. when some of the best Sanskrit plays were already in existence. Speaking of the origins of the dramatic art, he asserts that drama represents the *pañcam veda* (Fifth Veda), created by God himself in order to impart instruction in religious behavior to the members of the lower classes who were not allowed access to the other Vedas.¹ This myth of the deliberate, divine creation of the drama would suggest that in fact the Sanskrit drama as a literary form must have developed out of a prior folk dramatic tradition. As Keith has pointed out, the Sanskrit drama was so polished in its conventions, so linguistically refined, that the mass of the people could not have enjoyed it,² and it is therefore likely that throughout history the two traditions, folk and literary, developed side by side, mutually influencing one another.

Throughout traditional Indian literature, in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha and modern Hindi, the words *svāṅg*, *suāṅg* and *sāṅg* recur frequently with various references generally to some form of drama. We cannot completely identify the modern *sāṅg*

*This is a slightly revised version of a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Denver, Colorado, November 21, 1965. The fieldwork was carried out during the summer of 1965 by Ved Prakash Vatuk; the writing was accomplished jointly. We wish to thank all of our informants for their invaluable help, particularly Dina Bhagat, one of the most eminent *sāṅgs* of the older generation in this area.

¹ Bharata Muni, *Nāṭyashāstra*, Ch. I. 11-22.

² A. Berriedale Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*, Oxford 1924, p. 31.

of our title with the dramatic forms thus referred to in the past. However, the etymological relationship of these words to the modern *sāṅg* and the fact that their use doubtless reflects the existence of a folk dramatic tradition persisting throughout Indian history, justifies their brief mention here.³

In *Vikramorvaśī*, a play by Kalidas written in the 5th century A.D., folk meters have been used in conversations with birds, animals, and forest folk.⁴ Kalidas also mentions the word *sāṅg* and suggests that the folk tradition had at that time developed a kind of drama oriented toward experimentation. It was musical in character, a kind of poetic opera, and several instruments were used in accompaniments.⁵

The existence of a folk dramatic tradition is revealed in the remarks of writers of a later period as well. In the 9th century Kaṇhappā has mentioned *sāṅg* in his poems.⁶ Kabir, in the 15th century, complains of the people's interest in *svāṅg* to the neglect

³ The words *sāṅg*, *suāṅg*, and *svāṅg* seem to be derived from the Sanskrit *svāṅga* meaning "disguise." In the dialects of this area, *Bāgrū* and *Kauravī* (*Nāgarī*) of Western Hindi, another word is used for *sāṅg* when it is in a written form, that is, *sāṅgī*. Yadav (also, Gupta quoting Yadav without attribution) has suggested that both *sāṅg* and *sāṅgī* may be derived from the Sanskrit *sāṅgīta* ("music"), since music plays such a prominent role in this form of drama. This etymology does not seem to fit the linguistic development of the dialects in question. As far as the word *svāṅg* is concerned, since it has been demonstrably used for centuries with the meaning "disguise," "acting," or "drama," it does not appear likely that the more recent dialectal word *svāṅg* should have come from *Sāṅgī*. It is possible that the word *sāṅgī* could be derived from the Sanskrit *sāṅgīta* ("musical"), an adjectival form of *sāṅgīta*. However, we would suggest the possibility that, since *sāṅgī* is only used for the written form of *sāṅg* (a distinction not maintained by the authorities), it is a compound word from *sāṅg* and *gīt* (Sanskrit *gīta*, "song"), which according to the morphophonemic rules of these dialects would produce *sāṅgī*, with the meaning "sāṅg songs" or "songs of sāṅg". Cf. Somnath Gupta, *Hindī Nāṭak Sāhitya kā Itihās*, Jalandhar and Allahabad, 1958, 4th ed., p. 14. Also, Shankarlāl Yadav, *Hariyānā Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya*, Allahabad, 1960, p. 383.

⁴ Sitaram Chaturvedi, ed., *Kālidāsa Grathāvalī*, Aligarh, 1962, *Vikramorvaśī*, Act IV, pp. 212-216. For readers of this paper, particular attention should be drawn to verse 8, which is the earliest documented use of *dohā* meter, so popular in folk and literary styles of the Hindi-speaking area. Cf. S. H. Kellogg, *A Grammar of the Hindi Language*, London, reprinted 1955, p. 575.

⁵ *Mālavikāgnimītra*, Act I. in Chaturvedi, *op. cit.* p. 262. See also Gopinath Tivari, *Bhāratenduakālīn Nāṭak Sāhitya*, Jalandhar and Allahabad, 1959, pp. 72-78.

⁶ Quoted from a manuscript poem by R. C. Shukla, *Hindī Sahitya kā Itihās*, Kashi, 1955, p. 10.

of devotion toward God⁷. Jayasi, in the 16th century, mentions female prostitutes, called *suāngīs*, who disguise themselves as *yogīs*, male ascetics.⁸

In modern India, each region can be found to have its own characteristic forms of folk drama. Prominent, for example, are the *khyāl* of Rajasthan, *bhavāi* of Gujarat, *sāngūt* or *tamāshā* of Maharashtra, and *bhagyat mel* of Andhra.⁹ Many others have been discussed in the literature. In most cases, several distinct forms of folk drama co-exist in a single area. Uttar Pradesh has *rās*, *nakal*, *naṭankī*, *bhāṇḍ*, *rāmliṭā*, *sāng* and others.¹⁰ These are all different in many respects. However, all have some common features. The stories they portray are derived for the most part from the same myths, tales, and epics and from the lives of Indian religious and folk heroes. Most use poetry, and where prose is employed, poetic elements such as rhyming, and elaborate figurative speech are prominent. All use music and song as an integral part of the performance, so that it is appropriate to call them folk opera. Yet despite this underlying similarity in content and technique, it must be stressed that all Indian folk opera is not identical. It is unfortunate that in the available literature, both in English and in Indian languages, there has been a tendency to confuse various forms of the folk opera. This appears to result from heavy and indiscriminate reliance on written sources rather than on personal field research, and from the assumption that phenomena similar or identical in name, but occurring in different regions, are also similar or identical in form. The work of Satya Gupta, one of the few writers who has worked on the folklore of

⁷ Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay, *Kābir Vachnāvalī*, 9th ed. Kashi, 1946, p. 216.

⁸ Raj Nath Sharma, ed., *Jāyasi Granthāvalī: Padmāvatī Adī*, Agra 1962, p. 951.

⁹ See, for example, Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*, New York 1962, pp. 82-95. Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, *Indian Drama*, Delhi, 1956, *passim*. Shrikrishna Das, *Hamārī Nāṭya Paramparā*, Allahabad, 1956, pp. 163-448. Dharendra Varma, *et al.*, *Hindī Sāhiya Kosh*, Benaras, 1953, *passim*.

¹⁰ Varma, *op. cit. passim*, Gargi, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-103. Das, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-180, 191-200. Yadav, *op. cit.* pp. 379-408. Chandra Prakash Singh, *Hindī Nāṭya Sāhiya aur Rangmanch kī Mīmāṃsā*, Delhi, 1964, pp. 24-153. Norvin Hein, "The Ram Lila," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 71, 1958, pp. 279-304.

the area of Western Uttar Pradesh with which we are here concerned, unfortunately suffers from this defect. In her chapter on the local folk drama, Gupta supports the assertion of numerous general writers on Hindi literature that *sāng*, *naṭankī* and *bhagat* are identical. Actual attendance at performances, or even a fairly superficial reading of the individual descriptions of these in her quoted sources would readily demonstrate the faultiness of this generalization.¹¹ She has further confused the issue of Uttar Pradesh's folk drama by including in her general statement of identity an all-female skit, the *khoriā*, performed by amateurs in connection with the marriage ceremony.¹²

In the part of western Uttar Pradesh and eastern Punjab with which we are dealing here, several types of folk drama and folk dramatic troupes are to be found at the present time. One of the best known folk dramas is the *rāmliṭā*, a performance of about fourteen days duration in which the important episodes in the life of Lord Ram, as related in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and in the improvisations of local writers, are recited and acted out. Under the term *rāmliṭā* are included two kinds of performances. The local *rāmliṭā* is performed yearly during September or October at the festival of Dashahara and is organized by a committee in each city. Another *rāmliṭā* is performed by independent professional troupes, without regard for the season.¹³ Skits and short plays of another kind are performed by hereditary troupes of *bhāṇḍ*s and *natnīs*, and by the *hijrās*. Typical of this area is the one-man surprise skit of the *bahurūpiā*, in which the actor does an impersonation in a real-life situation, with the purpose of actually deceiving his audience. At the close of his performance he reveals his true identity and is given money by onlookers. Also common in this area are several types of narrative performances which are sung but not acted out. Among the performers of these the most

¹¹ Satya Gupta, *Khaṛī Bolī kī Lok Sāhiya*, Allahabad, 1965, p. 307. Cf. Varma, p. 126, which she is quoting without attribution, and pp. 425, 878. Dashrath Ojha, *Hindī Nāṭak: Udbhav aur Vikās*, Delhi, 1956, pp. 34-38. Arvind Kulshrestha, "Bhagat, The Folk Drama of Agra," *Folklore*, Vol 2, 1961, pp. 323-328.

¹² Satya Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-316.

¹³ Hein, *op. cit.* Gargi, *op. cit.* pp. 95-100.

important are *ālā* groups, *holī* groups and *bhajan mandalīs*, about which more will be said later.

Here we are specifically concerned with a particular type of folk performance, the *sāṅg*. Our research has been confined essentially to Meerut District, in the eastern part of the region under consideration, but we have established the existence of *sāṅg* throughout the whole area of western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and eastern Panjab.¹⁴ One of us has been familiar with *sāṅg* for many years, but it was not until the summer of 1965 that we were able to attempt a serious investigation of this local folk opera. It was possible to interview several *sāṅgīs* about their backgrounds, training and professional lives and to follow up some ideas that had occurred to us while still at a distance, about the social functions of the *sāṅg* performance, the social setting in which it is found, and the effects of today's economic and social changes upon the popularity of *sāṅg* and even upon the form and content of the *sāṅg* performance itself. We were particularly interested in viewing *sāṅg* as an instrument of communication in the rural setting and in comparing its message content with that of other competing agents in the same field. In Singer's terms, we sought to study the role of the *sāṅgī* as a "cultural specialist,"¹⁵ or in Wolf's terms as a "cultural broker"¹⁶ in this area of North India.

The *sāṅg* troupe, called *khārā*, usually consists of nine to twelve members. Of these, approximately four are instrumentalists who provide the musical accompaniment to the actor-singers on the *tablā* (a small double set of drums), *nagārā* (or *nakkārā*, kettle-drum), *sārāṅgī* (a large stringed instrument), and sometimes a harmonium and/or cymbals. With the *khārā*, a cook (of Brahman

¹⁴ See, for example, Yadav, *op. cit.*, 379-408. Satya Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-327. Krishna Chandra Sharma 'Chandra', "Kauravī Loksāhitya," in Rahul Sankrityayan and Krishnadev Upadhyay, *Hindī Sāhitya kā Vrihad Itihās*, Kashi, 1960, pp. 505-509. Sharma has listed the names of 17 "svāṅg writer-poets" of the area. However, only four are actual *sāṅgīs*, the rest being *bhājnopadeshaks* (see below) or *Holī* writers, some of them active opponents of *sāṅgīs*. Cf. p. 506.

¹⁵ Milton Singer, "The Great Tradition of Hinduism in the City of Madras," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 71, No. 281, 1958.

¹⁶ Eric R. Wolf, "Aspects of Group Relations in a Complex Society: Mexico," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 58, 1956, pp. 1065-1078.

caste) and a man to prepare the *hukkā*, or water pipe (traditionally a man of the Nai or barber caste), generally travel.

All *sāṅgīs* are male. Although the troupe may travel as much as 100 miles for a performance, and may be in demand for much of the year, the performers are not truly nomadic. All maintain a home and family in their own village, to which they return between tours.

Recruitment to the *sāṅg khārā* does not follow hereditary or caste lines, as it does in some of the other types of traveling dramatic troupes in this area. Members are chosen on the basis of interest and ability. The *khārās* we contacted all contain members of several different castes and included Hindus and Muslims. The latter are generally instrumentalists rather than actor-singers. This may be because the basis for most *sāṅg* plays lies in the Hindu religious and epic literature and inculcates Hindu values, and perhaps also because Islamic doctrine forbids dramatic impersonation. However, no categorical statement about this can be made, since at least one well-known *sāṅgī* and *sāṅg* composer in this area is a Muslim. Leadership of the *sāṅg* troupe is, like membership, open to members of all castes. We found as leaders in this district Brahmans, Raya Rajputs, Jats, Luhars (blacksmith caste), Kasai (Muslim butchers) and others. Except in the case of Brahman leaders, some members of all the troupes were of castes higher in status than their leader. It is clear that the *sāṅg khārā* provides an arena of achieved status, wherein the caste hierarchy is subordinated to a hierarchy of skill. This must be placed within the framework of the generally low prestige traditionally accorded by Indian society to the dramatic performer, and, for reasons that will be explained in more detail below, particularly to the performer of the type of plays usually presented by the *sāṅg* troupe. However, the opprobrium incurred by a high-caste performer because of his profession, although certainly felt, is evidently not sufficient to restrict the performance of *sāṅg* to persons of low caste, nor to seriously discourage a talented high-caste singer from assuming the role of *sāṅgī*, a role which at least in the past has been economically very rewarding.

The *sāṅgīs* interviewed had begun singing on their own as young men, and had gradually achieved a local reputation singing

in the men's groups which specialize in performing at the annual village Holi festival. They had then either been approached by or had themselves approached a *sāṅg* troupe in the area and had begun their professional career. There seemed to be no tendency for this profession to be passed from father to son.

Most of the older *sāṅgīs* had belonged to at least two different troupes during their career, having left after some years the troupe with which they had originally been affiliated. A *sāṅg* troupe may retain a stable membership for as long as twenty years. In any case, a core of members generally remains together for decades, while other members are replaced due to death or other unavoidable contingencies, or because they have left to join another troupe or to form new troupes of their own. Such fission may be the result of disputes within the troupe, but is frequently the result of amicable mutual agreement. Furthermore, troupes frequently lend and borrow singers and instrumentalists from one another to fill in when a regular member is unable to perform. This mutual aid between *khārās* is not, however, incompatible with considerable jealousy and pride of membership on the part of each *khārās*. As one of our informants stated, "this is a business in which even the teacher is jealous of his own pupil."

Within the *khārā*, highest esteem and authority is accorded the leader or *khāreband*. The *khāreband* is regarded as the *guru* or spiritual teacher of the other members of the troupe. The master-disciple relationship thus established is a persisting one, and is remembered on the occasion of each performance. The name of the leader of the original group to which a *sāṅgī* has belonged is recited in the opening lines of a performance, even by the oldest *sāṅg* leaders, who are themselves *guru* to many younger performers.

The *khāreband* is responsible for the recruitment of members, the booking of engagements, the practical arrangements for travel and housing while on tour, as well as for the training of young actors, direction of the performance, staging, makeup, and costumes. He acts and sings in the opera himself, often taking one of the leading roles and serving as narrator for those parts of the story not acted out in full. In addition, the *khārband* is author-composer

of the play itself. Using for inspiration the traditional Sanskrit literature, the great epics, *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, and local folk tales and heroic legends, he composes the dialogue in the form of songs, called *rāginīs*, for most of the plays presented by his troupe. He may on occasion draw also on the composing skills of other members of the *khārā*, or he may use plays composed by other *sāṅgīs* which he has seen performed or has read in the booklets printed by them for local distribution.

The troupe generally performs by invitation, with the possible exception of occasional informal performances in the home village of the *khāreband*, or performances given in order to fulfill certain of his kinship obligations which would otherwise be fulfilled by a cash gift. The troupe is invited by prominent landlords or other wealthy persons to perform during the celebration of a daughter's marriage or to accompany the wedding party of a son. An invitation may be made on the occasion of an important yearly festival, or in order to celebrate an event of personal rejoicing, such as the birth of a son. Another type of occasion on which an invitation may be tendered is when a temple, village resthouse (*dharamshālā*), or school is to be built, or a well dug. Here the *sāṅg* troupe will be asked to give a benefit performance. In either case, the question of compensation is settled beforehand. The initial transaction, during which the date is agreed upon, a price is set, and a nominal advance of 1, 11, 21, 51 or 101 rupees is delivered, is known as *sāhī denā*. This formerly took place six months or even one year before the performance, due to the great demand for the services of the better-known *sāṅgīs*.

When invited by a private person, the *sāṅg* troupe asks a flat rate per day and is also housed and fed at the expense of the host. Since each performance lasts a week, during which a serial story or a number of short stories are acted out on succeeding afternoons and evenings, this last item is a considerable one. During the actual performance, donations of money and clothing are given by members of the audience, and these are also retained by the troupe. For a benefit performance, either a similar arrangement is made, with the fee deducted from the audience donations, or an agreement is reached to accept a certain percentage of the take, the rest going toward the building fund. At such a

performance the donations are of course much greater than at a privately sponsored performance, since the audience is aware that by their gifts they are supporting a religious or social cause and are not merely tipping the performers as they would do at a private performance. Nowadays, the arrangers of a benefit performance generally prefer the percentage arrangement because of the expense of feeding a twelve-man troupe and because, with the declining popularity of *sāṅg*, the sponsors cannot be sure of receiving sufficient profits to assure the flat fee.

Within the troupe, receipts are divided into equal shares, of a number somewhat more than the number of members. One and a half shares then go to the star, who plays the role of the female heroine, and perhaps one and a half shares go to the male leader and to the leading instrumentalist. The *khāreband* himself takes one and a half or two shares, and a share is retained for the expenses of the *khārā*. All other members receive a single share.

Training of new members and rehearsals with the *sāṅg khārā* are informal. New members are instructed in their parts before a performance, but since the stories are for the most part well-known and since the newcomer must have often watched performances of the troupe before taking part himself and may already know the more popular songs by heart, he is not difficult to train. After a time he knows the entire play so well that he can substitute for any of the other actors when they are unable to perform.

The stage for a *sāṅg* performance is usually set under a large tree near the village boundary, in an open space accomodating ten thousand persons or more. Occasionally it may be staged on the open platform surrounding the village *chaupāl* or public meeting house. The stage is simple. Six or more high wooden cots are set up side by side and covered by a heavy cloth or rug. People sit around it, on three sides. Some climb nearby trees for a bird's eye view. Women sit separately, many watching from the roofs of nearby houses. Little space is left between the audience and the players, what space there is used when the action of the play requires that traveling be portrayed. A corner of the stage is set aside for the instrumentalists. Actors may sit here while waiting

for their turn on stage, and important village dignitaries may also be seated here.

The performance takes place either in the afternoon or late at night. Before it begins, the *nagārā* is played to inform villagers that the *sāṅg* is about to start. People arrive in groups from nearby villages, adults and children also, carrying with them a *chaddar*, a large shawl, which can be used as a turban for protection from the sun, as a seat in case of dirt or hard ground, or even as a raincoat in case of a downpour.

The *sāṅg* begins with the recitation of one or more couplets in the *dohā* meter.¹⁷ The most common version, which consists of three couplets, is as follows:

Om(a) nām(a) sab(a) tai baḍā
 Ūstai baḍā na koy(a)
 Jo uskā sumiran(a) karai
 Shuddha āt(a)mā hoy(a)
 Ā ri Bhavani bās(a) kar(a)
 Ghat(a) ke par(a)de khol(a)
 Ras(a)nā par(a) bāsā karo
 [Māi] shuddha sabad(a) mukh(a)
 bol(a)
 [Manai] sumar(a) liye jag
 dis(a)
 — sat(a)guru mile
 [Kahu] charan(a) ni vakai shis(a)

This name of Om is the greatest.
 No one is greater than He.
 One who remembers Om.
 His soul is purified.

Oh Bhavani, come live in me.
 Open the gates of my heart.
 Stay on my tongue, oh Mother
 And speak the correct words
 through my mouth.

I remember the Lord.

— is my guru.

I bow to his feet and pray.

Following directly upon this is the so-called *bhēt*, or offering, sung in turn by each member of the cast.¹⁸ The *bhēt* is in the

¹⁷*Dohā* is a verse, divided first into two equal parts, each containing 24 *mātrās* (morae or instants). Each part is further subdivided into two *padas* (lit. "feet") of 13 and 11 *mātrās*. The last three *mātrās* of each of the two parts must consist of one long and one short syllable, and must rhyme. See notation in the text.

¹⁸ This is comparable to the *nāndī* of Sanskrit drama.

form of a hymn to the Goddess Durga, known also as Kālī or Bhavani. In some cases the name of Sharda (Sarasvati, Goddess of Wisdom) is identified with Durga also. The *bhēt* asks the Goddess for good voice, appropriate thoughts, originality and poetic inspiration. It is a four-stanza *rāginī*, standardized in meter, style and theme.¹⁹ The jester sings his *bhēt* first,

¹⁹ The general structure of the *bhēt*, as well of the other *rāginīs* which make up the *sāṅg*, may be summarized as follows. The basic unit is a stanza of four lines. Each verse of the *rāginī* (there are usually four verses) consists of three parts: *tek* ("refrain"), *kālī* (the main verse), and *tor* (a line or lines rhyming with the *tek*). There are three main structural sub-types commonly used in *sāṅg*:

- (I)
tek—1/2 stanza, AB (generally each line containing 22-32 *mātrās*.)
kālī—1 stanza, CDEF (of the same meter as *tek*)
tor—1/4 stanza, G (of the same meter as *tek*)
 Rhyming pattern: ABG, CDEF.
- (II)
tek—1 stanza, ABCD (generally with lines ABC containing 16 *mātrās*, while D contains anywhere from 10 to 16)
kālī—1/2 stanza, EF (of the same meter as AB of *tek*).
tor—1/2 stanza, GH (of the same meter as CD of *tek*)
 Rhyming pattern: ABC, EFG, DH.
- (III)
tek—as in Type I (but generally reduced to one line) A or AB
kālī—as in Type II, EF
tor—as in Type II, GH (of the same meter as A, when both lines GH are taken together).
 Rhyming pattern: A/ABH, EFG.
 The following examples will illustrate:
 Type I
tek:
 do din(a) Kī jind(a)gānni jagat(a) māi, kar(a) bānde jo
 30 kar(a)nā rai.
 30 pher(a) budhappā bairī āvai, kash(a) parāigā bhar(a)nā rai.
kālī:
 is(a)var(a) bhag(a)ti dhyan(a) karyā kar(a), is(a)māi ke
 30 nuk(a)sān(a) terā.

followed by the other actors. Finally, the *khāreband* sings his *bhēt* and begins the *sāṅg* proper with several couplets, also in *dohā* meter, in which the chief characters are introduced and the scene is set.

Sāṅg, as our translation "folk opera" implies, is a musical play, and as such the greater part of the dialogue as well as the connecting narratives are poetic in form and musical in expression. Even the rare prose portions are musical in tone and tend to rhyme. Each actor sings his dialogue in the form of a *rāginī* called *javāb*. This is usually preceded by one or two *dohās* as introduction.

The soul of the *rāginī* is in the rhythm. The meters used are centuries old, utilized by generations of non-Sanskrit folk poets. The *sāṅgī* does not pay close attention to the weight of the metrical line, but composes intuitively, according to the way he knows from experience the rhythm should sound.

Continued (Footnote 19)

kām(a) karyā kar(a) shreshta jagat(a) māi, ho jāgā
 30 kalyānā terā.
 30 sam(a)jhāne kā merā pharaj(a) hai, āggai bhāi dhyan(a) terā.
 guru latur(a) sing(a) tai jā kaido, achchhā hai byākkhyān(a)
 30 terā.
tor:
 30 phul(a) kahai ek(a) din(a) tajai bī, par(a) jagā bai
 mar(a)nā rai.

Oh man, you are given two days of life on earth, do what you can.
 Soon the enemy, old age, will come, and you will have to suffer.
 Meditate and worship God, what can you lose by that?
 Do good deeds in the world, and you will get salvation.
 My duty is only to tell you, it is then up to you.
 Go and tell guru Latur Singh, he preaches well.
 So says Phul, that one day you too will have to die.

He frequently lets extra syllables slip in when necessary to express his meaning, and of course he exercises the traditional prerogative of the poet to pronounce long syllables as short, or *vice versa*, in order to fit his words to the chosen meter.

The refrain (*tek*) begins the *rāginī*, and it is sung first by the actor and perhaps repeated by the chorus of all the instrumentalists. At each repetition of the refrain the instrumentalists then join in, and this is considered the high point of the *rāginī*. The atmosphere created by it leaves a profound and lasting impression on the audience. Besides the *rāginī* of this type, there is another called *duchashmī*, which literally means "two-eyed." Here two singers are facing one another. They are full of romantic thoughts, some beautiful, some verging on vulgarity, as they express the desire of the lover for the beloved. Needless to say, *duchashmī rāginīs* are highly favored by the *sāng* audience.

When a portion of the story is not to be acted out and no

Continued (Footnote 19)

Type II

tek:

16 āī ājā rī merī devā.
16 jan(a)nī nī banī nahī sevā.
16 heī jan(a)nī merā khevā.
12 mātā kar(a) diye pār(a).

Oh my Goddess, come.
I have not served you well.
Oh Mother, make my fleet cross
[the ocean of the world].

kalī:

āj(a) māi sum(a)ru.
16 par(a)bat(a) āī
tere mandar(a) ki kaṭ(a)
16 mā jāī.

Today I invoke the Goddess of
the mountain.

Your temple is carved in
open-work.

tor:

lyāyā hār(a) gūtha(a) kār
16 māī
12 gālē bich(a) dīnā dār(a)

The gardener has braided a
garland [for you].

And has placed it around your
neck.

dialogue in the above form is to be presented, the *khāreband*, in his role as *rangāchār* (director) or *kavi* (poet) narrates the linking passage. This narrative is called *javāb rangāchār kā*, or *javāb kavi kā*. If recited in prose, rather than in the normal poetic form, it is called *vartā*. Under the influence of films, passages of prose dialogue, known by the English term (*dāilog*), have been introduced into some *sāng* performances. These are used for humor and are spoken by the actor who plays the part of the jester and by the actor who plays his wife.

The particular story selected for a *sāng* performance depends to a certain extent upon the occasion. If it is a benefit, for a social or religious cause, the subject is a religious one, and the story is taken from the *Purāṇas*, from the *Ramāyaṇa* or the

Continued (Footnote 19)

Type III

tek:

32 gobindī mahārāj(a) rākh(a) le, āī(a) sabha mē lāj(a) merī.
guṇ(a) gyān(a) tāi rī sachchī kar(a)de, buddhī bin(a) bē andāj(a)

32 merī.

kalī:

16 jāī shankar(a) bhag(a)vān(a) tuhī hai.
16 sab(a)kā mīntar(a) mān(a) tuhī hai.

tor:

32 binā gyān(a) kā gyān(a) tuhī hai, buddhī rī bin(a) guṇ(a)
āj(a) merī

Divine Goddess, protect my prestige before this audience today.
Fill me with virtue, wisdom, and the sense of proportion I lack.
You are the victorious Lord Shankar himself.
You are the friend and honor of everyone.
You are the knowledge for those who lack knowledge, virtueless is my
mind today.

Mahābhārata. It may be one in which are described the trials of a devotee of God, who goes through many hardships to prove his faith. His hardships are set up by God to test his devotion, with no intention of actually harming him, and in the end the hero is granted eternal bliss in heaven, or some similar reward. Other stories considered suitable for this type of performance concern true devotees who are in a difficult situation, but who are saved by God at the eleventh hour. In these stories, the nice guys suffer, but they always win. Even the bad guys are in a sense agents of God, for they act either at His command so that He may test the hero, or they act in order to force His intervention. It is interesting that salvation or *moksh* is never presented as the ideal goal in these plays. The hero's aim is rather to win an audience (*darshan*) with God, or to reach heaven.

On occasions such as a marriage or a celebration for the birth of a son, the *sāng* troupe generally performs a love story. There are many of these, but all of them portray the trials and suffering of lovers. Usually, but not always, love ultimately triumphs over all impediments. These *sāngs* are the most popular, for they give the poet and the audience the opportunity to explore and enjoy, albeit vicariously, all the ramifications of a romantic love which is denied practical expression outside of marriage, in Indian society. *Sāngs* of this type include dancing, and their language often borders on the obscene. The action on stage, however, is chaste by Western standards, the lovers never so much as touching one another even at the height of their passionate outbursts. Our oldest informant, who has fifty years of *sāng* experience behind him, listed as the most popular *sāng* stories, *Sorath*, *Hira Rānjhā*, and *Sodāgar*. All are stories of a great lover and the most beautiful girl of his time. They are full of romantic as well as hair-raising episodes. Two have happy endings after many travails, but *Hira Rānjhā*, a famous folk tale of the Panjab, ends tragically.

Among spiritual plays, the stories of *Nala Damayanti*, *Harishchandra*, *Gopichand*, *Mordhaji*, and *Bhartrihari* are

famous.²⁰ The *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* have always served as important sources of inspiration for folk literature in general. The *Mahābhārata* is utilized more fully than the *Rāmāyaṇa* by *sāngīs* simply because the latter has provided the theme for the *Rām Līlā*. The *Mahābhārata* is particularly suited to the needs of the *sāng* composer because it is a long and complicated story, providing material for many days' performances. Its advantages were explained by a young *sāngī* who specializes in *Mahābhārata sāngs*; it is so long that there is no problem of selecting material, and furthermore, plays based on it are suitable entertainment for the whole family.

It has been noted that the stories of all these *sāngs* are well-known to the public and the better songs are extensively memorized. Therefore, the main appeal of a particular performance is in the voice, the style of singing, the dancing ability, and the personality of the performer. Interaction between the *sāngī* and his audience is direct and intense. The audience responds immediately to the action on stage, literally crying, laughing, admiring the hero and the beauty of the song by shouting expressions like: *kādh diyā dharti kā bāl* ("you have brought out the strength of the earth!"), or *vāh pyāre* ("bravo, beloved!"). The public and the actors are one at the height of a performance. When the listeners cannot contain their enthusiasm, they interrupt the program by offering money. Women may offer feminine clothing and shawls. These gifts are announced by the *sāngīs* in the following manner:

— <i>nagar ke bīch maī</i>	In the city of — there is a
— <i>haī bhāgvān</i>	fortunate man named —

²⁰ The stories, briefly, are: (1) *Nala Damayanti*, a famous tale of love and devotion between King Nala and Queen Damayanti, related in *Mahābhārata*, *Vanaparva*, Ch. 53-58. (2) *Harishchandra* tells of a truthful king, who preferred to give up his kingdom, his wife and his son, rather than to tell a lie. Related in *Markandeya Purāṇa*, 7-8. (3) *Mordhaji* tells of a test of devotion, in which King Mordhaji and his wife saw their son in half in order to feed Lord Krishna's lion. Ultimately, the son is restored to life. A version of this story appears in *Jaiminī Ashvamedha*, 41-46. (4) Gopichand and Bhartrihari were kings of the 13th century who renounced the world to become wandering ascetics. Ballads on their lives are sung by beggar Jogis, who travel from place to place, singing to the accompaniment of the *sārangī*.

—jinke *lāḍle*

kiyā — rupaye kā dān

His honorable son is —, who

has donated — rupees.

If the donor has given more money than other admirers, the *sāngī* sings further, thus:

jug jug jivo, kare kartār

*haryā bharyā ho kutam
parvār*

das beṭō se sukhi ho nār

lamb khajūr sī potō kī lār

May God give you a long life.

May God make your family
prosperous.

May God give your wife ten
sons.

And may the line of your
grandchildren be as long
as a palm tree.

This incites others to give money, and a wish to be sung about in public impels them to top the previous donations. In this way, a show may be stopped for more than a half an hour at a time.

When the *sāng* has continued for about five hours, evening falls or dawn breaks, and the *khāreband* announces the end of the day's performance. This is called *jai bolnā*, to call for the victory of Lord Ram or Lord Krishna, in the words: *bol siyābar rām chandra kī jai*, or *bol kanhaiyālāl kī jai*. Then he announces the program for the following day.

The *sāng* performance of the mythical or religious type serves an obvious function in emphasizing and buttressing the traditional values of Hindu culture. In this it is consistent with the views of the ancient dramaturgists, who saw the drama as a way of instructing the masses in those matters about which the sacred texts instructed the elite. The value of singleminded devotion to God and a determination to uphold certain moral and ethical standards is reiterated constantly in these plays. The ancient conventional restraints on showing violence or lovemaking on the stage have also been maintained, even in those plays whose message is not primarily spiritual. The former is always carried on behind a curtain held by two actors, and the latter is limited to words rather than deeds. However, the romantic *sāngs* serve still another function, and this is as an outlet for forbidden feelings in a society

which still observes the *pardā* system, and rigidly separates men and women outside of the marital union.

From the viewpoint of the host to a *sāng* troupe, the performance serves as a means of enhancing prestige in the community.²¹ The performance, drawing the attention of the entire village and surrounding villages as well, is a testimony to the inviter's wealth and social position. Thus a *sāng* performance sometimes provides an arena for the playing out of factional rivalries and mutual jockeying for social position, when two troupes are invited by opposing village leaders to perform simultaneously. The victor in this test of prestige is considered to be that sponsor whose *sāng* performance has attracted the greater audience, and even if such a victory is short-lived, it provides much food for talk. The ends of factional leaders in such a contest are served also by the inherent rivalry between the *sāngīs* themselves, on the basis of their technical and artistic excellence. One of our informants described the many occasions on which he had "faced" other prominent *sāngīs* in repeated encounters of this kind, always in the context of intra-village competition between wealthy sponsors. Such encounters, although termed "facing" a rival, do not actually involve face to face competition. The competing performances are held at the same time, but in different parts of the village.

It has been mentioned that in recent years *sāng* has been losing some of its popularity, and cannot be counted on to draw the large crowds and sufficient donations of former years. There are probably several reasons for this. With rising economic and educational level in the villages, value systems are changing to some extent and in the sphere of entertainment, films are attracting much of the following that formerly belonged to *sāng*. The notion that films are modern and smart, while *sāng* is old-fashioned and rustic, accounts for much of the latter's decline in popularity among the young people. Furthermore, the films are much freer in structure and need not draw only upon the traditional literature and folk stories for their themes. They can therefore fulfill the function of an outlet for culturally devalued beliefs and emotions

²¹ Satya Gupta has recorded a song which describes what India's independence means to a peasant. Among many other things, the peasant woman of the song dreams of having enough money to invite a famous *sāngī* to perform. *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

much more fully than can *sāṅg*, while in a greater variety of ways they can also show the value of culturally approved ideas and behavior.

The wider radio audience in this part of rural India and the attractions of the so-called "village programs" have also assuaged some of the craving for entertainment which was present in the heydays of *sāṅg*. Some *sāṅg* composers have begun to fight the competition of these new media by adopting film music and themes, and in this way are able to hold certain urban-oriented segments of their audience. On the other hand, however, these changes cause them to lose the allegiance of those who are still enthusiasts of the traditional folk opera.

These influences from the modern mass media of communications are perhaps inevitable in the setting of a changing India, and their effect on *sāṅg* is incidental, although severe. However, there are other forces which for decades have been deliberately attempting to undermine *sāṅg* in this area, and these provide a most interesting commentary on the social setting of this folk art form.

We have mentioned that the status of the dramatic performer has traditionally been low in Indian society, and although the elite have frequently hailed the drama as the highest form of literary art, certain segments of orthodox Hinduism have consistently attacked the drama for several reasons.²² It has been felt that actors are immoral by the very nature of their work, in that the life of a wandering performer cannot be compatible with the maintenance of the norms of approved family and social relationships. "Respectable" people are assumed to be unwilling either to associate closely with actors or to live the type of life which their career demands. If a woman is prepared to act on the stage in front of strangers and to dance in public, she must be a prostitute.²³ On the other hand, if a troupe bars women, and men play their parts, dressing in feminine clothes and engaging in romantic dialogue, they must be homosexual. There is also the

²² E.g. *Nāṭyashāstra*, Ch. 36; *Manusmṛiti*, VIII. 362; *R̥gveda*, X. 99.7 (in which Nahush, the royal patron of actors, is described as the archenemy of Lord Indra).

²³ The general disapproval of dancing is illustrated in a popular children's rhyme of this area:

chāchchī rī chāchchī

Auntie, oh Auntie

notion, apparently not considered contradictory, that such men are a threat to virtuous womanhood and are likely to seduce and abduct innocent women if given the slightest opportunity. If the plays performed are not romantic but spiritual in theme, it is felt that one has a spectacle of persons of low social esteem and personal worth pretending to be gods and goddesses or devotees of the same. Therefore, orthodox opinion has held that dramatic performances can only have a deleterious effect on their audience.

In the particular locality with which we are dealing here, even more vocal and active opposition to *sāṅg* has come from the Arya Samaj, a religious reform sect founded by Dayanand Saraswati in the late 19th century. This sect seeks to purge popular Hinduism of non-Vedic accretions, and to return to what it believes to be the pure and enlightened form of religious worship of the Vedic period. On the religious side, it opposes idol worship, belief in spirits, in magic, and other features of the folk religion. It wishes to abolish caste distinctions in worship and open the priesthood to all, on the basis of spiritual worth and knowledge, rather than on the basis of caste membership. In the social sphere, the Arya Samaj opposes the seclusion of women, child marriage, and the practice of untouchability, and encourages the remarriage of youthful widows. However, the sect is also strongly opposed to certain Westernizing influences in India, particularly those which threaten traditional values concerning relationships within the family and between the sexes, and, like orthodox Hinduism, it prohibits the eating of meat and the use of tobacco and alcohol. It is a proselytizing movement, which preaches through the agency of the *bhajan mandalī* and its leader, the *bhajnopadeshak*. *Bhajan* means devotional song, but the word is also used in this area to refer to any song written in the traditional style used for such devotional songs, regardless of the actual subject matter. The *bhajan mandalī* is a traveling troupe of singers, as is the *sāṅg kharā*, but its message is a very different one. Its songs celebrate the virtues of bravery, sacrifice, celibacy and the like, romance is totally excluded,

Continued (Footnote 23)

chullhe pichchhai nāchchī

āyā chāchchā

mār gāyā lāt

batā de rī chāchchī

kal kī bāt

You danced behind the stove

Uncle came

Gave you a kick

Tell me, oh Auntie

What happened yesterday!

and no acting or dancing is involved. Some of the songs are on topical rather than religious subjects; they are nationalistic and patriotic in spirit, and through them the *bhajnopdeshak* becomes an unsolicited agent of the Indian government's propaganda efforts on behalf of programs like birth control, the five-year plans, women's education, and so on. Not fully in accord with the government on all issues, however, he also attacks corruption, Westernization, and the government's alleged neglect of national defense needs. At the time of the China-India friction, literally thousands of songs were produced and promulgated by the *bhajan mandalis* on this theme. Working with true missionary zeal, the *bhajnopdeshaks* consider themselves a vital agency of change in their society. In reading or listening to their songs of the last thirty years, one gets a glimpse of the course of Indian history, something completely absent in the songs of *sāngī* composers writing during the same period. These *bhajnopdeshaks* are the chief writers of what Greenway would call the "protest songs" of this part of India.

One of the principal targets of their protest on the local scene has been *sāng*. In accord with orthodox Hinduism, the Arya Samaj opposes *sāng* primarily on moral grounds. It feels that *sāng* undermines the values of celibacy and chastity so basic to the Hindu value system, and that in portraying scenes of love and desire and in disguising men as women, it encourages similar behavior in those who watch it. The Arya Samaj also shares with orthodox Hinduism its condemnation of the impersonation of great human beings and deities by actors, which underlies the opposition even to mythical and spiritual *sāng* plays. The movement's founder, Dayanand, was quite explicit in his writings about the evils of dramatic performances, and feelings on this score run so high that recently a highly inspirational play based on his own life, performed by respectable non-actors, and including no feminine roles, was prevented from continuing a successful run of several months by pickets representing that faction of the Arya Samaj which insisted strongly on strict adherence to Dayanand's teachings.²⁴ This was

²⁴ We are indebted to Ram Nivas Vidyarthi and Svami Dhruvanand for this information. The latter participated in this protest. See also, Sevanand Sarasvati, *Arya Samāj kī Vedī par Nāṭak Kyō?* Dhamora, 1956 (leaflet), 4 pp.

the case even though the performances had been designed as a means of raising money for an orphanage, a highly approved cause for the members of this socially-conscious sect.

Some quotations from the songs of the *bhajnopdeshaks* will illustrate their views regarding *sāng*:

<i>Bhārat mā̃ ne āj tumhārī viro māng kī.</i>	Today Mother India has called you, oh brave ones!
<i>Tumhē bimārī lagī sinemā theṭar sāng kī.</i> ²⁵	But you are sick with the sickness of films, theater, and <i>sāng</i> .

To show that this is not an isolated, personal opinion, we quote a similar passage from another *bhajnopdeshak*:

<i>Desh kī durdashā ūpar inko kuchh afsos nahī</i>	They feel no sorrow over the misery of the nation.
<i>Svāng vo sinemā sehī milnā bilkul hosh nahī.</i>	They are so engrossed in <i>sāng</i> and films.
<i>ya inke dimāg mē dhun faishan kī savār hai.</i> ²⁶	They are overcome by a craving for fashion.

The following shows the moral aspects of Arya Samaj's opposition to *sāng*:

<i>Sāngiyō kī dholak jab se mohalle mē bāj gāī.</i>	Since the drums of the <i>sāngīs</i> have been played in the street.
<i>bahan bhāī bāp beī sabhī kī lihāj gāī.</i>	All shame between father and daughter, sister and brother is gone.
<i>Sāngiyō ke sāth bahut bahū beī bhāj gāī.</i> ²⁷	Many wives and daughters have run away with the <i>sāngīs</i> .

In another song from the same singer:

<i>Rām krishṇa bhagvān kī sab ṭūṭ gāī maryād nī.</i>	All the standards of Lord Ram Krishna have been broken.
--	--

²⁵ Shobha Ram 'Premi', *Khūn kā badlā khūn*, Meerut, 1961, p. 3.

²⁶ Begraj Singh Bansala, *Prayāna Gīta Bhārīya Sainik*, Meerut, 1963, p. 19.

²⁷ Prithvi Singh 'Bedharak', *Dhol kī pol*, Meerut, 1963, p. 29.

Kal sāng dekhne bahū gāī The wife went to see *sāng* and
*āī do dīn ke bād rī.*²⁸ came back home two days
 later.

A further objection to *sāng* is that the rural people are swayed by the *sāngīs* into giving them money which could better be spent in productive ways.²⁹

Gādhī māī to Dinnā luttai. In Gadhi Dinna is looting.
Jānti ke māī Lakhmi In Janti the scoundrel Lakhmi
khāggar kuttai. is pounding.
Khekre kā nāī kā, The son of the barber of Khekrā,
Sūp kā kasāī kā The son of the butcher in Sup.
Yā Bullī kī badkāī And the roguery of Bulli.
*Ghar luttai hai kisān kā.*²⁹ Is looting the home of the
 peasant.

Basically, the message of the *bhajan mandālī* is one of devotion to duty, conformity to the positive values of Hinduism, and active participation in social reform. In implementing these it finds itself in direct opposition to *sāng*. Entertainment for its own sake is definitely disapproved, and while entertainment is certainly one element in the appeal of the *bhajan mandālī*, it is regarded by the *bhajnopdeshaks* only as a means to an end. This end is, of course, that of inspiring the audience to positive action. Even the names of the *bhajnopdeshaks* illustrate this. Whereas *sāngīs* are known by nicknames, derived from their given names, as are most people in the villages, the *bhajnopdeshaks* take pseudonyms which convey their missionary zeal. Some examples are *Bedhārak* ("fearless"), *Dhanurdhar* ("archer"), *Brahmachārī* ("celibate"), *Musāfir* ("wayfarer"). In the words of one of them:

"It is the duty of every man to serve the nation with all the talent he possesses. All the *bhajnopdeshaks* are fulfilling their duty. As the Arya Samaj has never lagged behind in its service to and

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁹ From an informant. The names are of *sāngīs* famous in the area.

sacrifice for the nation during her trying period, so are they awakening the country with their *bhajans* and fiery speeches."³⁰

The message of *sāng* is very different. Its manifest function is entertainment, and because of this, and particularly because of the form the entertainment takes, it clashes with orthodox Hinduism as well as with the Arya Samaj movement. *Sāng* plays do buttress certain of the values of Hindu society, but they do so in a manner unacceptable to orthodox believers and religious reformers alike, although in a manner traditionally regarded as appropriate for the instruction of the folk. The orthodox opposition to *sāng* and to the drama in general has of course been of long standing, but it did not coalesce into an active moment to abolish *sāng* in this area. Arya Samaj's disapproval of the drama has had this result, which is indicative of a general tendency to broaden the applicability of certain Hindu precepts that were originally regarded by most people as appropriate primarily for the elite and for the exceptional individual, but not for the common man.

POSTSCRIPT

Folk Drama and Social Change

Though numerous, folklore studies concerned with India—both literary and anthropological—suffer from a bias of "over traditionalism." This is not unique to Indian "oral traditions." William R. Bascom in *Contributions to Folkloristics* (Meerut 1980) candidly admits that in his classic article "Four Functions of Folklore," he did not appreciate the function of 'verbal art' as an instrument of social and political change. Even now, however, most scholars emphasize the ways in which folklore is used by the ruling elite as propaganda, ignoring the folk's own creation and use of these verbal art forms to promote one kind of change while opposing another. The "folkview" of society, culture, and history is mostly ignored by armchair scholarship attempting to interpret the Indian scene. Moreover, the continuous stream of folk literature is not collected and analyzed for the simple reason that it is not perceived as "traditional" and "old" enough. Bibliographies on South Asian folklore, such as Kirkland's and Handoo's, list more

³⁰ *Bansālā, op.cit.*, p.3.

than a dozen articles can be found in these collections that deal with social, cultural, and political change, and none of them, unfortunately, is scholarly.

And so this postscript, based on the data I have collected over the years, is a brief analysis regarding this neglected aspect of folklore studies. It is an effort to put the "folk" back in the "lore," as related to the modern, as well as the traditional, changing society of India. After writing our initial article on *sāṅg*, I did extensive fieldwork, recording hours of performance, interviewing dozens of actors, troupe managers, composers, and musicians, and making a collection of hundreds of printed texts going back to the 1920s. I also interviewed many persons who had attended *sāṅg* performances for decades. It is only after conducting these extensive interviews and reviewing written as well as performed versions of these plays (comparing them with other printed versions by the same troupe and recollecting the memories of my own involvement in decades of "folk movements") that I came to the conclusion that the study of folklore cannot be done without considering the historic role played by it in society at different times and places. Even societal traditions are characterized by "change." Here, then, the entire field on which I have written should be re-examined to define folklore not merely as a carrier of traditional values but also as a vehicle of change, as demonstrated by my articles printed in *Thieves in My House*.

Looking back on the writings about *sāṅg* by myself and other scholars, I now realize that the approach taken in these early studies was too narrow. In the four decades between 1950 and 1990, so much changed in relation to poetics, structure and morphology and functions in folk drama; to an old-timer, nothing seemed to be the same except the name of the genre. The music, the audience, the themes, the customs, the language have all been influenced by popular culture. In turn, folk culture also keeps continuously influencing popular culture. For example, performances were no longer held at the invitation of private rich clients on auspicious occasions like marriage, but more and more for social causes. Dramas were performed for the purpose of fund-raising to build a temple or a school. In this process, "democratization" and "free enterprise" had become the factors of new life. Entrance to plays was often no longer free. New heroes, new gods, and

new ideas had replaced the old ones; even "time" had become more "realistic" than mythological. Mass media, new technology, new laws to "reform" society, new economic and political atmospheres, and new cultural and social movements all had deep impacts. Even the internal organization of the troupes was not spared. No longer did an actor dedicate himself for life to a guru, for wages had become more important than loyalty to a guru or troupe leader. The new themes to build a new nation almost became a "rite of modernization." More and more, the old *rāgas* and *rāginīs* were replaced by film music and film songs. Even costumes were "modernized."

Yet in spite of all of this, the genre is still called *sāṅg*. This change forces us to create new criteria to define genre. It is no longer the "text" but rather the "context" that must define genre. The same type of song would be termed a "film song" when sung in a film, a *rāginī* when written by a *sāṅg* leader and sung in a *sāṅg* performance, and a *bhajan* when sung by a *bhajanopadeshak*.

In short, the main reason why the performance is still called *sāṅg* is simple: the *folk say so*. And because it is the folk's view that in the end determines what a genre is, it is necessary to re-examine previous folklore scholarship with the "folk" in mind.

APPENDIX

Rup Basant

Rup-Basant as played by the Bundu Mir Drama Party of Meerut District, U.P., at a crossroad in Rukunpur village. Recorded and translated by Ved Prakash Vatuk, edited by McKim Marriott.

1. *Nagmā* (musical)
2. *Bhēt* (prayers)
3. Play—

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, in a city named Dara, there rules a King named Chatar Sen. He has two sons named Rup and Basant. One day the Queen is resting in her chamber. She notices a nest in the ceiling which is inhabited by a pair of birds. One day the female bird dies. The male bird brings a new female bird. The new female bird kills all the chicks and pushes them down from the nest. This has a great impact on the Queen. She tells the King everything about these birds. She asks the King not to remarry in case she dies. The King promises (not to remarry). A few days later the Queen dies, and after much persuasion from his ministers, the King remarries. He sends his children away to school. One Sunday, Rup wants to play a game. He asks his brother Basant to take him out and play a ball game. What does Basant say?

Solo

Basant: Hearing the word 'game' his heart sank.
Our game was over the day our mother died.
Empty is the man of great house who has no caste.
Empty is the small child who has no mother.
Calamities fell on (the motherless) Chandrahasa and
Bhakta Dhuru;
Oh, these stepmothers!
There is no disinterested friendship in this world!

His fortunes are great, he whose father does not
have a second woman,
No one ever loves the children of a co-wife.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, they go near the Queen's palace playing their ball game. Basant hits the ball and it reaches the courtyard of the Queen's palace. Rup asks him to retrieve it. Basant says they can play with a different ball, but Rup is indignant.

Solo

Rup: You lost my ball, I have become destitute!
The love between you and me is all over.
The ball was a memory of our mother.
I kept it with great care and love.
That heavenly soul brought it from Haridwar.
She who has crossed the ocean of this world
deserves our devotion and worship.
Strange are the ways of the world—
Innocent faces hide killers inside.
You did not care much about the beloved son of
your mother.
Only God knows in what condition I live!
Every broken part of my body has seen death.
Since our mother died my life has become hell.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, the Queen sees the ball and asks one of her *bāṇḍīs*. (maid-servants) to get it. She asks if they know whose ball it is. When told about it, she says, "Oh how beautiful he must be whose tastes are so good!" The maid-servants try to plead with her to come to her senses, that the ball belongs to her son.

Duet

Bandi: He knows the world. He is your son! He can never
be frightened.
You can invite him, but he will never come.

- Queen:* He is the love of my life, my beloved!
How can it be that he will not come?
He can never escape my grip.
- Bandi:* Sister! Think, lest you bear the bad fruit of your action!
You will be defamed and he may lose his life!
You are mad with love! You are wrong!
He is a flower of yours that will not fade.
- Queen:* My infamy may travel with me—
But my life will be burnt up with that old husband!
How can such friendship last?
He is all spent out;
He can never have me.
- Bandi:* He who does not take when his turn comes to take.
Will not be cared for in earth or sky.
- Queen:* I am drifting toward my old age,
But have yet to see a child of mine born.
Old age, yes enemy-like old age,
Is preferable to this wasted youth.
It's hard to give up love!
Such *rāginī* no one else can sing—
None but (the blind Singer) Bundu Mir,
Who cannot (but by song) make others' eyes
See what he may feel.

Narration

- Guru:* Gentlemen, Basant comes to the palace and asks for his ball. The Queen propositions him. He is baffled and begs her to let him go.

Duet

- Queen:* You are my Basant (spring); be my beloved husband!
Let me love you, I will give you two balls instead of one!
- Basant:* Listen to me, you are my mother!
Why attack me like that?
Give me our ball! Give me the ball!

- Queen:* Without the gardener an ivy dries up,
And what life remains for the gardener?
Become a bee and smell the grape on the branch.
It is so ripe!
Be happy in your heart, enter the garden!
A new spring is here.
- Basant:* I will give you two balls instead of one.
The caretaker of this garden is our father.
I am the servant of these feet of yours
Oh mother! your son, Oh Mother!
Listen, dear Mother, my brother is crying—
The little, young, innocent one!
Give me the ball! Give me our ball!
Your father is not a match for me:
The world calls him old.
If a plant does not get water,
From where will it get fruits and flowers?
You and I make a good pair.
I will be your mare, you my rider.
I will give you two balls instead of one.
- Basant:* Only he who is the master rides the mare.
The whole world knows what kind of love
There is (to be) between mother and son.
Bundu Mir says the end will be very bad,
Oh Mother!
Give me the ball! Give me our ball!

Narration

- Guru:* Gentlemen, the Queen is angry when Basant runs away. She throws away her ornaments, goes to the sulking chamber and asks her maid to fetch the King.

Dialogue

- Queen:* Bandi, go and fetch the King!
- Bandi:* Fetch the King? What should I tell him?
- Queen:* Tell him, "Queen Chitravati is very sick."

- Bandi:** Very sick?
- Queen:** Yes.
- Bandi:** I see that you aren't even running a temperature.
- Queen:** Just go!
- Bandi:** Yes, Madam! Oh Ma, I am dead!
- (She comes to the court, where movie songs are being sung to entertain the King.)
- Messenger:** What is the matter? Have you gotten punctured?
- Bandi:** Messenger, tell me where the King is!
- Messenger:** Maharaja is resting in the room. I am the King for a couple of hours.
- Bandi:** You are the King? I have come to get the King.
- Messenger:** Oh talk to me, I am your true lover.
- Bandi:** Shame on your love and down with your clan.
- Messenger:** What will you get by burying my longings?
- Bandi:** I will have to talk to the King about your longings!
- Messenger:** Please don't tell him, or he will chop my head off!
- Basant:** Take me to see the King, Oh you worthless fellow!
- Messenger:** Then stay here for a while, you slave! How about my taking you to Haridwar for a dip in the Ganges? It's hot here; there you will feel cool.
- Bandi:** My little brother will go with me, too.
- Messenger:** Soak your little brother in the pond. He will be good material for rope, that bastard!
- (She goes to see the king)
- Messenger:** Maharaj, Bandi is at the door.
- King:** So bring her in!
- Messenger:** Bring her in?
- King:** Yes.
- Messenger:** Oh yes, I will bring that Bandi in.
- Messenger:** Oh Bandi!
- Bandi:** Yes pimp, what news?
- Messenger:** Cry the same way inside, as you did here.

- Bandi:** Very well.
(Bandi goes to see the King)
- Bandi:** Oh Ma, I am dead!
- Messenger:** Oh Pa, I am finished!
- King:** Oh shut up, you!
- Bandi:** Maharaj, I bow to you!
- King:** What brings you to the court, why are you crying?
- Bandi:** I am crying because I will be ruined.
- King:** Why are you crying?
- Messenger:** She spilled the water from my glass.
- King:** Bandi, why have you come here?
- Bandi:** Maharaj, one thing first: your messenger is a great rogue!
- King:** A rogue?
(Messenger sings a movie song, "Man dole")
- King:** This Bandi is complaining about you.
- Messenger:** What complaint?
- King:** She says my messenger is a rogue!
- Messenger:** What a strange thing you say! Maharaj, I have been with you so long, tell me truthfully, swearing by your dharma, did I ever do any roguish thing with you?
- King:** Bandi, what's the (specific) complaint about him?
- Bandi:** Maharaj, he was saying...
- King:** What was he saying? (she looks flustered) Don't be shy, tell me!
- Bandi:** He was saying, Maharaj, "How about going to Haridwar with me to take a dip?"
- King:** What? Is that true?
(Messenger: Humming a song about Coca Cola)
- King:** Do you hear me? This Bandi is complaining about you!
- Messenger:** What's she saying?
- King:** She says that you asked her to go to Haridwar with you to take a dip.

- Messenger:** Oh King, is it really a wrong thing to do—asking to take a Hindu to Haridwar? Bearing his expenditure? Was this really like shooting her? Strange, this world spends thousands of rupees to go to Haridwar to bathe in the Ganges, and I was taking her for free! Is this really a wrong thing?
- King:** He is right, Bandi, there was nothing wrong with it.
- Bandi:** But Sir, he said one more thing!
- King:** What did he say?
- Bandi:** I said, "My brother, too, will come," and he said, "Soak him in the village pond!" He will turn into rope-material."
- King:** Why? When it is an act of dharma to bathe at Haridwar, you refused to take her brother along?
- Messenger:** I have money for only one ticket; if I take him, I will be arrested.
- King:** Now, enough of that. Tell me why you came here.
- Bandi:** Maharaj, the Queen is very sick in the palace.
- King:** What? The Queen is sick?
- Bandi:** Yes, she has asked to call for a doctor.
- King:** Minister, it's terrible, the Queen is sick in the palace, what should be done?
- Messenger:** Prepare for the cremation.
- Bandi:** She is not dead.
- King:** She is not dead.
- Messenger:** Then kill her, she will die anyway.
- King:** The first one died, and I should kill this one too!
- Messenger:** As the first one died, this one, too, will die. Kill her!
- King:** Then how shall I spend my days?
- Messenger:** You can keep my mother.
- King:** Shut up!
- Messenger:** What else can I say? She can only cook for you!
- Bandi:** Call the Doctor, Sir!
- King:** Mr. Minister, go right away.
- Messenger:** Listen, Sir.

- King:** She has called for the Doctor.
- Messenger:** So what?
- King:** "So what?" The Queen is sick in the palace. Call for the Doctor!
- Messenger:** I can go myself.
- King:** Can you treat her?
- Messenger:** "Very nice." (he speaks in English)
- King:** Then let's go!
- Messenger:** With one condition.
- King:** What's that?
- Messenger:** I will go with you. I will treat her, make her fully recover, make her quite well.
- King:** Then what are your conditions? Can you treat her?
- Messenger:** "Very nice."
- King:** But your conditions?
- Messenger:** Firstly, Maharaj, I have no compounder with me, so I will ask Bandi to do that job.
- King:** Bandi, you will have to do what the doctor asks you to do!
- Bandi:** Yes Sir, but only within the rules and regulations, no improper work!
- King:** It's perfectly right, what Bandi says. She will work only within the rules and regulations. No improper work!
- Messenger:** Fine, Sir! But Maharaj, you have a servant. You've had him for some time. You may give him ten tasks to be done within the rules and regulations, but occasionally you can give him one or two seemingly improper tasks.
- King:** That's right, You can.
- Messenger:** So I will!
- King:** Your second condition?
- Messenger:** Ask her to tell me, "Let's go, Mr. Doctor. Let's go, Mr. Doctor."
- King:** Tell him so, Bandi!

- Bandi:** "Let's go, Mr. Doctor, Sir."
- Messenger:** Sure, Madam Mistress !
- King:** Third condition?
- Messenger:** This is the most important one, if this is not fulfilled, all will be useless.
- King:** Fine, what?
- Messenger:** Who am I?
- Bandi:** Doctor!
- Messenger:** And you?
- Bandi:** Compounder.
- Messenger:** This Bandi of yours is so vulgar. If she called me "Messenger" or "Minister" on the way, I would lose all the air inside me. I would lie there like a stone, the Queen would die, and everything would be over. Let's go, Bandi!
- Bandi:** Alright, messenger!
- Messenger:** Fs s s s—
- King:** Bandi, you messed it all up! He warned you in advance not to call him a messenger, or he would lose all the air inside him.
- Bandi:** I didn't know that the poor thing was telling the truth.
- King:** Now what?
- Bandi:** Use an air pump.
- King:** Should I pump?
(Messenger shakes his head negatively)
- King:** Should Bandi pump?
(Messenger nods his head in approval)
- King:** Now Bandi, pump. (She pumps)
- Bandi:** Let's go Messenger.
- Messenger:** Fs s s s—

Narration

- Guru:** Gentlemen, they reach the palace where the Queen is sitting angrily. What does she say?

Dialogue

- Queen:** On the one hand is your love for your Queen, on the other is your love for your dear son. Today justice shall be carried out to the last letter. I want the rogue to be banished from this earth, Never to see his face again, As my evidence, I have my bandis and his ball and kerchief!
- King:** What are you talking about?
- Queen:** About your son, who wanted to molest me, to make me his wife!
- King:** Is that right, Bandi?
- Bandi:** Yes, Sir!
- King:** Did Basant come to the palace?
- Bandi:** Yes, he did, Sir!
- King:** Today I discovered the truth about my son's bad character. That sinner, shameless, rogue.... He robbed me of my honor! If this is known to the world, What will people say?
- Queen:** This is what I am worried about, Kng! Today it happened at home; tomorrow he will do that outside. He is spoiled! This boy is out of our hands.
- King:** Should I bury him in the ground? Let hound dogs eat him?
- Queen:** No, he will come out. I want a death sentence for that sinner. Bring me back a pair of his eyes and a cup of blood!
- King:** What a sad day! Oh my Lord, what a sad day. The mother has become blood thirsty. Don't spoil Rajput blood! Citizens will taunt me, "Here comes that sinner, that son-eater!"

Queen: Even if you repeat that plea thousands of times, I will say, "No, he has to die!"

King: Only a bird can know the sorrow
of being imprisoned in a cage,
Only those who have children
Can know the sorrow of their loss,
You cannot tell me what I know.
Those who have no children
Can not know the pain of losing a child.
But I will do, what you say.
I will have them hanged!

(King goes to the Teacher-Minister)

King: I gave you two boys of mine. Do you know why?

Minister: Yes, to feed them, to raise them, to teach them, to train them.

King: Did you do that?

Minister: Yes, from A to Z.

King: Go and arrest Basant, immediately!

Minister: Oh no, why?

King: He has dishonored me and he has to be put to death.

Minister: Why? Are you mad? Because of that woman, you have lost your love for your boys!

King: Just do what I say!

Minister: Oh, King!

Solo

Minister: You shouted like thunder
At these children.
This is a very mean act.
They belong to your world
And no one else's.
They are your two innocent sons,
And no one else's!

If they wish, they can render *Sheshnāg* helpless.
If they wish, they can bring stars
From the sky to the earth!

Narration

Guru: Gentleman, the King insists that Basant should be brought before him. When Basant is brought before him, he is told by the King that he has done a deadly sin, and for that he will be put to death. Basant speaks.

Solo

Basant: Those who are blind from loving a woman
Do not give love to their children;
God sees, Oh father, what is true and what is false
Call the Hangman, Father, put me to death!
Send me there where our mother has gone!
Why delay, Father, why?
Your servant stands before you in the court
With hands folded.
~~Our~~ mother died leaving us young.
Father, believe me, I am innocent...
A motherless child.
You are getting us killed, destroying the very
name of your clan.
Come, Father, come yourself when I am being hanged.
Bring that stepmother, too
So she can see me die.
Tear my corpse and hang it publicly in the marketplace.
So all passers-by can see us innocent ones.
Call us names and praise our stepmother
when I am gone!
Acknowledge my regards, my bowings!
I salute you again and again.

Narration

Guru: Friends, the King sends the Minister to bring the Hangman to the court.

Dialogue

Minister: Take your book of laws and somehow explain it to the King.

In whatever way, save Basant.

Hangman: Sure! I will try to make the King understand. If he does not agree, I will try to give him some drink of peace.

I shall do whatever I can to save Basant.

(Hangman comes to the court)

King: Paltu, the Hangman!

Hangman: Yes, Sir!

King: Do you have (a strong) heart?

Hangman: Like stone, steel, and fire!

I can hold back a falling mountain.

I can take out the eyes of a roaring lion.

I am at your door to pay my homage.

Give me an order and this slave will be honored.

Tell me (who is) the prey ?

King: He is present here: Prince Basant.

Hangman: This is impossible, beyond me, Sir!

(Hangman throws his weapons on the ground)

King: I will cut you into pieces and throw them to lions.

I will shred your bones and throw them in rivers.

Why disobey me? Why dishonor me?

Why do you want to be killed in the place of this evil boy ?

Hangman: Yes, cut me to pieces; feed me to lions!

Crush me and throw me in rivers!

Grind me to dust! Burn me in Fire!

Bury me! Wipe me from this earth!

You have only learned lessons taught by women.

Little should I say: I have eaten your salt.

You sentence them to death, the innocent ones.

You don't feel the sadness of your son's loss?

How can you not, being a father?

King: You ungrateful Hangman! Don't disobey me! Arrest him immediately, or it will be bad for you!

Hangman: Maharaj, when one is sentenced to death, he is asked what his last wish is, whether he wants to eat or drink something.

King: No, he doesn't deserve to be granted that.

Hangman: He is your own son, Sir! You won't see him again. Ask him!

King: Right, this is your last day, your last moments. You will get your wish, (if you) ask.

Basant: I don't want to drink, to eat,

Or to love anyone.

I only wish to have a glimpse

Of my brother, the son of my mother.

Hangman: Oh Lord! His cry brings tears to

Every speck of sand!

How can a father not shed tears

When a son dies before him!

Maharaj,

We are seeing the day of an end

And not the day of a beginning.

We are seeing the day of his death

But not the day of his wedding.

Solo

Basant: But Hangman, I am married!

My agony rains, like the month of *sāvan*.

My handcuffs are my wedding bracelets.

Take my death as the crown of my marriage day,

And my chains as the necklace.

We are going. All houses are empty to us.

On the one hand are pleasure gardens;
 On the other are the cremation grounds.
 We were the jewels of this century.
 Now we are going. Be careful, Oh traveler!
 We too were human beings once!

Narration

Guru: Friends, in the meantime the minister goes to Rup's place. When he hears the voice of the minister, Rup shudders. May even an enemy not have such a fate!

Dialogue

Rup: Greetings, Mr. Minister.
Minister: Bless you, my son.
Rup: Have you come to play a game with me?
Minister: My sweet, your game is over.
Rup: Did they find my ball?
Minister: In a way that may God never give anyone in his whole life.
Rup: Why, what happened?
Minister: Your father has ordered your brother to be put to death.
Rup: Oh Lord!
 (Hearing about his brother's death, he did not delay. He came where his father was holding his court.)

Solo

Rup: Tell me, Oh Father, what is the crime of my brother?
 Before my brother, hang me, Oh Father!
 Mother asked you not to remarry,
 And to hug and love your two sons,
 You did not listen to Mother,
 Took it as a joke,
 And now today you are hanging your own Basant,
 Why, Oh Father, why?

Dialogue

King: Son, this brother of yours is unworthy.
 You come daily here.
 You will be trained to inherit my kingdom.
 Obey me!
Rup: Shame on such a kingdom, Oh Father!
 I kick it with my foot right before you.

Narration

Guru: Friends, the King asks both Basant and Rup to be taken away. The Hangman takes them away to the forest to kill them.

Solo

Hangman: I should do something
 So that these innocent ones are not killed,
 Without any crime, without any fault.
 I tell you, boys, just do this much for me.
 Go across the boundaries of this Dara city.
 Do not delay!
 I will kill two deers, will take out four eyes.
 You are motherless children, thus I shall save you
 And show the king these eyes of deers,
 What are you waiting for?
 If the King finds this out, he will hang me too!

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, the Hangman leaves the boys alone in the forest, kills two deer, takes their eyes out and gives them to the King. The Queen sees them and feels sorry inside.
 The boys are crying in the forest and they say:

Duet

Basant: Why cry ? Brother, walk a little faster!
Rup: How should I do that? I am unable to walk.
 Take me with you.

Great are you, Oh Stepmother, what have you done to us?

If a lion or a tiger eats us, our end will be here.

Basant: Don't be afraid, good fortune is (still) with us.

Rup: Even Father, Oh Brother, did not care for us.

Basant: Be grateful that we have at least survived, Oh brother.

Rup: I can't walk further, carry me, Oh Brother!

Basant: Stepmother was cruel, heartless, like a sword for murdering us....

Rup: A chain to be tied around our feet, were we to get the worst fate in the world?

Basant: Yes, this was written in our destiny. Don't be afraid.

Rup: Destruction is our fate! Walk, Brother! Walk slowly.

Basant: What we feared, Brother, came before us.

Merciless Father, too, Brother, carried out a strange justice.

He was taken in by stepmother and ordered us to be killed.

May God be good to the Hangman, who saved us from being harmed.

This is the script of Brahma, Brother, don't call it bad.

Rup: My life is at its end, my Brother. Save me!

Our fortunes were gone the day we became motherless,

Wandering in the forest like calves without a cow,

The rope of our boat is all but broken.

My feet are blistered, Brother, sit down and look.

Let Bundu Mir sit in (his village) Khanpur to create the *rāga*.

And ignorant Khajan lament our sorrow in song!

Solo

Rup: The sun is about to set; evening is falling.

I can't go on any more! Sit down and rest here.

How can I walk? I can't with blisters on my feet.

May you have bad days ahead, Stepmother,

Making us wander in the forest,

Fearing that lions and tigers

May devour us, helpless!

Brother, do this much:

Sit down and rest.

Camp here somewhere.

Whoever listens to my lamentation,

You are not being kind at all!

My life's breath is coming to my lips.

If anywhere our mother is listening,

Call out to us, please, wherever you are!

Duet

Basant: Don't lose courage; courage is a great thing.

Weeping won't help, control your heart.

The sun is set, Brother; night has fallen.

Under this tree, my Brother, let us rest.

Rup: It's such a desolate place, my body shivers.

No one is in sight. The night is very dark.

Listen to me, Brother, it's not wise to sleep here.

No city is near here.

Even if we cried along for help,

None could help us in our days of misfortune.

Basant: Listen, my Brother, Oh what shall I tell you?

When I am sleepy I will wake you up.

It's time to go to sleep; stretch your legs and sleep.

You never walked so much before. You are afraid of the journey.

When sleep falls on me, I will tell you to wake up.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, Rup goes to sleep. Basant is guarding him. On the same tree live two *chakwā* and *Chakwī* birds. Chakwa says, "Chakwi, tell me something to (help) pass the night." Chakwi says, "You

tell me." All this Basant hears sitting at the root of the tree.

Solo

Singer: Sitting on the branch of the tree
Both are talking to each other.
Chakwa says, "Listen to what I say:
If a person kills and eats me,
He will receive the Kingdom.
He will become rich."
Chakwi then says this:
"If someone kills and eats me,
He will be stung by a snake in the morning.
His death shall come."
It's dark in the night,
Chakwi says, "it's past midnight,
I feel sleepy."
Thus talking to each other,
They felt happy.
Chakwi says, "Listen carefully.
Stretch your legs and go to sleep."
Khajan Singh writes the verse.
Both of them went to sleep on the same tree.
May the Lord grant them salvation.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, when Chakwa and Chakwi fall asleep,
Basant shoots them down with an arrow. They both
fall down dead. Basant eats Chakwi. When it's
midnight, he wakes up Rup and goes to sleep himself.
Rup guards and eats Chakwa. A snake lives in the
tree roots. He stings Basant. When Rup tries to wake
Basant, he finds him dead. He weeps and wails.

Solo

Rup: Brother, Oh Brother, my own mother's son;
I will die with you.

You have left me alone in the forest.
Talk to me once!
Open your eyes!
What can I do alone?
Where can I go?
I will die with you.
Your breathing stopped,
Your heart stopped beating,
I don't know where the cremation ground is;
Without a shroud, your body is bare,
My agonies are doubled.
I will die with you.
First Mother, and now you, Brother,
Broke relations and went away.
I am fearful alone,
Whom did you leave to take care of me?
I will die with you.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, when Rup is tired of weeping and when
he comes to his senses, he goes in search of wood
and a shroud for his brother's cremation. Soon he
finds before him a giant belonging to the King of
Egypt coming toward him. The King has ordained
that anyone who stands up to the giant should be
the next king. The royal servants catch Rup. Rup is
frightened.

Solo

Rup: Don't arrest me, Police Chief! My brother is lying
dead in this forest.
Give me a shroud, Oh people of this city!
My brother lies dead, his heart has stopped beating.
Be merciful, tell me the way to the cremation ground.
I beg you, give me a shroud and wood!
I myself am the victim of misfortune,

Time has shaken me.
 I am the dear son of Chatarsen of Dara Nagar.
 Our mother died, leaving us orphans, motherless,
 Our stepmother exiled us, blaming us violently.
 We wandered until we reached the boundries of
 Egypt,
 In the name of God, donate! I will not forget your
 good deed!
 Whom can I ask? Who is mine here a real relative?
 I am destitute, owning nothing.
 Darkness has fallen before my eyes. I cried so much.
 Who will listen (to me)? Whom should I tell, wailing
 since morning?
 I desire no riches, no palaces, no multi-story buildings.
 I swear by God, I desire no kingdom.
 Why laugh at me, saying, "Take part of the Kingdom?"
 My fate has already forsaken the kingdom in my life.
 May God bless you with that, I need no power.
 "Your God's temple is there in Harinagar," says
 Khajan Singh.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, Rup is given the Kingdom of Egypt. He forgets his brother Basant. Meanwhile, *Mahādeva* and *Pārvati* appear. Parvati asks Mahadeva to bring Basant back to life. Mahadeva refuses.

Solo

Parvati: Why don't you take pity on the condition of this child?
 What a beautiful child he is, what attractive features!
 At such a tender age he became beloved of death.
 His mother will die of shock crying, losing such a son.
 Look at his condition, his situation in the forest.
 Any animal may tear him apart and eat him.

Give him some herbs from your bag!
 Lions roar here, there is no trace of people.
 You are the god among gods, no one knows
 the mystery about you....
 You kill one, and save the other.
 You are worshipped even by Brahma as the lord.
 First you bring him to life, then do whatever else
 So that he can get up and go to his (own) place.
 Tell Sadhu Ram to sing songs of Khajan Singh.

(Mahadeva brings Basant back to life.)

Solo

Basant: You renounced your love for me, Oh Brother, and went away.
 Tell me, Oh Baba Ji, where did he go,
 leaving me like that in the forest?
 What did you intend, Oh God, by separating
 the two of us in the forest?
 Our kingdom is gone, our home is left behind,
 And even my brother has renounced me.
 For you, I had to leave Daranagar, Oh Brother!
 I broke relations with all the crying men and women.
 I burnt up all my wealth and came with you.
 I am fearful, alone in this forest,
 Who will listen, and to whom should I speak?
 Where can I go now?
 If you are hiding anywhere, tell me
 and I will call,
 If you don't answer, I will kill myself,
 I am burning inside, I cry and cry,
 If you were to betray me, I should not have brought
 you with me.
 I would have preferred being hanged right then and there.

I would have gone where Mother is gone.
 All desolate here, Oh Lord, where can I go?
 He cries, he wails, "Oh Lord, your *māyā* is beyond us."

(He came to the main gate of the country of Egypt.
 He just lay down there to sleep near the royal gate.
 At midnight a giant came there.
 The Prince killed him in a moment.)

Narration

Guru: The King of this country had proclaimed that any one who killed the giant would be rewarded handsomely. Basant kills the giant, keeps his ears and tail, and falls asleep. When the city Police Chief comes on his rounds, he snatches the ears and tail from Basant, beats him to unconsciousness, and pushes him into a ditch. A Potter comes to dig for clay and finds Basant murmuring

Solo

Basant: Gently, gently, Oh Father, dig me up gently!
 I am lying here by misfortune with all my body wounded.
 I am an orphan child, my misfortune brought me here.
 The Police Chief has thrown me down here after beating me,
 I killed the giant.
 He snatched (the giant's) ears and tail and threw me in the ditch.
 Prajapati, listen to me, I will be ever so grateful...
 You are my father, my mother, my Lord!
 My brother has left me in the forest sleeping ...
 God knows where he went.
 His name was Rup, Oh Father.
 I came searching for him and am left in this condition.
 Take me with you, please!

Treat me as your son, keep me with you.
 I will be your servant.
 Day and night I will obey you.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, Basant now lives with the Potter. In the meantime, a Merchant comes to this part of that country. His ship is stuck for want of a human sacrifice demanded by the ocean. The Merchant goes to the King, who sends his servants with him in search of a man to sacrifice. They come to the Potter's house, grab Basant, and take him to be sacrificed.

Duet

Merchant: Listen carefully, Oh boy!
 My ship won't move until I offer a sacrifice.
 My ship will sail only after I sacrifice you.
 I tell you everything ... I will offer you to the ocean.
 I cannot be merciful; I will have to harden my heart.

Basant: Oh Merchant, why should you make me lose my life?
 I will be thy servant, Oh *Seth*, I will serve you for life.

Merchant: I will give you as a sacrifice; I will not back down out of fear.
 I will send you to death, not leaving any trace of you.

Basant: What a horrible day becoming a ship's victim!
 I will talk about your song, Oh Khajan Singh, at the Jatav Gate.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, Basant prays to the Lord with folded hands, shaking the Lord's throne with his prayer. The Lord sends his angels down and the ship sails as soon as Basant touches it with his foot. Now the Merchant takes Basant with him and goes to Sankal Island. He does business there. Basant goes on a

tour. He hears about the conditions set by the King: if a man shoots down a fish, piercing the seven iron plates below it with one arrow, he will be entitled to the hand of the Princess and half the Kingdom. Basant fulfills that condition and is greeted by Princess Chandra Kala with a marriage garland. They are married. Soon afterward they sail back. Basant tells her everything about himself when the Princess asks.

Solo

Chandra Kala: Why do you cry now in memory of your brother?
It's useless, like crying over the line made by a snake
after it has passed by.
What use is crying now? Try to forget it,
That you loved him, the son of your mother.
He would be dividing your money now, dividing your
property.
You searched for him, why weep now?
It was a thoughtless act. Why wash your face with
tears now?
I know that a real brother is the most beloved to
noblemen.
Ever since I heard your tale, my body has burned.
My Prince, it is not your mistake; you lost your
brother.
But what can you do? Fate is greater than any plan
we may have.
That must have been a great pair—the two of you...
The beautiful, motherless children.
God willed that only one remain.
Bundu Mir always loves the tune Khajan brings out.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, when they are returning to Egypt, on the way the Merchant has an evil thought. He throws Basant in the ocean and pleads with Chandra Kala for her love.

Solo

Merchant: Oh fair maiden, come with me, enjoy life day and night.
Put vermillion in your hair. Put powder on your face.
Clean your teeth and chew betel leaves.
Your palace will be in a garden filled with fresh air.
You will be loaded with golden ornaments
In your left hand,
You will wear a watch with 15 jewels.
You will walk like a decorated favorite mare
I will give you a Saigon blouse, and underwear, too.
You will bathe with Lux soap.
I will give you a dressing table from Dharapur.
We will go to movies daily,
Sit in the most expensive seats.
There will be plenty of soda water and lime juice to drink.
You will be loaded with precious stones that shine at night.
With silken saris over fine cloth petticoats,
Nine-size socks and pantyhose,
New types of shoes, which will cost seven bills.
We will sit in our room and play *chaupar* and cards.
Friends will be waiting to have our company.
You will sit next to them on a chair,
They will think you hold a B.A. degree.
Talk in English, and arouse love inside!
I will never send you away from me,
Not even for a minute.
Always enjoy my company, Oh beauty, never be sad!
We will take a tour of America, Japan and Russia.
I will get fruits for you every day,
Will apply *Kakul* oil with my own hands,
Will sing the *sāṅgs* of Bundu Mir,

Whose tunes are world famous, who sings praise to
the Lord,
Day and might.

Solo

Chandra Kala: For how many days in this world
Are you taking this sin upon your head?
Even more than one's mother and sister
The women of others are (to be) respected.
There was a man named Bali of Pampapur.
He seduced the wife of his own (mother's-son) brother.
Sugriva went to Rama and pleaded with him;
Rama killed Bali from behind the tree
And gave the Kingdom to Sugriva,
Indra, the king, fell in love, left his throne,
Fell for Ahilya—wife of a *rishi*
He didn't listen to any advice, that sinner!
In the end he himself ruined his own body—
The *rishi* cursed him to have a thousand vaginas on
his body!
And in Lanka, there was a ten-shouldered brave man
(Ravana);
He came to Panchvati disguised as a saint,
Begging when the daughter of Janak was alone at
home.
He deceived her, kidnapped the wife of Rama.
Rama killed him, burning his Lanka to the ground.
Like the moon, you will be shadowed by sin.
Why do it?
Like Narad, you will have the face of a monkey.
Why give your heart to another's woman?
"You will be judged later," says Bundu Mir.
The blackness of your deed will shine on your face."

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, Basant is swallowed by a fish. The fish
is caught by a fisherman. When he wants to cut the
fish open, Basant speaks from inside the fish.

Solo

Basant: Gently cut it open, Oh Fisherman, or I will be
wounded
Don't cut it in a way that I will be cut, too!
Give me the boon that I come out alive!
Put it aside, that sharp, shining knife in your hand!
Piercing were the eyes of my wife.
Every pore shone, with beauty,
She was so fair
Just like the *memsāhebs* who live in the West.
My nightingale has fled from my garden;
Only sorrow fills my heart.
Her speech was like flowers,
Showering fragrance with every word.
My wife is sacrificed to the ship;
My bird is trapped by the hunter,
She who was from Sankal Island
Shone like the moon on a dark night.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen: The Merchant hands Queen Chandra
Kala over to King Rup, who wants her to go to the
palace. She pleads with him that she would like to
hear the story of two brothers before she is sent to
the palace.

Solo

Chandra Kala: First let me hear the story of two brothers.
After that, you may make me your queen.
Make a proclamation in the streets of the rich.
In small villages and lanes,
In the marketplaces.

I will remain in the court.
 Until then don't send me to the palace.
 I will hear the story related here orally,
 Will not expect that someone else heard it.
 I will listen carefully with my own ears.
 Don't take me away from here
 If someone comes to relate the tale of two brothers
 In the court, I want to be the first to be told.
 He who tells the truth will be rewarded.
 These merchants who brought me here
 Have thrown away my husband
 In the ocean, these sinners.
 Khajan wrote those stanzas,
 Let his poem be sung.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, Rup asks this to be announced, that anyone who tells him the story of two brothers will receive five hundred rupees as a reward. Basant comes to the court with the Fisherman's wife, disguising himself as a woman, and relates the tale:

Solo

Basant: I will sing you a song full of sadness.
 My story is full of agonies.
 There was a nice village, Daranagar,
 Where King Chatarsen ruled.
 He was famous in all lands.
 He had a very noble Queen.
 His Kingdom was filled with happiness.
 He got two sons—they were named Rup and Basant.
 As luck would have it, the Queen was taken by death.
 The King was persuaded to marry again.
 One day both the boys felt like playing ball.
 They went to play near the palace of their stepmother.
 The ball on first strike fell in the palace.

Basant went to fetch it.
 A trap was set up by the cruel Queen.
 The Queen called the courtiers,
 Showed them the ball and sword,
 She lost her mind,
 The King was taken over by suspicion.
 He came to the court,
 Asked both princes to be brought before him.
 Ordered them to be put to death,
 Handed them over to a Hangman.
 The hangman left them, crossed over to Egypt.
 They slept under a tree.
 Basant was stung by a snake.
 Rup betrayed him, went away,
 And never came back,
 Left the forest and the brother,
 The son of his own mother.
 Lord Shiva brought Basant back to life.
 Basant wandered around, weeping bitterly,
 Sometimes for his brother, sometimes for his mother.
 He cried, he searched, not knowing where to go,
 Went to sleep near the main gate.
 The giant there threatened to eat him.
 He killed the giant. The city Police Chief threatened
 to kill him,
 Dropped him in a ditch.
 A Potter found him, took him home.
 Gave him away to a Merchant to be offered as a
 sacrifice for his ship,
 But the ship sailed no sooner than he touched her.
 The Merchant took him in the ship.
 They went to Sankal Island, did their shopping.,
 Fulfilled a test, and he married Chandra Kala.
 In the ship they sailed.

The Merchant lost his mind over Chandra Kala,
 Threw Basant in the ocean and took the Queen.
 Basant was swallowed by a fish.
 A Fisherman caught the fish
 And brought Basant out
 When he cut the fish open.

Solo

Rup: Sister, resembling you was a brother of mine,
 The son of my very own mother.
 We lived in Daranagar.
 Stepmother made life hell,
 Kicked us out. Father discarded us.
 In distress we wandered.
 My brother died in the forest,
 I thought, and I left in search of a shroud,
 And they sat me on the throne here.
 I got the Kingdom; my brother lay there.
 Thus I was separated from my brother
 When he lay dead.

Narration

Guru: Gentlemen, both brothers embrace each other. The
 Merchant is hanged. Chandra Kala goes to the palace
 to live. They spend some time in Egypt, but then
 return to Daranagar. When Chatarsen comes to know
 the facts, he orders the Queen to be hanged. Both
 brothers rule the Kingdom happily ever after.
 Victory to Lord Ram!

9

The Lustful Stepmother in Folklore of Northwestern India

with Sylvia Vatuk

In the mid 1940s a lengthy ballad composed and sung by a locally prominent folk preacher, Bhism Brahmachari, attained considerable popularity in the rural districts of western Uttar Pradesh.¹ This ballad (or *bhajan*) purported to tell a recent and true story of one Dharm Pal, a young man of the village of Maharampur in the district of Basti, in eastern Uttar Pradesh. The other principal actors in the story were *Zamindār* Arjun Singh, the father of Dharm Pal, a man in his mid-fifties, Kam Kala, the latter's 18-year-old wife, and Dharm Pal's young newly married wife Shanta Kumari. Their marriage had not yet been consummated, and Shanta Kumari, therefore, still lived with her parents and brothers in the nearby hamlet of Tyodhi. The outline of the story is as follows:

One day in 1935 Dharm Pal enters the house where he lives with his father and stepmother and finds his stepmother, Kam Kala, alone. Kam Kala seizes the opportunity to make sexual advances toward Dharm Pal, declaring her passionate desire for him and complaining of her lack of sexual fulfillment as the wife of an elderly man. Dharm Pal is appalled at the suggestion that they should have sexual intercourse, pointing out that she stands in the relationship of a "mother" to him, and that such an act would be a heinous sin. She persists and refuses to listen to his remonstrances. Finally, he leaves the house without giving into her pleas.

Some time later Arjun Singh returns home to find Kam Kala lying on the floor, her hair and clothes in disarray, crying bitterly.

¹ For a discussion of the role of the singing folk preacher (*bhajnopadeshak*) in this region, see Vatuk 1967.

After considerable prodding she tells her husband that while he was away Dharm Pal entered the house and sexually assaulted her. Arjun Singh is furious, calls for his son, and orders him to leave the house immediately. Dharm Pal does not attempt to clear his name by accusing his stepmother of the attempted seduction; he acquiescently leaves home, taking some money and a bullock cart, and sets out for his wife's village.

Three miles from his destination a storm comes up. In the darkness and rain he is set upon by four robbers who take his money and the bullock cart and leave him, stripped naked, tied to a tree. Unbeknownst to Dharm Pal, these robbers are the brothers of his wife. They do not recognize each other because they have not been in contact since Dharm Pal's marriage ceremony and because of the darkness and stormy weather.

After the robbers leave him, Dharm Pal cries out for help and finally a passerby comes and unties him. He arrives at his in-laws' home late at night and tells them what has happened. They clothe and feed him, and while he is eating, the brothers confer among themselves. They realize who it is they have robbed and fear that they will soon be found out. So they slip out together and go to the police station where they explain their predicament to the *daroga*, the chief of police. They offer him four rugs and Rs. 100 to take Dharm Pal into custody and poison him. After some discussion, he agrees to do so.

The brothers then return home and advise Dharm Pal to go with them the next morning to the police and report the incident. He does so, but when he arrives there he is seized and put into a cell. Later, he is given poison in his food. When he realizes that he has been poisoned, he begs his guard to go quickly to his wife's home and tell her what has happened.

In the meantime, his wife sees her brothers returning from the police station without Dharm Pal. When she asks where he is, they evade her questions. She starts out for the station herself but meets the guard, Daya Ram, on the way. He tells her that her husband has been poisoned by the *daroga*. He also tells her that the District Collector is camped in a nearby village and advises her to seek his help. She runs as fast as she can through the fields to the District Collector's camp site.

Back at Dharm Pal's home, Kam Kala has a dream in which she sees her stepson bidding goodbye. She murmurs in her sleep that she is sorry for what she has done. Arjun Singh hears her words. Rather than confronting her directly for an explanation, he tells her to get ready immediately, that news has come that one of her relatives is sick, and that they must go to visit him. The couple then set out toward Tyodhi.

By this time, Dharm Pal is unconscious from the effects of the poison, and the *daroga* and his men take him out of the cell, intending to throw his body into the canal. On the road they meet Shanta Kumari and the District Collector coming from one direction and Arjun Singh and Kam Kala coming from another. The Civil Surgeon, who is with the Collector, examines Dharm Pal's almost lifeless body and gives him an antidote to the poison. Dharm Pal soon regains consciousness. He forgives his stepmother for what she has done. The brothers of Shanta Kumari and the *daroga* are sentenced to life imprisonment. Dharm Pal and Shanta Kumari live happily ever after.²

The folklorist will immediately recognize this ballad as a typical representative of a folktale motif which is very widespread, not only in India, but in other parts of the world as well. Tales containing this motif have been indexed by Thompson (1955) under two separate classification numbers, K2111 (Potiphar's Wife) and T418 (The Lustful Stepmother, under the more general heading of Illicit Sexual Relations). This separation is apparently based on the absence or presence in various examples of the motif of a stepmother-stepson relationship between the seductive woman and her victim. But most scholars who have examined the occurrence of this motif in world literature have traditionally considered it as a unity. As Dundes has suggested (1962: 102), the relationship existing between the man and woman may be considered a matter of allomotifemic variation (in Propp's sense) in the basic structural form of the story. This structure involves three main characters, a mother-figure; a father-figure and a son-figure, in the following sequences of events:

² It is interesting to note the symbolism of the names in this story: Dharm Pal—Protector of *dharma*, Shanta Kumari—Peaceful One, Kam Kala—Lustful One, and Daya Ram—Compassionate One.

1. The woman attempts to seduce the son-figure.
2. The son-figure rejects her overtures.
3. The woman, in revenge, accuses him of (attempted) sexual assault.
4. The father-figure punishes the son-figure.
5. The son-figure is later discovered to be innocent and reparation is made (through human or divine agency.)
6. In some cases, the woman is punished for her misdeed; in others she is forgiven by the son-figure.

The earliest known version of this motif appears before 1200 B.C. in an Egyptian manuscript (in which the protagonists are a young, unmarried man and the wife of his much older brother (c.f. Yohannon 1968: 1-13), and again somewhat later in the well-known Biblical narrative of Joseph and the wife of his master, Potiphar (Genesis 39). In the Greek myths, the motif occurs a number of times, most importantly in the tale of Hippolytus and Phaedra, dramatized by the playwright Euripides in the 5th century B.C. In India the motif is to be found numerous times in the classical literature—the earliest clear example is from the *Jātaka* tales, in the *Mahāpaduma Jātaka* (472), wherein the central characters are Prince Paduma, son of Brahmaddatta, King of Banaras, and the latter's second wife. In the later Buddhist literature the motif appears in a story concerning the great Ashoka, his queen, Tishya Rakshita, and his son by another wife, Kunala (in *Divyāvadāna*). (See Bloomfield 1923: 147-9 for a discussion of this story, and also Yohannon 1968: 231-46). Keene (1962) and Bloomfield (1923) have discussed in some detail the occurrence of this motif in the Indian literary tradition, and the latter points out that the lustful stepmother incident is frequently fitted into a more lengthy and elaborate Fortunatus tale type, in which the attempted seduction and subsequent exile of the hero provide a springboard for an adventurous and ultimately victorious career (1923: 141-2). Such is the case in the Joseph story, and in some of the Indian parallels as well.

Relevant studies of this motif in world literature have tended to be comparative in approach; examples are presented from one or more geographical regions and their similarities and differences

are examined. For example, Bloomfield presents in some detail twelve stories of this type from Indian classical literature, mentioning a number of others more briefly, and describes "the organic modulations which [the motif] undergoes in its manifold story connections" (1932: 143). Yohannon, taking more ambitiously the entire Old World as his literary spring, discusses, in the context of an anthology of prominent exemplars of the Potiphar's wife theme in literature (ranging from Spain to Japan and from 1200 B.C. to the mid-twentieth century), the principal "resemblances and differences among the stories" (1968: 2). Among these more recent scholars there has been little commitment to searching for actual historical relationships among the stories under their purview, although such an interest has not been absent in the annals of folklore (cf. Lang 1913: 318) and literary scholarship. While assuming the existence of historical connections among many of the tales in which this motif is prominent (see e.g., Keene 1962: 162), these writers generally conceded that the motif owes its worldwide occurrence more to the fact of "a familial experience common to all mankind" (Yohannon 1968: 2-3) than to diffusion from a common source (cf. Bloomfield 1923).

In a recent review of Yohannon's work Greenway has expressed disappointment at the author's failure to grapple with the problem of the contextual environments, in their respective cultures, of the tales he presents (1969: 1004-1005). He thus makes a plea for a study of the significance of this motif to the bearers of the tale traditions in which it occurs, for the "why" of the motif, rather than the "what" and "how good" (Greenway 1969: 1005). The present paper is designed as an attempt to answer the need to which Greenway has so cogently directed attention and to consider specifically the question of the cultural context of the Lustful Stepmother motif in Indian folk literature.

In the two studies mentioned above of Indian exemplars of the motif under consideration (Bloomfield 1923 and Keene 1962), as well as in more general studies of this motif in world literature, emphasis is on the *literary* analogues of the Joseph story. This emphasis should not be taken to indicate that the motif is in fact limited to Indian literary as opposed to oral tradition. Aside from the question of the interrelatedness of folk and elite traditions in

India, and the probable folk origin of much of the extant story literature in India, it should be pointed out here that the motif of the lustful stepmother is in fact a common one in the oral tradition of India up to the present time, at least in the region of northwestern India with which the present writers are familiar. While certain of the better-known literary tales of this type may have oral versions, for the most part the popular lustful stepmother stories of this region are not the same as those known to the Indian literary tradition. The most commonly heard in this region are the stories *Rūp Basant* and of *Pūraṇ Mal* (or *Pūraṇ Bhagat*). These have been reported more widely in other parts of North India as well. For example, Temple (1885: 375-456) has recorded a text of the *Pūraṇ Mal* story in ballad form from the Gujranwala District of Punjab, and Bloomfield makes a brief reference to published versions of both of these folk tales, one from as far east as Bengal (1923: 163-64).

Folktales appear in a variety of genres, and it is often possible to find versions of these popular tales sung in the form of a ballad, dramatized by professional traveling folk opera troupes, as well as narrated by amateur storytellers in family gatherings. The story of Dharm Pal, for example, has been found in a printed libretto of a *sāṅg*, composed by a noted drama troupe leader of this region, as well as in the *bhajan* form referred to at the outset of this paper. Our data here are drawn primarily from folk operas.³ First, we have used a *sāṅg* performance, recorded on tape, of *Rūp Basant*. This performance by the troupe of Bundu Mir was given in the spring of 1970 in a village in Meerut District, U.P. Second, we have a number of printed librettos of *sāṅgs* telling the stories of Dharm Pal, Rup Basant and Puraṇ Mal, as well as four other stories containing variations of the lustful stepmother motif, entitled respectively *Gulāb Kaur*, *Devar-Bhābhī*, *Jaimal Phattā* and *Bhābhī kā Pyār*.

A word about the latter sources may be appropriate. These librettos are part of a large collection of approximately 500 printed *sāṅg* texts made in the course of a broader study of this genre of folk drama as it is found in western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

³ See Vatak and Vatak 1967 for a description of *sāṅg*, a type of musical folk drama indigenous to the area of western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

They are orally composed, but are set down in writing by the troupe leaders who have composed them or (since these leaders are often illiterate) by other members of their troupes. They contain the principal story line, important dialogue between the central characters, feature duets and solo songs and essential stage directions. They are printed cheaply and distributed in rural and small town markets. Their usual customers are literate village people or those of the town-dwelling and urban lower class, who read them as stories and also learn the songs for their own enjoyment. The *sāṅgs* written by different composers on a single theme naturally often differ in minor details of the story, and the words of the dialogues and songs may differ considerably. But the *sāṅgī* rarely takes marked liberties with main events of the traditional folk stories, which are already well-known to their audience. *Sāṅgīs* do, however, compose entirely original *sāṅgs* on stories of their own invention, frequently drawing on popular motifs like that of the lustful stepmother. They also adapt stories from popular films. From internal evidence, and from the apparent absence of these stories from the older folklore record in this region, we believe that the stories *Devar Bhābhī* and *Jaimal Phattā*, in addition to the story first cited, *Dharm Pāl-Shāntā Kumārī*, are probably recent compositions or adaptations rather than traditional tales.

Our first step will be to recapitulate briefly the main story lines of the tales with which we are dealing. We will limit ourselves to the part of the tale which displays the lustful stepmother motif; in some of these tales the seduction incident is only a prelude to a much longer story of adventure for the male protagonist and the details of these adventures are not directly relevant to our interests here.

1. *Rūp Basant*—Main Characters: Rup (eleven years-old) and Basant, two brothers; King Chatur Singh, their father; Sundra, their father's second wife; her maid.

On her deathbed, the mother of Rup and Basant pleads with her husband not to take a second wife after her death, for the sake of their sons' well-being. He agrees, but sometime later is persuaded to marry a young girl. This second wife is, however, housed in the palace in an apartment separate from that in which the young boys are living and they do not have any contact with

her. One day they are playing ball and the ball goes over the wall into their stepmother's courtyard. Rup goes to retrieve the ball. The stepmother is struck by his beauty and attempts to seduce him. He refuses and manages to leave. Later, when her husband comes to her apartment, she accuses Rup of sexual assault. Chatur Singh does not believe her story initially, but is convinced when her maid corroborates the story. He confronts Rup, who denies the accusation but refrains from revealing his stepmother's attempt to seduce him. Chatur Singh (or Chatar Sen) orders Rup executed. Basant, loyal to Rup, accompanies his brother and the executioner into the forest. The executioner takes pity on Rup and kills a deer, whose eyes and blood he takes back to the palace as proof of Rup's death. The two brothers go on to have many adventures. After twelve years they return home. Their father comes to know the true story and has his wife hanged. (A version of this *sāṅg* is given in Chapter 8 (Appendix)).

2. *Pūran Mal*—Main Characters: Puran Mal, a twelve-year-old boy; King Salvan, his father; Achchhade his mother; Nunade, his father's second wife.

When Puran Mal is born, the astrologer announces that his was an inauspicious birth—he must be put away in a pit for twelve years, to be cared for by a nurse, lest he either die himself or cause his parents' death. This is done, and after twelve years he is released with much rejoicing in the kingdom. In the meantime his father has taken a second wife, a young woman named Nunade. When Nunade hears of his beauty, she demands of the king that he send Puran Mal to see her, and the king agrees. But Achchhade warns Puran Mal that if he goes to see this woman, he will be putting himself in great danger. Puran Mal does not heed his mother's advice, maintaining that it is his duty to pay his respects to new stepmother.

When Puran Mal enters Nunade's apartment, Nunade immediately begins to make sexual advances toward him, which he vehemently resists. She becomes very angry and tries to prevent his leaving, but he escapes through a window. Then Nunade calls her husband and complains to him that Puran Mal has tried to seduce her. King Salvan does not believe her story at first, but she is able to convince him that she is telling the truth and

threatens to kill herself if Puran Mal is not punished by death for dishonoring her. At her demand, King Salvan orders Puran Mal's eyes gouged out, his hands and feet cut off and his body thrown into a well. He also orders Achchhade out of the palace. Despite his maimed condition, Puran Mal survives in the well for twelve years, at which time he is rescued by a holy man, Guru Gorakh Nath. His limbs and eyesight are miraculously restored. Puran Mal forgives his stepmother and his mother returns to the palace.

3. *Gulāb Kaur*—Main Characters: Sher Singh, a young man; Sukhlal, his father; Gulab Kaur, his father's second wife.

When Sukhlal, a wealthy man, is widowed at the age of fifty, he marries a young girl, secretly giving her father Rs. 1000 in payment for her. One day Sher Singh's pet parrot flies into his stepmother's room and he goes in to fetch it. She makes sexual advances toward him, which he refuses, and he leaves her. When her husband comes in, she tells him that Sher Singh has violated her honor. Sukhlal does not believe her at first, but she shows him Sher Singh's dagger, which he has left behind in his hurry to leave. Sukhlal calls for his son and demands that he leave the house. Sher Singh wanders through the countryside, becomes the servant of a rich man, and later, through a chance encounter, becomes heir to a kingdom and marries that king's daughter.

4. *Devār Bhābhī* (Husband's Younger Brother, Elder Brother's Wife)—Main Characters: Saleyman, the elder brother; Rangbir, his younger brother; Chandra, Saleyman's wife; Prem, Rangbir's fiancée.

The father of Saleyman and Rangbir dies, leaving Saleyman in charge of the household. One day when Saleyman is away from the house, Rangbir enters Chandra's room on some errand and finds her alone. She makes sexual advances toward him, which he refuses. When Saleyman returns, Chandra tells him that his younger brother has sexually assaulted her. Saleyman confronts Rangbir with this report and, in his anger, stabs him. Rangbir falls to the floor unconscious and is presumed dead. Saleyman has him put in a wooden box and thrown into the Jamna River. The box floats downstream to his fiancée's village. There a washerman sees the box, pulls it ashore and opens it. He revives Rangbir, who tells

him his story and asks him to call his father-in-law-to-be. His fiancée and her parents come, take Rangbir home, and call a doctor. He recovers, marries Prem, and inherits half of his father-in-law's property.

5. *Jaimal Phattā*—Main Characters: King Biramde; Malde, his younger brother; Jaimal, his son; Jaimal's mother; his mother's brother; his mother's brother's wife; his wife.

King Biramde dies and Malde, his younger brother, takes charge of the kingdom. Jaimal is only a child, but Malde begins to worry about the day that he will come of age and claim his rightful share of the patrimony. He orders his barber to cut Jaimal's fingernails, using a poisoned nail-cutter. The barber tries to comply with this order, but three times the nail-cutter falls from his hand when he starts to cut Jaimal's nails. Frightened by this omen, the barber confides in Jaimal his uncle's plan. Jaimal goes to his mother and tells her what has happened. She suggests that they leave his uncle's home at once and go to live with her brother until Jaimal is old enough to fight for his rights.

Jaimal grows to maturity in his mother's brother's kingdom and his marriage is celebrated, but not consummated there. In the meantime, his mother's brother, who is an old man, takes as his second wife a young girl of sixteen who comes from the same village as Jaimal's wife. When this girl sees Jaimal in her husband's palace, she falls in love with him and takes the opportunity when they are alone to make sexual advances to him. Jaimal refuses to accede to her pleas that he sleep with her and she becomes angry. Later she reports to her husband that Jaimal has dishonored her, and Jaimal and his mother leave her brother's kingdom. Jaimal brings his wife from her parents' home to live with him and his mother in another city. Eventually he goes back to reclaim by force his share of his father's kingdom from his father's younger brother, Malde.

6. *Bhābhī kā Pyār*—(Elder Brother's Wife Lover)—Main Characters: Vikram, a young man; Bhartrihari, his elder brother; his elder brother's wife (*bhābhī*); her lover.

One day Vikram observes his elder brother's wife in the embrace of another man. When she realizes that she has been seen, she is fearful that Vikram will tell her husband about her

indiscretion. To forestall this, she goes to her husband and accuses Vikram of sexually assaulting her. Her husband is furious and exiles his younger brother. However, she is not satisfied with this, and in order to make sure that her secret is perfectly safe, she hires four executioners to kill him and bring back his eyes as proof. The executioners take pity on him, kill a deer in his stead and bring its eyes to the woman as evidence of the killing. She continues her love affair, but through a strange set of circumstances her husband eventually comes to know of her infidelity. He has her lover executed and sends a servant to find Vikram and bring him home. When Vikram returns, he forgives his elder brother's wife for her misdeed. His elder brother gives the kingdom to Vikram and becomes a *sādhū*.

It is perhaps worth inserting here that in the complete texts of these stories it is almost always asserted that the events being reported actually took place, and are thus historically based. In some cases the characters are widely-known historical or semi-historical figures (for example, characters in the story *Pūran Mal* also appear in other tales or legends of the region). Even if the characters are not of this kind, they are typically placed in known localities (though not usually in nearby localities), giving additional credence to the notion that the story is based upon fact rather than fiction. This device is particularly marked in the story of Dharm Pal, where the village, district and date of the incidents (1935) are all specified early in the recitation.

Of these seven tales, or portions of tales, six are very clearly type specimens of the lustful stepmother motif. The structure of each follows very closely that outlined above for this motif (after Dundes 1962), and the variations of personnel do not introduce a significant change in the basic story line. These tales, so closely related within a common cultural tradition, might almost be considered versions of a single tale, although they are not in any sense so considered by their narrators or by their audience. In the first four tales (Numbers 1, 2 and 3, plus the initial story in *Dharm Pāl—Shāntā Kumārī*), the seductive woman is, classically, the stepmother. In the fifth tale she is the young man's elder brother's wife, and in the sixth she is his mother's brother's wife. These other kinswomen say he treated as "all-characters" (Fischer

1966: 129; cf. Dundes 1962 for the stepmother). The seventh tale (Number 6) is perhaps not an unambiguous example of this motif, since the crucial seduction scene is absent. However, the accusation, exile, and eventual vindication of the husband's younger brother follow the motif structure so closely in other respects that we have included it as a possible parallel.

The approach which we intend to take here is based upon the assumption that one function of folktales is to give expression to important social values, to culturally-shared assumptions about the nature of the world and about human nature, and to patterned social conflicts arising out of the structure of the social system in which they are produced. It is common place to state that a story which is told and retold, dramatized and performed, sung and enjoyed and popularized for periods of decades and even centuries, must be communicating something to its audience beyond the bare "information" that a particular set of possibly historical events involving people with whom they are personally unacquainted, has occurred. Such a story is communicating something about human nature and about the way that adherence to certain values and norms can keep this nature controlled, can harness and restrain it in approved directions. It is saying something to its audience about how one ought to conduct one's own life, even if the likelihood of one's ever being placed in the situation of the story's protagonist is remote and perhaps not even consciously contemplated as a possibility. Such a story is also, perhaps, by causing its audience to focus attention on certain key points of social stress or ambiguity, allowing the acceptable resolution of certain "social-psychological conflicts inherent in the particular social structure (and perhaps in life itself)" (Fischer 1966: 129).

Although the formal structure of these tales is not such that an explicit "moral" is appended, they nevertheless can all be seen to contain an implicit moral (or, more accurately, a set of related morals) which are abundantly clear to their audiences, and can be made clear to the analyst as well. We wish to show here what the study of the lustful stepmother motif in its variant expressions in the folklore of northwestern India reveals specifically about the nature of relations within the family and between the sexes in this society and about some underlying assumptions and inherent cultural

contradictions pertaining to the nature of human sexuality and its social control.

In order to do this, it is not sufficient to draw only on the synopses of the stories which we have presented here. We must, on the one hand, draw on our knowledge of the social organization and particularly the kinship system of the region of India, and, on the other hand, use the complete texts of the recorded and published versions of these tales, which for practical reasons we have not chosen to print in their entirety here. The most useful kind of data for this purpose are the dialogues of the central characters in the seduction scenes and subsequent accusation, punishment, and vindication scenes which proceed in stereotyped fashion in the seven tales. Furthermore, there is the didactic commentary of the narrator (or "poet," *kavi*) in the *sāṅgs*, and the remarks of minor characters (such as the executioner and the king's minister) advising or reflecting on the events which have occurred. It is a reflection of the common tradition out of which these stories have emerged, some recently, some perhaps centuries ago, that these dialogues and commentaries tend to be phrased in predictable, almost formulaic wording, that identical metaphors are repeated in one story after another, that reference to the better-known stories (particularly *Rūp Basant* and *Pūraṇ Mal*) are made in the course of other stories containing the same motif and that similar references to Indian literary and folk tradition are commonly made where they are deemed appropriate, usually as "examples" of "proofs" (*pramāṇ*) of the wisdom or foolhardiness of behavior contemplated by the characters in the story at hand.

A central focus in all of these stories is the relationship between stepmother and stepchild. This relationship in India, as in so many other societies, is viewed as inherently imbued with potential conflict. It is felt that a stepmother will fail to take proper care of her husband's children by a previous wife, that if she has children of her own she will favor the latter, and that, in any case, she will try to drive a wedge between her husband and his children by a former wife, complaining to him about their behavior and carrying false reports in order to alienate him from them. The stepmother is an object of suspicion and mistrust and is, by definition in this society, the "cruel" or "wicked" stepmother.

Thus, according to a local proverb, "Stepmothers are bad even if they are made of dough" (*mossī to chūn kī bī buṛī*). The lustful stepmother motif, as it is treated in these stories, must therefore be considered within the context of the "Cruel Stepmother" motif (Thompson's S31) in Indian folk literature. The former's sexual aggressiveness and later accusations and punitive demands are treated as one variety of the type of cruel behavior to be expected from persons in this kinship role. This point is illustrated, for example, in the opening scene of *Rūp Basant*, in which the dying mother begs her husband not to marry again "for the sake of the children." She does not, we may note, indicate in her pleas any desire to ensure that her husband be sexually faithful to her. Her motive is rather to ensure that her sons will never have to submit to mistreatment from a stepmother. The same concern is reflected in King Chatur Singh's arrangements for separate living quarters for his second wife when he finally accedes to remarriage.

That the motif of the lustful stepmother is seen in this culture as a variation of the theme of the cruel stepmother is also demonstrated in the fact that in several of the *sāng* and *bhajan* texts with which we are dealing, the Puranic story of *Dhruva* is pointedly referred to. The latter story is brought in either as part of a warning to the young man of his stepmother's possible unsavory intentions (for example, in *Pūraṇ Bhagat*, by his mother) or in the course of reflections by subsidiary characters, or by the "poet" on the inevitability of the stepmother's behavior. The *Dhruva* story is a straightforward example of the cruel stepmother motif—a young child is slighted by his father at the instigation of his father's second wife and, as a result, determines to devote himself to a search for God, eventually being elevated to the heavens as the North Star (see Ghosh 1965: 302-7; Coomaraswamy and Nivedita 1967: 378-80). The seduction motif is entirely absent from the *Dhruva* story, yet this story is viewed as a direct parallel to the tales being discussed here.⁴

The role of stepmother can only be fully understood in perspective of the role of mother. An understanding of the concept of motherhood in Indian society (although the mother herself

appears only indirectly in most of these tales, and centrally in none of them) is central to the contextual meaning of the lustful stepmother motif. The mother in this culture is idealized as a nurturant, succoring figure, an always-dependable source of security and warmth. Self-sacrifice is seen as the essence of the mother's role—she will give up every pleasure and need of her own in order to ensure the happiness and well-being of her child. The mother is viewed as dispensing freely and openly the purest and most genuine kind of love, and in return the child offers complete devotion and dependency. In the relationship of child to its mother, respect is combined with warmth and intimacy, and there is little of the restraint and distance which characterizes the attitude toward its father. Woman as mother is to be trusted implicitly—her non-sexual love is, for a man, purer and more worthy even than the similarly self-effacing ideal love of a wife for her husband. This is one aspect of the essentially dualistic conception of woman in this society to which we will refer again later.

In only two of these tales is the protagonist's mother living. In both, she is a model of motherly devotion, sharing in his punishment and exile, cleaving to him (rather than to her husband or other close kin) in his adversity (see *Pūraṇ Mal* and *Jaimal Phattā*). In the other tales the mother is either stated or presumed to be dead, but here the "mother" role nevertheless is central to the dramatic conflict of the story, particularly in the seduction scene and its immediate aftermath. Indeed, the very fact that the protagonist does *not* have a living mother brings the concept of motherhood more sharply into focus as a central issue. The seduction scene, as it is drawn out in the dialogues of the young man and woman, becomes a struggle over the definition of their relationship, and the young woman attempts valiantly to redirect his attention to what she considers to be the more important issue of her desire for him. Consistently the man tries to define the young woman, whatever her actual relationship to him, as "a kind of mother," while she tries to persuade him that even if she is perhaps superficial and from one point of view "like a mother," in reality their relationship is quite otherwise, and sexual relations between them are quite possible and indeed appropriate. He stubbornly insists upon placing her (or rather, keeping her) in the

⁴ This ethno-classification of the lustful stepmother motif as a submotif of the cruel stepmother illustrates the difficulty of using an *a priori* classification, such as Thompson's motif-index, in cross-cultural folktale analysis.

category of prohibited sexual partner, while she defines herself as imminently eligible.

In Indian society the use of kinship terms in address is felt to have a kind of coercive power or at least a positive influence on behavior so that, for example, calling a man "brother" may act as a damper to any possibly dishonorable intentions he may have. Furthermore, relationships between persons of the opposite sex who are not in the prohibited kinship categories are felt to be potentially, even inevitably, sexual in nature. Thus, it is not surprising that a key device in the young man's rejection of the woman's sexual advances is the use of various kin terms for "mother" and the development of arguments based on the supposed "mother-son" relationship existing between them. The general thrust of his argument in all of the examples of the motif which we have examined, is that (1) mother-son incest is a heinous sin; (2) we are mother and son to one another; (3) therefore, sexual relations between us are unthinkable.

For example, in one of the printed versions of *Rūp Basant*, the young man replies to Sundra's unexpected proposal that he forget his ball game and "play" with her:

"You are my mother—don't give me bad advice... Why are you putting this burden of sin on your head? Being a mother, you think about making love to your own son!"

And she replies:

"Don't say mother, mother to me... come to your senses and let's discuss this."

Later, in their duet, the following portion of the dialogue is relevant:

S. "Be my husband—don't make me your mother mother is only that one who gives birth to a son."

R. "But who is the sister of one's mother (*mausi*, stepmother, has as its "primary" meaning "mother's sister") if not a mother?"

S. "If I want to have sex with you, then what are you to me?"

R. "But when I call you "stepmother," mother, then what am I to you?"

In a similar dialogue in the *sāng* version of *Dharm Pāl-Shāntā Kumārī*, the young man pleads:

"If you renounce your *dharma*, our *karma* will be ruined. Day will turn into night, oh *mausi*; for three lives we will suffer from this sin.

"If you become the victim of lust, oh mother, you destroy *dharma*. Consider yourself my mother! Let me go, I pray you."

An important distinction within the general category of "mother" is made by the young man in several of these texts: that is, between the *pāp kī mā* ("mother by sin") and the *dharam kī mā* ("mother by faith" is any other woman who stands in a status position equivalent to that of mother). The latter term may refer to the stepmother or to someone who takes on a "mothering" role or occupies a "mother-like" status (as, for example, the elder brother's wife in *Devar Bhābhī*. In traditional Indian literature the guru's wife is sometimes referred to in these same terms. The implication of the contrast is that the *dharam kī mā* is deserving of even greater respect and reverence than the "real" mother because the relationship with her is "pure," not based on the "sin" of sexual intercourse (that is, between her and one's father). Thus, for example, in the confrontation between Rup and his father after Sundra has made her false accusation, Rup protests his innocence and makes reference to his deceased mother:

That mother was the mother by sin, this is my mother by faith. I bow to her with folded hands ... If I were to pay my respects daily to my *mausi*, I would go to heaven.

Elsewhere, with the same intentions, he maintains: "The rights of a *mausi* are greater even than those of a real mother."

In another example, Dharm Pāl (in the *sāng* version of this story) resists his stepmother's proposal with the words:

I am to you a son of faith, and you are my mother.

Having seen my good looks, *mausi*, don't do this great wrong... [of] having lustful eyes for your very own son.

The *sāngs* and *bhajans* whose texts we are examining tend in general to uphold the scriptural norms and values in kinship matters as in other areas. Thus, in the tale which deals with an elder brother's wife and her husband's younger brother (*Devar Bhābhī*), there is no significant difference in the dialogue or commentary from those tales in which the seductive woman is a stepmother. The ideal that the elder brother's wife should be respected as a "pure" woman of the "mother by faith" category is adhered to in this *sāng* even though in fact in this region there is a stereotyped joking relationship between the elder brother's wife and the husband's younger brother. In this relationship, particularly if the brothers are fairly close in age, mutual teasing, joking, and sexual innuendo are permitted and even expected. While actual relations are not considered acceptable, they are probably seen as less serious than adultery with an unrelated (or otherwise related) woman and do not constitute "incest" as do such relations with a "sister," "daughter" or "mother" (in the extended sense of these terms). But there is no reference to this relationship of license in the text of *Devar Bhābhī*, and the woman does not use the existence of such a relationship as an argument for the acceptability of her proposition. The dialogue here is very similar to that of the man and woman in the four "stepmother" stories. Thus, for example Rangbir protests when his *bhābhī* suggests that they make love:

"Why are you committing this heinous act? You and I can never be a couple. There will be a great outcry in the world... *Bhābhī* is equivalent to a mother!"

And in their latter duet his sister-in-law pleads:

B. "Please do as I say; fulfill my desire!"

D. "*Bhābhī*, you are like a mother to me. Do not destroy the fortress of our house!"

B. "You and I are a perfect couple. Do not make me your mother!"

D. "You should pair yourself with my brother, not with me."

Further along in their dialogue, Rangbir tries to reorient his sister-in-law's feelings for him not only by calling her "mother," but by attempting to elicit "motherly" behavior from her: "Take

me on your lap and love me"—a phrase having all the implications of a mother's non-sexual love for her child.

An interesting solution to the problem of redefining the relationship is sought in the story of *Jaimal Phattā*, where the mother's brother's wife is the hopeful seductress. She does not deny that she stands in a forbidden relationship to Jaimal, but attempts to establish the existence of a prior kinship relationship which should take precedence. She points out that since she and Jaimal's wife are natives of the same village (and are therefore "sisters" to one another), she is in reality Jaimal's "wife's sister" (*sālī*). And the wife's sister is a permitted joking partner—this relationship is defined in the local culture in very much the same terms as the relationship of a man and his elder brother's wife.

It may be observed here that in almost all of the tales being discussed (and in all of those that are known to be "traditional" rather than recently composed by contemporary *sāngis*, the seduction scene occurs at the very first meeting of the couple. Although this fact is never given particular stress by the central characters nor in the commentary, it is striking that as a consequence of it the attempted seduction does not in fact contravene an existing and on-going role relationship between the parties. The woman involved has never really "acted" as the young man's mother. She "is" his mother by definition, but her knowledge that she is propositioning her "son" is an intellectual knowledge, not one born of nurturant interaction with him. Her desire is not "unnatural" or "perverted" in that sense. Her love for him is "lover at first sight" (or, in some versions, "love at a distance"); it is in no case a deep and mature attachment growing out of lengthy and close interaction. This manner of staging the attempted seduction may arise out of certain conceptions about the nature of romantic love and sexual desire, but it is also clearly the most obvious device by which the extraordinary situation being portrayed can be made even remotely conceivable to the composer and his local audience. Furthermore, it enables the poet to avoid the vexing question of motivation and psychological character development which would be involved in explaining a genuine role reversal. In the cases in which one must assume some kind of longer-standing relationship to have existed between the man and woman before

the attempted seduction (in *Devar Bhābhī* and *Dharm Pāl- Shāntā Kumārī*), the problem of the role change is simply ignored by the poet, with no attempt at explanation.

Another matter to be considered is the relationship between the "father-figure" in these stories and his wife: it is in this relationship that the poets and their audiences seek the key to the motivation of the young woman's seduction attempt (her motivation in accusing and punishing the object of her desire is considered obvious: the wrath of a woman scorned). We will concentrate in this discussion on those examples which involve a lustful *stepmother*, although many of our observations apply to the other tales as well.

In every case, the married pair consists of an "old" (i.e., over fifty) man and much younger woman (in some versions she is as young as twelve years old; in others she is sixteen or eighteen). Except where the seductive woman is the *bhabhi*, she is the old man's second wife, taken after the death of his first wife or married polygynously. In each case where a stepmother is involved the old man has one or more mature sons (i.e., over twelve years of age) by his first wife. The significance of these facts lies in cultural attitudes toward polygyny and remarriage and toward qualifications for marriage and the criteria of suitability of mates. While traditionally polygyny has been permitted in Indian society, and while it is still generally regarded as a plausible alternative to monogamy (despite national law to the contrary) the practice of taking two or more wives has never been highly valued or admired, nor has it ever been widespread. Hindu traditional law has specified rather precisely the circumstances under which polygyny is acceptable—most of these relate to the inability of the first wife to provide a man with offspring, particularly with male heirs. While polygyny appears in Indian myths and legends as a common prerogative of kings (not all of whom indulge in it for purely procreative reasons), it is generally treated (in folklore, and in the traditional literature as well) as evidence of moral weakness on the part of the man involved, and is shown to result in considerable difficulty, unhappiness, and even tragedy for all concerned. Remarriage for a man after his first wife has died is regarded in a similar fashion (although perhaps with somewhat

less disapprobation), if he already has living sons. One possible justification for a remarriage in this latter situation would be to have a woman to take care of the children, but this justification runs up against the problem of the inherent cruelty (or at least lack of concern) of a stepmother towards her husband's children. This is not to say that remarriage of widowers is in fact rare in Indian society—the opposite is perhaps the case—but it does suggest that the moralist's attitude toward remarriage is one of considerable disapproval. A fundamental basis for this disapproval probably lies in the notion that marriage (and sexual activity in general) should be undertaken mainly for the purpose of procreation: for the provision of male heirs to carry on one's lineage and to make the appropriate ritual offering after one's death. The pleasure which accompanies the procreative act should not be valued too highly for its own sake; this stricture is of course related to the ascetic view that sexual activity is physically debilitating (for a man) and that over-indulgence retards one's spiritual advancement as well (cf. Carstairs 1967: 156, 159, and *passim*).

Another factor is the idea of man's four stages of life (the four *āshramas*), according to which active sexuality and the other activities of a husband and householder are relegated to a limited period, roughly defined as lasting from the time one marries to the time that one becomes a grandfather (by one's son). When the son has demonstrated his reproductive and social maturity, it is time for the father to retire from active family responsibilities and enter the third stage in which a contemplative existence should be his goal. A related notion, which comes not only from the scriptures but from the local culture, is that a parent's sexual activity should be finished by the time the son begins his own sexual life—it is "shameful" for a man with an adult son to show that he still has an interest in sex. Thus in this region it is not uncommon for the parents of a married son to cease cohabiting with one another when their daughter-in-law comes to live in their house. At least, such restraint is admired, if perhaps honored more in the breach than in the observance. Its relevance to our discussion lies in the fact that in all of these stories a man has embarked upon marriage at an inappropriate time in his life. Thus, for example, in one of the versions of *Rūp Basant* the king's

adviser cautions him against a remarriage, reminding him of his promise to his deceased wife, and pointing out to him that "you are not of an age to marry...don't get trapped by thoughts of women, trapped in the net of love." The remarriage is particularly inappropriate in those cases in which the man has a son who is himself almost ready to enter the life-stage of householder. For this deviation from proper morality, the only explanation is the old man's unwise and shameful attachment to sexual pleasures. This earns him so much disapprobation from the composer of these *sāṅgs* and *bhājans* that one might almost characterize the motif from their standpoint as the theme of the Lustful Father!

The wife, as a consequence of her marriage to an old man, is portrayed somewhat as a victim, rather than as a vamp, at least in so far as her relationship with her husband is concerned. According to the pattern by which marriages in this society are arranged by parents rather than resulting from romantic love between the couple, the girl is reported to have been "given" (or even "sold"—see *Gulāb Kaur*) to the older man by her father, and her lengthy discourse in the seduction scene, in which she reveals her unhappiness in her marriage, is intended to arouse sympathy—and desire—in the young man and to make her a somewhat sympathetic character in the eyes of the audience. However, in this society an audience's reaction to this kind of plea is bound to be ambivalent at best.

The essence of the young woman's marital dissatisfaction is to be found in cultural notions of a "fit" match—ideas about what is a "good pair" versus an "unmatched pair" in marriage. The complaint of the young woman centers around the idea that a couple joined in marriage should be "suited" to one another: "One should not try to mate a camel to a she-goat;" "A mare looks good with the proper rider;" "A heifer has been joined to an elephant." An oft-related phrase in all of these texts has the young woman saying to the young man: "You and I are a perfect pair" or "We are an equal match." This "equality" is put primarily in terms of age, but a more general concept of mutual suitability (and potential sexual compatibility) is also implied.

The young woman, in the seduction scene, repeatedly asks that she should not be blamed for this situation, for her parents

and her husband have done wrong to think of such a match and to force her become a party to it. Her problem is explicitly stated to be sexual dissatisfaction—somewhat ironically, since lust on the part of the old man is asserted to have been the motive for his marriage! For example, Kam Kala cries out to Dharm Pal:

"Your father is old, grey has taken over his hair.

With wrinkles on his cheeks, he is unable to cope with a youthful woman....

The oil is all gone, the lamp is empty, the wick is limp and weightless."

And later:

"I am dying without a man;

I am thirsty: you be Indra and shower rain on me.

You be the snake charmer and charm me with your love flute;

I am a cart for hire: you be my cart man..."

And so on.

In *Rūp Basant* a similar dialogue takes place, in which Sundra attempts to excuse her behavior on the basis that the very natural desires of a young woman have been thwarted by marrying her to an old and (by implication) impotent man:

"There is no fault of mine in this; the fault is of the king.

Consider this the mistake of your father;

As if marriage were a game!

My age is twelve years, and he is an old bullock.

Whenever I put it to the test, I passed and he failed.

How can a person live when the relationship is between unequals?"

Later, when she reports to her husband that Rup has assaulted her, she speaks pitifully of her helplessness as a pawn in the game of others:

"I am like the wife of an orphan—I was married to the father but the son kept me in his house [i.e., had sexual intercourse with her].

May that Brahman die and that *nāl* [Barber—a marriage intermediary] die without a son, to whom the whole world was empty when they betrothed me in this house [i.e., who were unable to find any other husband for her].

My parents have drowned me by marrying me to a previously married man."

Another factor in the young woman's unhappiness, mentioned in some of the texts, is her childlessness. Her craving for a son of her own provides, to an audience in this society, a readily conceivable motive for her willingness to contravene the strict norms of marital fidelity and incest taboos. A childless woman is one who has been able neither to fulfill her bodily functions as a woman, nor to assume the ideal womanly role of motherhood. In the dialogue of the seduction scene, the young woman in these texts thus makes frequent reference to the fact that she has not yet been able to "blossom," that she has not "borne fruit." These and other metaphors for pregnancy and childbearing are used liberally in her attempts to persuade the young man to lie with her. In one text, Kam Kala, expressing her love and desire for Dharm Pal, even says to him, "How I have longed for a son as beautiful as you!" Other characters in the stories also make a source of unhappiness for her. For example, in the accusation scene in one version of *Rūp Basant*, her husband remonstrates with Sundra when she accuses Rup of assault:

"My Rup is not like that—give me a whip—that woman is talking rubbish.

He is young—he doesn't know east from west.

Why are you so jealous of these children ?

One day you too will blossom."

While the young woman's sexual frustrations and childlessness doubtless arouse a certain amount of sympathy, and while the texts include comments by subsidiary characters and by the poet-narrator to the effect that her behavior is what might be expected from a union between an elderly man and a young woman whose sexual capacities are at their peak, there is no attempt made to excuse her behavior nor to exonerate her from wrong-doing. Rather,

it is suggested that her behavior is imminently illustrative of "the way women are." The notion that the lustful stepmother is in a sense a typical representative of her gender is brought out very clearly in the choice of title for one of the *sāngs* in this collection (a version of the *Rūp Basant* story), namely, *Sāngit Tīyā Charitra*, "The Story-song of Woman's Character." Like the Spanish tales of *Women's Wiles* (see Yohannon 1968: 261-3), these stories on the lustful stepmother theme reveal a great deal about culturally-shared conceptions of the nature of femininity.

We have suggested above, in our discussion of the concept of "motherhood," that woman is viewed dualistically in Indian society. This dualistic view results from a basic ambivalence toward the female sex—an ambivalence which Carstairs, for example, seeks to explain in childhood experience (1967: 156-62), but which in the present context we will deal with only on the manifest level, as it is revealed in the texts and recorded performances. One aspect of this conception of womanhood sees her as benevolent, nurturant, "pure," and loving, in the nonsexual sense. This is "woman as mother," the aspect in which woman is idealized and even "worshipped" in Indian social and religious life. But there is another contradictory aspect of woman in which she is viewed as threatening, destructive, and aggressive (specifically sexually aggressive). It is this aspect of woman that is represented by the lustful stepmother and that is referred to in the phrase "woman's character."

There are several particular characteristics of woman in this aspect that are referred to in the course of these stories. One of the most important is the characteristic of being untrustworthy, deceitful, and unreliable. In this connection, a well-known local saying is repeated almost formulaically in a number of the texts, namely: "no one can ever understand woman's character: first, she kills her husband and then she commits *satī* [self-immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband]." The lustful stepmother of course demonstrates this characteristic most clearly in the accusation scene, where she carefully sets the stage for her husband's return and then proceeds to convince him of the truth of her highly implausible story. In most of these texts it is said that the woman "does *āsanpāī*"; in other words, she disarranges her hair and

clothes, removes her jewelry, and lies on the floor feigning illness and distress. She dramatically recounts the details of her violation and has her maid recount them for her, neatly reversing the roles of the actual seduction scene:

"The Queen was crying out "Son! Son!" as he dragged her to the floor and said, "Love doesn't know any *mausī* or *betā* ["son"].

Our mother was Rupade—you are my woman.

A mare looks good with the proper rider, and you are suited to me.

He dragged her to the bed—there was a long tussle..."

And then, in her own words:

"He bit me, he ate my flesh;

I cannot even tell you all the bad things he did.

Of course, you will side with him—who will believe me?"

Another related characteristic of woman in her destructive aspect is her capacity to bring dishonor upon the family, to cause the "line" (*kula*) to be destroyed, to attract the ridicule and contempt of others upon the families of her husband and her father. The instrument of dishonor is understood to be her sexual laxity, and the point is made that the woman driven by desire is not even heedful of the social or kinship status of its object, still less for the consequences of her actions on the prestige and reputation of her family. According to the king's minister in one version of *Rūp Basant*:

"When a woman is bent upon sin, she can be the mistress of her own brother or son. She can give birth as a maiden or widow. She won't hesitate to shame the lineage, won't consider who is an outsider, who is lower or higher."

Furthermore, a woman driven by sexual desires is irresistible—it is in this irresistibility that her danger lies, since it makes the strongest man helpless to defend himself against her onslaught. While men can control their sexual urges, women are insatiable. Yet, once a woman really puts her sights on a man, be he saint or ascetic, young or old, he will be unwittingly drawn into her net and forced to abandon his *dharma*, his religious duty:

"King, there are thousands of old books describing lust, and all agree that 17/20ths of lust belongs to women, 3/20ths to men. This is why you cannot trust her. She has so much power in her body! Immeasurable is the strength of woman."

And in another context, the executioner remarks upon the folly of Puran Mal's father believing his wife's story:

"The following are great evils: water, fire, women, police, prostitutes, and snakes. Those who are trapped by these will not escape."

In sharp contrast to the character of the woman is that of the virtuous young man. The latter's virtue does not lie in his ability to resist temptation—for there is no suggestion in any of the stories that he is actually tempted by the seductress' offer, or that he shares her lustful feelings but is determined to suppress them. His struggle is shown to be against an external threat (the woman's irresistible power to entrap) rather than against any forces within himself. Armed with his convictions about the morality of kinship, the nature of religious duty and the inevitability of spiritual retribution, he fights to save himself from being overwhelmed by her anti-social intentions. His religious arguments are couched in familiar Hindu terms: *dharma*, *karma*, rebirth and hell, and he elaborates upon these in a multiplicity of permutations. He measures the sinfulness of the act she proposes in terms of the number of miserable future lives in which both of them will experience its consequences. He expounds upon the quantity of bad *karma* to be accumulated through commission of such a moral outrage—while she counters, "But I assure you there is great pleasure in this *karma*!" He tries to frighten her with the knowledge that she will burn forever in hell, and reiterates the firmness of his own resolve to uphold his *dharma* at any price.

"The sun's chariot may turn back, the earth split, the sky fall.

Brahma may be entrapped, but Rup will not renounce his *dharma*;

The Ganges may return to Haridwar,

The whole world may lose its *dharma*,

The gods may take birth,
 But I will not sleep on your bed.
 Life after life would be blackened by that act.
 Think how that could be washed away!"

Further, the young man appeals to the woman's sense of family honor. He stresses that the act she proposes would bring shame and loss of prestige to her husband's family—to "our family." For example:

"Are you not afraid in your heart of the calamities which may befall you ?

You are suggesting something that will ruin the prestige and honor of the lineage."

He also appeals to her own sense of shame: "There will be no place for you to show your face; the whole world will laugh." But she retorts: "I don't give a damn for this stupid world!"

It is interesting that there are very few passages in any of these texts in which the young man makes direct reference to his father-figure's prior rights in the sexuality of the woman who is importuning him. We can see in this fact evidence of the marked constraint between father and son (or between a man and his much older brother or his uncle) concerning their respective sex lives. Carstairs has made much of the fact that a son in Indian society is socialized so as to suppress before his father all outward expression of the fact that he leads an adult sexual life—he enacts before the father; in Carstairs' terms, "a symbolic self-castration" (1967: 159-160). But it may further be noted that a son also properly suppresses any open acknowledgement of the fact that he is aware that his *father* leads an active sexual life. This restraint seems to function not only as a sign of the respect and lack of unwanted familiarity that is supposed to characterize the attitude of a son toward his father, but as a correlate of the "pure" non-sexual mother. Furthermore, it is clearly an aspect of the notion referred to above, of the propriety of sexual shame between the generations.

In any case, the main point we wish to make here is that, as far as the young man is concerned, it is the incestuous, rather

than the *adulterine*, aspects of the proposed dalliance which (manifestly, at least) disturb him. In *Jaimal Phatthā* some reference to the uncle's pre-eminent sexual rights over the young woman, his aunt, is made:

"We are like mother and son.

I love my uncle [Mother's brother] more than my life.

I cannot be the rider of a mare raised by someone else."

However, this comment is not typical. In most of the texts, if in the seduction scene any explicit mention is made of the father-figure by the young man, it is in terms of the proposed threat to the former's reputation. For example, in *Devar Bhābhī*, Rangbir says: "At the cost of my brother's honor your dream will not come true." Or, in some instances, he suggests that the woman try to find satisfaction in the arms of her own husband instead of harassing him. But he does not say, in any explicit manner, "I will not sleep with you because I would consider such an act a personal betrayal of my father," nor does he, with the exception of the passage given, refuse on the grounds that to do so "would be to take something belonging to my father."

The young man's virtue in the stories is maintained to the very end—through the difficult incident of the accusation, through his exile, and even, in those cases where he again confronts the woman who has been his undoing, to the final scene of forgiveness. It is significant that in none of the stories does he show the slightest desire for revenge, and that his defense of his own honor never involves a counter-accusation. His character is consistent: defining the woman as a "mother" he never wavers from behaving toward her as a son ought to behave toward his mother. As he repeatedly resolves to do, he upholds the *dharma* to the end. It is true that in *Rūp Basant* the king has his wife hanged when he discovers what she has done, but this act is not performed at Rup's instigation.

We can look at the interaction of the "stepmother" (exemplifying the "character of woman") and the "stepson" (exemplifying the ideal, dutiful son) on another level than that of interpersonal conflict. In a larger sense, these characters and the struggle they engage in are symbolic of forces of more universal

relevance. At this level, the lustful stepmother tales present to their audiences the essence of the more basic struggle of society over nature, of reason over emotion, of self-control over sensual abandon.⁵ The woman from this perspective, represents the dangerous forces of personal anarchy, social disorder, and self-indulgence; the man represents the desirable confining and restraining forces which society strives to impose upon man's wants. The woman threatens to unleash the animal nature of her sex—the man, through steadfast adherence to the commands of moral duty, keeps her in check. The woman is changeable and fickle, shifting ground as her situation alters, adjusting herself opportunistically to the circumstances in which she finds herself. The man, on the other hand, is entirely predictable, forcing circumstances to adapt to the requirements of his principles. The conflict of society against nature is of course present and compelling in all societies, but we would maintain that it has a particularly central place in the indigenous ethos of northwestern Hindu India (if not in Indian society in general). The interplay of human nature and social order—envisioned here in terms of the sexual opposition of female and male and the dualism of woman's nature—has been illustrated through some local interpretations of the lustful stepmother motif. But this interplay has other, related manifestations, not only in the realm of folklore, but in the ritual, belief, and value systems of this culture (cf. Vatuk and Vatuk 1967b).

It would be possible—and enlightening—to consider a number of other aspects of these lustful stepmother stories. For example, an analysis of the role of the wife (in those tales in which the young man is married) could perhaps illuminate further the dualistic view of the feminine character discussed earlier. It is significant perhaps, and certainly of interest, that in none of these stories has the marriage of the young man been consummated. This fact establishes his sexual innocence⁶ (and thus perhaps magnifies for him the perceived threat of sexual attack), but it also enables the wife to remain a sexually "pure," succoring, benevolent figure, the

⁵ Babb has drawn attention to a similar kind of contrast between the male and female principles in the conceptualization of Hindu deities (1970).

⁶ This follows since, as a young man devoted to *dharma*, he would not be expected to have contravened the strict norm of premarital celibacy.

devotee of her husband according to the model of Sita and Savitri, while partaking of the ambivalence inherent in the person of the wife as sex partner.

A further direction of inquiry would involve a comparison of the varied forms which this motif takes as it appears in other cultural contexts. A number of points of comparison have suggested themselves to us in the course of this study, in light of the published exemplars of the Potiphar's wife theme available to us. But an adequate comparative analysis would have to await a more considered study and a fuller body of data from one or more specific cultural contexts. The present study is intended only to show some of the possibilities of this kind of analytic approach for the study of a widespread, almost universal, folklore motif in a particular cultural frame.

REFERENCES

- Babb, L. A. "Marriage and Malevolence: The uses of Sexual Opposition in a Hindu Pantheon." *Ethnology* 9: 1970, 137-48.
- Bloomfield, M. "Joseph and Potiphar in Hindu Fiction." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 1: 1923, 141-67.
- Carstairs, G. M. *The Twice-Born*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967.
- Coomaraswamy, A. K. and Sister Nivedita. *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*. New York: Dover Press, 1967.
- Dundes, A. "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales." *Journal of American Folklore* 75: 1962, 95-105.
- Fischer, J. A. "A Ponapean Oedipus Tale: Structural and Sociopsychological Analysis." *Journal of American Folklore* 79: 1966, 109-20.
- Frances, H. T. and E. J. Thomas, *Jataka Tales* (trans.). Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1967.
- Ghosh, Oroon, trans., *The Dance of Shiva and Other Tales from India*. New York: New American Library, 1965.
- Greenway, J. Review of J. D. Yohannon, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in World Literature*. *American Anthropologist* 71: 1969, 1; 4-5.

- Keene, D. "The Hippolytus Triangle, East and West." *The Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 11, Supplement: 1962, 162-71.
- Lang, A. *Myth, Religion and Ritual*. Vol. 2. London: Longmans Green, 1913.
- Temple, R. C. *The Legends of the Punjab*. Vol. 2. Patiala: Department of Languages, Punjab, 1885.
- Thompson, S. *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*. 6 Vols. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955.
- Vatuk, V. P. "Bhajnopdeshak as an Agent of Social Change." *Journal of American Folklore* 80: 1967, 255-70.
- Vatuk, V. P. and S. J. Vatuk. "Ethnography of *Sāṅg*: A North Indian Folk Opera." *Asian Folklore Studies* 26: 1967, 29-51.
- Yehannon, J. D., ed. *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in World Literature*. New York: New Directions Books, 1968.

SĀṅG LIBRETTOS CITED

- Bhim Raj—*Sāṅgīt Dhruv Bhagat*. Delhi, n.d.
- Bundu Mir—*Sāṅgīt Devar Bhābī*. Syana, Bulandshahar, 1959.
Sāṅgīt Pūraṇ Mal. Meerut, 1960.
- Aslī Sāṅgīt Dhuru Bhakta*. 7th ed. Meerut, 1969.
- Aslī Sāṅgīt Rūp Basant*. 6th ed. Meerut, 1969.
- Chandra Lal Bhat, alias Badi—*Dharm Pāl-Shāntā Kumārī*. n.d.
- Lakhmichand—*Aslī Sampūrṇa Sāṅgīt Lakhmichand kā Jaimal Phattā*. Delhi, n.d.
Aslī Sāṅgīt Lakhmichand kā Rūp Basant. Delhi, n.d.
- Munshi Ram—*Kathā Pūraṇ Bhakta*. Jandli Kalan, Hisar, 1953.
- Nathu Ram Gaur—*Sāṅgīt Pūraṇ Mal*. 3 parts. Hathras, 1963.
- Panna Lal Sharma—*Aslī Sāṅgīt Bhābhī kā Pyār*. Delhi, n.d.
- Prabhudayal—*Sāṅgīt Triyā Charitra Yānī Rūp Basant*. 3 parts. Meerut, 1940.
- Chatar Singh—*Aslī Sāṅgīt Dharm Pāl-Shāntā Kumārī*. Delhi, n.d.
- Saguva Singh—*Sāṅgīt Dharm Pāl-Shāntā Kumārī*. Meerut, 1963.

10

Let's Dig Up Some Dirt: The Idea of Humor in Children's Folklore in India¹

Indian folklorists have commonly tended toward a romantic and moralistic stance in their discussions of the folklore of Indian children. In their attitudes they reflect a culturally defined image—one shared particularly by the educated Indian—which views the child as an unspoiled innocent, whose socialization is a series of orderly steps toward the ideal member of society: respectful, obedient, peaceable, clean in thought, word and deed. Playing the stereotyped role of the three monkeys, who neither see, hear, nor speak evil, these folklorists have described children's lore as indicating the virtues of courage and cooperation, building good character and instilling self-discipline, stimulating intellectual growth and filling the child with the vigor of life.² Such clichés about the valuable educational and character-building functions of children's lore are unfortunately made with very little reference to the actual content of a specific corpus of folklore material, and ironically when examples are provided to sustain these hollow assertions, they often are of a kind which cast doubt upon or even completely refute their validity. One example of such a discussion may serve as an illustration:

"These [children's folksongs] help to uplift their character, and through [the songs] the tradition of cultural relations is maintained from one generation to the next. Before starting

¹ During the conception and writing of this paper much assistance was received from Sylvia Vatuk, for which I express many thanks.

² For example, see Satya Gupta, *Kharī Bolī kā Lok Sāhitya*, (Allahabad, 1965), pp. 97-100; Shankar Lal Yadav, *Hariyānā Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya*, (Allahabad, 1960), pp. 447-449; Krishna Dev Upadhyay, *Lok Sāhitya kā Bhūmikā* (Allahabad, 1957), pp. 183-184.

a game the children shout to one another in order to gather all together:

adlak adlak champa: phu:l jua:ri:

jiski: mā: na: bhejje uski: ma: chama:ri:

(nonsense)

"The mother who won't send her child to play is a Chamari [woman of the untouchable, leatherworker caste]"

"Whenever a girl or boy insists on playing in a group of the other sex, he or she is chased away with the following rhyme:

lonḍiyō māi lonḍa: khelle

mā: bahin ka: na:ra: kholle.

The boy (who) plays among girls

Unfastens the skirt of his mother and sister.

And the boy retorts:

larkō māi larki: gu:kha:ni:

A girl among boys is shit-eater³

Clearly the author of this quotation is correct in saying that a cultural tradition is being preserved in her examples of children's lore. But—unless one can assume that she and her colleagues write tongue in cheek—it is not the tradition to which her pious rhetoric naively refers. The girl chases away the neighbor's boy with an accusation of maternal and sororal incest—he snaps back that she is an eater of excrement, while their friends shout racist obscenities at another's mother. In this brief passage is revealed the almost obvious fact that Indian children's folklore—like children's folklore in other societies⁴—serves primarily as what Bascom has termed "socially approved outlets" for desires their society tries to repress, rather than as means of "transmitting and maintaining the institutions" which have imposed these repressions.⁵ This is particularly the case when one analyzes children's folklore

³ Satya Gupta, *op.cit.*, 98-99

⁴ For example, see Lona and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of School Children* (Oxford, 1959); Paul G. Brewster, et. al. (ed.), *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, Vol I, (Durham, N. C., 1952).

⁵ William R. Bascom, "Four Functions of Folklore," *Jorural of American Folklore* 67 (1954), p. 349.

from the point of view of its humorous aspect—that is, when one seeks to discover what the young carriers of this folklore regard as amusing in it.

It should be pointed out here that Indian society is replete with outlets from a rather strict moral code on the adult level as well as on that of children, and that although adult lore for children is of the "morally uplifting" kind, the constant exposure of children to their elders' free use of sexual and scatological abuse among one another must surely be a factor in the development of the children's own rhymes and stories. Aside from abuses, the repression of sexual freedom has an outlet in stereotyped cross-sex joking relationships and in licensed singing of sexually suggestive and mock-aggressive verses at various festivals and life-cycle ceremonies. These songs, sung particularly by women, have the further functions of buttressing the position of women versus men, and of bride-givers—socially inferior—versus bride-takers.⁶

The study of humor in a large collection of children's lore made in Western Uttar Pradesh, India between 1960 and 1967 has shown that the dominant stimuli to laughter in this folklore are overt verbal expressions of anal, oral, genital and physical aggression, particularly when such is directed toward authority or respect figures, or when it parallels the socially approved and often explicitly inculcated prejudices surrounding the institution of untouchability and caste distinctions in general. One might say, in short, that this humor derives from a triad of sex, shit, and sadism.

As several students of Indian child-rearing practices have remarked, little explicit sex instruction of a positive nature is given to Indian children by their elders—such instruction is usually limited to the prohibition of sexual activity when observed or suspected and the seclusion of girls approaching puberty. However, conditions of life in the Indian village are such that young children are generally very much aware of this aspect of life, and rather freely discuss it and often experiment among themselves. Dube has discussed Indian children's sex games at some length.⁷ They

⁶ For a detailed discussion of this, see Sylvia Vatuk, "North Indian Kinship Structural Analysis," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, (Delhi, 1969), p. 93 ff.

⁷ S. C. Dube, *Indian Village*, (Ithaca, N. Y. 1955), pp. 193-197, see also Mildred Stroop Luschinsky, *The Life of Women in a Village of North India: A Study of Role and Status* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1962), pp. 253-255.

may imitate their parents or the animals—cows, buffalos, dogs—whose copulation they frequently observe. And as they play, so they speak, flouting the ideals of sexual innocence which their parents hope will be the result of moralistic admonitions:

mili: to de ma:ri:

ni to biramcha:ri: ke biramcha:ri:

If he gets someone, he lays her,

If he doesn't, then he's a perfect celibate.

In the same spirit they use a play on words, changing *biramcha:ri:*—meaning 'celibate'—to *bīramchama:ri:*, "he who follows the untouchable woman."

Another example of a children's saying is directed against the norm of village exogamy, according to which children brought up in the same village are explicitly taught to regard one another as brothers and sisters and thus sexually inaccessible:

bobbo kah kai marva:iye

kadhi: na: dhokka: kha:iye

Being called "sister" let yourself be taken,

Then you will never have reason to repent.

The point here is that it is easy to have an illicit affair if a man and woman are publicly acknowledged to be "brother" and "sister," since no one should suspect their motives in being together.

A game of reciprocal taunting, similar to that described by several folklorists as the "dirty dozens" among American Negro youths,⁸ is enjoyed by Indian children as well. As in the "dirty dozens," the person abused is required to avoid showing his anger, but to "top" the insult with a more original one of his own. Incestuous acts in various combinations are the most popular insinuations, as well as assertions that one has himself had relations with the other's mother, sister or daughter. Whereas formal socialization puts tremendous stress on the inviolability of the mother and sister and severely proscribes aggression toward them.

⁸ John Dollard, "The Dozens: Dialectic of Insult," *The American Imago*, (1939), pp. 3-25; Roger D. Abrahams, "Playing the Dozens" *Journal of American Folklore*, 75 (1962), pp. 209-220.

the vocabulary of curse-words, used by adults and children alike, is rich in references to these kin and to the daughter:

ma:dar chod

he who has relations with his mother

bhanya: chod

he who has relations with his sister

dhi: chod

he who has relations with his daughter

teri: ma: ki: chu:t

your mother's vagina

teri: ma: sa:h dūvā:

I will make love to your mother

ma: ka: loṛa:

mother's penis (that is, he who has relations with his mother)

Other curses of the same type suggest various animals having sexual relations with the mother or sister, and much humor is derived from the possible variations.

The father, a most important figure of authority and respect, is also referred to in curses. On the one hand, a person may be insulted by the suggestion that an animal—donkey, owl, pig, for example—has fathered him. On the other hand, he may be called "father of a pig" or "uncle of a goat." But more effective than these uses of the paternal relationship are those curses in which one asserts that one is the father of someone else, for this is equivalent to an assertion of having had relations with someone's mother.

Certain other kinship relationships occur in curses as well. Their use derives from the distinction in North Indian kinship between bride-givers and bride-takers. To call someone by a term for bride-giver (*sa:la:*, wife's brother; *susra:* wife's father; *ma:ma:* mother's brother) is an insult because it implies that oneself, or one's father, has had sexual relations with his mother or sister or daughter. The same insinuation results from claiming the relationship of bride-taker to someone else (*jijja:*, sister's husband, *jama:i:*, daughter's husband, or *phuppha:* father's sister's husband).

We have mentioned ceremonial occasions of which obscene speech or song is especially licensed. One such occasion on which children participate is the arrival of the bride-groom outside the village of the bride, where the marriage is to take place. Villagers

gather at the village boundary to welcome him and his party. The children shout:

ek lakri: oru: moru:, uspai baitthya: ha:u:

sa:re bara:tti: mere chodde, mai banne ka: ta:u:

There is a curvy stick, on it sits a goblin

All the members of the marriage party have been fathered by me, I am the elder brother of the groom's father.

Sexual innuendo also plays a role in many children's games in this area. In one, for example, the stone of an unripe mango or other fruit is slipped through the fingers while the player chants "bijli, bijli; mera: bya:h kinghai?" (Stone, stone, tell me in which direction my marriage will take place), *unghai* (Over there). Another game uses the word *bahu:* ("wife") euphemistically for the male organ: it is called *la:l bahu:* ("red wife"):

A boy holds a red brick in his hand, saying

la:l bahu: kiski:? Whose red wife is this?

meri : Mine!

teri: na: tere ba:p ki: Not yours, your father's.

ya: to meri: This is mine!

So saying, he throws the brick into the water (of a pond or canal) and the other tries to find it.

The treatment of excrement in Indian children's folklore is in many ways more interesting than the manner in which sex is utilized as an aggressive tool and consequently a source of humor. Young children particularly utilize in rhymes, games, abuses and stories the theme of the deposition of feces, urination, and passing air to attain a humorous effect. The popularity of this device seems particularly significant in the light of the strong emphasis on cleanliness in this culture, expressed primarily in notions of ritual purity and pollution. Excrement is of course highly polluting and children are obviously made aware at an early age of their elders' attitude with regard to its disposal, yet there is in this society no stress on an early or strict toilet training such as might be thought to create a tendency to obsessive ritual cleanliness or, on the other hand, to an exaggerated pleasure in the verbal manipulation of feces. Even though such training is delayed and

somewhat casual⁹, however, the aversion to pollution of this and other kinds is internalized at an early age—perhaps one element in the enjoyment of this type of humor is the feeling of pleasure in flouting the directives of the older generation, even though basically these directives have been accepted.

Stories including such motifs are very numerous. For example:

Once a boy went into the field to relieve himself. It was dark, and by mistake he sat on a turtle's back, whereon he deposited his feces. When he finished, the turtle walked away. The boy was overjoyed. "My, my!" he said, "My feces can move! Now I don't have come to the fields anymore for this purpose!" Several days later there was a festival, and his mother and others in the family went to worship. The boy sat down in the middle of the living-room floor. But this time his feces did not move away. He ordered it to go away, but it would not. He thought "Perhaps because it is a festival, it would like some of our special festival food to eat." So he covered it with food, but still it did not move. The boy became angry. He picked up the heaviest staff he could find and beat it with all his might. Soon the whole room was covered with excrement.

Here it is interesting to note the association of the festival, festival food, his mother's worship, with this most polluting act. In another story the description of ritual is more explicit:

Once a young man went to visit his in-laws' home. Before the evening meal was served, he was asked to go upstairs to the roof to perform *sandhya:*, the evening prayer. He went upstairs and there he saw that a beautiful rug had been laid out and beside it a jug of water. He had never learned *sandhya:* at home, but did not want to show his ignorance. Seeing the jug of water (which is used after elimination as well as in worship) he thought he had discerned the purpose of his mission. "Funny on such a beautiful rug," he thought, but soon decided that this was simply an indication of his in-law's great regard for their son-in-law. He completed

⁹ Leigh Minturn and John T. Hitchcock, *The Rajputs of Khalapur, India* (New York, 1966), pp. 116-117.

his *sandhya*., came down and enjoyed his meal. Next morning his mother-in-law asked him again if he wished to go upstairs for *sandhya*: (morning prayer). To this he replied, "Mother, as yet the *sandhya*: of yesterday is still lying there. When that is cleaned, I will go again." His in-laws were displeased and refused to let him take their daughter home with him until he had learned how to behave. Six months later he came back, claiming that he had learned everything. He greeted them properly, performed the *sandhya*: ritual correctly, and gave other indications of improvement. His in-laws praised his polite language and the knowledge he had gained. "But mother!" he exclaimed, "wait until I call lentils *baikunthi*: (a sophisticated name)!" They were surprised anew at his stupidity, and chased him away again.

In these tales, which children tell to one another, the high point of the telling is always the description of the deposition of the feces, and the more pure and sacred the chosen place, the more hilarity greets the teller. Such excremental ritual in other stories has caused fools to win armies and great wealth, turned them into famous astrologers and army chiefs, and has even won a man a princess and heirship to a kingdom.

The use of the feces motif and those related to it is not limited to tales. For children, one of the most important folklore genre is the riddle—when a child fails to solve a riddle he is taunted in the following way:

<i>ha:r gya:?</i>	give up?
<i>jhak ma:r gya:?</i>	did your best?
<i>billi: ke gu: maĩ lot gya:?</i>	did you lie down in cat shit?
<i>kutte ka: gu: chat gya:?</i>	did you lick dog shit?

Only when he answers in the affirmative is the riddle's answer divulged. In the following riddle the passing of air provides the punch for the youthful riddlers:

johar maĩ tai likri paddar pũ:
cha:r chuttar ek mũ:

Let's Dig Up Some Dirt

From the pond came an air-blast,
 Four buttocks, one month. (Answer: granary)
 The same is the case in these counting-out rhymes:

a:da: pa:da: kisne pa:da:
ra:ja: ji:ki: gho:ri: ne pa:da:
thim tha:m thus (nonsense words)
lobh sha:da: kachchhi: gho:ri:
pakke a:m dha:i thus
pa:da: phus
 (nonsense word) passed air, who passed air?
 The king's horse passed air,
 (nonsense words)
 mud-fence,
 ripe mangoes (nonsense words),
 passed air (nonsense word).

And in a game, "What are you looking for, old woman?," we see the use of urine at the climax of play: This game is played by any number of children. One plays the old woman and pretends to search for something.

<i>budhiya: budhiya: ke</i>	What are you looking for,
<i>dhunḍhai?</i>	old woman?
<i>suĩ ta:gga:</i>	Needle and thread.
<i>suĩ ta:gge ka: ke karaigi:?</i>	What will you do with needle and thread?
<i>thelli: simmu:gi:</i>	I'll sew a money bag.
<i>thelli: si:m kai ke karaigi:?</i>	What will you do with a money bag?
<i>rapaye katṭhe karũ:gi:</i>	I'll save money.
<i>rapaye katṭhe kar kai ke karaigi:?</i>	What will you do with the money you save?
<i>gā: lyũ:gi:</i>	I'll buy a cow.
<i>gā: le kai ke karaigi:?</i>	What will you do with the cow?
<i>du:dh piũ:gi:</i>	I'll drink milk.
<i>mu:t pi:le, mu:t pi:le</i>	Drink urine! Drink urine!

Saying this, all the children run away and the old woman tries to catch one of them. When she does, the child who is caught becomes the old woman and the game is repeated.

Just as genital aggression is expressed in standardized terms of abuse, so also is anal aggression. One of the most popular curse words of children is *gu:kha:na:*, feminine *gu:kha:ni:*, which is the "excrement eater" epithet used in our earlier quotation from the folklore literature. Unlike the phrases of sexual abuse, this word is more limited to children and is rarely used by adults. Another such word of abuse, used to mean "good-for-nothingm," either a person or thing, is *kutte ka: gu:*, "dog-shit." Finally, we have a rhyme used when two children are fighting and others are trying to persuade them to make up:

lara:i: lara:i: ma:f karo forgive one another,
kutte ki: gā:d sa:f karo clean the dog's bottom.

The sadistic impulse as a stimulus to laughter in Indian children's folklore manifests itself in a number of ways. First are those which enable children to discomfort one another, either physically or emotionally—usually such games or tricks involve one child being singled out as a butt of humor by a number of others. Second are the occurrence of verbal attacks on socially inferior persons or the imputation of inferior status to one of high status as a form of aggression. And finally, the very common device of describing the physical or emotional discomfiture of authority or respect figures. Again, it is significant to examine the folklore in light of Indian socialization patterns with regard to the handling of aggression, the submission to authority, and reverence and respect for those higher than oneself in hierarchies of age and social status. The lore in this collection clearly provides sanctioned outlets in each of these areas.

Nicknames are an important way in which children can express aggression against one another in a situation in which physical aggression is not permitted. Here the use of nicknames is very wide-spread—some nicknames are original, but the majority

are standardized. Most are based on either skin color or physical defects and peculiarities, and the connotation is generally derogatory. Some common nicknames are *ka:lu:* (Blacky), *tava:* ([black] Griddle), *dhumma:* (Smoky), *ka:liya:* (Black Snake), *ka:na:* (One-Eyed), *bhainga:* (Squint-Eyed), *chundha:* (Near Blind), *buchcha:* (Earless), *nakta:* (Noseless, Shameless), *bijje mū:h ka:* (Pock-marked), *langardi:n* (Lame), *nā:d* (Tubby), *badhiya:* (Castrated Ox), *paddar* (One who passes air). Taunts in which some of the same nicknames occur are the following:

ka:ne ki: mā: da:ne bhunnai, ka:na: pittai pet

pi:t le so pi:t le, da:na: na: dū:ek

One-Eyed's mother is roasting grain, One-Eyed is patting his stomach

You can pat as much as you want, I won't give you a single grain.

langardi:n bajavai bi:n

ha:t maĩ sotta: mūh maĩ bi:n

The Lame One is playing a snake-charmer's pipe
 In his hand a staff, in his mouth a pipe.

There are also games which make use of nicknames and are used to taunt a child. For example, one child asks another "If a mother has two children, one named Mainak, the other named Tika, how will she call them both together?" The answer of course is Mainaktika or *maĩ nakti: ka:*, "I am the son of noseless (shameless) woman." When the answer is given, the gathered children dissolve in taunting laughter.

Many rhymes and games reflect the existing social system in that they involve verbal aggression toward persons of low caste, particularly toward untouchables. In a game called "King and Sweeper" the key line shouted by the children is:

ra:ja: ra:ja: uppar, bhangi: bhangi: nichchai

All kings above, all sweepers below

Another rhyme is directed toward the barber caste:

na:i ke rai na:i ke
tabla: baja:i: ke
table maĩ totta:
tuhi: mera: potta:
 Oh the barber's son
 Plays a drum,
 In the drum is a parrot,
 You are my grandson.

The Baniya or merchant is an especially popular figure of fun in children's folklore. Although relatively high in social status, the merchant or moneylender is widely disliked and is attributed with cowardice, often symbolized among the children by the jackal. A few rhymes will illustrate:

<i>baniya: baka:l</i>	The talkative Baniya,
<i>musse kaise ga:l</i>	Cheeks like a rat,
<i>seth</i>	Baniya,
<i>ghare ka: peṭ</i>	Belly like a jug.
<i>jai kabaddi: na:la:</i>	Victory in <i>kabaddi</i> : (a game)!
<i>baniye nai giddar pa:la</i>	The Baniya raised a jackal.

A longer rhyme incorporates the excrement motif as well:

<i>moṭe la:la: pilpile</i>	Fat merchant, soft and squishy,
<i>bahu: ku lekai gir pare</i>	Took his wife and fell down.
<i>bahu: gai tha:ne maĩ</i>	She went to the police station (to report him),
<i>la:la: gaye pakha:ne maĩ</i>	The merchant went to the latrine.

But in this folklore it is not only other children and social inferiors who are the targets of attack. Children enjoy perhaps most thoroughly to attack those above them in the hierarchy of the social system. In terms of caste, the Brahman is frequently the butt of jokes:

ha:di: ku: ha:d pa:ya: majai pa:ya: pi:sa:
ha:di: kai ju:t lage majai a:ya: ji:sa:
 Bone-sucker found a bone, I found a pice,
 Bone-sucker was beaten by shoes, oh how I enjoyed it!

"Bone-sucker" is the nickname given to the Brahman by children—being beaten with shoes is regarded in this culture as the most degrading kind of punishment. In another rhyme the Brahman teacher is buried under the path of the oilman's bullock and trod on day and night:

takti: pai takti: takti: pai laḍḍu:
pandajji marge, ka:h ja: gaḍḍu
telli: ke ghar maĩ ja: ga:ḍḍu:;
 State on a slate, and on the slate a sweet,
 Brahman teacher died, where should I bury him?
 I'll bury him at the oilman's house.

This rhyme shows disrespect for knowledge:

paḍhoge likhoge hovoge khara:b
kheloge kuddoge banoge nava:b
 If you read and write you will become a useless man,
 If you play and fool around you will become a prince.

Relationships within the family and extended kinship circle are also used extensively in children's folklore, as we have already seen above. Humor seems to derive from the reversal of kin roles, and sex roles, and from attacks of various kinds on authority and respect figures within the family. Within a family supreme authority rests in the eldest males of the parental or grand-parental generation—among women the highest authority is the husband's mother—*sa:ssu:*. Thus, the father's elder brother and the mother-in-law are favorite figures of fun:

ta:u: rai ta:u:
teri: kha:t talai bila:u:
bila:u: nai ma:rya: panja:
ta:u: hogya: ganja:

Uncle, oh uncle,
 There is a cat under your bed.
 The cat attacked with his claws,
 Uncle became bald.

Children play a trick with a mud pie, throwing it at the head of another child and shouting "Just wanted to see how good a spinner your mother-in-law is!" The word for mother-in-law is used together with that of *rā:d* "widow," to make a very harsh curse, for widowhood is regarded as a fate far worse than death by an Indian woman.

The respect for age which is so stressed in the training of the young Indian child is also disregarded in their folklore:

barso ra:m dhara:kke tai

budhiya: mariyo pha:kke tai

Rain, oh Lord, with full thunder,
 And let the old woman die of hunger.

Likewise, the pattern of male dominance which society regards as basic is flouted by children in their games and songs. In these, the husband-wife relationship does not conform to the ideal pattern, but is commonly reversed. Here, of course, it is likely that the realities of life (in which women are often domineering over their husbands despite a public front of male supremacy) affects the picture which children observe, regardless of what they are explicitly taught. Wives are always bigger, meaner, more gluttonous than their husbands. Men are small, pitiable creatures who have a difficult time hanging on to their wives. Women run away with other men, chase their husbands away to be eaten by wolves. They eat a lot, refuse to work and to feed their husband. By way of illustration, here is a children's verse:

choṭi si nagari: choṭa: sa: ba:g

usamāi rahta: modhu: ja:t

modhu: ja:t ku lagi: angha:i:

balad bech kai kari: saga:i:

uskai a:i: ganjo luga:i:

ganjo kuddai nonno ha:t

modhu: jorai donnu ha:t

a:ya: basantaka karamkara:

ganji: nai modhu: khu:b gharya:

In a small orchard in a small city
 Lived a Jat (farmer) named Modhu.

Once Modhu Jat tried to show off.

He sold his bullock and got engaged (with the money he'd earned).

A bald wife came to him.

The bald wife jumps high in the sky (she is unmanageable).
 Modhu stands with both hands folded prayerfully in front
 of her.

When the curtain fell, a ring in a ring (nonsense phrase)

The bald woman pounded Modhu to a pulp.

In conclusion, it seems quite evident that Indian children's folklore is one of protest toward the authority and strictures of elders, and that the most important humorous device is the denigration of all that the society regards with reverence. The fact that the rhymes, songs and stories of this collection are recited in a group of children—not in the presence of elders, not by a child in solitude—reinforces their effect as an outlet for socially banned feelings and ideas. The safety of the group dissipates the possible guilt feelings that would result if the same phrases were repeated singly and in seriousness—the absence of adults preserves the child from punishment for his verbal transgression of a code that is of utmost importance to the older generation. Although this study has been only a brief introduction to the vast subject

of Indian children's lore, it should serve at least to make the point that folklorists in India must take a fresh approach to this subject. We should not be afraid to investigate this folklore more deeply nor should we gloss over the aspects which may appear somewhat sordid. For to the children, dirt is not something to be abhorred—dirt is just plain fun.

PART IV

On a System of Savings and Other Traditions

On a System of Private Savings among North Indian Village Women¹

with Sylvia Vatuk

In the literature on the Indian household, emphasis is generally placed on the operation of this unit as a joint economic enterprise.² Less attention has been paid to concepts and disposition of personal property by individual members of the joint household, particularly women. The present paper will deal with the acquisition, saving, and expenditure of personal property—cash and goods—by women in a village of Western Uttar Pradesh. Our reference point for this discussion is a system of private banking called *paise dhama*, participated in by some of the women of a certain neighborhood (*mohalla*) over a period of about 40 years. During this period seven women secretly deposited cash, new clothing, and occasionally other valuables with a Brahman woman of the *mohalla* for the purpose of retaining a private store of property for their personal use, outside of the joint account of their household. Several of these women also borrowed money from her periodically.

The chief informant has been the Brahman woman herself and members of her family. We will describe the family circumstances of these eight women, the manner in which this secret banking system operated, the sources of private funds, and

¹ Fieldwork was carried out during the summer of 1965 by Ved Prakash Vatuk; the writing and interpretation was accomplished jointly. We wish to thank all of our informants for their invaluable help, particularly Devi and her clients. Thanks are also due to Mr. and Mrs. Ram Nivas Vidyarthi, who were very helpful during the fieldwork.

² See, for example, David G. Mandelbaum, "The Family in India," in Ruth Nanda Anshen (ed.), *The Family: Its Function and Destiny*, New York, 1959, esp. pp. 168-169; Mildred Stroop Luschinsky, *The Life of Women in a Village of North India: A Study of Role and Status*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1962, pp. 445-465.

the uses to which such funds were typically put. We are not suggesting that this banking system was a unique innovation of the women of this village. On the contrary, it is to our knowledge a rather common institution in village India. Perhaps due to the disinterest of investigators in an aspect of the economic system that has more important social than strictly economic implications, we have been unable to find reference to it in the literature.

The ideal form of household in this part of India is a patrilocal extended family of three or more generations in depth. Many of the families which we will describe were of this type or represented truncated remnants of such a family, other members of which had died. However, some of the households were of a nuclear type either during the entire period or at some time during the period. We will begin with a brief description of the women involved in this private banking arrangement and give some relevant information about the composition of their households and their personal circumstances.

1. The woman who served as informal banker for this group is a Brahman widow, now eighty years old, whom we will call Devi. Her husband, before his death 25 years ago, was a respected and moderately well-to-do man. Most of his income came from his services as the principal Arya Samaj *pandit* of the village. He held family land jointly with his father and two half-brothers. The latter cooperated in cultivating the entire holding, giving their elder brother half the produce of his share according to a traditional arrangement called *batāi*. He and Devi, with their children, lived in a nuclear household; his father, his father's second wife (until her death), and their sons and daughters-in-law lived jointly in a separate but adjoining house. The younger of these daughters-in-law, who will be introduced later, was one of Devi's banking "clients."

It may be relevant here to mention the role of Devi's husband as keeper of the joint property of those Brahmans of the village who are of his clan (*gotra*). This included some large cooking vessels used when the Brahmans cooked for their hereditary ritual clients (*jajmāns*) or for members of their own caste at weddings and other festival occasions. When not in use, these vessels were kept in his house and used for the storage of grain. He was also the man entrusted with any common funds of the *mohallā* when

such amounts were raised for a community purpose. He was known on occasion to lend money, without interest, to persons in need. He thus had the reputation of being honest and reliable and a person to whom one could go in case of trouble. This reputation no doubt reflected to some extent on his wife, and may have been partially responsible for her assumption of the role we describe here. However, also crucial was the fact that she had an independent personality, that her husband allowed her a great deal of autonomy in the handling of the family finances while he was alive, that she did not share the household of her mother-in-law (and she was therefore not subject to another woman's authority), and that after her husband's death she was for many years the matriarch of a large family which included her eldest son and his wife as well as her own unmarried children. Furthermore, Devi was known as a leader of the women of her generation in group activities such as singing at the rites of passage, and like her husband was generally regarded as trustworthy and sympathetic.

The women who deposited money and goods with Devi or who habitually borrowed from her were the following:

2. A Badhai (Carpenter) woman of the neighborhood, who lived in a nuclear household with her husband and unmarried children. Her relationship with Devi was confined to borrowing money in small amounts, until the marriage of her son to an aggressive and domineering woman in 1948. After a short period of joint living she began to deposit money and valuables with Devi, and continued this until her death five years later.

3. A Nain (Barber woman) from an adjacent street, who, with her husband, was attached in *jajmānī* relationships to the families of Devi's *mohallā*. She lived in a nuclear household with her husband and children. She was generally reputed to be unreliable and addicted to sweets, *chaṭori*. Her relationship with Devi was mainly confined to borrowing small sums which were not always repaid. Devi said of her: "Once she came to borrow money and left some silver ornaments as security, saying that she would repay the loan in *ghī* (clarified butter). After four months she brought part of the money back because of the silver."

4. A Brahman woman, not a relative of Devi, who lived jointly with her husband, widowed mother-in-law, and unmarried

children. Her husband was a reputed sweet addict, *chaṭora*, and she was tainted with the same reputation. In the early years of their association this woman borrowed money from Devi, giving her own jewelry (silver) as security, but later, as the fortunes of the family declined (said to be a result of their habit of excessive sweet-eating), she began to leave with Devi small brass vessels, probably the property of the joint family. This woman also had the reputation of being untrustworthy and Devi's family even suspected that she stole brass utensils from their own (that is, Devi's) house and sold them in order to obtain the money to repay loans taken from Devi on a previous occasion.

5. A widowed Brahman woman, living with her son, a domineering daughter-in-law and eight grandchildren. The son was a school-teacher who was said to be greatly under the influence of his wife, consistently favoring her over his mother. This woman put money and clothes for safekeeping with Devi over a number of years.

6. The wife of Devi's husband's youngest half-brother, referred to above. As we have said, this woman lived jointly with her husband and children, her husband's elder brother and his wife and children, and her husband's father. Her mother-in-law committed suicide shortly after this woman's marriage, apparently because of discord among the women of the joint household. The two brothers in this family were very close to one another, dominant over their wives, and presented a united front toward the quarrels of the women which might otherwise have tended to divide them. The younger brother was very hard-working, but was regarded as not being overly bright. He left the entire management of the household to the older brother. Both women in the family as well as the daughter of the elder woman habitually took small amounts of grain from the household store and exchanged it at the nearby shop for sweets, the ingredients to make sweets, or for cash. The younger woman deposited her money and possessions with Devi, saying that she was afraid they would not be safe from the depredations of her nieces, nephews and sister-in-law.

7. and 8. Two widows of Luhar (Blacksmith) brothers, living together with the children of the younger woman. When the children became mature, the daughter married and went to her

husband's home; the three sons went to work in the city and lived there with their wives. The two widowed sisters-in-law seemed on good terms, but both kept money and other items at Devi's house, without the knowledge of one another.

The services performed by Devi for these women of her neighborhood were two: loaning small amounts of money and keeping money and valuables to be returned to their owners on demand. No interest was taken for the loans, and repayment was made at the convenience of the borrower. Security was generally given for a loan, but the form and amount of such security was not set by Devi. Usually it consisted of silver jewelry, part of the borrower's personal property which would normally be kept locked in a trunk at her own home. Sometimes brass pots were left as security. Devi did not use any of these items while they were in her keeping, primarily because of the necessity for secrecy, which in subsequent discussion she stressed over and over again. The goods were kept by her in a small storage room which was locked at all times. Although her husband and children were inevitably aware of her activities in a vague way, these were never discussed openly and her family had no knowledge of the details of her relationship with each woman. Although the loans were usually repaid, this was not always the case, and Devi apparently made no active efforts to collect.

On savings no interest was paid by Devi, as the money was not to be put to any use by her. Her friends brought small amounts of cash or articles such as new clothes, which are important items of ritual exchange in this area. These items and the money were also placed in the locked storeroom—the money was kept in a covered pot. All accounting was by memory, since Devi and the other woman were unable to read and write; in any case, this method assured secrecy from prying eyes. Sometimes the funds of different women were kept separately in small boxes or envelopes. It was never touched by Devi or by the members of her family for their own use, nor were the deposited goods ever utilized.

The sources of the money which these women deposited with Devi were limited. Most individual or family income, whether from the sale of produce of the land or in return for the performance of caste-linked or other occupations, is pooled by members of a

joint household and is administered as joint property by the head—usually a male. Disbursements are made, as needed, for the benefit of the family as a whole. Any surplus may be allotted to fulfill the personal needs and wants of the individual members on a roughly equitable basis, again taking into account the good of the group as a whole. For example, a disproportionate amount of the family budget may be allocated to pay for the education of a son which would be expected to benefit the family in future years. However, there is always a certain small amount of property which is regarded as the private reserve of individual family members. For a woman this consists mainly of clothing and jewelry and a store of cash which is kept separate from the joint household account. Only in the case of dire need would a woman be asked or be expected to offer to use such private savings for ordinary household expenses, and she would almost never be expected to reveal to other members of the household the exact amount in her reserves.

A woman's own jewelry consists of that given her by her natal family at the time of her marriage. She has also a share in the jewelry provided her and other daughters-in-law by her husband's family. Although the joint family retains a residual right of disposition of this jewelry, it is, under normal circumstances, regarded as part of a woman's own property. This jewelry is kept in her own locked trunk, together with clothes brought from her natal home or presented at the time of marriage by her new affines. When cash presents are given to the bride at this time, a major part is usually retained by the joint family. However, a portion of this money may in some cases be returned to the bride. With this she begins to build her nest-egg.

The property which a woman brings with her or acquires at the time of marriage may subsequently be augmented in a number of ways. There are the gifts of clothing and money which are given to her and/or her children when she visits her natal home or when her brother comes to visit her at her husband's home. Furthermore, a woman receives gifts on certain festivals during the year when money and clothing is given specifically to daughters and sisters. Such gifts are generally retained by a woman rather than being pooled with joint family funds or the nuclear household budget.

A second source of cash, particularly in this case for the Brahman women and the Nain, are the small amounts given by the family *jajmāns* in return for the performance of traditional ritual services. For the Brahmans this includes cooking the food for feasts given by members of other castes for Brahman men and singing at the rites-of-passage ceremonies to which they are periodically invited. The Nain also sings at certain ceremonies and performs many other ritual duties for those families to which she and her family are traditionally attached. Again, except in the case of serious necessity, such sums may usually be retained by the woman to whom they are given. If some of this money must go into the joint account, a woman may easily hold back a portion of her payment, hiding from her husband or mother-in-law the exact amount paid her.

For those women who have no opportunity to earn ritual income of this kind, small amounts may be obtained by doing odd domestic job for neighbors, collecting mustard seeds and gleanings from the fields for sale to the storekeeper, doing occasional field work, and the like. Here also it is often possible for a woman to hold back part or all of her earnings for her own use.

Another means of building up a private fund is by diverting some of the household's joint resources secretly to her own use. One common way of doing this is by selling small amounts of grain from the household store. Most agricultural families keep half-a-year's supply of grain in the house from one harvest to the next; from such a large store a handful here and there is hardly missed, and such handfuls of grain substitute for cash in many of the small transactions within the village. To take grain in this way is a frequent practice, particularly for women and children, but it is usually done surreptitiously and is regarded as stealing, although of a minor kind.³ It may, however, have major implications when it is done continuously by several members of the family so

³ Luschinsky discusses this practice in some detail and interprets it as an expression of the desire for additional authority in the household or, for some women, the desire for support and affection. In the latter case, these ends are achieved by using the grain to purchase gifts for others. With respect to men's attitude toward this type of theft, she analyzes it as a permitted deviation from the ideals of the joint family, serving as an "emotional and practical release for individual members of the family collective." Op. cit., pp 460-465.

as to seriously deplete the household's grain supply. If a woman takes grain in this way it is usually to buy something for her own or her children's immediate consumption—most commonly for sweets, salty snacks or fruits—but she may take grain to exchange for cash which she then hordes.

Finally, a woman may divert part of the household money to her own personal fund by exaggerating the cost of goods bought for household consumption and retaining the difference, or in other ways "saving" from the money she handles for household expenses. This procedure is analogous to the cookie-jar saving of many American and European housewives with a housekeeping allowance. Like the amount in the cookie-jar, the extent of a woman's personal fund is kept secret. Saving money in this way is not disapproved in the way, that taking grain may be. A woman who is able to amass a goodly sum in this way is on the contrary admired for her frugality and careful management.⁴

The extent to which any of these avenues for acquiring private savings are open to a woman depends, of course, on the economic standing of her natal family and their generosity, the opportunities available to her for earning money outside the home, her honesty with regard to the household grain supply and the attitudes of individuals in authority toward her lapses, and her freedom of access to the household's common fund. But except for households living at the very margin of subsistence, some opportunity is available to every woman to save small amounts, even penny by penny, to spend as she likes. Every woman attempts to find a way to do so; if she feels for any reason that her personal needs relative to those of other family members are not being met equitably, she will seek a way more urgently. In any case, there are a number of important uses to which such a personal fund may be put.

All of these uses reflect a women's desire for something extra for herself or her children which the other members of the household of comparable status do not have. Thus the rationale

⁴ See, for example, S. C. Dube, *Indian Village*, Ithaca, 1995, p.147: "[A woman] should save enough to buy her ornaments and should lay aside something to meet unforeseen expenses. The more she can save without the knowledge of her husband, the more she will be appreciated by the elderly women."

for such a fund runs counter to the explicit ideology of the joint family economy: that everyone should be treated equally while contributing everything they have, that the good of one is the good of all, and vice versa. According to this ideology, a man should make no distinction between his own children and his brother's children in providing necessities or luxuries—he may in fact be expected to favor his brother's children, a consideration which is reciprocated by the brother in favor of *his* sons and daughters. While men are generally able to adhere to the letter of this ideology with little obvious difficulty, women are known to resist it. Such resistance is frequently held to be the cause of discord within and ultimate break-up of the joint household. Women will always try, whenever possible, to give their own children extra treats which the other children in the household do not have. For example, when a fair is to be visited, all children may be given a set amount from the household reserves. The mother will secretly give her own children an additional amount from her own fund. A woman may occasionally buy her children sweets and other delicacies which are not a part of the regular menu, or she may give them money for small luxuries which they desire. These must also come from her own savings.

A second major area where a woman finds it desirable to have her own resources is in helping to maintain the prestige of her natal family in the eyes of her affines and neighbors in her husband's village. The relation between the giver of the bride and the receiver of the bride is assymmetrically structured, so that the receiving family is always regarded as higher in status than the family which has given a daughter. Subsequent to a marriage, the roles of giver and receiver may never be reversed, and it is obligatory for the girl's natal family to continue to give periodic gifts to her and to the members of her husband's family.⁵ This is done on certain festivals, on the occasion of her visits home, when she gives birth to her first child (and perhaps to subsequent children as well) and when her children marry. The frequency

⁵ Cf. McKim Marriott, "Social Structure and Change in a U.P. Village," in M. N. Srinivas (ed.), *India's Villages*, 2nd ed., New York, 1960, p. 112: "...lavish hospitality must be offered and gifts made to the husband's family throughout life." See also Eglar's discussion of the role of the daughter in gift exchange: Zekiye Eglar, *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan*, New York, 1960, pp. 108-115.

and quantity of such gifts necessarily declines over the years as mutual visits occur more seldom and as she becomes completely caught up in the life of her affinal home. But it is always important, even in her old age, for a woman to establish and maintain the reputation of her natal family in the village of her husband, particularly to validate her family's economic status and generosity *vis-à-vis* the family of her husband. Therefore, on the visits she makes to her natal home a woman may well buy clothes for herself and her children—perhaps also for her mother-and sister-in-law—to say on her return that they have been given to her by her parents or brother. Similarly, if her resources allow, she may have a small piece of jewelry made, and on returning from visiting her brother's wife after childbirth will show it as the traditional childbirth gift from a woman to her husband's sister. On the other hand, when her brother visits her, she may give him a sum of money and ask him to return it to her "as a brother's gift" in the presence of other members of the family. This transaction, in which nothing is lost and some prestige for her family is perhaps gained, may in many cases be a thinly disguised ploy: her audience nods heads knowingly, but since nothing can be proven the attempt is felt to be worthwhile.

While it is most important for a woman to reinforce the prestige of her natal home, it is also important to show the natal family and the people of her natal village that she is well-off, well-loved, and not an object of pity. To this end she may again use her private funds to bring gifts for her brother's children on her periodic visits. Because of the traditional giver-receiver relationship, she may bring presents from her affinal home only to the younger generation. Furthermore, she can expect to take back with her more than she has given, so that ultimately it is to her own advantage to bring as much as she can conveniently afford, within the bounds of what she knows to be her natal family's means. Gifts may be sent with a woman from the affinal joint household, but if they are not sufficient or if, for some economic or personal reason, they are not forthcoming at all, she must depend on her own resources. Again, when her brother or his children visit her in her husband's home, a woman may use these resources to provide a more lavish meal and a greater variety

of sweets than would otherwise be available from the joint household budget.

When her children are grown and her daughters have married into other villages, a woman again uses her funds to buttress the position of her joint household of marriage (now the bridegiver) *vis-à-vis* the household of her daughter's husband. She will then purchase as many gifts—principally clothing—and give as much cash on appropriate occasions to her daughter and her daughter's in-laws as her resources permit.

Another area in which private funds may be used is to buy the affection and allegiance of grandchildren or of nephews and nieces—the latter particularly in the case of a childless woman who wishes to draw to herself the children of a husband's brother. Such competition for the affection of children is part of the normal interplay of personalities within a joint household—the other aspect of which is the tendency of children to play adults against one another. However, it is likely to be more intense when there is discord among women in a joint household.

Finally, a woman may need personal savings to buy the necessities of clothing and toilet articles for herself, particularly if the household budget is tight or if, for some reason, she is being dealt with unfairly in the family. Such a purpose may easily be combined with the one discussed above, as when clothes are bought and shown as presents from the natal relatives. Such a procedure also relieves a woman of the necessity of revealing the source of her funds.

In addition to these needs, all generally recognized as legitimate, a woman may require money for less approved purposes. She may wish to aid natal relatives who are in need, and to whom the joint family of her husband cannot be expected to give assistance. Or she may need funds to support a habit of sweet-eating. In fact, an unnatural craving for sweets was said to be the problem of several of the women who availed themselves of Devi's banking services. Since such a craving is linked in local perceptions with unreliability and untrustworthiness—probably because it suggests an excessive tendency toward self-indulgence—it is strongly disapproved. This matter has been discussed by us in a previously cited paper.

Theoretically the presence of private savings of this kind does not require a savings and loan arrangement as described here. Money may be kept in one's own house, locked in one's own trunk. In the ideal household there is no reason for anyone but the owner of the trunk to have access to its contents, and personal property, cash or goods, should be quite safe. Furthermore, in an ideally run household there should be no strongly felt need for large personal cash reserves, since the joint account should equitably provide for most of the needs of all members. One reason for such an arrangement is the difficulty for a woman to resist the temptation to fritter away what little money she has on small luxuries for immediate consumption rather than saving it for later personal "emergencies." By taking their money to Devi, in amounts however small, these women were enabled gradually to save rather large sums, into which they dipped only after careful thought.

The other important reason for this institution results from discord and suspicion among members of a family—usually, but not exclusively, among women—from the unequal distribution of authority and influence over the allocation of the family's joint property. When such a situation exists, the woman who feels herself to be in a position of dependence and insecurity may prefer not to risk keeping her carefully hoarded cash and valuables in the home. It may be that this store is illicitly acquired and that other household members are fully justified in their suspicions of the extent and source of her wealth. But even property to which a woman has undisputed rights may be insecure in circumstances in which the character of interpersonal relationships in the family is strongly at variance with the accepted ideology. Particularly when a woman must be absent from the village—as on the occasion of a lengthy visit to her natal home or to other kin—she may well fear that in her absence some member of the family will succeed in breaking into her trunk and discovering her hoard or even stealing it. A local proverb speaks of the uselessness of a locked trunk when someone really wants to get into it: *tāle billī kuttō kī lī hō*, "Locks are (made) for cats and dogs."

A situation of this type seems to have been present for most of the women who availed themselves of Devi's friendly and

confidential services. Devi's sister-in-law was generally recognized to be the underdog in the family headed by her husband's father and later her husband's elder brother. She was, relatively speaking, on bad terms with the latter's wife, and their continual routine quarrels were aggravated by the fact that her husband was passive and submissive toward his brother. Furthermore, the latter's children were older than her own; they sided with their mother in any dispute and aided her in any way they could against their aunt. When these sons married, their wives also came to live in the household, and this added other supporters to her sister-in-law's clique.

The Carpenter woman on her part was dominated by an aggressive daughter-in-law and apparently felt neglected and threatened by this woman's active management of the household. A similar case was that of the mother of the Brahman schoolteacher. She felt threatened also by a daughter-in-law who dominated her husband, and influenced him to favor her over his mother. The elderly widow felt strongly the loss of her hard-won independence and the usurpation of her position as household manager, as well as the alienation of her son's affection. She kept money and valuables at Devi's house secretly for safe-keeping, for fear that at home they would not be safe from her daughter-in-law's hands.

For the Luhar widows the situation is less clear. Although they appeared to be mutually dependent on one another and lived in amity most of the time, both used Devi's house as a depository for money. Their household was a poor one, but both amassed comparatively large sums over the years. Neither was supposedly aware of the saving of the other. The disruptive factor in this household seems to have been the childlessness of the elder sister-in-law. She had great affection for her niece and nephews and spent small sums from her private reserves to buy luxuries for them. The competition for the children's affection between their mother and aunt seems to have provided most of the motivation for their saving and the secrecy that surrounded it, although other factors may also have been involved.

It is significant to note that all of the women who deposited savings with Devi were members of joint households. Those who lived in nuclear households limited their relations with her to

borrowing money, for both household and personal requirements. Those who lived in a joint household in which interpersonal relations were harmonious, or who were themselves the more dominant and secure female members of their respective households, similarly found no need to use Devi's services for the deposit of their savings.

Young women recently married and living with their mothers-in-law are interestingly not represented in this discussion. Such a woman is certainly likely to suffer from the feelings of dependence and insecurity which we have shown to be related to participation in this type of savings arrangement. The explanation for their absence in this group of women may be that Devi was middle-aged and many years married when she began to assume the role of informal banker—all her associates (with the exception of one sister-in-law) were of her own age. It must be appreciated that it may take many years for a woman to establish the very close ties with women of her husband's village that would allow her to participate with them in this kind of arrangement. In the early years of marriage a woman visits her natal home frequently and for extended periods. If she feels oppressed by the mother or sister-in-law in her husband's home, her close contacts with her natal kin give her the opportunity to share her difficulties with them. She will frequently ask her mother or brothers to keep her cash reserves. It is only in later years when these natal ties have become somewhat attenuated, when her parents have perhaps died and contacts with her brothers are less frequent, that she begins to turn toward village friends for this kind of personal aid.

We should mention that there is an alternative way in which the problem of keeping a personal fund may be solved. In this village there are approximately ten small shopkeepers. They are all called Baniyas, although not all are actually of Baniya caste. Their shops cater mainly to the people of the neighborhood in which they are situated and sell a variety of merchandise. Grain is the usual medium of exchange. In this neighborhood the shopkeeper is a man of an old and respected Baniya family. He sells goods on credit to many of the *mohallā* residents and buys goods such as clarified butter from them. He keeps his accounts in writing. Devi herself deposited her own cash reserves with him,

maintaining that this was a more secure and sensible manner of handling her surplus money than to deposit it with a friend. However, there are several reasons why other women might find this alternative unsatisfactory. Firstly, the Baniya is an elderly man—all women whose husbands are younger than he must keep *pardā* before him, that is, they must hide their face from him with their headshawl and must not speak to him. For this reason very little shopping is done by women personally—children are sent to purchase any items which are not purchased by the men of the household. *Pardā* restrictions may be circumvented by taking a small child to the shop and addressing the storekeeper through the child—but even with this device the relationship of a woman with a male shopkeeper is certain to be formal and impersonal. On the other hand, from the Baniya's point of view, the taking of customer's money for safekeeping is a business arrangement, not a service performed out of friendship. How can a woman depend on his keeping her secret from other members of her family who may also deposit cash with him—particularly from the household head who may himself habitually deposit rather large amounts? A woman may not even wish to ask him for a pledge of secrecy, since such a request places the prestige of her family at stake—it is felt strongly that no matter what the difficulties within a family, no member should ever allow a stranger to become aware of them. A family should present a united front at all costs.

Another factor in women's reluctance to use the Baniya as banker is the local stereotype of the Baniya as a clever cheat, who acts dishonestly whenever it may be to his advantage. This stereotype is not attached to the particular Baniya of the local shop, who is regarded as honest, but to Baniyas in general. In such a secret arrangement, particularly if one is illiterate, it is mandatory for one to have complete confidence in the person handling one's savings. There would be no recourse if he denied the existence of the arrangement at a later time or if he underestimated the amount. From the religious point of view it is believed that the Baniya's fate in the afterlife and his conscience in this life would suffer little from the type of dishonesty which is regarded as his God-given way of life. But a woman friend who betrayed a friendly agreement would certainly suffer untold torments.

Finally, it may be asked: What kind of woman is likely to be chosen for this role of friendly neighborhood banker? Firstly, she must be independent, living in a nuclear household without the necessity to submit to the authority of any other woman. She must have the respect of her husband and the ability to stand up against him should he discover her activities. He must in fact be a man who leaves his wife very much on her own in her management of household affairs, whether from indifference or because of her domineering character. She must not be in obvious need, so that the temptations of this surplus cash may easily be resisted. And she must have a reputation for honesty and the ability to keep secrets. A woman known for her love of gossip and a tendency to incite discord among her women friends would not be chosen for this role. She must be free of habits like *chaṭorpan* (sweet-addiction) which would endanger the security of her long-established relations among a close-knit in-group of women friends within her neighborhood. It is an expression of intimacy, friendship, and sympathy within an inner circle of village women.

12

Chatorpan: A Culturally Defined Form of Addiction in North India

With Sylvia Vatuk

The present paper describes and attempts to interpret a complex of behavioral traits, regarded by the Hindi-speaking population of Western Uttar Pradesh as deviant, and termed by them *chaṭorpan*. *Chaṭorpan* is perceived in this region as an addictive condition, characterized primarily by the excessive consumption of sweets (*mīṭhāī*) and salty-spicy snacks (*chāṭī*), and secondarily by a number of anti-social or deviant behavior patterns resulting from or closely related to the compulsive food preference. A person so craving sweet and salty delicacies is called *chaṭorā*; if a woman, *chaṭori*. The *chaṭorā* is, in this part of India, regarded as a common deviant type, and the cultural definition of his deviance, the characteristic attitudes taken toward him and his problem, and the social consequences felt to be associated with his abnormal eating habits form the central subject of this paper.

We will not discuss here the medical or psychological aspects of *chaṭorpan*, although these would certainly provide a topic of legitimate inquiry. We will not even discuss the question of whether such an addictive condition actually exists in this region or, if it does, whether symptoms conform to those described by informants and what its incidence might be. We do not, unfortunately, have the extensive case material necessary to pose questions of this kind, although we do have some material which would provide

¹ The field work on which this paper is based was carried out by Ved Prakash Vatuk during June, July and August 1965. We would like to thank our many informants for their cooperation, particularly Mr. Ram Nivas Vidyarthi of Arya Vidyalaya Inter college, Tera (Meerut), U.P., Mr. and Mrs. K. B. Sharma, Mrs. Kirpadevi Sharma and Pandit Ram Svarup Vaidya. This paper, in an earlier version, was presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association at Denver, November 1965.

the basis for further research along these lines. The Ayurvedic doctors whom we interviewed during our investigation regarded *chaṭorpan* as a medical problem, at least to the extent of regarding it as a complicating factor in many physiological disturbances of varied origin with which they dealt in their practice. Their suggestion that a habit of excessive sweet-consumption produces a dependence on sweets similar to that experienced by the alcoholic or drug addict is worthy of further study. A similar theory has recently been put forth by British psychiatrists speaking of the self-reinforcing cycle set up in those who satisfy cravings for sweets and other carbohydrates (Pincher, 1966).

Here, however, *chaṭorpan* will be discussed as a product of cultural perceptions, as a demonstrable domain in the Hindi language within this culture area. This paper can thus be viewed as an exploration of one aspect of "native context of use," with an attempt being made to answer some of the questions posed by Hymes in his discussion of the structural analysis of meaning: what does the domain *chaṭorā* include, what does it exclude, what features define it and its elements? (Hymes, 1962, p. 19) In this endeavor we have also taken some leads from recent sociological literature on deviance, from those investigators who, like Becker, are concerned with social definitions of deviant categories and who seek to view deviance not as "a quality of the act the person commits, but rather [as] a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions...." (Becker, 1963, p. 9).

Our awareness of the phenomenon of *chaṭorpan* came from the long residence of one of the authors in rural Meerut District, Western Uttar Pradesh. Once we had formulated our problem he was able to spend three months in this area, during which time he interviewed a large number of people in different parts of the District who represented both sexes, various ages, castes, and religions. The group included five local doctors, fifteen school teachers and white collar workers, two singer-composers and more than twenty-five peasants and housewives who claimed to know the sweet addicts. A number of them belonged to the families of three alleged male sweet addicts. These informants were queried

about their use of sweets and their perceptions of *chaṭorpan*. The interviewer also made extensive notes from observation on the uses of sweets in this area and collected proverbs, folk sayings, and folk beliefs concerning sweets and *chaṭorpan*. Throughout, an attempt was made to investigate both the *form* of sweet use—that which is relatively explicit in the culture—and its *meaning*—the implicit aspect of the behavior. As further data, the members of a ninth grade class were requested to write short essays, in Hindi, on *chaṭorpan*. These essays, in which the students were left completely free to phrase their conceptions in their own way, provide extremely interesting insights into the cultural perceptions of the etiology and prognosis of *chaṭorpan*.

Throughout we will, for the sake of brevity, use the term "Indian culture," but we will be referring only to the area of our investigations, making no attempt to generalize for the whole of Indian culture or for other parts of India, except where parallels in the literature are specifically referred to. However, we do not mean to suggest by this that the attitudes we describe are unique to this limited area of Western Uttar Pradesh, and there is evidence that a similar syndrome with respect to sweet-eating is to be found in other regions of India as well, at least all over the Northern regions.

In the culture of Northern India, sweets play a vital role as a medium of both ritual and secular exchange. They are the invariable accompaniment of religious worship where they form the major type of offering to the gods, and they predominate in the elaborate foods prepared for festive occasions and for the celebration of the rites of passage, most notably marriage. They are likewise exchanged on secular occasions such as informal visits, and their distribution to friends and neighbors provides a means of announcing and celebrating personal good fortune or success of any kind.

In this sugar-cane producing area, sweet foods are not a rare treat, nor are the common homemade sweet dishes particularly

expensive. A farmer's breakfast commonly consists of *roti gur* (bread and a large lump of brown sugar) or *gur chhā* (buttermilk with *gur*). Including that eaten at other meals and between-times, a farmer in this area may consume as much as one or two pounds of *gur* daily. The most desirable types of sweets, however, which include as ingredients milk, *ghī* (clarified butter) and flour with white, refined sugar, require lengthy preparations and special skill. These are usually bought from a professional sweet-maker or, where large quantities are needed, a confectioner is hired to make them at the host's home. It is these sweets that are usually involved in ritual and secular distributions and at feasts, and the ability to provide them in quantity is an index of wealth and social status.²

In the ritual sphere, sweets as *prasād* are the standard offering at routine worship or *pūjā* in the home or at the temple or shrine. At the temple, these sweet offerings are often redistributed by the priest among the assembled worshippers at the close of the ritual. At the yearly rites honoring village gods and goddesses, occupational and caste gods, or the goddesses of contagious disease, the offering of sweets or *gur* is an integral part of the procedure. When someone contracts smallpox, *Mātā* (mother) or *Sītā* (cold goddess), who is believed by the villagers to be responsible for the disease, is propitiated with equal quantities of flour and *gur*, in order to ensure a patient's recovery. The ritual known as *dhamā bolnā* is also frequently performed in this area, whereby a vow is made to a god or goddess that sweets will be distributed to neighbors and friends in the divinity's name if one's prayer—for a successful examination result, the safe return of an absent son, the conception of a child, the recovery of a sick father—is answered.

On the great festivals of the yearly cycle of Hinduism and Islam, on Holi, Diwali, Id, Janamashatmi and Tij, sweets are prepared for consumption as a matter of course. It is on Holi

² The type of sugar used is also an important index of social prestige; the use of refined white sugar denotes high social status, while *gur* is considered inferior and rustic.

and Tij, however, that the most important reciprocal exchanges of sweets take place. On these occasions it is customary for sweets and clothing to be presented to persons who stand to one in the relation of "daughter-in-the-village," and a portion of the sweets received on such occasions is distributed in turn, within the village, to those with whom one has *bhāichārā* relationships.³

Of the life-cycle ceremonies, marriage is the most elaborate and time consuming, and it is noteworthy that the exchange of sweets accompanies almost every stage of the negotiations preceding the marriage as well as the various parts of the wedding ceremony itself. The wedding feast is the highpoint of the occasion, and the excellence of the meal provided by the bride's family is judged according to the number and quality (particularly the *ghī* content) of the sweet dishes prepared. When asked "How was the wedding you attended last week?" the villager will reply, "Wonderful! There were twelve sweets!"

The ceremonies surrounding the birth of a child also involve the distribution of sweets at various stages, and here also sweets are used in a medical context to speed the physical recovery of the new mother. Her first food after giving birth is *pāit*, a mixture of *gur* and *ghī*, and after her parents have been informed of the birth they send, on the *jesūtan* ceremony, a quantity of *sāndā*, made of sugar, butter, nuts, and dried fruits. This food is regarded as strength-giving, and is intended for the new mother's consumption during her convalescence. Interestingly, *pāit* and *sāndā* are also provided for the buffalo cow after calving.

At death too sweets are utilized. On the thirteenth day after death, called *terāmī*, a feast is held for relatives and friends of

³ *Bhāichārā* is an institutionalized socioeconomic relationship of mutual friendship and assistance between families. *Bhāichārā* relationships go beyond caste and village boundaries; for any family, some of these relationships have been inherited and some have been established in the present generation. Reciprocal exchange of money on the occasion of rites of passage is one aspect of this relationship, the main one in which *bhāichārā* relations in other villages are involved. Within the village, mutual assistance with agricultural tasks is afforded by people standing in this type of relationship. As persons who are expected to share in the joys of celebration with one's own family, *bhāichārā* friends are the recipients of sweets on occasions of their distribution. This is similar to the institution described by Eglar as *vartan bhānjī* in Punjab (Eglar, 1960).

the deceased, and in this area the traditional food served is *burā-chāval*, a mixture of refined sugar, *ghī* and rice. Offerings of sweets and dough are made to various animals, ghosts, trees, and Brahmins in order to help speed the soul of the deceased across the River Vaitarani and to assure its safe arrival in the other world.

Beyond this type of formalized occasion on which the offering or exchange of sweets is prescribed or in which it serves an instrumental purpose in the supernatural sphere, there are countless occasions in the secular sphere which also call for the distribution or presentation of sweets. On occasions which in American culture might prompt the throwing of a party or having friends in for a drink, the Indian who has reason for celebration will distribute sweets to his relatives, neighbors, and friends. It is commonplace to ask, on hearing of a friend's accomplishment in any field, "Well! When are you going to offer us sweets?" Here, we might suggest that sweets are used in much the same context as champagne in Western society.

In folk sayings and proverbs, sweets are associated with pleasure, with beauty, joy, and desire. Their lack suggests absence of pleasure, dullness, colorlessness. For example:

1. Eat bread with sugar, cheat the world with tricks [i.e., eat well and enjoy yourself].
2. Her eyes are like a marble of *gur* [i.e., sweet and round].
3. Without sugar, the kitchen is a widow.
4. If a skinny man eats olives with sugar and *ghī*, he can tuck an elephant under his arm and walk 120 miles.

Obeyesekere has suggested in his study of pregnancy cravings in Ceylon that certain foods which are the object of uncontrollable craving are not individual, but cultural choices, and that they are so chosen because of their symbolic meaning to members of society. He suggests that sweets in Ceylon are associated with the pleasures of childhood and that their excessive consumption in pregnancy provides an opportunity for regression (Obeyesekere, 1963, pp. 337-338). It appears to us that in North India, and perhaps also in Ceylon, the symbolic meaning of sweets goes beyond their association with childhood pleasure, and that sweets are in fact

associated with pleasure *per se*, with all kinds of celebration and rejoicing, as well as with feelings of general well-being and harmony fostered by their role in the yearly round of ritual activities and in cementing social ties between individuals and groups. The role of sweets in lubricating all types of social intercourse in this part of India, and the mental associations created by this role, have been discussed here to demonstrate that the frequent and heavy consumption of sweets is conceived of, in this culture, as an activity of very positive value and, in fact, as an obligatory activity in terms of the individual's successful participation in his community's social and ritual life. An interpretation of the fact that an activity of such positive effect is closely tied to the social definition of a disapproved deviant category requires further discussion.

Data from our informants present a consistent definition of *chātorā* as an individual possessing a complex of character traits in which sweet addiction is a necessary, but evidently not a sufficient, condition. It is not sufficient in the sense that our informants do not perceive as possible a situation wherein a person could have the characteristic craving for sweets without developing the other associated traits. The acquisition of some or all of these other traits is held to be progressive and inevitable. However, they may be present in the character of persons not addicted to sweets, in which case the deviant is known by other terms.

As our informants described the characteristics of a *chātorā*, two adjectives recurred: *charitrahīn* (or *badmāsh*), and *nirlajj*. The former literally means lacking in character, worthless, and implies sexual immorality in thought and/or in deed. *Nirlajj* is generally translated into English as "shameless," and implies consistent and blatant breaching of fundamental social norms, without regard for the sanctions of public opinion. The word is used in many contexts, and in its use is quite comparable to the use of the Spanish expression *sin vergüenza* as discussed in all its ramifications by Pitt-Rivers (1961, pp. 112-118).

Most of our informants, both in the essays and in oral interviews, when asked to explain what is meant by *chātorpan* began with an example of "someone in our village," who began eating sweets in excess and went gradually into a progressive moral, economic, and social decline. The students were somewhat

more imaginative than their elders in relating these "case histories," as might be expected. They also gave less consideration to mitigating factors (in terms of family situation, personal problems, etc.) than did their elders, and unanimously condemned the habit and those who fell prey to it. This difference may result from a school atmosphere which encourages active conformity to the values of the older generation, before maturity has taught the desirability of judging each case on its own merits and interpreting the social rules with some regard for personal differences. Few people in either category attempted to search back beyond the initial "fall into indulgence" for causal factors. In two or three cases, a curse was said to be responsible. However, several informants expressed the view that the seeds of *chaṭorpan* were sown in childhood. Certain phrases recurred here: "his parents loved him too much," "his father raised him with great affection and gave him everything he wanted." In short, the *chaṭorā* is the spoiled child full grown.

A composite case history presents a young man whose parents give him money for sweets on demand. Soon his craving outstrips even his parents' willingness to indulge him, for even if they are wealthy their values concerning the evils of *chaṭorpan* eventually overcome their affectionate instincts. At this point two processes take over. The young man deals with his economic problem by taking money surreptitiously from home and lying when the loss is discovered. He buys sweets on credit and fails to pay the bill, or finds ways of cheating the confectioner. He may even be shameless enough to steal the sweets outright. Simultaneously, the *chaṭorā* begins to branch out into other forbidden fields. He is truant from school and goes instead to the movies, or, in the stories of the traditional minded, he spends his time at the folk-opera (*sāṅg*) performances and at the circus. This causes him to fall into bad company, and he begins to smoke cigarettes and perhaps even to drink alcohol and eat meat. Some informants mentioned gambling as a likely activity in this early stage.

Here some of our younger informants went on to paint a lurid picture of the *chaṭorā*'s embarkation on a frank life of crime, with subsequent arrest, beating by the police, and a lingering death in prison. The inevitability of his decline was described by others in less colorful but no less definite terms. The physical consequences

of *chaṭorpan* were generally agreed to be weakness, thinness and poor health. Several informants mentioned that no one ever gets fat—that is, healthy—from eating sweets in excess. Perhaps as a result, the *chaṭorā* is lazy, indolent, and ill-tempered, particularly within the family circle. He works as little as possible, and tries by various ruses to get other people to take on his responsibilities while he pursues pleasure. Any money at his disposal is immediately spent on sweets and other luxuries to indulge the senses. He sells his wife's jewelry, then his livestock and other property, and finally his land. He begins to borrow money which he cannot repay, and is forced to accept ever higher rates of interest. In several cases, informants described *chaṭorās* who were said to have sold their daughters or other women under their authority. Since it is customary in this area to provide a rather large dowry at the marriage of one's daughter, it is felt to show extreme weakness of character and greed if a man takes money for her instead. In fact, of course, such a match can only be arranged if the groom has some serious defect which makes him unmarriageable, such as advanced age, blindness, or mental deficiency.

If allowed to persist unchecked, the *chaṭorā* is described as eventually losing completely the respect of his community; and in a society in which the fate of the family and the individual are regarded as intertwined and inextricable, he lowers the status of his entire family. This is the ultimate calamity. The members of the family are unable to lift their heads in public, but the *chaṭorā*, shameless as he is, goes on to perpetrate ever more horrendous deeds.

Throughout our discussion we have assumed that the *chaṭorā* is a male deviant. This is not accidental. Although the word *chaṭorā* is frequently heard in reference to actual women, and although informants who were asked readily agreed that women were also susceptible to *chaṭorpan*, in fact none of the spontaneously mentioned cases involved female sweet addicts. It appears that perhaps due to the conventional authority structure within the Indian family it did not occur to our informants that a type case of *chaṭorpan* could be represented by a woman. No woman could fully indulge in such a habit unless the man responsible for her

actively connived in it. Therefore, although a woman might have tendencies in that direction and might loosely be referred to as a *chātorī*, a full-blown case, one which fully represented the stereotype, could only be described by using a male protagonist.⁴

However, the problem of family control over the activities of a female sweet addict is present to some extent even in the case of a male, even if he be head of his own household. The wife of a *chātorā* could certainly make life miserable for her husband, even though she has no real authority over his actions, and several informants mentioned the possibility that the full expression of *chātorpan* could be held in check, at least temporarily, by family pressures.

It may be interesting here to quote briefly from some of our informants. Unfortunately, the following passages have lost a great deal in translation:

1. "Because of *chātorpan*, some people lose their wealth and turn their minds to bad deeds...like cheating, stealing and selling daughters. One man owned plenty of land. Because of *chātorpan*, he, the lover of lawlessness, sold it and ate *halvā* (a popular, homemade sweet) and such things. Now he begs from door to door, his children wander from street to street in search of food. And that rogue had three daughters. He sold them and ate [sweets]. Now people tie him up and beat him because he can't repay the debts incurred because of *chātorpan*."

2. "Due to their habit of *chātorpan*, and cinema-going they have to steal...or sell whatever they can find in the house....Many play hooky and go to the cinema. They exaggerate to their parents about the cost of their school fees, and then smoke cigarettes and

⁴ Triloki Nath Pandey, in personal communication, informs us that in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, it is women whose husbands have gone away for extended periods (perhaps to work in Calcutta or other industrial areas) who are believed to be particularly susceptible to *chātorpan*. This seems to support our suppositions about the relation between the social structure, sex, and *chātorpan*. The association between sexual laxity and *chātorpan*, in this case with reference to women, is shown also in a proverb of that area, "A *chātorī* tongue and a promiscuous vagina will never be controlled."

form many other bad habits. They drink, gamble, play the stock market, all because their *chātorpan* has exceeded its limits."

3. "Parents first spoil children, then suffer. Whatever the child says, they do. In our village there is such a man. Now his parents are dead and he borrows money and eats plenty of sweets. At his house the radio is blaring, but when he is asked to repay his debts he runs away from the village. If people chase him, he gives them a piece of his land. Thus he has sold all his land and also his houses."

4. "In our village there lives a man named Khacheru. Whenever he brings home his earnings he buys sweets and puddings. Once he owned very good houses and brassware, but he enjoyed selling these and buying sweets. And now he starves. His wife left him ... and his son won't let him enter his house.... In the olden days he used to raise pigeons and he fed them *ghī*. Now both he and his pigeons starve... Only one daughter remained. He sold her and ate sweets. The girl ran away from her husband and he sold her silver ornaments and ate sweets. The police beat him, but he still did not learn his lesson and sold his daughter again for 500 rupees."

The problem of the *chātorā* in Indian society seems to be perceived by our informants as a problem of loss of control over the senses by the sweet addict. The *chātorā* is "slave of his tongue," and in submitting to such slavery has forfeited the mastery over his instinctual desires which is the hallmark of the conforming member of Indian society. The notion is repeatedly expressed that man must remain master of his food—he must not let the food master him. This is what the *chātorā* has allowed to happen.

However, not only has the craving for sweets taken the upper hand—once the *chātorā* let down the barriers in this respect he can no longer maintain a hold on himself in other sensual spheres. Excessive indulgence in sweets has made the *chātorā* incapable of resisting the temptations which continually beset a man from all directions, and so his decline is inevitable. Underlying this view of the *chātorā* is the assumption that the self-restraint which is necessary for life in a civilized society can only be accomplished

by constant vigilance. Once this control begins to break down, man is helpless against evil.

The problem of *chaṭorpan* as a deviant category can be viewed from two aspects. For the *chaṭorā* himself it represents loss of the sensual control deemed necessary for personal spiritual salvation and social acceptability. From society's point of view, *chaṭorpan* presents a threat to order. The weakness of the *chaṭorā* is inexcusable not only because of the implications for him as a worthwhile person, but because it is evidence of his potential weakness against all the temptations of anti-social behavior.

Other possible ways of viewing *chaṭorpan* in the context of rural North Indian culture suggest themselves here. There is some evidence that the imputation of *chaṭorpan* may be used as an explanatory device in terms of folk conceptions of social failure. Viewed in another way, the *chaṭorā* may have some elements of the witch, in that through anti-social behavior he becomes a scapegoat for the moral ills of his community (Kluckhohn, 1962, pp. 76-128).

A fruitful comparison is possible here with the literature on alcoholism in cultural context. Bales' work on cultural attitudes toward alcohol and alcohol addiction in Ireland is particularly suggestive (Bales, 1962, pp. 157-187). Bales submits that alcohol consumption is positively valued in Irish culture for a variety of reasons, and that consequently the attitude toward alcohol consumption is generally one of indulgence. The inability to restrain oneself when drinking is viewed good-humoredly as a natural human—or at least masculine—failing by the Irish. Such an attitude is in direct contradiction to the attitude toward sweet addiction in India, even though the Indian attitude toward sweet consumption in general is very favorable. Here the crucial variable seems to be the attitude toward excess *as such*, rather than the attitude toward sweets and sweet-eating.

In this respect it is interesting to compare the American perception of the compulsive sweet-eater. The latter is usually perceived as a fat woman sitting in an armchair in front of a television set with a box of chocolates at her side. But there is little further elaboration of this image, and although it may be

recognized that she suffers from serious psychological disturbance, she is not viewed as a social problem, still less as a potential criminal. The cultural definitions in American society of the deviant categories of "drug fiend" or "drunk" certainly provide more fruitful material for comparison with the concept of *chaṭorā*, but here the physical effects of the object of addiction and the legal difficulties associated with drug acquisition create conceptual complications.

In conclusion, we feel that the analysis of definitions of deviance along the lines of our study of *chaṭorpan* has interesting possibilities as a way of elucidating basic value orientations in a culture, and as a means of establishing some of the more crucial cognitive categories in the normative sphere.

REFERENCES

- Bales, R. F. Attitudes Toward Drinking in the Irish Culture, in D. J. Pittman and C. R. Snyder (eds.), *Society, Culture and Drinking Patterns*. New York, John Wiley, 1962.
- Becker, H. S. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1963.
- Eglar, Z. *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Hymes, D. The Ethnography of Speaking, *Anthropology and Human Behavior*. Anthropological Society of Washington, 1962.
- Kluckhohn, C. *Navaho Witchcraft*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1962.
- Nadel S. *Nupe Religion*. London, Routledge and Paul, 1954.
- Obeyesekere, G. Pregnancy Cravings (*Dola-Duka*) in Relation to Social Structure and Personality in a Sinhalese Village, *American Anthropologist*. 65, 1963, 337-338.
- Pandey, T. N. personal communication.
- Pincher, C. A. Warning to Non-Stop Eaters, *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*. January 9, 1966, p. 22.
- Pitt-Rivers, J. A. *The People of the Sierra*. Chicago, University of Chicago, 1961.

The Social Context of Gift Exchange in North India

With Sylvia Vatuk

ABSTRACT: *Gift-giving in societies at all levels of social complexity has been shown to function as a way of expressing and reinforcing social relationships. Particularly in societies without a well-developed market economy, the circulation of goods through the exchange of gifts has been analyzed as one aspect of a wide range of social interactions within the kinship, religious, political, and other spheres. In Indian village society, gift transactions are numerous and varied and the many types of gift transactions tend to be associated with specific kin and caste roles and with the role of the human worshipper vis-à-vis a god or the supernatural as whole. This paper analyzes a large corpus of Hindi terms for gift transactions, from rural Western Uttar Pradesh. A social exchange model provides the framework for the analysis, and the various types of gifts are described in terms of the social identities of the appropriate donors and recipients, the nature of the return for the gift, and its source. The analysis reveals the existence of six main categories of gifts, according to these variables, each of which is recognized by an indigenous label.*

The study of the means by which material goods are circulated and exchanged in human societies has been a consistent focus of interest within anthropology from the beginnings of the discipline.¹ Much of this interest, particularly in recent years, has been pursued in the context of attempts to describe the operating principles of so-called "primitive" economies, and to distinguish the latter analytically from systems more familiar to traditional economic

¹ This is a revised version of a paper entitled "The Semantics of the Gift in North India," presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in New York, November 1971.

science. A major theme in this pursuit has been the notion that modern Western economic systems differ fundamentally from those of the "primitive" world in that each is characterized or dominated by a distinct transactional mode (cf. Polanyi, 1957; Sahlins, 1965). Thus attention has been drawn to the relative absence of "commercial" or "market"-type transactions in the distribution of goods and services within simpler societies. Goods in such societies have been described as changing hands primarily in the context of "gift-giving" of various kinds, and a number of excellent and detailed ethnographic reports on the forms and functions of gift exchange within particular "primitive" economies tend to support this generalization in considerable measure (e.g., Malinowski, 1922; Firth, 1965; Goodenough, 1951).

While this literature has important theoretical implications for the study of "primitive" economies as systems of production and allocation of material resources, it also—and more pertinently for the present investigation—points the way to a more broadly focused study of material transactions as modes of social intercourse. The giving of gifts would then be viewed, as it is in the seminal work of Mauss (1954), primarily in terms of its role of expressing and reinforcing existing social relationships and of creating (or facilitating the creation of) new social bonds. In Sahlins' words, "A material transaction [in a 'primitive' society] is usually a momentary episode in a continuous social relation" (1965: 139). The circulation of goods is thus tightly embedded in a social matrix, and the analysis of gift transactions involves as a first priority the delineation of the major characteristics of this matrix, specifically the social identities of the parties to the transaction, the role relationships in which they are linked, and the place of these relationships in the total social system. Such an approach need not—and should not—be limited to the study of gift-giving in the so-called "primitive" world, and indeed some of the most insightful analyses of the phenomenon have drawn on data from Western society and those similar to it (e.g., Lévi-Strauss, 1969: 55-60; Blau, 1964: 196-212; Schwartz, 1967; Firth, 1967: 11-17). The present paper deals with gift transactions in a complex society which in terms of "types of economy" may be said to lie somewhere between the ideal "primitive" and "modern" poles stated or implied in much of the literature on economic anthropology. This is the

society of the peasant village in northern India, where traditional forms of exchange co-exist in a variety of forms with the usual phenomena of a well-established and growing cash economy. It is intended here to make some contribution to the ethnographic record for this region of India, as well as to grapple with some more general comparative problems in the analysis of gift transactions.

Mauss, in his classic *Essai sur le don*, devotes a brief section to what he calls "the Hindu theory of the gift" (1954: 53-59). His discussion is based not on contemporary ethnographic reports, but rather on a number of ancient Sanskrit treatises which deal with *dānadharma* ("the law of the gift," in Mauss' translation) in the context of early Hindu thought. Unfortunately, anthropologists have failed to follow up Mauss's speculations on the significance of gift-giving in Hindu society to the extent of making available either any detailed and comprehensive ethnographic descriptions for specific localities or any full-scale analysis of gift transactions in modern India from a comparative perspective. The gift-giving that typically accompanies the major *rites de passage* and cyclical festivals has indeed been noted, especially in the literature on Indian kinship. Dumont's (1957, 1966) and Mayer's (1958) writings on southern, northern, and central India, respectively, come to mind here, as does Eglar's study of kinship and neighborhood reciprocity in a Panjabi Muslim village in Pakistan (1960; see also Vatuk, 1975). Other types of non-market transactions in goods and services have been described for many areas within India, particularly in connection with discussions of intercaste relationships at the village level. The fairly extensive literature on the exchange of goods and services among agricultural and artisan families within the *jajmānī* system is relevant here (e.g. Wiser, 1936; Harper, 1959; Kolenda, 1963; Neale, 1957; Orans, 1968). Most recently, Marriott's transactional analysis of caste-ranking, as expressed in the exchange of foods between members of different castes in a north Indian village, is a major effort to deal meaningfully with the social-structural significance of a particular class of material transactions in an Indian setting (1968). The present study attempts to look, from a broader perspective, at the whole domain of gift-giving in a delimited ethnographic area of the large and diverse Indian subcontinent. Its purpose is to try to discover some of the principles

by which the various types of gifts recognized by participants in this culture are defined and distinguished from one another and how the association between certain types of gift transactions and certain social roles may be accounted for in terms of some key notions about the nature of kinship and caste hierarchy and of man's relationship to the supernatural.

The data for this analysis consists of information on material transactions of many different kinds, collected through interview, observation, and recording of spontaneous conversation over a period of years by the senior author in rural Meerut District in the province of Uttar Pradesh. The language used in this area is a dialect of Western Hindi and is his mother-tongue. The ethnographic literature on gift transactions has understandably made some use of "native categories" of kinds of gifts, at least for the purposes of organizing and arranging the descriptive data, and often also for dealing with some of the analytical issues raised by these data. Malinowski, in his well-known discussion of the varieties of gift exchange in the Trobriands, asserts that "linguistic terminology....always affords the simplest and surest means of approach towards the understanding of native distinctions and classifications" (1922: 176), and he introduces the native terms where appropriate, although his own classification of these gifts according to the equivalence of return is not one that is explicit in the indigenous terminology. Firth's analysis of the distribution and exchange of goods in the Tikopian economy similarly makes use of a number of native concepts, but he relegates their full explication to an appendix (1965: 371-76). Oliver has more recently stressed the utility of collecting indigenous terms for this type of study, although he points out that the lexical materials cannot be expected to provide a precise description of transactional behavior (1958: 806-07). His own ethnographic report on Siuai transactions demonstrates this, as, for example, he lists four types of "gift" which the Siuai are said to "distinguish in practice" although "the same general term is applied to all of them" (1955: 229-30). Elsewhere he cites a number of major classes of transaction for which he provides no Siuai lexeme (1955: 230-31). An important segment of the data for the present study is in the form of an extensive corpus of terms for types of material transactions and of words used in discourse relating to this general domain of

behavior. Some of the former terms denote very specific gifts, presented in conjunction with specific ritual activities, for example, or on a specific day of the year. Others are more general terms, referring to broad classes of gifts, within which may be subsumed many of the more specific gifts listed. These lexical materials were not elicited according to any systematic or ethnoscientific procedure, but were noted down as far as possible in the context of their use, during ongoing transactional activities or in spontaneous conversation. Like our predecessors in this type of endeavor, we have found the native classification of transactional modes to be neither entirely consistent nor comprehensive enough for analytical purposes, but nevertheless the study of the semantic content of the lexical materials collected provides important clues toward an understanding of the principles underlying the circulation of material goods outside the market sphere in rural north Indian society.

A singular and influential attempt by an anthropologist to deal with the analysis of gift transactions cross-culturally and in the context of social structure is Sahlins' essay on "the sociology of primitive exchange" (1965). Using the term "reciprocity" in a special sense (following Polanyi, 1957: 250) to mean any material transaction between parties in a dyadic relationship, Sahlins reformulates the notion of a "continuum of reciprocities" originally suggested by Malinowski. The various empirical types of "reciprocal" exchanges to be found within any one society or among different societies may be ranged along this continuum on the basis of the degree of disinterestedness with which goods are given by one party to the other, or, to put it another way, the degree to which a material return is stipulated for the items transferred (Sahlins, 1965: 146-49). At one end of Sahlins' continuum would lie Malinowski's "pure gift"² and other similar "transactions that are putatively altruistic....on the line of assistance given and, if possible and necessary, assistance returned" (1965: 147). At the midpoint of the continuum lie "balanced" exchanges, in which "the reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay" (1965: 148). And at the further pole are transactions in which self-interest is the dominating principle,

² Many years earlier, of course, Mauss pointed out the inappropriateness of this term for the type of transaction described by Malinowski for the Trobriand Islands (1954: 70-71).

termed "negative reciprocity" after Gouldner (1960: 172): "transactions opened and conducted toward net utilitarian advantage" (Sahlins 1965: 148). Sahlins elaborates in the remaining pages of his essay the hypothesis that this continuum of exchange forms corresponds to a continuum of social distance, and he supports this with an ethnographic addendum of substantial scope. While there is much in Sahlins' essay to be commended, the argument is greatly flawed by its reliance upon the insubstantial variable of "degree of self-interest." As Panoff has cogently argued, "evaluations of generosity or selfishness can only be based on the moral preconceptions of the analyst, or on principle which are so general that they lack any heuristic effect (1970: 61). Such evaluations can also, it may be pointed out, be based upon indigenous concepts of "altruism," but in such a case cross-cultural comparisons become difficult, if not meaningless. Even in the study of varying forms of gift transaction within a single society, the complexity and ambiguity of such indigenous conceptions and the necessity of separating out the "formal pretence and self-deception" involved in actual prestations (Mauss, 1954: 1) create insuperable problems of interpretation. These problems are clearly illustrated in the data with which we are dealing here.

In Indian culture the notion of giving without expectation of material return is present and the virtues of generous and altruistic giving are positively sanctioned and extolled in the lore of the literate elite and of the folk. The most important concept in this regard is that of *dān* (Skt. *dāna*), a form of present given to another person or group of persons or to society at large with the purpose of earning spiritual merit, *pun* (Skt. *punya*), toward a place in heaven or toward reincarnation into a higher station in the next life on earth, and eventually toward the final spiritual goal of release of one's soul from the repetitive cycle of rebirth (i.e., toward *moksha*). It should be noted that in this conception the acceptance of any material reward in return for *dān* would negate its spiritual efficacy. Ideally, in giving *dān* one should not only carefully refrain from accepting a reciprocal gift from the beneficiary of one's largess, but one should also refrain from any consciousness dwelling on the merit to be obtained through one's act. The gift motivated purely by altruism, without thought of the spiritual "fruits," is the highest form of *dān* and predictably, that

form of *dān* which earns the greatest merit. There is no doubt, then, that at the behavioral level *dān* could be termed a "nonreciprocable" gift (cf. Oliver, 1955: 230) and would (in Sahlins' model) find a place at the extreme left of the generosity continuum on the basis that a material return is neither stipulated nor even accepted if offered. But if we include in our purview a consideration of the Hindu doctrine of which the concept of *dān* and its purpose is an integral element, this interpretation reveals itself to be inadequate.

The difficulty here is of course similar to that encountered in the interpretation of philanthropy and charitable donations in our own society. Sociologists who have considered this matter have generally found it most satisfactory to consider gifts to charity within a social-exchange framework, along with transactions of other sorts in which there is a clear stipulation of material return. Thus the significance of non-material rewards has been pointed out, and also the occurrence of triadic exchange relationships, in which a return is expected from some third party, rather than from the recipient of the original goods transfer. So, for example, Simmel has discussed the role of gratitude in dyadic gift relationships (1950: 387-95) and others have demonstrated the importance of such factors as admiration from one's peers, social approval, national renown, and tax benefits as "rewards" for "altruistic" gift-giving (for example, see Blau, 1964: 260). It is also quite possible and legitimate to include in such a model benefits like spiritual salvation which, though they lack empirical manifestations, can be shown to enter into the motivational aspect of transactions like the Hindu *dān* or Christian charity. While the inclusion of non-material returns in the reciprocity model creates undeniable problems of measurement, this need not concern us in the present analysis, which is structural rather than quantitative in its goals.

Without entering into the difficult debate about whether completely selfless behavior can be shown to exist, we will assume for our present purposes that all of the forms of transaction to be considered here can fruitfully be analyzed by means of a social-exchange model and that this approach can provide insights superior to those provided by Sahlins with his continuum of degrees of selflessness.

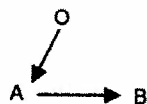
Before we begin to look at our data, it will be necessary to further specify and delimit the domain of gift transactions upon which our analysis is to focus, and then to break down analytically this structurally complex act into its constituent elements and processes. It will be most useful to look at a gift transaction first as consisting of a series of acts, occurring in a definable sequence and involving two or more actors. The concepts of "actor" is to be understood in a broad sense: in the present analysis it is specified that only one of the actors need be a living human being (the other may be a non-human being, animal or supernatural, for example), and that any one "actor" may in fact be a group of persons acting corporately rather than a single individual. In order for a transaction to come under the purview of the present analysis it must involve as at least one act the transfer of a material object or quantity of goods from one actor to another. Thus we are perhaps arbitrarily setting aside here for the present any consideration of strictly service exchanges and the wide variety of transactions which involve *only* intangibles such as information, advice, approval, or emotional support (cf. Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961). We are also ignoring material transactions within the market sphere in order to concentrate on those less well-understood forms of transaction indigenous to this ethnographic region. It would, of course, be quite possible to handle market transactions within the same analytic framework. In the course of our analysis we will be led to examine with respect to each transaction such features as the number and identity of the actors, the sequence and timing of the individual acts, the nature of the goods transacted, and so on.

Although we have found it necessary to dispense with the strictly dyadic donor-recipient model suggested by Sahlins, we can profitably utilize his mode of representing the elements and processes in an exchange transaction in diagrammatic form. According to Sahlins there are two major types of "primitive" exchange: "reciprocity," represented by the diagram $A \rightleftarrows B$ (with variations in the form and direction of the arrows to denote variations in the amount of self-interest secured by A in the performance of his part of the exchange acts), and "redistribution,"

represented by the more complex diagram (Sahlins, 1965: 141, 147-48).³



For our purposes these are useful, but insufficient. As we have noted, it will be necessary to allow for returns from a third party, which we will here call "indirect" returns, following Blau (1964: 92, 255-3). We will let "O" stand for any other actor as a source of return to A for goods he has given to B, as in the diagram:



Neither in the dialect spoken in this region nor in standard Hindi is there any noun form which covers precisely, or even approximately, the semantic domain covered by the English word "gift." The word *dān* is commonly translated as "gift," but as we have seen, this word has a much narrower meaning than does the English word. However, the cognate verbal form, *denā*, "to give," is used in standard Hindi and in the dialect in a sense almost identical to that of the English gloss, in the context of discourse concerning gift transactions. For example, on ritual and festival occasions, when such transactions typically have a prominent place, a question asked many times of those who may be expected to have been donors or recipients of gifts is:

<i>kyā diyā?</i>	{	"What did you give [to him/her/them]?"
What was given?		"What did he/she/they give [to you]?"

And as people talk about past or upcoming gift transactions, they use the word *denā* with any one of the myriad terms for specific kinds of gifts recognized in their society:

³ These diagrams draw on the formulations of Polanyi (1957), to whom Sahlins credits the notions of "reciprocity" and "redistribution" as forms of primitive exchange.

kanyā dān mē pāch rupaye diye
 virgin gift in five rupees gave

"I [he/they] gave five rupees for the 'gift of the virgin' rite"

shādī mē ek-ek parossā dete hai
 wedding in each food packet (we) give

"At a wedding we give a 'food packet' to each [of them]."

This verb is also used, as in English, when speakers wish to describe market-type transactions:

pāch rupaye kā diyā { "I gave it [to him] for 5 rupees"
 five rupees of was given { "I sold it for five rupees"

rupaye le ke diyā { "I gave it, taking money"
 money having taken was given { "I sold it"

badle mē diyā { "I gave it [to him] in
 exchange in was given { exchange [for something]"
 "I swapped it"

Furthermore, in a compound form with the verb "to take" (*lenā*), this verb is used to refer to doing business of loaning money for interest (*len-den*).

There are some general social principles of gift-giving, namely rules governing who may assume the status of recipient *vis-à-vis* a given donor. These rules generally pertain to factors of relative age, sex, kinship status, and caste status. Since a large proportion of all gifts are transferred within the kinship network, it is appropriate to mention these considerations first. The basic unit of the kinship system is the agnatic extended family, the co-residential group within which property is owned in common and a sharing of resources is prescribed. It is mainly outside this unit that gift transactions take place, and commonly this unit acts as a corporate "actor" in such transactions. However, there are certain exceptions to the former generalization, which are related to the pattern of patrilocal postmarital residence and to the notion that daughters (or sisters) are "given" to another family at the

time of marriage. Thus, within the family, unmarried girls may receive gifts from their parents and brothers on specified ritual occasions, anticipating their future role as out-married women, who will be the recipients of a constant flow of ritual and other gifts from their brothers and senior kinsmen of both sexes. In general, the direction of gift-giving within the family is from elder to younger, from senior to junior. This is so particularly between sisters and between parents and their daughters, it being considered a "sin" (*pāp*) to accept any gift or material assistance from a daughter, unless it is immediately returned augmented in quantity (cf. Vatuk, 1975). Between adult brothers or cousins within the extended family and between parents and their sons, sharing is expected to occur, the property of one being considered rightfully the property of all and transfers within the group not being regarded as "gifts" at all. Between in-married women of the same extended family, gifts typically pass from junior to senior—from a woman to her husband's mother, sister, and elder brother's wife—but transfers in the opposite direction are not uncommon and fully acceptable. Many such informal transactions between women in their conjugal families may be viewed as manifestations of the "sharing" ethos of the agnatic property-group.

Outside of the property-group, male agnates and their wives exchange gifts on a strictly reciprocal basis, approaching (in Sahlins' terminology) "balanced reciprocity," commonly with delayed returns. Transactions with matrilineal and affinal kin proceed according to different principles. A distinction is made among affines between "bride-giving" families (the natal families of one's mother, wife, brothers' wives, son's wife) and "bride-taking" families (the conjugal families of one's sister, daughter, or niece). Bride-takers are defined as ritually and socially superior to those from whom they have taken a bride. This superiority is continually validated in their acceptance of gifts from the natal families of their wives and children's wives. On the other hand, gifts are never accepted from bride-taking families, nor is hospitality nor any other form of material aid. Asymmetry in the relationship is strictly maintained in this manner.

Asymmetry also characterizes certain gift-giving relationships outside the kin network, in the context of the caste hierarchy and

in secular relationships of a hierarchical nature, such as the relationship of master and servant, employers and employee. Brahmans have a key role as gift recipients from members of other castes, and gifts presented to a Brahman *qua* Brahman are classified as *dān* and are by definition not directly reciprocable. On the other hand, it is possible for members of other castes to be partners with Brahmans in certain types of "balanced" reciprocal exchanges (to be described below), in which case no sin or demerit is incurred by accepting the appropriate direct return. Persons of low castes, particularly if they are also in an economically subordinate position *vis-à-vis* the donor, are generally not expected to return the gifts they receive from their superiors, and in such cases these gifts may be classified as *dān* and thus meritorious. However, many such gifts are instead classed as "payments" for ritual or secular services already performed for the donor's benefit.

The kinds of items given in the transactions to be discussed vary a great deal. Certain categories of gifts require the presentation of a specific item or kind of goods—in the case of others some leeway is permitted, but within a generally rather limited range of what is considered appropriate for the type of occasion on which the transaction takes place. The most frequently given items are money, sweets and other foods (prepared or raw), and clothing. For gifts in which a specific item is not stipulated, women tend to prefer to give clothing, while men more frequently give money. But this difference is not a rigid one, nor is it supported by any formalized cultural preferences. It is rather, perhaps, an artifact of the circumstance that women tend to receive clothing as gifts and to store this for future gift-giving obligations rather than to make use of it for wearing.

The etiquette of gift-giving in this society also bears mention. With few exceptions, there is little attempt to fit the gift to the recipient by choosing something unique or particular to his individual taste. Since the types of goods considered appropriate for a particular gift are either highly specified or quite limited in range, the primary consideration in entering upon such a transaction is the quantity and/or quality of the items to be transferred. The value of the gift is measured in terms of its cost, in monetary terms, if it is not indeed in the form of cash. Gifts of manufactured

goods tend to be stored and circulated further in later transactions—thus their unique qualities have no particular relevance to their function. The element of surprise concerning the nature of the gift is not considered important, and gifts are never wrapped to conceal or disguise their contents. In the case of major ritual prestations, such as the *dahej* ("dowry") or *bhāt* (mother's brother's gift at the marriage of a sister's child), the value and contents of the entire set of gifts is commonly agreed upon beforehand by a consultation between the prospective donor and recipient. Again, in the case of many types of gifts this consideration is irrelevant since the form and quantity of the gift is traditionally fixed.

It is not considered necessary or appropriate in most gift transactions to demonstrate gratitude or appreciation for a gift. In the case of the majority of customary gifts, the recipient considers it his right to receive what the donor is obligated to give him. Even where this is not the case, verbal expressions of gratitude or thanks are not expected. Commonly the donor of a gift is confronted with questions from the recipient concerning the cost of the item and the place of purchase, and unfavorable comparisons may be made between his gift and others received in the past or given by the present recipient to someone else on a similar occasion. Furthermore, gifts of consumer items like clothing and household goods and gifts of sweets and other luxury foods are typically displayed for the eyes of neighbors and friends, and they too feel free to comment and compare with previous displays. The tendency to denigrate the gift received is carried further in the case of certain ritual gifts, discussed below, in which a certain amount of good-natured haggling is considered appropriate; the recipient of such customary ritual dues may go so far as to refuse to complete his ritual performance until his gift has been augmented.

Examination of the data on a large number of distinct kinds of transactions recognized by members of this society (a sampling of 35 of these is presented in an appendix), reveals that they may be grouped into six major categories, each bearing an indigenous label. These are: *dān*, *bhent* (or *bhent-pūjā*), *dakṣhiṇā*, *neg. inām* (or *bhent-inām*), and *dangvārā* (or *bhāichārā*).

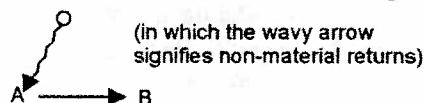
The category of gifts referred to as *dān* has been mentioned above. *Dān* is not only conceptually distinguished from other types of gift transactions in this society, but is morally evaluated as the "best" or "highest" form of giving. Anyone may be the recipient of *dān*, with the exception of persons who by virtue of their kinship or rank status *vis-à-vis* the donor are proscribed from accepting his gifts (see above). One may bestow *dān* upon a servant, a needy stranger, a beggar, an ascetic holy man. Brahmans are regarded as recipients *par excellence* of *dān*, and to give to a Brahman of any age or social position is always meritorious. In the case of large-scale philanthropy, which also falls under this rubric, a particular group or category of persons or non-human beings (e.g., the blind, aged cattle), or even the public at large may be beneficiaries of *dān*. In the latter category would come such traditionally popular "good works" as sponsoring the digging of a well or setting up a watering spot on the highway for thirsty travelers, planting a shade tree for the comfort of passersby, or building a temple, school, hospital, or resthouse.

A major factor in assessing the spiritual worth of such a gift (and thus the amount of merit to be earned) is its cost to the donor (relative, of course, to his total resources). Another is the "worthiness" of the chosen recipient. Thus, for example, *dān* to Brahman priests or to holy men who have renounced the world is valued higher than donations to an ordinary beggar or to one's hereditary servant. As the concept of *dān* is integral to Hindu religious doctrine, it has formed the subject of a number of Sanskrit treatises, which deal with these matters and others, such as the appropriate kinds of items to be given as *dān*, the proper manner in which to present it, and so on. Source materials of this kind provided the foundation for Mauss's discussion in his *Essai sur le don*, and his remarks there give some notion of the complexity of the traditional "theory" concerning this type of gift. Understanding of the intricacies of the Sanskrit *dānadharma* is obviously incomplete at the folk level, and the practice of giving *dān* among north Indian villagers is greatly simplified over the traditional prescriptions. Nevertheless, it is clear that this practice and its ideological accompaniments represent the product of a continuous tradition, having its roots in the classical literature. It is therefore quite erroneous to say, as does Mauss, that "this law

[the *dānadharma*] disappeared except among the Brahmins" after the second century A.D. (1954: 54).

In this region many different kinds of *dān* are recognized; in many cases the names of these gifts refer to the thing given, in a compound with the word *dān*. So, for example, *gaudān* refers literally to a "gift of a cow." Its primary meaning is of a presentation to a Brahman of a living cow, on any occasion, for the purpose of earning *pun*. It also refers to a specific rite included in the marriage ceremony at which a symbolic gift of cash usually replaces the theoretically required animal. A central rite in this same ceremony is *kanyādān*, literally "gift of a virgin," in which the daughter is given in marriage to her new husband and at which time others present at the gathering (relatives and friends of her natal family) give sums of money or clothing to her father. The amount collected is included in the *dān-dahej* (or *dahej*, or *dāt*), a "dowry" which is sent with the bride to her new conjugal family. All of these gifts are regarded as meritorious and shed light on the religious significance of the act of marriage, particularly from the point of view of the bride-giving family.

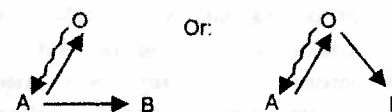
Other types of gifts included in the concept of *dān* are alms given to beggars or holy men (*bhikṣ* and *bhikṣā*), and contributions or subscriptions for the support of an institution or organization (*chanda*). The notion of meritorious gifts is carried to its extreme in the "gift of the fruits," *phaldān*, which refers to the act of giving to another the merit one has earned through meritorious behavior in the past. In all of these types of *dān*, and in the many others which cannot be mentioned here, the pattern of giving and receiving in return is as follows: the initial act is a spontaneous gift from A to B. B does not reciprocate, but A is rewarded with an amount of merit, which is credited to his spiritual account:



At this point the transaction is closed, there being no further obligation on the part of B toward A. Frequently, of course, A and B will be parties to future transactions of the same kind, but their respective roles as donor and recipient should not be reversed on these later occasions. The asymmetry of the donor-recipient

relationship and the prohibition of any material reciprocation for things given as *dān* is particularly explicit in the case of the gift of one's daughter in marriage (*kanyādān*). This form of *dān* inevitably leads to a lasting relationship between the two families involved, in which role reversal is stringently avoided.

A closely-related category of gifts, which shares with *dān* the characteristic that a material return for the initial gift is not expected, is *bhent* ("offering"). To be more specific, this kind of gift may be called *bhent-pūjā* ("worship offering"), to distinguish it from another form of gift often also called *bhent* (or *bhent-inām*), in which no worship is involved. The latter will be discussed below. The distinction between *dān* and *bhent-pūjā* is not a sharp one, and some gifts which we have placed in the latter category may in certain contexts and by certain persons be considered forms of *dān*. The essential difference between the two seems to lie in the difference between two ways of viewing man's relation to the supernatural, which co-exist within Hinduism as it is practiced at the village level. The first view revolves around the scriptural doctrines of reincarnation and *karma*, the notion of *punya* acquired and accumulated through good works, of which *dān* is a major form. The other view involves the notion of personal deities (and deified human beings), whose worship provides one access to personal favors and general spiritual and physical well-being. In the worship of personal deities in Hinduism the material offering plays a central role. Whatever the material form of the offering (be it clothing, foodstuffs, cash, or whatever), the deity cannot consume its physical aspect, and therefore all or most of an offering remains available for human consumption. Therefore, gifts classed as *bhent-pūjā* commonly have a dual recipient: one supernatural, the other human or animal:



Offerings to the gods are usually called *chadhavā* in this dialect. Such offerings may be made in the context of routine worship, or they may be given in thanks for the granting of some desire for which one has petitioned in the past or in completion

of a vow which one has made. Such offerings may be "solicitory," in the sense that they are accompanied by a request for aid or general well-being in the future. If we focus on the worshipper-deity relationship, *bhenṭ* of this kind involves direct reciprocity—a stipulation of return which is "balanced" in value, though not in form. However, any substantial offering of this kind has a living recipient as well. Offerings made in a temple become the property of the temple priest. When these are foodstuffs they are generally collected by him and redistributed to the assembled worshippers as *prasād*, the leavings of the deity, consumption of which grants spiritual well-being.

Bhenṭ intended primarily for a living recipient may, in a similar manner, be first offered to the deity. In this case, it is said that the gift is *pūj ke diyā* ("given, having worshipped") or simply *pūjāppā* ("something offered in worship"). Typically the recipient of such an offering is a respected kinsman, either a person of the bride-taker category (a son-in-law or sister's husband, for example) or (if the donor is a married woman) a senior in-law. A gift of this kind may be offered spontaneously or in conjunction with a vow made to the deity for the granting of some desire, such as recovery from illness, the birth of a son, or passing an examination. There are in addition a number of specific festivals, celebrated by women for the benefit of their husbands or children, at which it is considered appropriate to offer gifts *pūj ke denā* to senior female affines, particularly the mother-in-law.

The term *bhenṭ* is also used to refer to gifts presented to one's daughters or sisters and to bride-takers (called *dhyāne*). The association of such gifts terminologically and conceptually with worship offerings to a deity can be explained by the fact that the gift of one's daughter in marriage has a ritual significance, that its performance is considered a religious duty. The daughter's husband (and, by extension, his entire kin group) is a ritual superior, who is to be "worshipped" with an attitude akin to that taken towards a deity. Therefore, gifts to him and to other members of bride-taking families are equated with offerings made to a god. At the same time, such gifts are considered meritorious, as evidenced by the classification of the major gifts (*kanyādān* and *dān-dahej*) as *dān*. Typical examples of *bhenṭ* presented to bride-takers

(and/or the daughters and sisters through whom the affinal link is forged) are *bhāt* (the gift of the mother's brother, given at the marriage of a sister's child), *chhūchhak* (gifts to a sister at the birth of a child), and *kothlī* (sent to a daughter or sister in her conjugal residence on the yearly festivals of Holi and Tij). Also in this category is the monthly ceremonial feeding of the son-in-law of the deceased for a year following a death (*ṣīmanā*), and the gifts of cash given by each of the males of the bride's kindred to the corresponding kinsmen of the groom when they come to attend the wedding ceremony (*milāi*, literally "meeting"). In addition to these formal gifts, distinguished by specific terminology, one always gives cash gifts to a son-in-law when he departs one's house after a visit, clothes and cash to a married daughter or sister in the same situation, and minor gifts of cash to women classed as "sisters" or "daughters" and to their husbands when one meets, by accident or design. These informal gifts, too, are referred to as *bhenṭ*.

While both *dān* and *bhenṭ-pūjā* are characterized by the absence of direct material reciprocity, there are other categories of gifts in which material prestations are exchanged for services or for similar or different goods. The major category of goods-service exchanges involves ritual services, primarily on the occasion of the major lifecycle ceremonies. The gifts presented in return for the performance of ritual services at childbirth, marriage, funerals, and the like are called *neg*. Two main categories of recipients are involved: kin and members of other castes, primarily "servant" castes, such as Barbers, Potters, and Sweepers. Specified ritual duties are required of representatives of these castes at life-crisis rituals. Generally, in the village setting, the individuals who undertake these duties will be of families traditionally linked for the performance of their regular occupational specialities, with the "patron" of the event, in *jajmānī*-type relations. Thus, the family barber, who regularly cuts the hair of the men of the family, will be called on, with his wife, to participate in the various rites at marriage for which their services are required. However, while payment for the secular services of the barber performed throughout the year are made in the form of a fixed yearly payment at harvest time, ritual services are compensated immediately after their

performance in an amount left to the discretion of the ceremonial host, but subject to bargaining or haggling by the ritual specialist. The latter also characterizes the payment of *neg* to kinsmen and kinswomen for ritual services. While kin of many different categories are called upon at different stages of the ceremonial cycle for ritual performances, the kin most commonly specified for such rites are those who also are the recipients of *bhenṭ* on other occasions or in other contexts, namely, daughters, sisters, and their husbands. *Neg* gifts typically are referred to in terms of the ritual function for which they serve as fee: for example *chuchī dhuvāī*, "washing the breasts," *neg* for the husband's sister after the birth of a child; *dvār rukāī*, "barring the door," *neg* for the groom's sisters when the newly-married couple returns from the wedding to his home for the introduction of the bride to her new in-laws; *chāk pujāī*, "having the potter's wheel worshipped," *neg* for the potter woman at the prenuptial *Chāk pūjā* rite.

Brahmans serving as priests for rites of passage are also paid for their ritual services, but such payments are referred to as *dakshiṇā* rather than *neg*. If *dakshiṇā* is not paid to the priest, it is believed that the rite will be ineffectual. This is not true of the ritual services of "servant" castes and kinsmen; perhaps it is partly for this reason that the two types of ritual payments are conceptually distinguished.

The fifth category of gift transactions is called *inām* or *bhenṭ-inām*. Sometimes the term *bhenṭ* alone is used to refer to these gifts, but they are considered quite distinct from *bhenṭ* in the sense of a religious offering, as discussed above. *Inām* is frequently translated as "reward," and this is appropriate in that many of the kinds of gifts which fall into this category are "payments" for secular services of various kinds. Others, however, are gifts which appear to be spontaneous, which cannot be interpreted as given in return for any specific service, but which solicit general goodwill from the recipient and often an expectation that in a similar situation in the future the present donor-recipient role assignments will be reversed:

A ⇄ B

or

A ⇄ B

Of those *inām* which are quite clearly given in return for services (of a non-ritual kind), the most common is *phaslānā*, the yearly payment (usually in kind) to one's hereditary "servants" for their labor during the year in the context of the *jajmānī* system. *Phaslānā* is a fixed, traditional gift, in terms of its form and quantity, which bears no necessary relationship to the amount of work actually performed by the recipient during the past year. It is not subject to haggling, although it is the servants' "right" to receive it. The same term is used to refer to yearly gifts to local governmental officials, in reciprocation for their services and goodwill during the past year and in anticipation of their continued goodwill in the future. Such government officials are of course the recipients of regular salaries for their work (which does not come out of local village revenues), but the payment of *phaslānā* by individual families is customary in the area, though contrary to government regulations.

Other forms of *inām* include payments to a person whom one has allowed to "sharecrop" one's land or raise one's livestock—these are specifically called *hissā* (literally, "share").

Forms of *inām* which do not imply payment for a service include gifts to friends, associates, or to servants and other inferiors when one wishes to celebrate a happy occasion: a birthday, a graduation, the completion of a journey. In this society it is customary on such occasions for the central figure in the event (the person whose birthday is being celebrated, the graduate, etc.) to be the *donor*, rather than the *recipient* of gifts. When *inām* is given to one's peers on such an occasion, it is expected that they will reciprocate when they in turn have an occasion to celebrate. When it is given to inferiors, no material return is expected, but the gift is an expression of and buttress to the continuing master-servant relationship between donor and recipient.

The final category of gifts are those given in direct and balanced exchange between peers, typically between neighbors in a village community or among agnatic kin. The relationship between close neighbors (even if of different castes) and among agnates (whether actual or fictive kin) is called *bhāichārā*, "brotherhood," and exchange of goods between such persons is expected to take place on the basis of strict equivalence. Thus, gifts which involve

the expectation of a later return in the same amount (and often in the same form) are explained in terms of their having been given in the context of the *bhāichārā* relationship. Another term used to refer to such balanced exchanges is *dangvārā*, from *dāngar*, "livestock." This usage is a somewhat derogatory extension of meaning from the common transaction in which two farmers, each owning one draft animal, combine forces and complete the work of each with the resulting team: A $\approx$ B

The most common cycle of transactions between *bhāichārā* is the exchange of *nottā*, literally "invitation." When a villager plans to host a ceremonial feast (typically for a wedding or funeral), families with whom he has exchanged *nottā* in the past make a cash contribution, which he then uses toward his expenses. The amounts given are fixed by past precedent (in terms of each dyad—a family will exchange different amounts with different families in their *nottā* network) and records are kept by all concerned of amounts paid out and received. Amounts received in *nottā* are considered as "debts" owed to the donors, but repayment is not made until a similar occasion arises in the latter's family. The manner of reckoning the amount owed insures that there is never a final balancing of the accounts: the last recipient is always kept a few rupees behind. If one receives a series of *nottā* gifts from a particular family before one has the opportunity to repay them at a similar occasion in his household, one must pay the entire sum (rather than make a single payment) on that occasion, whenever it occurs.

A related type of transaction involves the distribution of sweets to village neighbors on ritual occasions in one's own household, apart from occasions on which one is hosting a major ceremonial feast. These sweets, intended for distribution, are called *bhājī* (see Eglar's [1960] account of a similar institution in a Punjab village, named after the exchange of sweets, *vartan—bhāñjī*). Occasions for such distribution of sweets occur, for example, when a bride returns from her natal home after a visit, bringing with her substantial amounts of sweets for this purpose. These sweets will have been given as *bhent*, in the context of the relationship between the bride's natal family and that of her husband. They will be distributed by the bride's mother-in-law to neighbors and

locally resident kin (who are normally agnates). These will reciprocate when they have such a supply of sweets. In this exchange equivalence is also striven for, and is accomplished by means of weighing the foodstuffs before presentation.

The distribution of *bhājī* illustrates a point about many of these gift transactions that should be particularly stressed. This is the fact that any particular transfer of goods may be an act in more than one transaction and that frequently the same goods may be used in a number of distinct transactions, sequentially. Several examples have been given in the foregoing discussion, although special attention was not drawn to this as a typical feature of gift transactions in this region. A particularly marked example occurs in the case of the ritual gifts which accompany marriage and other life crisis ceremonies. Thus the *mūh dikhāt* gifts, considered from one perspective as the bride's *neg* from relatives and neighbors of her husband's family (literally, "showing the face," when she comes for the first time to her conjugal home), from another perspective is an act in a *bhāichārā* transactions between her conjugal family and the families of neighbors and agnates, and from still a third perspective may be an act in a *bhent* transaction (when the donor is, for example, the mother's brother or brother's wife's brother of her husband).

As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, Sahlins' "continuum of reciprocities" is not very enlightening for the analysis of North Indian gift transactions. We have noted that the indigenous terminology distinguishes six main types of gift transactions (within each of which are included a large number of specific kinds of gifts), and that in the case of all of these the notion of "balance" or of "equivalence of return" has a prominent place. While the concept of "generosity" or "disinterestedness" in giving gifts is indeed an important ideological component of the complex of attitudes which relate to this domain of behavior, we have seen that it is explicitly embedded in a framework which postulates a strict supernatural reckoning of spiritual rewards for adherence to the ideal. Thus, the notion that for every material transfer there is an equivalent return is fundamental to an understanding of gift-giving in this society as in other societies, as Mauss has so convincingly shown.

Nevertheless, the notion of balance as it relates to the various forms of gift transaction is a complex one, and the *nature* of that balance is clearly a critical factor in distinguishing one form from another. This factor in turn is related to the factors of source, form, and timing of the return, and all of these to the social identities of donor and recipient *vis-à-vis* one another.

A number of writers on the subject have given particular attention to the factor of balance in an exchange relationship. This is of course the focal point of Sahlins' discussion, in which the forms of reciprocity are categorized in terms of the extent to which the thing given and the thing returned approach equivalence, and, where they do not, the extent to which the first party donor gives more or less than he receives from the second party of the dyad. Sahlins limits himself almost entirely—and quite explicitly—to a consideration of *material* returns, although his discussions of tribute and *noblesse oblige* leave room for widening the scope of reference. While Sahlins deals with the issue of imbalance in the exchange by postulating an association between it and the degree of self-interest motivating the parties concerned (or rather, motivating the *first* party to the exchange), other investigators have discerned in a situation of imbalance a critical analytical issue. Gouldner, for example, refers to cases of "lack of reciprocity" in which one party receives all the benefits of the relationship, while the other receives nothing in return for what he has given (1960: 164). He later discusses the fact that "reciprocity" (by which he means "a mutually contingent exchange of benefits between two or more units"—a definition which differs considerably from that of Sahlins, it should be pointed out) is not merely present or absent but quantitatively variable, from an equal exchange to a situation where one party receives everything, the other nothing (1960: 164).⁴ Such cases, he maintains, arise either out of wide power disparities between the parties, in which case compliance is coerced from the second party, or come about when the "tensions" which would be expected to result from the imbalance are compensated for by special social mechanisms, such as

⁴ Gouldner does not specify that returns must be material in form, and would not, for example, regard as an instance of "lack of reciprocity" a relationship in which goods could be shown to be exchanged for protection or for political support.

"culturally shared prescriptions of one-sided or unconditional generosity...[or] cultural prohibitions banning the examination of certain interchanges from the standpoint of their concrete reciprocity" (1960: 164). A somewhat different perspective is taken by such writers as Homans and Blau who explicitly stress the necessity of taking into account non-material returns in the analysis of exchange transactions and who focus attention on the *consequences* of imbalance in the exchange relationship for the wider social relationships of the parties. Both of these authors have made in different forms the observation that "to take a gift and fail to make a return is to incur cost in the form of social inferiority" (Homans, 1961: 319), and the "reciprocated benefactions create social bonds among peers, whereas unreciprocated ones produce differentiation of status" (Blau, 1964: 8).

In examining those kinds of transactions in our data which, in terms of the human donors and recipients, manifest an absence of "balance" between the contributions of the parties directly involved, both of these perspectives are relevant. First, we note the presence of "cultural prescriptions of one-sided generosity" in gifts to daughters and bride-takers, to Brahmans, and to certain social inferiors, such as hereditary servants. But these "cultural prescriptions" also involve the aforementioned qualification that spiritual rewards will follow when one forgoes any material reward. Thus, an apparent imbalance is resolved into a situation of balance in the exchange.

The association of imbalance with power or rank differentials is also clearly present in the Indian data. But the evidence is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, as Marriott has convincingly demonstrated, the willingness to accept gifts of food (specifically of cooked food) is an expression of inferior social rank within the Hindu context: "A cardinal assumption of ranking in...statements about food could be formulated very simply: givers are higher, receivers are lower" (1968: 142). Yet, as he also points out, accepting uncooked food and gifts of other material form is not necessarily demeaning to the recipient, even when these gifts are intended to remain unreciprocated (1968: 143-44). The key difference here is that gifts to status superiors (whether in terms of caste rank or kinship rank) are considered to earn *pun* for the

donor. Since the donor is to be repaid for his generosity in spiritual coin, the obligation to reciprocate is removed from the earthly recipient of the material gift and the subordination that would otherwise result from the imbalance is lacking.

APPENDIX

Some Examples of Named Gift Transaction

- I. *dān*.
- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>gaudān</i> | "gift of a cow" |
| <i>kanyādān</i> | "gift of a virgin" |
| <i>dān-dahej, dāt</i> | gifts of money, clothing, and household goods presented by bride's family to bride, groom, and groom's kin: "dowry" |
| <i>piṇḍ dān</i> | offering of rice cakes to the ancestors |
| <i>dattak</i> | an adopted son: a child who has been given as <i>dān</i> to a couple with no son of their own |
| <i>chanda</i> | donation to an institution or organization |
| <i>bhikh</i> | alms given to an ordinary beggar |
| <i>bhikshā</i> | alms given to a holy man or ascetic |
| <i>phaldān</i> | "gift of the fruits": gift of earned merit to another |
- II. *bhent* (*bhent-pūjā*)
- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>chadhāvā</i> | offering to a god or shrine |
| <i>pūj ke denā</i> | "to give (something), having worshipped" |
| <i>bhāt</i> | "gift of the mother's brother": clothes, money and other goods presented to the sister and her child on the latter's marriage—at the marriage of a sister's daughter, this is combined with the <i>dahej</i> for presentation to her groom's family |
| <i>chhūchak</i> | gift to the sister on the birth of her child |
| <i>kothilī</i> | gift to the daughter or sister on Holi or Tij |

The Social Context of Gift Exchange

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| <i>jīmānā</i> | ritual feeding of a son-in-law or other "bride-taker" or Brahmans or Virgins |
| <i>milāi</i> | "meeting": presentation of cash gifts by bride's kinsmen to their counterparts in the groom's party |
- III. *neg*
- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>chuchchī dhuvāi</i> | "washing the breasts" — husband's sister — at birth |
| <i>bāg pakarāi</i> | "grasping the reins" — groom's sister's husband — at marriage |
| <i>chuchchī pyāi</i> | "giving the breast" — groom's mother — at marriage |
| <i>dvār ruk āi</i> | "barring the door" — groom's sisters — at marriage |
| <i>kangnā khulāi</i> | "untying the bracelet" — groom's brother's wife — at marriage |
| <i>mūh dikhāi</i> | "showing the face" — bride — at marriage |
| <i>chāk pujvāi</i> | "having the potter's wheel worshipped" — Potter woman — at marriage |
| <i>gūt gavāi</i> | "having songs sung" — Barber woman, Brahman woman — at birth, marriage, other celebrations |
| <i>sissā dikhāi</i> | "showing the mirror" — Barber — at marriage |
| <i>badhāvā</i> | "praising" — beating the drums to announce a birth — Sweeper or musician of another untouchable caste |
- IV. *dakshinā* payment for ritual performances
- V. *inām* (*bhent-inām*)
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| <i>phasānā</i> | yearly payment to hereditary "servants" — yearly "tip" or "bribe" to government officials |
| <i>dālī</i> | payment to upper echelon officials on special occasions or when they visit the locality |
| <i>rungā</i> | extra goods given by shopkeeper to customers who have bought a substantial amount, in gratitude and to ensure their continued patronage |

mīṭhāī bāntnā "to distribute sweets"—gifts to friends and associates on one's own birthday or other celebration

VI. *bhāichārā* (*dangvārā*)

notā "invitation"—cash gifts to host family on occasion of ceremonial feast, returned when similar occasion arises in donor's family

parossā "food packet"—sent to neighbor's home after a ceremonial feast, returned on similar occasion in donor's family

bhājī bāntnā "to distribute *bhājī* sweets"

mūh dikhāī "showing the face" (see above, *neg*)—gifts received by the family which has welcomed a new bride, from neighbors and kin, returned on similar occasion in donor's family

REFERENCES

Blau, P. M.

1964 *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Dumont, L.

1957 *Un sous caste de l'Inde de sud*. Paris: Mouton

1966 "Marriage in India: The Present State of the Question. III. North India in Relation to South India." *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 9: 90-114.

Eglar, Z.

1960 *A Punjabi Village in Pakistan*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Firth, R.

1965 *Primitive Polynesian Economy* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

1967 "Themes in Economic Anthropology: A General Comment." In R. Firth (ed.), *Themes in Economic Anthropology*, pp. 1-28. London: Tavistock.

Goodenough, W. E.

1951 *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*. New Haven: Yale University Publications in Anthropology 46.

Gouldner, A. W.

1960 "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement." *American Sociological Review* 25: 161-78.

Harper, E. B.

1959 "Two Systems of Economic Exchanges in Village India." *American Anthropologist* 69: 760-78.

Homans, G. C.

1961 *Social-Behavior: Its Elementary Forms*. New York: Harcourt Brace and World.

Kolenda, P. M.

1963 "Toward a Model of the Hindu Jajmani System." *Human Organization* 22: 11-31.

Levi-Strauss, C.

1969 *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Revised Edition). Boston: Beacon Press.

Malinowski, B.

1922 *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Marriott, M.

1968 "Caste Ranking and Food Transactions: A Matrix Analysis." In M. Singer and B. Cohn (eds.), *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, pp. 133-72. Chicago: Aldine.

Mauss, M.

1954 *The Gift*. Glencoe: The Free Press.

Mayer, A.C.

1960 *Caste and Kinship in Central India*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Neale, W. C.

1957 "Reciprocity and Redistribution in the Indian Village." In K. Polanyi et al. (eds.), *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, pp. 218-36. Glencoe: The Free Press.

Oliver, D. L.

1955 *A Solomon Island Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- 1958 "An Ethnographer's Method for Formulating Descriptions of Social Structure." *American Anthropologist* 60: 801-26.
- Orans, M.
1968 "Maximizing in Jajmaniland: A Model of Caste Relations." *American Anthropologist* 70: 875-97.
- Panoff, M.
1970 "Marcel Mauss's *The Gift* Revisited." *Man* 5: 60-70.
- Polanyi, K.
1957 "The Economy as Instituted Process." In K. Polanyi et al. (eds.), *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, pp. 243-70. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Sahlins, M. D.
1965 "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange." In M. Banton (ed.), *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, pp. 139-236. London: Tavistock.
- Schwartz, B.
1967 "The Social Psychology of the Gift." *American Journal of Sociology* 73: 1-11.
- Simmel, G.
1950 "Faithfulness and Gratitude." In K. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of George Simmel*, pp. 379-95. New York: The Free Press.
- Vatuk, S.
1975 "Gifts and Affines in North India." *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, New Series 5: 115-96.
- Wiser, W. H.
1936 *The Hindu Jajmani System*. Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House.

14

The Position of Women in Hittite Laws and Manusmṛiti

In studying any society, ancient or modern, one important aspect of its structure is the rules governing the position of women and marriage and inheritance. In this respect it is interesting as well as scientifically fruitful to compare cultures, even widely separated in space and time, to point out parallels and differences and to note regularities in the formation of such a body of rules and practices. Here an attempt will be made to compare certain aspects of the broad field encompassing marriage and the family in Hittite and in ancient Indian societies, with particular reference to the Hittite Laws and the Laws of Manu (*Manusmṛiti*). In doing so, reference will also be made to practices current in earlier periods in India (as revealed in various ancient literary and religious writings as the *Rgveda* and *Mahābhārata*) and to laws of the Hebrew and of Islam.

It is first necessary to say something about the law codes with which we will be primarily concerned. The Hittite Laws consist of two groups of cuneiform tablets (Tablet 1 and 2), the main parts of which were found by Winckler in his excavations at Bogazkoy in Central Anatolia in the early decades of the twentieth century. Fragments of the laws, which have been useful in filling gaps where the basic texts are damaged or missing, have been found in large numbers in more recent excavations (Neufeld, 70-73).

These tablets of laws, containing approximately 200 sections, appear to be copies or extracts from originals which have not yet come to light. There has been considerable difference of opinion as to the nature of the collection of laws. San Nicolo and Korosec (Neufeld, 107) are of the opinion that it constitutes a law book but not a code of laws (that is, it is a "collection of laws not

issued by public authority, i.e., a subordinate legislation" (Neufeld, 107)). Gurney seems to agree with this view but goes further in saying:

It has been thought that the extant tablets cannot represent the complete Hittite code...But it would be strange if, when so many recensions of this series of laws have survived, the remainder of the code had disappeared without trace...We must, it seems, accept the fact that the Hittites did not consider it necessary to legislate about these subjects (which have been omitted in the Laws), presumably because they did not normally give rise to dispute, being regulated by the customary law of the people. (91)

However, Friedrich is more skeptical. He does not feel that the Hittite body of law is exhausted by these two tablets, nor that there is any proof that the two tablets belong together or belong in the order in which Hrozny has placed them.

Neufeld agrees with this skepticism and his explanation seems reasonable: that this was a collective document, executed by professional scribes and comprising essentially

a collection of judicial formulas and decisions of the Royal Court of Hattusas...a documentary record of the decisions once made for possible parallel cases arising in the future (110).

This record was presumably added to and condensed, recopied and altered, generalized and formalized as time went on, resulting in the tablets which happened to be preserved and discovered by archaeologists. The fact that these laws are written in a number of sections not always consistently organized (in terms of content or principle of law), that the style of writing varies between different sections, that there are many repetitions and contradictions all seem to lend support to Neufeld's thesis. It is also relevant that throughout the laws, reference is made to "former" regulations, which indicates a fluid legal situation.

The dating of the laws is difficult precisely because there are no names of rulers given or of wars or other datable occurrences. Mainly on linguistic grounds, various scholars have attempted to date them and estimates vary from the early 15th to the 13th century B.C. (Neufeld, 111-112). Neufeld believes them to be of late composition, probably 13th century B.C. (112). Basing his

opinion on historical rather than linguistic factors he feels that their compilation must have begun in the reign of Hattusilis I (112-113); for similar reasons he places the statute laws contained in the tablets in the reign of Telipinus (113-115).

The Laws of Manu, being from a historically continuous civilization rather than from one known only archaeologically, are of a somewhat different nature than the Hittite laws. They comprise a book of fairly systematized form, listing about 2000 laws grouped under various headings, according to the content or subject matter of the laws included. In this respect there is a contrast with the Hittite Laws which, besides being much smaller, are arranged less systematically. A number of inconsistencies and contradictory laws (especially in those sections pertaining to marriage and the place of women) suggests that the Manusmriti, like the Hittite Laws, consists of a compilation of different laws by a number of writers, although it is ascribed to one "Manu." It is not a fixed "code" promulgated by a central authority. In this respect the two sets of laws are comparable.

The Manusmriti is much later in date than the Hittite Laws, being dated (on the basis of its contents compared with that of other law books whose date has been established) at about the beginning of the Christian era or slightly before (Hopkins, 279; Altekar, *passim*). The Manusmriti is not an isolated law book however, as is the Hittite Laws. It is preceded by the precepts given in earlier writings of a religious and literary nature, the didactic sections of the Rigveda, the Mahabharata, and so on. It is the earliest of the law books as such which began to be compiled at around this time and is followed by other authoritative lawgivers as Vishnu, Yajnavalkya and Narada, in the early centuries A.D. (Hopkins, 277-280).

Like the Hittite Laws, the Laws of Manu suggest a system of law in flux—a fact which can be thoroughly documented in the case of Indian civilization because of the long continuity of historical writings before and after Manu's time. We are therefore in a much better position to evaluate Manu's laws than those of the Hittites in relation to actual historical changes. However, here, because of the deficiency of the Hittite Laws and knowledge of their historical background, it is necessary to compare them principally

as bodies of law, abstracted from actual legal reality in their respective societies. Because the Hittite Laws are much less comprehensive than those of Manu, we will deal comparatively only with those aspects of marriage and family as are dealt with in the Hittite texts.

Permitted Marriages

Incest: The word used by the Hittites to describe a relationship which we would term incestuous was *hurkel*, meaning an abomination or outrage. This word is also used for other crimes such as bestiality which have a horror beyond the legal sense. According to Neufeld any act described as *hurkel* "implies the death penalty" (189), not as in some societies where punishment for such sins is left to the supernatural or the gods. This is said by analogy to #187 and #188,¹ where bestiality is condemned as *hurkel* and is followed by:

...he shall die. They shall bring him to the royal gate. The king may have him killed and the king may grant him his life, but he shall not come before the king.

Friedrich interprets the last phrase to probably mean either "he may not let himself be seen again before the king," or "he may not come to the king with a plea for clemency (Gnadengesuch, 83n)."

In all of the laws regulating incest it is usually sexual intercourse that is expressly prohibited, but it is assumed that marriage is included in the prohibition.

The Hittites forbade two types of incest: that between blood relatives and that between affinal relatives (relatives by marriage) or between persons related by the fact of one having had sexual relations with a blood relative of the other. In the former category were prohibited sexual relations between mother and son and father and daughter (#189). Also in this category were placed homosexual relations between father and son (#189).

Incest of the second type includes the prohibition on relations between a man and a father's wife (other than his own mother) while the father lives (#190) and between a man and his brother's

¹ Where reference numbers are preceded by the sign "#", they refer to sections of the Hittite Laws, according to the numbering of Hrozný (used also by Neufeld) and unless otherwise noted to the English translation of Neufeld.

wife while the brother lives (#195). In this category the question of class differences arises. Hittite society appears to have contained at least three broad classes (with a large number of specialized subgroups within them). These were the nobility, the freemen, and the slaves (Gurney, 67-72). They perhaps also had a class of "half-free" persons as did the Babylonians (Neufeld, 119-120). The laws governing sexual relations between freemen differ from those governing sexual relations between freemen and slaves or between slaves. Section 196 provides that if two slaves practice incest they shall be separated in different towns, but allowed to live. Forbidden were sexual relations (or marriage) between a free man and free prostitutes who were mother and daughter, although this rule was modified if the two women lived in different places and the man was unaware of the relationship (#191). Likewise forbidden were such relations between a free man and a free mother and daughter or two free sisters (#195). However, a free man might have such relations with slave girls and their mother (#194) or with a girl and her mother who were *arnuuala* (#200A). This word is translated by Neufeld as "foreign women" and by Friedrich as "Deportierte." The remark of Neufeld that the word implies an unfree status seems to fit in with Friedrich's translation also (Neufeld, 196).

All of these laws, it should be noted, imply prohibitions on intercourse with a stepdaughter, mother-in-law, or sister-in-law. There was no bar to two kinsmen—brothers or father and son—having relations with the same woman, slave or free (#194), although the fact that it was mentioned and told "no punishment" (or as Friedrich translates, "no offense," cf. 114) shows that it was probably not approved or perhaps had formerly been prohibited.

Other than these prohibitions the Hittites do not seem to have had any restrictions on marriage between any two persons. There is no mention of any groups such as clans within which, or outside of which, a person would be obliged to marry. There was no prohibition in the Laws on intercourse or marriage of siblings, and Gurney says that King Arnuwandas I was married to his sister (102). This custom appears to have been not uncommon in the Middle East in early times, and examples of marriage of half-siblings are found in the Bible (e.g. Gen. 20: 12). Although in many parts of the world—ancient Egypt, Inca Peru, and

Hawaii—brother-sister marriage was practiced by kings in order to keep the royal line pure, this practice was regarded as incest when occurring between ordinary people. The isolated Hittite case of royal sibling marriage and its omission in the Laws are not enough to make us certain whether it was really approved.

Another Semitic custom, followed also by Islamic people in later times, that of preferring marriage with the father's brother's daughter, may also have been practiced by the Hittites (cf. Patai, 27-31). If not preferred, this type of marriage would certainly have been permitted among the Hittites (on the basis of the laws so far discovered), as also marriage with a cross cousin, the mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter.

The question of incest in the Manusmriti is more complicated, because here we must also consider prohibited degrees of marriage which while forbidden are not true incest, a mortal sin (*mahāpātaka*). Included under incest are sexual relations with sisters by the same mother and with a son's wife (XI, 59; XI, 171).² These are the most serious kinds of incest and the punishment prescribed is branding the forehead with the mark of the female organ (this is the punishment for adultery with the wife of a Guru or teacher, which is considered the worst sin) (XI, 237). Alternatively, the guilty person may do a severe penance, one choice being to "embrace the redhot image (of a woman), by dying he becomes pure" (XI, 104). Similarly prohibited, but with less severe penance for transgression, are intercourse with father's sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughter, or mother's brother's daughter (XI, 172). There are clearly many omissions here, and it is not to be assumed that those close blood relatives not mentioned could have intercourse with impunity. The rules of marriage recommend for a man marriage with a girl who is neither *sapinda* on the mother's side nor of the same *gotra* on the father's side (III, 5). *Sapinda* means all persons related to the bridegroom in the maternal line and paternal line of his mother to the seventh ascending and descending generations (V, 60). A *gotra* is a patrilineal clan, including all persons descended from a common ancestor and bearing a common name—in the case of Brahmans the *gotra* is

² Such reference refer to the Chapter and Paragraph of the Laws of Manu, unless otherwise noted according to the translation of Bühler.

believed descended from an ancient *rishi* or sage (Bühler, 76n.). Although Manu says that such marriages are "recommended," it is not clear that there is a specific punishment for disregarding the rules. In another section (XI, 173) it is said that a man who marries his cousin sinks low, which is interpreted variously as meaning he will go to hell or that he will be outcast (Bühler, 466n.).

The whole question of incest in the time of Manu in India has to be put in a different light from that among the Hittites because the whole sexual morality seems to have been quite different. Among the Hittites extra-marital relations do not seem to have been especially condemned as such, whereas any sexual relations other than with a wife are strongly condemned by Manu. Intercourse with an unmarried girl is a mortal sin (XI, 59; XI, 171) and even intercourse with prostitutes or other loose women is punishable by a fine.

Interclass marriages: There are no provisions in the Hittite Laws for marriage between nobles and freemen, but marriage between slaves and freemen was apparently common, which indicates that the Hittite slaves had a somewhat different status from that of slaves generally. Gurney says the Hittite slave was not "a slave in the normal sense of term" (72). Although they were the possessions of their master, they had a legal personality in their own right and could acquire property and contract (Neufeld, 120-121). Sections 31 to 36 and 175 of the Laws refer to marriages between freemen and slaves. These marriages were apparently sometimes of a less formal type (called by Neufeld "marriage by *usu*" (146 & 148)) than that usually practiced by freemen, but the latter form of marriage also took place between slaves and free men (for example #34) (see below for a discussion of the two types of marriage).

A parallel situation in India is that of marriage between members of different castes. Although after the 10th century A.D. when cultural differences between castes began to widen and become rigid intercaste marriages gradually ceased, at the time of the writing of the Manusmriti the situation was more fluid (Altekar, 88-92). These laws provide for a Brahmana marrying a Kshatriya, Vaishya, or Shudra; a Kshatriya man marrying a Vaishya,

a Shudra; and a Vaishya man marrying a Shudra. In every case Manu says that for the first wife each of these should take a woman of his own caste, but for secondary marriages intercaste unions are permitted (III, 12-13). And although marriage with Shudras is permitted by Manu, in the next paragraphs he enumerates the degradations that will befall the higher caste man who marries and begets children by a Shudra woman (III, 15-17). It should be noted that these marriages are all of *anuloma* types; that is, the man is of higher caste than the woman. In the literature abundant examples are given of such actual marriages and even occasional marriages of *pratiloma* type where the woman is of higher caste than the man (Aletkar, 89), which are not approved as *anuloma* marriages are.

In Islamic law a phenomenon similar to the *anuloma-pratiloma* distinction occurs. Although there are no "classes" or castes in Islam, marriage with members of a different faith is a comparable case. Here a Muslim man may marry a *Kitābiyya* (an adherent of a scriptural or revealed religion, except a Shiite Muslim), but a Muslim woman may not marry any non-Muslim (Fyzee, 79).

Other marriages: Certain types of incest noted above among the Hittites, namely that between affinal relatives, were only temporary and ceased to operate on the death of the intermediary person. Thus after a father's death a man could have relations with a stepmother, and marriage to her was not forbidden (Neufeld, 190). According to Semitic custom, the wives of the father (other than his own mother) would be taken by the heir as a part of his inheritance.

In fact, the taking possession of the wives of the deceased was regarded as the most important act which established the right of the son to the inheritance of his father. (Patai, 99)

Whether this was so among the Hittites is doubtful. The only mention of it is in #190, which says "If a man sins with his stepmother, there shall be no punishment (*U-UL haratar*); but if his father is alive, it is an abomination." This does not imply that inheritance of the father's wives was a preferred custom.

The question of marriage to the brother's wife is similar. In #193 it is provided that when a man dies the following persons shall marry her: his brother, then his father, then his father's brother, then his father's brother's son. The section is concluded with the words "no punishment." This could refer either to the *true levirate* where, as among the Semites (Patai, 92-98), the brother marries the wife in order to "raise up seed" to the dead man (the resulting children being regarded as belonging to the dead man), or to *widow inheritance* where the brother simply inherits the wives of his brother with the other inheritable property. There is no indication in the Hittite laws which of these customs was followed. Although Neufeld believes this section shows that marriage to the brother's widow was obligatory (192), I think he is perhaps influenced by the force of this custom in surrounding regions and that the words "no punishment" at the end indicates perhaps that this marriage was allowed but not recommended.

The section referring to sororate marriage—that is marriage to a deceased wife's sister—is phrased similarly: there shall be no punishment (#192). This again indicates that this marriage was allowed but not approved (see Neufeld, 191).

The evidence of polygamy among the Hittites is not certain. It is not specifically mentioned in the Laws. If the marriage to a brother's widow were compulsory, we would have to assume the existence of polygamy, but this is not definite.

In the Manusmriti there is no mention of inheritance of wives from the father, but the epics and literature up to the present day make it clear that this practice would be regarded with horror, for anyone in the relationship of mother (even as a stepmother would be) can never be looked at in any other way, and least of all in the way of a wife.

There is not a mention of sororate marriage in the Manusmriti, but there was no bar against it, since a wife's sister could be quite eligible (from the point of view of the *gotra* and *sapinda* restrictions). Manu enjoins a man to marry again after performing the funeral ceremonies for a dead wife (V, 168). The need for a man to remarry in order to maintain his religious duties was a development of this time. In earlier periods it was maintained that "a widower can continue his Vedic sacrifices even if he remains

unmarried... an image of the dead wife can well serve the sacrificial purpose" (Altekar, 130).

The question of the levirate in ancient India is an interesting one. In the Vedic and Epic periods in India the custom of *niyoga* was fairly common. According to this, if a man were sterile or if he had died, his wife might have children by his brother or some other near relative in order to give him sons. This was, of course, a product of the importance placed on sons for a man's spiritual well-being—a son had many ritual duties on behalf of his father after death as well as inheriting his property so that it would not go out of the family (Altekar, 169-172). The Mahabharata says, "If a woman loses her husband she marries her brother-in-law" (XIII, 12, 19). In the beginning it was permitted for the sons to be begotten by *niyoga*, but after about 300 B.C., the custom began to be discouraged. Manus is ambivalent on this question. On the one hand he describes in detail the procedure for *niyoga*, stressing that the cohabitation must take place only for the purpose of begetting a single son and as soon as this end is accomplished the relationship must cease: "those two shall behave towards each other like a father and a daughter" (IX, 62). He condemns in several places any "lascivious dallying" of a man with his brother's widow (e.g., III, 160, 173; IX, 63, 143, 147). So it is clear that the form of levirate described by Manus as permissible is not in any true sense a remarriage for the widow: it can only take place if the woman is without sons and must cease as soon as she has given birth to one son.

It should be realized that at this time also the practice of widow remarriage as such was falling into disrepute. Although in earlier times it was acceptable for a widow to remarry—sometimes her husband's younger brother or other member of his family, but sometimes an unrelated person—from 300 B.C. to 200 A.D. the opposition increased and Manus states that a woman "must never even mention the name of another man after her husband has died." (V 7). This explains Manus's aversion also to the custom of *niyoga*, and although he gives the aforementioned detailed procedure, he says in the following paragraphs:

... a widow must not be appointed to cohabit with any other than her husband; for they who appoint her to another man will violate the eternal law. (IX, 64)

This practice (*Niyoga*) which is reprehended by the learned...as fit for cattle is said to have occurred even among men, while Vena ruled. (IX, 65)

This contradiction can perhaps be explained by the fact that the Manusmriti is not the work of a single man but a compilation of laws, a collective work.

Marriage Procedure

Among the Hittites there appear to have been two main types of marriage, which Neufeld terms "marriage by *usus*" (149), what we could term common law marriage.

The formal type of Hittite marriage involved payment of bride price by the prospective bridegroom to the girl's father; other monetary transactions required were a marriage gift or dowry given by the girl's father to the girl on the occasion of marriage as her share in his estate, and thirdly, a gift by the man, settled upon the wife at marriage. These were called *kusata*, *iwaru* and *assu*, respectively (Neufeld, 141-142, 144). Furthermore, the marriage arrangements took place in three stages, the Promise, the Betrothal, and the Marriage itself (Friedrich, 95 and n.). The Laws concerned with marriage arrangements are primarily cases of non-fulfillment of the obligations by one or another party and are revealing of the type of disputes that could occur in such a system. They deal with three types of cases: where the man has paid the bride price and the girl has eloped with another man; where the bride price has been paid and the parents change their mind; and where the bride price had been paid and the bridegroom changes his mind (#28-30).

In case of an elopement of a "promised" girl with another man, the man is obliged to make restitution to the prospective bridegroom of the amount of the bride price paid. If it is the parents who have given away a "promised" girl to another man or taken the girl away from her betrothed, it is they who must return the money. In the case of a betrothal the amount must be double. If the man himself refuses to take a girl for whom he has paid, he forfeits his bride price.

Slaves, as mentioned above, were allowed to acquire property and could pay bride price for a free woman (#34). It seems from the wording of this section that there may have been in the past

some penalty for a woman contracting such a marriage or that such a marriage was invalid. Neufeld's translation "no one shall surrender her" and his explanation that she may have been subject to some enslavement or class subjugation (148) does not seem as logical as Friedrich's: "no one can take her from him" (*so kann sie ihm niemand entziehen*) (95). Sturtevant and Bechtel use the same translation as Neufeld, "no one surrenders her."

Interclass marriages and marriages between slaves were often of the less formal type, whereby the two persons would simply agree to live together. Sections 31-33 mention this type of union between a free man and a female slave, a male slave and a free woman, and between two slaves, respectively. In such cases they "are in love and come together, and he takes her for his wife, and they establish a household and have children" (#31, Sturtevant and Bechtel). Such marriages could frequently be initiated by an elopement (#35). Evidently if no bride price was paid in an interclass marriage, a free man would become a slave after two to four years of marriage with a slave and her children will be slaves also (#35, 175, compare #34). In #175, mention is made of a "girdle" which their children shall wear. This is explained by Neufeld as perhaps referring to a symbol of status (186-187).

Two other forms of marriage are hinted at in the Hittite Laws: marriage by capture and marriage in which the bridegroom settles in his father-in-law's household to work out the price of his bride.

In #37, which deals with an elopement in which men are sent out to rescue the girl and fatalities occur, Friedrich has seen an indication of marriage by capture. The fact that rescuers go after them implies to Friedrich that the girl was unwilling. He presumes that the deaths occurred to men accompanying the eloping couple and that no compensation can be paid because they lost their lives while exercising illegal force (96, 27n.). Sturtevant and Bechtel give a similar explanation, while making no decision about which side the dead men belong to (227).

Marriage among the Hittites was generally patrilocal, that is the bride went to live with the husband in his or his father's house. However, there are two mentions of another custom, where the husband was living in the house of the wife's father. One of

these speaks of the inheritance arrangements if the wife dies in her father's house (#27); the other speaks, according to the latest interpretation, of a slave taking a young free man into his house as husband for his daughter (#36). This latter passage is controversial in meaning. It speaks of a slave paying bride price for a free youth and taking him to live in his house as husband. This was interpreted as meaning a homosexual relationship by Koshaker (quoted in Friedrich, 96) and Götze (quoted in Sturtevant and Bechtel, 227). Bechtel suggests the bride price may be provided by the slave for his own son's wife (*ibid.*). However, the best explanation seems to be that of Balkan (quoted in Friedrich, 96 and by Neufeld in "Notes on Hittite Laws," 129). He translates *antiiant* not as "husband" but as "son-in-law," who is married into the house of his wife's parents, possessing no household of his own.

From the indications in the Hittite Laws, the marriage procedure seems very similar to Semitic custom in early times among the Hebrews and pre-Islamic Arabs. There also is a bride price, which went to the father of the bride and some of which was distributed by him to other relatives, his sons, the bride's mother, etc. (Patai, 60). Patai discusses the function of this bride price as partially a compensation to the father for the loss of the girl's services (which had an economic value) and partially as a payment for future offspring who, being members of the husband's group, would not benefit the father's family economically (56). However, he points out that this is not the only reason for paying a bride price. Even where the girl is actually an economic liability the bride price is paid gladly by the bridegroom as it increases the prestige of his family and shows his great love for the girl. It is also beneficial to the girl, because a man will respect a girl he has paid much for and will not be quick to divorce her (Patai, 56-57).

A gift analogous to the Hittite *assu* is the pre-Islamic Arab *sadaq* which Fyzee says was paid to the wife herself in a type of marriage where the wife stayed with her own parents and was visited by her husband (110). He further says that in Islamic law, at least in India, the bride price (*mahr*) is paid to the girl herself rather than to her father (Fyzee, 111).

The custom of working for a wife in the father-in-law's house is well-known from the Bible story of Jacob, who served seven years for Leah and seven more for Rachel (Gen. 29). It is also known among the Arabs, even up to today (Patai, 60-61).

The ancient Indian custom with regard to marriage is quite different. The Manusmriti recognizes eight different forms of marriage, in contrast to the Hittite two (or four, including the exceptional cases). Of these at least three were unapproved, most highly commended was the Brahma rite, described as:

The gift of a daughter, after decking her with costly garments and honoring her by presents of jewels, to a man learned in the Veda and of good conduct, whom the father himself invites. (III, 27)

The *Prajāpatya* marriage seems little different, except for the addition of the father's injunction "May both of you perform together your duties" (III, 30). Altekar is of the opinion that since this rite does not appear in the writings of earlier people, it was added in order to make the number of forms of marriage an even eight (55). This form of marriage was most probably the most common in actual practice in addition to being the most approved. At this time the custom of child marriage was becoming popular, although in earlier periods the girl was not married until 16 or older—when she was physically developed as a woman. In the Vedic period it is clear from references to the bride taking over the household duties from her mother-in-law and other such references that the bride was grown up. Similarly, in the epics and Buddhist writings there are mentions of love before marriage (Altekar, 58-63). Also, the practice of *Swayamvara*, whereby a girl chooses her husband from among a group of suitors, presupposes adult marriage (Thomas, 16-19).

However, beginning about 400 B.C. the approved age of marriage for girls was lowered, and by Manu's time it was preferred to marry a girl before puberty (Altekar, 63-67). This was done partially to ensure that she would not be tempted into any premarital liaison or becoming a female ascetic, and partially to ensure that none of her fertility would be wasted (Altekar, 56-67; Thomas, 35). The Manusmriti did not go as far as the extremes of later centuries which insisted that a girl must be married well before

puberty, even if she had to be married to a worthless husband (Altekar, 67). Manu merely says that a father is reprehensible who does not marry his daughter when she becomes marriageable (presumably at puberty), and that if he does not marry her within three years thereafter she may choose a husband for herself (IX, 4, 90). He also says, however, that she "should rather stop in the father's house until death than that he should ever give her to a man destitute of good qualities" (IX, 89).

Thus the fact of preferred early marriage and the assumption throughout that it is the father's duty to find the girl a suitable husband shows that the two approved forms of marriage described above were most common in Manu's time.

Other forms of marriage recognized by Manu are the following: The *Daiva* form (III, 28) means that a girl is offered to a priest while he is the guest of the father and performing Vedic sacrifice for him. While highly approved by Manu, this rite was opposed by others on the ground that a priest should not be thinking of such things while engaged in Vedic sacrifices (Altekar, 53). Next preferred by Manu was the *Ārsha* marriage. In this the father of the bride accepted from the bridegroom a cow and a bull to be used in performance of the sacrifices (III, 29). This rite was disapproved of by other writers, and even here comes in last of the approved forms, because it seems to be a relic of bride price marriage, which as we will see below is regarded as unworthy.

It is not clear whether the *Gāndharva* or love-marriage, which is comparable to the Hittite "free" marriage, was really approved by Manu—he seems to disapprove of it for Brahmans but permits it for Kshatriyas (see III, 24, 26, 32, 41). The same applies to the *Rākshasa* marriage, or marriage by capture. The last two, *Paishācha* (seduction of a girl who is sleeping, drunk or mentally disordered—III, 33) and *Āsura* (marriage with bride price—III, 31) are definitely regarded as unlawful (III, 25), although they did take place.

We see here a great difference in the approved marriage procedure between the Hittites and the ancient Indians. Among the latter the taking of bride price was regarded as reprehensible, degrading to the father who was willing even to sell his daughter. Even in the Vedic period, when the custom was probably more

prevalent than in Manu's time, it was regarded unfavorably (Altekar, 47), and later, for example in *Dharmashāstra* literature, it is even more furiously opposed (Altekar, 48). On the other hand, among the Hittites this was the most approved and most common form of marriage. The opposite custom, that of giving a dowry by the bride's father to the bridegroom, is a much later development in India. It became important in the 13th and 14th centuries among aristocratic families, especially in Rajputana, but did not reach extremes in the general population until British education and civil service positions put a high premium on eligible young men (Altekar, 84-85). All along, however, it was customary for the father to give gifts of jewelery and such with the bride, just as the *iwaru* among the Hittites, but these gifts were in moderate amounts and not to be compared to the later dowry.

Divorce: There is no information in the Hittite Laws about divorce in a "strict" marriage. We can only assume that it must have taken place, and that there was a formal procedure (just as there was a formal procedure to contracting the marriage). The disposition of the bride price that has been paid, the division of other property, and the fate of the children are all matters about which no clues are given.

Divorce in a "free" marriage is mentioned in #31-33. The only thing said is that if they do not get along and decide to separate, they divide the house and the man gets all the children except one, who goes with the mother. These sections refer to "free" marriages between slave and freemen or between two slaves. It is not said what would happen if both spouses were free; in any case, this brief mention is not very enlightening about divorce customs.

Insofar as divorce is mentioned in the Hittite laws, it appears to be a matter of mutual agreement. In the *Manusmriti*, however, very little option is given to the wife to initiate a divorce. The man is allowed under certain circumstances to "cast off" his wife or take another woman in a polygamous marriage. Manu gives two possible instances of remarriage by a woman while her husband lives: in IX, 176, it is said that a woman, still a virgin and deserted by her husband, may marry again. And in IX, 76, a woman is enjoined to wait for a husband who has gone abroad for eight,

six, or three years, depending on the reason for his trip. It does not specifically say that she may remarry—some commentators interpret this to mean that she should then set out looking for him, others that she may take another husband (Bühler, 341 n.).

The man's opportunity for release from an undesirable marriage is somewhat better. If a woman hates her husband, shows disrespect, drinks liquor, "is of bad conduct, rebellious, diseased, mischievous, or wasteful," she may be deserted or superseded by another wife (IX, 77-80). Barrenness of the wife is also a reason for superseding her. However, it is important to note that there is in Manu no formal ceremony of divorce, and in fact it is maintained that a true dissolution of a marriage cannot take place: "neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband" (IX, 46).

In fact, Altekar notes a number of examples in the literature of provisions for divorce, down to the beginning of the Christian era (98-101), and although in later times it was rigorously opposed by the higher classes of society it was by no means uncommon in the lower classes (Altekar, 102).

Adultery: There are two sections of the Hittite Laws dealing with adultery (excluding those referring to incestuous adultery and discussed above). A distinction is made between a case where the woman is attacked in the mountains (in which case she is blameless) and where the offence takes place in the house (for there are people around and she could call for help, she is therefore to blame). Friedrich points out the similarity here to ancient Hebrew custom (114).

In the case of rape in the mountains, the man alone is held to be at fault and suffers the death penalty. Where adultery is committed in the house and both are therefore guilty, there are three alternatives. The husband, if he finds them *in flagrante delicto*, may kill both on the spot and receive no punishment for the killing (#197). Otherwise, he brings the two to the king's gate. He may tell the king to spare them, but that the adulterer must receive some kind of mark on his head, probably a mark of shame. Otherwise, he may tell the king to kill them, and then the choice is the king's whether or not to give them their lives. (#198).

Adultery in India was similarly regarded as a most serious

crime. In the Manusmriti it is said that a man, except a Brahman (who should not be killed under any circumstances), should suffer the death penalty for adultery (VIII, 359). Adultery is defined very broadly by Manu, and includes "offering presents to a woman, romping with her, touching her ornaments and dress, sitting with her on a bed..." (VIII, 357), although probably these acts would not be punishable by death. In another paragraph Manu says that adulterers shall be marked by the king with "punishments which cause terror," and then banished. (VIII, 352). Again, a wife who willingly commits adultery is to be devoured by dogs in a public place (VIII, 371) and her paramour to be burned on a redhot bed to death (VIII, 372). Manu gives a list of punishments, mainly fines for adultery and for intercourse with unmarried women; these vary with the *varṇa* of the parties concerned. The inconsistencies of the punishments given by Manu for adultery indicates that there was no fixed rule, and the punishment no doubt depended on the circumstances. Altekar suggests that even up to the 9th century A.D., women were allowed occasional lapses of this sort if they repented, and men were treated with even greater leniency. Vashishtha "has no objection to the readmission of a woman who had voluntarily gone astray, provided she really repented and submitted to a proper penance" (Altekar 376). Yajnavalkya advised banishing a woman only if she had conceived a child through adultery (Altekar, 376). Clearly the extreme views expressed in the Laws of Manu are ideals, rather than a reflection of the actual practice of the time.

The Position of Women in the Family: There is almost no indication in the Hittite Laws about the place of women within the family. It is certain only that marriage was generally patrilocal, that the father accepted bride price for his daughter and presumably selected this daughter's husband together with the mother. These facts indicate some degree of authority by the father over the women of his household, but this is not very enlightening as it exists in most societies to some degree.

In Manu's laws women are given a high place in the family. Family life was considered obligatory (except for a few ascetics) for all men and women as a religious duty. It forms one of the

stages of studentship (II and III). Manu says, regarding the importance of the family man:

The student, the householder, the hermit, and the ascetic, these constitute four separate orders, which all spring from the order of householders.... The householder is declared to be superior to all of them; for he supports the other three. As all rivers, both great and small, find a resting place in the ocean, even so men of all orders find protection with householders (VI, 87, 89-90).

Other writers confirm this viewpoint. The *Taitariya Brāhmaṇa* maintains that "one who is without a wife is unworthy of *yajña* (sacrifices and religious rituals)" (quoted in Sampurnanand, 44).

Kullukbhah, a commentator on Manu comments:

As long as a man does not marry he is only half of his soul and he is incomplete as long as he is childless. Only when he has married and has begotten children is he complete. The knowers of the Vedas say that he who is husband (*bhartā*) is wife (*bhāryā*) (quoted in Sampurnanand, 189).

Concerning the position of the wife within the family Altekar says:

Though supreme authority was clearly vested in the husband, the wife's position was one of honorable subordination...we find that the wife was treated with utmost courtesy and regard. It was well recognized that the wife was the ornament of the house; nay the wife herself was the home (119).

The principle adhered to in defining relations between husband and wife were that the two would have absolute identity of interest, that they complement one another in assuring the happiness of the home.

Woman as mother was given even greater respect and worship than woman as wife. Altekar comments:

The apotheosis of the mother has reached a greater height in India than anywhere else. The son could not abandon his mother, even if she was boycotted socially and religiously....He was to respect her more than father (118).

The Mahabharata regarded the mother as greater than the father

(I, 211, 16), and Manu also agrees, saying that the mother is a thousand times more venerable than the father (II, 145).

In short, a woman was supposed to be respected and worshipped and protected by men in whatever role she played in the family, whether daughter, wife or mother. She was, and is, regarded as the epitome of virtue and goodness and is referred to as a goddess. For example, Saptashati says, "O goddess, all the women are your different shapes" (and therefore worshipable) (quoted in Sampurnanand, 22). And Manu enjoins men to care well for the women of their families:

Her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth, and her sons protect her in old age; a woman is never left unprotected. (IX, 3).³

REFERENCES

- A. S. Altekar. *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*. Banaras, 1938.
- G. Bühler. *Laws of Manu*. Oxford, 1886.
- J. Friedrich. *Die Hethitische Gesetze*. Leiden, 1959.
- F. A. Fyzee. *Outlines of Muhammedan Law*. Oxford, 1953.
- O. R. Gurney. *The Hittites*. Baltimore, 1961.
- E. W. Hopkins. "The Growth of Law and Legal Institutions," in Rapson, ed. *Cambridge History of India*. New York, 1922.
- Neufeld, *The Hittite Laws*, London. 1951.
- "Notes on Hittite Laws," *Archive Orientalni*, 18, 1951, pp. 116-130.
- R. Patai. *Sex and Family in the Bible*. New York, 1959.
- Sampurnanand. *Hindū Vivāh mē Kanyā Dān*. Benaras, 1956.
- Dayanand Saraswati. *Sanskāra-Vidhi*. Ajmer, 1953.
- E. H. Sturtevant and G. Bechtel. *A Hittite Chrestomathy*, Philadelphia, 1935.
- P. Thomas. *Kāma Kalpa or the Hindu Ritual of Love*. Bombay, n.d.

³ Bühler translates this last phrase "a woman is never fit for independence." However, I believe this to be a faulty interpretation. The sense of the passage is that woman should be protected as are Brahmans and cows.

PART V

Thieves in My House (Studies In Protest and Social Change)

Dedicated to my children

Sanjaya, Aruna, Sunita and Jaidev

An Indian Folk View of the West and Western Institutions

The image which the Indian folk have of the West, and their attitudes toward Western culture and institutions, have been formed very largely out of India's experience with the British colonial presence during a period of some two hundred years. Only a small part of this image has come through direct contact with Westerners on their own home ground. This is what has filtered down through hearsay from the relatively few educated Indians of the upper and middle classes who have spent time abroad and have returned to reinterpret their impressions to their countrymen. In more recent years, Western films and (perhaps more important) Indian films portraying a version of Western or Westernized Indian life have played a noticeable role in the development of a Western image. The press, which like the press everywhere selects occasional "exotic" news stories for the shock and amusement of its audience, should also be mentioned.

Because of the very pervasive nature of the British impact on India and the recency of the British departure, it is not surprising that in the folklore of various genres are reflected aspects of an Indian folk view of the West—or more precisely, of certain British colonial institutions and ways of life which are generalized by the folk as characteristic of the West as a whole. It is this process of generalization which makes this study particularly interesting and significant, far beyond the immediate implications of an examination of a nation's own interpretation of her colonial history.

In this paper I will discuss the folk view of the West as revealed in some of the folklore of an area in northwestern India, from a collection made by myself in the summers of 1965 and 1966 in Meerut District, Uttar Pradesh, and Ludhiana District,

Punjab. This collection includes songs, proverbs, and tales in the dialects of Hindi and Panjabi spoken in these two regions, respectively. As the genres represented in this collection are varied, so also are the explicit or manifest functions which they typically serve in this society. Within the collection of songs are *bhajans*, sung or led by semi-professional singing groups at political, religious, and social-reform meetings such as those sponsored by political parties, religious movements such as the Arya Samaj, or reform movements like Sarvodaya. Here the presentation of a certain type of image of the West serves an explicitly propagandistic role. But this element is not present in the songs sung by individuals and groups on other occasions. The *ālā*—traditional war ballads in a prescribed meter—are sung in the rainy season, by men, along with a shorter type of song, *kajālī*. These ballads include many songs about ancient battles and heroes, but more modern *ālās* tell about events in the struggle for freedom from the British, about the World Wars and the role of the various great powers and of India in them. *Holī* songs are sung during the month of *phālgun* (March-April) which concludes with the festival of colors of the same name. The *chopai* is a song of children, appropriate particularly to the festival of Ganesh *pūjā*, the worship of the god Ganesh. Singing beggars have their own distinctive songs which describe exciting events or eulogize heroic personalities—these are sung while begging on the street, in train compartments, and at religious fairs and the like.

Women have their traditional life cycle songs and songs associated with particular phases of the annual festival cycle. Modern leaders or martyrs appear in versions of these songs, replacing older mythological or legendary figures. For example, at the time of marriage a ceremonial song called *ghoṛī* (horse) or *ghurchadhī* (riding of the horse) is sung when the bridegroom mounts a horse to circle the village before departing for the wedding ceremony at the village of his bride-to-be. Some of the newer songs sung on this occasion depict the marriage of Gandhi or the Independence hero Bhagat Singh to the bride called Freedom.

Other songs are sung simply for entertainment by men or women in a gathering of friends. Prose narratives have a similar

function. They are typically told in the evening to groups of children; or women may tell stories to one another. Preacher-singers tell stories to buttress their point in the course of lectures and singing performances at rallies or meetings. Proverbs and anecdotes and what might be called “folk slogans” are popular in this society both as a means of entertainment and as educative devices. They are commonly used in discussion or argument to prove one’s point.

I have published elsewhere analyses of this and similar material from North India and from Indian communities in British Guiana and California. Here I will limit my discussion to what this folklore reveals of the folk view of recent Indian history and of the people and institutions which had so important a role in this history.

At no point does the chasm between East and West seem more unbridgeable than when we compare the history of British rule in India as written by Western historians (and by some Western-educated Indian historians) with the same history as retold by the folk. Whereas the emphasis of the former is on the advantages of education, economic development, and modernization brought to the subcontinent, on the reform of the evils of a backward Indian society by enlightened representatives of a great civilization, the latter describes the mindless eradication of revered traditions and the destruction of a prosperous and highly advanced culture by greedy and immoral invaders. While the Western historian accedes to the British claim to have brought justice, peace, and the concept of social equality to the Indian populace, the folk tell of British atrocities, injustice, and racism. The folk see the British period as one of continuous unrest and the last hundred years of British rule as an unceasing struggle for freedom by honorable men against a heartless tyrant. The great folk heroes of this period are those described in Western histories as minor terrorists and fanatics. Men honored and revered by the British (a notable example being Winston Churchill) are the folk’s villains.

Oh, Uncle Churchill!

Don’t go

Until the structure of this house (India)

Is totally destroyed!

The initial admission of the British into India is viewed by the folk as an unfortunate incident of misplaced hospitality to a treacherous guest. They tell of the openhanded welcome by India to the foreigners, a gesture returned by deceit and ingratitude. Subsequent political developments, which led to the entrenchment of British rule, are viewed in a similar light. The folk history of the whole period during which British hegemony was firmly established on the subcontinent is one in which a proud, honest people, naive to Western political machinations, succumbed, betrayed, to a people who had no respect for human decency, who raped and looted, plundered and massacred, to gain their selfish ends.

These rascals neither left Hindus alone,

Nor let Muslims be free.

Having divided us both,

They ruined India.

The house of the Nabob of Oudh was plundered,

All the jewelery of the old mother of Asafuddaula was taken away.

In Lucknow, in Dacca, in Peshawar, shooting was rampant,
Rajguru, Sukhdev, Bhagat Singh were hanged.

In Jaliyanwala Garden machine guns fired,

Tens of thousands of Hindus and Muslims were turned into ashes.

In Kanpur they dug a ditch forty yards in length and width.

Tens of thousands of necks were chopped off and thrown into it.

In the Rebellion of 1857, oh young ones, so many atrocities were committed,

The corpses of children were pierced through and paraded throughout open markets.

The breasts of uncounted mothers and sisters were cut off.

And innumerable women were killed and thrown into wells.

In the square of Allahabad people were hanged on every neem tree.

The Bloody Gate of Delhi, which makes your heart bleed,
Was made red with the blood of those Indians.

They made people spit on the ground and lick it.

They skinned beloved sons before the eyes of their fathers.

Lord Ranjit Singh's children were exiled,

Baji Rao Peshva's kingdom was taken away,

Lady Mainavat was burned alive,

The Queen of Jhansi was killed and mixed into the dust.

Neither Hindus nor Muslims were left alone.

For two hundred years they made this India dance so sadly.

Millions of brave persons were hanged, millions were killed.

Millions of houses were ruined, I cannot sing the *ālhā* of all that.

Our sweet little children were made victims of bullets.

The honor of millions of our mothers and sisters was raped cruelly.

Old, young, and children, all were killed in hundreds of thousands.

While a good deal of the folklore about the British period deals with the early years, the major concern of the folk is with the struggle for Independence. Among the many events of this period, the most widely sung and told are the Revolt of 1857 (generally called the Mutiny by Western historians) and the death of Bhagat Singh, hanged by the British in 1931 for throwing a bomb into the Central Assembly at Delhi. Also often mentioned is the massacre at Jaliyanwala Bagh in 1919, in which a peaceful political gathering was fired upon, resulting in many deaths. The most important legendary heroes of this period are Subhash Chandra Bose, who organized the Indian National Army to fight against the British during World War II, the Nehrus—Jawaharlal, his father and sisters—and of course their greatest leader, Mahatma Gandhi.

The most important concept in the folk interpretation of the freedom struggle is the idea of renunciation and sacrifice. The folk literature draws fully on those historical personages who demonstrated in their way of life the path of renunciation. Motilal Nehru (Jawaharlal's father) who, it is said, "had his shirts laundered in Paris," is praised for giving up a successful law practice and enjoyment of the riches it provided in order to join the Independence movement. Jawaharlal gave up fine Western-style tailored suits to wear coarse homespun clothing of Indian design "which scratched his tender body." The folk tell of how his skin peeled off as a result and blisters appeared. They tell also of his experiencing the death of his wife while he was in jail, far from her side. They sanctify him for remaining celibate, renouncing the indulgence of a second marriage after her death. Of Bhagat Singh, the folk relate incidents of his happy marriage and of how he left it in order to make the ultimate contribution of his life to the goal of expelling the British from India. Subhash Chandra Bose left the comfortable position of District Magistrate in order to lead the Indian National Army to fight in Burma and to die there. In fact the legends surrounding Bose are many; according to some he was not killed but went into hiding where he lives on to this day. Another sanctified hero is Vinoba Bhave. Bhave burned the diplomas which attested to his accomplishments in the British educational system in order to lead a grass-roots movement for India's rural development. The legends of Gandhi's suffering in the cause of freedom are, of course, innumerable.

Minor local figures also occur in folklore by virtue of their sacrifice or suffering. In my own village I have been told often about the peasant who was asked by the police to reveal the whereabouts of a freedom worker and who was offered a reward if he would do so. Instead, he chose the torture of being dragged by a car along a paved road.

Incidents which occurred during the imprisonment of Independence movement leaders provide additional material for the folk. Revolutionaries like Jayaprakash Narayan and Aruna Asaf Ali, who have played important roles in post-Independence India as well, appear as victims of unusual suffering. They are said to have been laid on ice, hung by their feet from the ceiling and

choked with smoke, and placed with their hands under a table on which many persons sat. Tortures are described which in Western history appear only in descriptions of German concentration camps.

The folk also like to humanize their heroes by describing their simplicity of life and their sympathy and compassion for the common people. Their love for Pandit Nehru is seen in many legends and songs, as they describe his forbearance and willingness to accede to the whims of the simple peasants. Here is one such story:

Once Nehru was visiting a village when a peasant brought him a full jug of milk, asking him to drink it down. At first Nehru demurred, saying that he had already eaten too much and was full. The peasant insisted, saying, "If you cannot even drink one jug of milk, how can you fight for freedom against the foreigner?" So Nehru had to drink the milk.

It should be noted here that milk is regarded as the prime strength-giving food and is drunk in large quantities, when available, by village people.

Another story features Vijaya Lakshmi, Nehru's sister:

Once she spent a long, hot day going from door to door in the villages, collecting money for the freedom movement, a few pennies from each household. At the end of the day in the burning sun she had collected only a few rupees. Her father, feeling pity for his daughter, said, "I could have given you that much money myself!" To which she replied, "But how then could I have collected so many hearts?"

The idea of the innocence of the Indians and their misplaced trust in the treacherous British, appears also in the folk's descriptions of recent history. In the First World War it is said that the British fooled Gandhi, telling him that if Indians cooperated in the war efforts they would be given freedom when it was over. Thus, Indians were encouraged to contribute to a war fund and to join the British troops who fought in Europe. To this day, if a person earns an academic degree for which he has shown no

competence, he is said to have earned the degree in a "war fund." There are a number of folksongs which tell of the bravery of the Indian contingent which fought against the Germans, "Number Six" Gandhi at that time encouraged Indians to enlist and many folk poets were recruited by the British government to help encourage such enlistments. The following verse was first sung over All India Radio at that time by a professional folk drama performer, *sāngī*:

Enlist in the army!
Recruiters are standing at your door!
Here you wear ordinary, mediocre clothes,
Whatever you can get, torn and old.
There you will get a good suit and boots!

No sooner was the war over than the British changed their minds, and instead of freedom came the Rowlett Act, hailed as a reform by the British, but interpreted by the Indian people as a breach of faith, a hardening of oppression. It was at this time that the incident at Jaliyanvala Bagh occurred:

This cruel government, Oh brothers, we will not keep.
They came here to trade
And have become the noose around our neck.
This cruel government, brothers, we will not keep.
In their pride of being white
They went to Jaliyanvala Garden
And killed many thousands.
This cruel government, Oh brothers, we will not keep.

In another song, reference to this incident is combined with mention of the First World War:

In 1914 the Kaiser was faced in battle by the whites
(i.e., British)
The Number Six platoon of Jats (an Indian caste) went
into the battlefield.
'Bravely' they fired.
If there were no bullets left, they fought with staffs.

Having won victory, when we began to come home,
They took off our uniforms and began to call us damn
fools.
And in Amritsar, Dyer began to shower tyranny on us
By shedding blood in the Garden (Jaliyanvala).

The portrayal of personnel and events of modern history in the guise of traditional heroes, gods, and mythological incidents is a frequently used device in Indian folklore. Gandhi is often referred to in songs and stories as Mohan, not only because this is the first part of his name (Mohandas), but because it is one of the names of Lord Krishna. Gandhi's time in jail is described in terms of Lord Krishna's birth in the prison of his maternal uncle, Kansa. Krishna took birth in order to deliver his mother from the jail of this tyrant. Gandhi went to jail to deliver his Mother India from another tyrant, Great Britain.

From Mohan's mouth came out the words, "Free India,
Free India."

With joy, everyone heard, "Free India, Free India."
Making it their cottage, good sons are settling down
joyfully in jail.

When these ascetics come out, they will see free India,
free India.

In another song:

We will leave our homes and go to prison,
We are not afraid of prison.
The prison where our Lord Krishna was born,
The prison where Mahatma Gandhi spent his life,
Is our dear, pleasurable house.

In another context Gandhi is referred to as Rama, who tries to find Sita (India), abducted and imprisoned by Ravana (the British) as in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. In folklore Gandhi is called Mahatma because of the belief that his soul had the power to perform miracles. Because of his miraculous power even the British—who fear no man—are consumed by fear. Thus the struggle with the British is portrayed in song and legend as a battle of gods against demons, good against evil, virtue against sin. The

Nehrus are also cast in mythological roles. Jawaharlal is compared with Buddha, who in order to achieve salvation renounced wealth, his kingdom, and a devoted wife. Jawaharlal Nehru is sometimes called *betāj kā bādshāh*, "king without a crown," in this context.

Word play is another folkloristic device to which the names of Indian heroes lend themselves. Jawahar and Moti (the name of Jawaharlal's father) mean "jewel" and "pearl" respectively, and these words are used in songs about the Nehrus:

Let this garland of love and unity not break,
Otherwise these "pearls" and "jewels" will scatter.

In a similar way, the names of Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi (Victory, Goddess of Wealth) are used by the folk poet:

Oh dyer, dye me a shawl of homespun cloth
On one corner Saint Gandhi with his spinning wheel
On the other corner Vijayalakshmi,
The dearest princess of India.

Another device uses the familiar festival and religious cycle and common daily experiences to represent historical events. The norms of kinship behavior are used in this way also. Gandhi is frequently portrayed as a bridegroom who goes (to jail) to bring back his bride (Freedom). Jail is called the home of the in-laws and the British are the in-laws themselves. In-laws are people with whom one has a close tie, but a tie with built-in antagonism. The fact that the word for in-laws is used in common parlance as a particularly obscene curse word makes it quite appropriate as an epithet for the British. India is the mother, making this kinship image complete:

Gandhi has become the bridegroom, the government the bride,
Motilal has become the *sārhu* (wife's sister's husband),
Irwin (Viceroy of India) has become the *sālā* (wife's brother)
All the volunteers have become the members of the marriage party,
Jail has become the father-in-law's house.

A less obvious aspect of this kinship image is the proscription in this part of India against taking anything—even hospitality—from the family of the daughter's bridegroom. Great Britain has taken untold riches from India and has become, after two hundred years a guest, a taker of hospitality, who has long overstayed her welcome:

One day a guest,
Two days a guest,
On the third day begins to stink.

Great Britain is therefore often depicted in folklore as an in-law who has lowered herself by ignoring the most fundamental rules of kinship behavior.

Your home has been penetrated by thieves
Gandhi, light the lamp.
All your brothers wear Indian caps.
Who is this in the hat?
All your brothers wear Indian *kurtās* (shirts).
Who is this in the jacket?
Gandhi, light the lamp.
All brothers of yours wear *dhotīs* (loincloths).
Who is this in trousers?
Gandhi, light the lamp.
All your brothers wear Indian *jūtīs* (sandals).
Who is this in the boots?
Gandhi, light the lamps.'

Unlike earlier invaders of the Indian subcontinent, the British—by their own admission and intent—remained outside of Indian society, despite their long sovereignty over the land. Their position as outsiders, not guests but unwelcome intruders, is reflected in the names that are used in folklore to refer to the British, close to synonyms for the British when appearing in context. The least derogatory of these are three words which literally mean "foreigner"—*phirangī*, *pardesī*, or *bilāī*—and the term *angrez*, which means "Englishman." All of these are used at present for any Westerner or may also be used for other non-Indians as well. Having no position in the Indian caste system into which other newcomers had been assimilated, the British were nevertheless

generally agreed to be of low status as a result of their personal habits, religious beliefs, and their behavior toward Indians. They were called *mlechchh* (a word long used for those outside the pale, dirty, impure, degraded, non-Aryan), *adharmī* (irreligious, unethical), *vidharmī* (adherents of a different religion) and "pope-follower" (meaning follower of a deceitful religious despot). Drawing on parallels in their own caste stereotypes, the folk use the caste-related terms *baniyā* and *sodāgar* (meaning moneylender, trader, in a derogatory sense) and *kasāl* (butcher) to allude to the British as economic exploiters and killers and eaters of flesh.

Indians make a distinction between the *dacoit* who robs in the daylight by force, the *thief* who sneaks into the house at night, and the *thag*, who cheats one out of something. All three terms are used to describe the British. They are dacoit because they used force to get what they wanted, they are sneaky thieves when it suits their purposes, they are *thags* because they cheated Indians out of their wealth and their freedom and broke every promise they ever made. It is in this latter role, perhaps, that the British incurred the greatest hatred, for they are said to pretend friendship, only to stab one in the back as soon as it is turned:

Loving a foreigner is like warming oneself with straws
You burn your house down and he will never be yours.

Being of light skin color, the British, and Westerners in general, are called *gore* (fairskinned people)—a not necessarily unfavorable appellation—but at the same time they are called *bandar* (monkey) and *gāddar* (jackal), the latter referring to their supposed cowardice in battle and their reputation for cunning treachery. They appear in the folklore as *dushman* (enemy), and in the frequently used device whereby historical and legendary incidents are related in terms of the great mythological heroes of the ancient past, the British are assigned the roles of the demons or evil tyrants. For example, they are compared to Ravana, villain of the Ramayana, Kansa, Lord Krishna's uncle, jailer of his mother and would be murderer of Krishna himself, and Hirnakashyap, a demon killed by Lord Vishnu in the form of a half-man, half-lion.

In this connection it is worthwhile to point out that much of the difference between the Western historian's and the Indian

folk view of Indian history is a matter of linguistic usage. The greater part of the vocabulary which is the stock in trade of the former—and of Western scholars who write about contemporary Indian problems—finds no place in folk recitals of India's past and present. For example, such terms as *terrorist*, *political unrest*, *free enterprise*, *capitalist system*, *constitutional reforms*, *free world*, *underdeveloped nations*, are either not used at all or are used with connotations opposite to that which the Westerner understands. And in their evaluation of Indian leaders, particularly of those who led them in the struggle for Independence, the distinctions so important to the Westerner between violent and non-violent methods, between extremist and moderate, find no recognition.

Those British governmental institutions which were introduced into India during the colonial period, and which have become an integral part of post-Independence society as well, receive short shrift from the folk poet. He has little admiration for the system of law and justice of which his former rulers are so proud. One reason for this is probably the fact that legal disputation—*mukadamebāzī*—has become almost an addiction for the Indian peasant, and its evils are sung along with the Western-associated evils of drunkenness, prostitution, and gambling. In a bilingual play on words the folk turn the word "court" into the Hindi *korat*, "destruction." The court is not seen as an institution which assures justice for all, but rather as an expensive, unreliable, and impersonal agency through which those with means are enabled to extricate themselves from punishment for their crimes and assert their will over those who cross them. The impersonality and objectivity of the courts—on which the West takes pride—is seen as one of the prime evils of the system. Impersonality is equated with inhumanity. One of the notions concerning freedom was that courts would be abolished:

Law cases will stop, lawyers will become vendors of
peanuts,
And their clerks will sell loquats in the market.
If all Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs
Will live like brothers,
All these police chiefs and constables will sell burlap
bags and bamboo mats,
And the Inspector will sell jugs of *jaljīrā* (a spicy drink).

The role of the lawyer in the court system is seen as a dishonest one. The fact that a lawyer can be hired to defend the right of either side in a case is regarded as sufficient evidence that "truth" has no place in legal procedure. Further evidence is the alleged practice whereby lawyers instruct their clients to lie in order to win a case and hire witnesses (at the defendant's cost) to say whatever the lawyer deems wise. A popular anecdote in this area is the following:

One day Truth came to court. The lawyer of the prosecution argued his case heatedly, proclaiming that Truth was on his side. Then the defendant's lawyer argued with equal conviction and vigor that Truth was on his side. Truth began to get a headache, which was intensified when the judge gave a third version of Truth as a compromise. Truth was so confused by that time that he ran away from the court as fast as he could, and he has never returned to the court since that time.

In another anecdote, a clever client gets the better of his lawyer:

Once a peasant was charged with murder. He came to a lawyer and asked his help. The lawyer agreed and suggested that he plead innocent by virtue of insanity. When anyone asked him a question in court, he should simply reply "Hum." The client complied. During the trial he pretended to understand nothing and uttered only "Hum, hum." The judge affirmed that the defendant was indeed insane and ordered him released. Now the lawyer demanded his fee, but the client simply shook his head and said, "Hum, hum." The lawyer became enraged. He demanded that his client stop this nonsense and pay his fee. The peasant answered, "If this can save me from a murder charge, it can surely also save me from your fee." He walked away.

A small item published recently in an Indian newspaper summarizes the folk attitude toward the Western court system:

An Englishman in India complained to a judge about the slow pace of the legal process in the overburdened Indian courts. "In Great Britain this business would have

been completed in two days, and here I have already waited for two months." To this the judge replied, "Before your people gave us this system we could have dispatched the matter in two minutes."

The police are similarly a Western introduction to India, although even during the colonial period the lower ranks were filled with Indians. The police are greatly feared and distrusted by the folk. At the same time they are regarded as incredibly stupid and are the butt of ridicule:

A Brahman teacher was shouting at a student one day in school, "I have made so many donkeys like you human!" A potter was passing by. He had many donkeys (the potter's beast of burden) but no son. He thought, "If this teacher can change one of my donkeys into a son, how wonderful it will be!" He brought one of his donkeys to the teacher, and the teacher, thinking it was useless to argue with such a simpleton, agreed to do what the potter asked. He took the donkey, sold it, and bought sweets to eat. A month later the potter returned and asked for his son. The teacher said, "You have come too late. Your donkey was so smart that he not only turned into a man quickly but acquired so much knowledge that he has been appointed police chief." The potter thanked him and set off to see his son at the police station, bringing a supply of grass, the donkey's favorite food. When he arrived he began to call the familiar donkey's call, "*ā darī, ā darī*." The police chief was enraged and gave him a swift kick. The potter, unruffled, simply said, "Even though you have become human, you have certainly not forgotten your old habit of kicking."

Another story paints a similar picture of the police; in this case the policeman appears as a man of illegitimate birth—*kadhellar* :

A Dom (untouchable, scavenger caste) was trying to get a seat in an overcrowded railway compartment. The train had already begun to move when he finally managed to climb on, but he found himself in the compartment reserved for railway police. They were ready to throw

him out, but he pleaded with them in a pitiful voice. Finally one said, "Let him stay, he will entertain us, poor Dom." The other constables joined in and demanded that he entertain them. The Dom said, "Should I tell a tale about myself, or about someone else?" The policemen said, "We hear about the world everyday. Why don't you tell about yourself?" To that he answered, "Well, sir, I am returning home after an absence of twelve years. My wife has written that a son has just been born to us." "How is that possible, when you have been away for twelve years?" "What do I lose by my absence? When he grows up I shall simply enlist him in the police force!" The policemen were so angry that they threw him out of the compartment at the next station.

A further belief of the folk is that a policeman is given intensive training in the use of curse words and obscene abuses. The faster and more varied his vocabulary, the sooner he is promoted.

Much of the attitude of distrust toward the police is clearly traceable to the colonial period. Then they had extraordinary power over the lives of the peasants and are credited with countless atrocities in the name of their foreign masters. Their treachery is mentioned in the following saying of this area:

Police, moneylenders and chauffeurs are never to be trusted.

They may speak sweetly, but their real feelings can never be known.

The police are believed by the folk to be intimately associated with criminal elements in the society. When a robbery takes place, police are said to be found afterwards at the lair of the robbers, taking their share of the loot. Only after the haul has been divided will the police answer the victim's call for help. When they arrive they will beat the victim and neglect to further investigate the case. The police are also believed to be susceptible to bribery. They are said to take bribes from all parties concerned in a case and to then proceed to beat and imprison whomever they wish. The folk are convinced that the police decide who is guilty long before the trial takes place. Criminals roam freely, while innocent

citizens pay for the crimes of others. The following proverb illustrates this:

They tell the thieves, "Go and commit theft!"

Then they go to the merchant and say, "Be careful!"

A verse from a song also expresses a similar thought:

Someone does it (commits a crime),

But someone else pays for it.

Truthful persons are hanged,

While thieves enjoy life!

The police are thus seen as holding all the power of the executive and judiciary branches of government, all by virtue of their nightstick. Thus the proverbial saying:

Why should he fear anything, he whose father is a police chief?

And another with a similar point:

I don't care about the salary, just make me a police chief!

English education was introduced into India quite early in the colonial period, primarily for the purpose of training indigenous young men to serve in the lower echelons of the colonial administration. But aside from this practical goal, the British felt that they were doing a favor to India, to open the Indian mind to Western scientific and humanistic thought and to enable India's people to share exposure to Western cultural values and ideals. The folk, on the other hand, could not disagree more vehemently. For them Western education (particularly as taught in the English language), was nothing more than a device by which Indian children were caused to forget their language and heritage, their homes and families, and were turned into unthinking and unfeeling bureaucrats, helping their rulers fill British coffers. This proverb illustrates a folk view of the English educated Indian:

Little educated, good for no work;

Better educated, good for nothing but to leave the village.

English education was also believed to have a bad moral effect on students, making them dishonest and irresponsible, making them forget the sacrifices of their parents who had given them their education. The English alphabet is referred to jokingly as *aibkī sīdī*, "ladder for misconduct," and anecdotes are told of educated boys who deceive and take advantage of their parents' ignorance. For example:

A student who had already spent his monthly allowance, sent his father a letter (in Hindi), in which he wrote that he needed seventy rupees (equivalent to his usual monthly allowance) for "blotting paper." This word he wrote in English. His father, not being able to read English, and assuming that this mysterious word must be something very important, had to borrow money at high interest in order to satisfy his son's request.

Another anecdote in the same vein:

A father brought ten pounds of butter to his son, who was living in a college dormitory (quantities of butter are believed to be necessary food for intellectual accomplishment). While he was there his son's roommate asked, "Who is this peasant?" To this the son replied, "He is just one of our servants." This conversation took place in English. The son had to leave the room for some reason, and the father asked the roommate what they had been saying. When the roommate explained, the old man became so angry that he immediately withdrew his son from college.

Not only is English education thought to destroy the moral fiber of the youth, it is also believed to have a deliterious effect on the mind. There are a number of legends about local B.A. students who became mad as a result of the pursuance of their studies.

A major focus of the folk's resentment of English education is what they see as the denigration and undermining of India's religious, cultural, and historical heritage. Indian children were told in school that their forefathers were barbarians, whereas their parents were proud of their "Aryan" heritage, transmitted through the centuries as an ancient and noble tradition. The stories of

Indian culture heroes, such as Rama and Krishna, were regarded by English teachers as baseless legends, and the thousands of saints, heroes, kings, queens, and sages of India's past were completely ignored in the history lessons of English schools. Indian children were not taught that India had been the richest and most civilized country of the world at the time of the British takeover, nor were they told of the scientific achievements of ancient India. Thus the folk feel that English education turned out people without a cultural heritage, "black gentlemen" and "oxen of the company" (British East India Company), who knew nothing but how to do the routine work demanded of them in service of their masters. As it was expressed in songs:

What kind of marijuana have you fed the country?
Alas, oh foreign education, you have shown not the
slightest pity.

From Aryans, you made us Hindu, from Hindu you
made us Black,

From Black you made us Coolie, oh what have you done
to us?

Instead of wheat and rice, meat was swallowed,
Killing milk, you made a cup of liquor,
Hating handmade cloth, you made India bankrupt
You made darkness here, while making light there.
Instead of *namaste* (as Indian greeting) you really made
a mess: *gurgur de, gur bāi* (good day, good-by).

×× ×× ××

You taught my children to smoke cigarettes,
Waste their time playing cards,
And call their father a damn fool.
Since you have come to India,
Deep darkness has fallen in the nation.
Cars came, and with them also came poverty,
And our culture has been butchered.

×× ×× ××

Without learning, you are humiliated and destroyed, oh
India, dear country.

In America, Arjuna was married, Pandu was married in Persia,

King Dhritrashtra was married in Kabul, from whence Mother Gandhari came.

Now lawyers are astonished to see trains and engines;
In one hour a wooden horse went twenty-six miles,
Which was King Bhoj's vehicle.

Seeing a phonograph, people were dumbfounded;
In Vikramaditya's throne there were thirty-two machines
Whose speech was each different.

In the airplane of foreigners only four persons can sit;
In the *pushpak vimān* ("Flower Airplane") of Rama
many chiefs sat,

Our dear Ramayana tells us that.

A similar attitude prevails among the folk toward the attempts of the British and other Westerners to convert Indians to Christianity. Missionary activity in India was greatly resented by the folk, as attempts at conversion—encouraged by the British government—were felt to constitute attacks on Hinduism. In fact, such an approach was characteristic of missionary activity in India. Particularly abhorrent are the changes in eating habits which accompanied conversion—the introduction of meat and eggs into a formerly vegetarian diet. The downgrading of Hindu religious figures, gods and sacred rites aroused great indignation. Legends are numerous which extoll those Indians who exposed Christianity's defects, who debated with English missionaries on theological matters and emerged victorious. Some of these are Lekh Ram, Dayanand, Shraddhanand, all of whom appear in the folklore as symbolic saviors of Hinduism, sacrificing their own kin, renouncing comforts, in order to demonstrate the corruption of Western religion:

When Mother placed the envelope in his (Lekh Ram's) hand,

He opened it immediately and began to read, leaving his food.

In it was written that some Hindus are going to become *adharmī*,

"Please come right away, if you can, to save them."

Mother said, "Oh dear son, you have just arrived
And you are ready to go again now, for your son is sick."

He replied, "Mother, here there is only one son,
But there are many with their religion in danger."

When in the morning he received the telegram

That his son had passed from this world,

He said, "Worry not, everyone has come here to go away."

The attitude toward Christianity and missionaries is well illustrated in the linguistic usage of the word "pope" to mean, in north Indian languages, a cheat, one who fools others with false promises, a religious despot. This word is used also to refer to orthodox, reactionary Hindu priests on occasion. The folk also believe that Indian spiritual thought has made great contributions to the West, and commonly speak of East and West in terms of the spiritual/material dichotomy. Emphasizing the unique spiritual heritage of India, they tell of the successes of their Hindu missionaries abroad. Vivekananda's name is mentioned as a true son of Mother India, who could defeat anyone in religious argument. It is said of his brilliance that he could speak for three hours on any subject without preparation. His triumphal tour of America is described with pride, and an anecdote is related in which Vivekananda spoke about a dot on the wall for many hours to the surprise—and probable stupefaction—of his American hosts. Going much further back in history, the folk tell of the Mahabharata hero Arjun, who not only defeated America in battle, but was even married to an American girl.

Much of the antagonism toward Christian missionaries is due to the firm conviction that in terms of morality the West ranks far below India. Since this is the case, what can she offer to the Indian people? The very expression, "You have become *kristān* (Christian)" is used in the sense of "You have lost all traces of morality." On the one hand is the fact that Westerners

are enthusiastic and indiscriminating meat eaters, for the eating of meat, though practiced by some in India even before Western contact, is very generally regarded as a cruel and filthy habit. Westernization is commonly equated with the adoption of a meat and egg diet, and is therefore viewed with suspicion and abhorrence. Since the British believe in the dietary necessity of eating meat and eggs and therefore not only followed such a diet themselves but actively promoted it among those Indians (particularly Christian converts) over whom they had some influence, they are regarded with scorn. A similar attitude is expressed toward the consumption of alcohol and the smoking of cigarettes, particularly as these are practiced by women as well as men in the West.

It was not even in my fate to have a potato,
Now I eat eggs.
Instead of an earthen lamp,
I now light a gas pressure lamp.

This is the line of a Christian convert in a folk drama on the theme of Christianity. To a good Hindu, of course, to be able to eat an egg is no improvement in condition! The West is also believed to be a place of extreme sexual laxity, where parents sell their daughter's favors, where unmarried boys and girls are encouraged to engage in sexual play, and where the concept of marriage as an enduring relationship scarcely exists. The "love match," far from being romantically idealized by the folk, is regarded as an institution of extreme depravity, and it is generally believed that Westerners change partners with remarkable frequency, flitting from one to another at the urging of sexual whims.

It is perhaps relevant to mention here that the attitude of the folk toward Germany is often seen to be considerably more favorable than that toward the British. Germany is one of the few countries, apart from England and America, of which the average peasant is likely to be aware as a separate entity. On the one hand the folk appreciate what they believe to be the great respect of the Germans for India's oldest and most sacred books, the Vedas. These books and the Mahabharata are often said to contain all the scientific discoveries which the West has only begun to

make again in the past fifty years. The early German scholars who began the Western study of India's ancient texts are said to have taken the secrets of "modern" science from them, and in this way to have laid the groundwork for the present scientific age.

Hitler's use of the name "Aryan" for his Master Race and his adoption of the "Swastika" (although in reversed form) to identify his movement is regarded as evidence of his respect and admiration for Indian culture. The Indian folk are in general unaware of Hitler's persecution and extermination of millions of European Jews and other dissenters from his regime. However, in any case Jews are identified with the Indian *baniyā*—moneylenders and traders—and are believed to share the stereotyped attributes which are very similar to the characteristics attributed to Jews by anti-Semitic Europeans. The little which is known by Indians about Hitler's treatment of the Jews, therefore, is not such as to dim their admiration of him and his nation. It must also be appreciated that during this century Germany was the major adversary of Great Britain in two World Wars, and on the ancient principle that the enemy of an enemy is a friend, it is perhaps not surprising that many Indians, unaware of any of the larger issues in these conflicts, would feel sympathetic toward Germany's attempts to defeat Great Britain. This is particularly the case since in the second World War, when the urge for Independence had reached the point of desperation, a segment of the Independence movement actively cooperated with German and Japanese efforts against the Allies. In *ālhās* sung during the second World War, Hitler is praised in glowing terms as a poor orphan boy who rose to a powerful position and gave Great Britain the kind of punishment she had been giving India for the past centuries. Some verses of these songs are:

Oh brave people, free your country!
Remember the Honorable Tilak!
The World War has started again;
This time Hitler has made great preparations.
He has bombed Poland already.
You too, take his example, and fight joyfully.
Oh brave people, free your country!

In this world, nothing but action is great.
 The value of those who do not act is nil.
 Look at Mussolini, whose father was a Chamar
 (untouchable, shoemaker) in Italy!
 Look at Hitler, who was just an orphan laboring boy
 in Germany!
 He was even once jailed,
 Thus he was nothing.
 But by his actions, he became great.

Racial discrimination had been observed since the beginnings of the British period. In Indian cities British and other European residents lived in exclusive areas, as did Anglo Indians, those of mixed British and Indian parentage who soon formed an in-marriage group, regarding themselves as superior because of their white blood and in turn despised for the same reason by Indians. Reserved seats for whites in trains, white-only hotels and restaurants, exclusive white clubs and other restricted public and private facilities, were evident to every Indian. The folk believed that in England every public place was closed with the sign "No dogs, no Indians." The British called Indians "black coolies" and denied equal pay for equal work by those with equal qualifications. Justice in India was always presumed to be biased in favor of the European. Pay differentials for Indians and British on the same job were routine. A soldier who fought to save his masters from defeat was likely to be in the front ranks and killed first, but was paid far less than his British mate. A story about two soldiers, one white and one black, illustrates the folks' perception of British justice:

An Indian soldier was hit by a white soldier in the course of an argument. A complaint was brought against the white soldier for assault. The judge sent the latter to the hospital and jailed the black soldier, reasoning that something must be wrong with a white man who couldn't kill a black man with one blow. And a black man who wasn't killed by a white man in a fight must be a very dangerous character.

The Western democratic form of government, based on the principle of elections and legislation by the people's representatives,

began very gradually to be introduced in India even before freedom was granted by Great Britain. The present Indian government is almost entirely structured after the Western pattern. But the Western type of democracy is not fully accepted nor favored by the folk. They particularly distrust the system of political parties and elections. This is not because they oppose the concept of participatory democracy, it is rather because they feel that these institutions hinder true participation by the people in deciding their own destiny. One reason for this attitude is that the electoral procedure requires attributes which are greatly at variance from those traditionally regarded as characteristic of a good ruler. The campaign requires that each contender beat his own drum—or blow his own horn—while condemning the motives, intentions, abilities and honesty of his opponents. The ideal ruler in traditional terms is incapable of carrying through such activities. Rama, the epitome of the wise and fairminded king, did not go before the people asking for their vote. He was selected by them and agreed to serve because of their unanimous acclaim. He never said a bad word about his colleagues nor about those who served him in any capacity. To the modern officeholder, name calling is a stock-in-trade. Thus it is a general belief that if one wants to ruin his reputation forever, he need only stand for an elective position. One song has it:

Rightly have they called them "election" (*alakshan*,
 "without attributes"),
 They really talk nonsense.
 Brother fights against brother, castes are separated from
 each other,
 Sometimes for *sarpanch* (local judge), sometimes for
pardhan (council chairman),
 Sometimes for members of Parliament and Assemblies,
 In one village there are four parties, seeds for division
 Everyone blows his own trumpet before every one.
 Some threaten, some are polite with both hands folded
 together,
 They fight in every way, these village councils do nothing
 but destruction.

Lecture after lecture they shower down,
 Many of them very clever in their tactics,
 They burn money in election campaigns,
 After becoming leaders they stab you.
 They become leaders by lying, looting the poor.
 Elections are truly an evil, our house is divided by them:
 All our ethical laws are broken.
 Only sins multiply, so does dishonesty, instead of love.

The following lines are from another song, again concerning elections:

Do not hold elections, this is no time for fighting.
 Open the ledger book and look at the record of your
 ancestors.
 Did the leader Subhash or Gandhi ever fight elections?
 And Lord Rama or Krishna?—they were greatest of all.
 Don't you have any thought of your own dignity and
 respect?
 Don't hold elections, if you want good for all.
 Stop this act now, why delay?
 Now, think the good for all; that is the only true human
 religion.

It is felt that the electoral system and the system of administration and judiciary introduced at the local level has caused division in the villages and has disrupted the unity which they believe to have been characteristic of the traditional *panchayat* system. While the folk dreamed, before freedom, of the reintroduction of a traditional system of government offering true local rule, they now view the complicated legal institutions which have come into being and which set a premium on the formal settlement of local disputes as a threat to ancient tradition. A *panchayat* inspector once told me that in his area few cases are brought before the *panchayat* court, and those that do come up are settled informally in a brotherly fashion. But such a *panchayat* is branded inactive by the higher echelons of the administration, and recognition is given to those *panchayats* which have the largest

number of disputes to record. The folk poets express their feelings about modern government in this manner:

There is so much noise about democracy, they say it is
 people's rule.
 But no one pays any attention to the people, this is a
 real tragedy.
 There is a big drama of election, begging for votes and
 fooling the public,
 Only to make their conditions worse later.
 All of them speak sweetly, sitting in their cars in groups,
 Trapping the simple-minded public,
 Only to tax them heavily later and make them totally
 bankrupt.

Concerning the persons in power before the 1967 elections, the following verse was heard:

In U.P. (Uttar Pradesh State) there is the *rāj* (reign) of a
 barren woman (Sucheta Kripalani, Chief Minister of U.P.);
 In the center is the reign of a widow (Indira Gandhi, Prime
 Minister);
 Above all there is *kāmraj* ("reign of lust," Kamraj, President
 of the Congress Party);
 How can you expect *rāmraj* ("reign of Rama," ideal
 government)?

In connection with this song, it should be pointed out that barrenness and widowhood are regarded as punishments of a woman for her sins in a previous incarnation.

One of the cherished notions of the folk about India's Independence was that it would be accompanied by equality of wealth. The impression was that when India become free, every peasant's child would live under conditions free from exploitation of courts, landlords, tax collectors, and the like. Capitalism—which to the peasant means a situation in which some are rich without doing any work while others remain hungry—would die a natural death and food would be sufficient for everyone. Thus, freedom meant equality of opportunity to earn and live a decent life, equal

distribution of land and wealth. Differences between rich and poor were expected to end. With such a background, it is understandable that the word "capitalism" and its Hindi and Panjabi equivalents have very negative connotations for the Indian folk. It is a term avoided even by political parties of the far right in their propaganda. On the other hand, movements like the Bhoodan or Land Gift Movement of Vinoba Bhave, which stress the idea of voluntary donations by the haves to the have-nots, have a great deal of appeal. The image of the future which such movements offer are preferred and earn more confidence than government sponsored development programs in which, as someone remarked, "American barren women come to tell a mother of six what kind of pain one suffers in childbirth." The following three examples give an idea of the folk's attitude toward modern government and development programs. The third of these is one of the many songs about the Land Gift movement circulating in this area:

What they call *vikās khand* (block development) is actually *vināsh khand* (destruction development).

A.D.Os. (Assistant Development Officers), B.D.Os. (Block Development Officers), many officers have increased.

Without bribery, none will talk to anyone, they are so spoiled.

Clerks are trained in that also, even the doorkeepers are arrogant.

Miseries have multiplied, for poor people the officials are the scepter of misery.

The reign has changed, but not the ways.

Bribery takers, thieves, thugs, dishonest ones have not changed,

Neither police chief nor police captains are changed,
Nor have the canal deputies and other officials changed.

Wake up! Saint of the age of truth has come to your door.

He has brought the message of the Master of the Three Worlds.

Wake up! Wake up, people!

Wash your hearts, wash your bodies.

Look upward, the moon has risen!

Drink the rays of the light of life.

Mother Bhavani is awake, why are you sleeping?

To make the villages an abode of joy,

The ascetic has left his forest

To lift up the fallen ones,

Having taken the help of truth and non-violence.

Look at the wonder of God!

He is performing the sacrifice of Land Gift.

You give your offerings,

Whatever you can share.

You will not meet this auspicious festival again.

Have at least one dip into the river for sure,

The Ganges has come to your home.

Look at the wonders of God!

Wake up! The saint has come to your door!

It seems clear from the above discussion that the dream of freedom which was conceived by the folk has not been fully realized, with respect to the abolition of Western institutions. Many feel that for them that dream died with Gandhi's death. Modern rulers are nothing more than "black *sahibs*" replacing "white *sahibs*." The government is still an impersonal jungle of bureaucracy. The Western outlook of its leaders has led the country into mental slavery, replacing their former physical slavery. As one metaphor puts it, Sita was released from Ravana's jail, but never went outside Delhi. There the liberator was shot and she has been in jail ever since, never returning to her true home, the India of the villages. Delhi's alliance with the Western invaders is not looked on favorably by the folk. Programs of "development," such as family planning, while accepted by many *bhajanopadeshak* singers, have nevertheless remained targets of suspicion to the folk mind. Even foreign aid has not been accepted with enthusiasm. One hears frequent comments to the effect that both the wheat and dried milk sent by America is unfit for human consumption, since all the "essence" has been removed before it is sent to India. They feel that all

these programs are nothing but traps set for the people by Western-minded leaders—many of whom never fought for freedom themselves. A similar plot, by Indian leaders and their Western colleagues who supported Pakistan against India in the recent conflict between the two countries, is suspected. This can be seen in the songs composed after 1965, for example the following:

Against India the world came to fight.

No one came empty-handed, all came armed.

From London, the English came in their fiercest form;

With airplanes and innumerable Patton tanks came stupid
America.

For eighteen years Pakistan made preparation for the
war;

Only in order to prepare for war were their people
given anything.

The greatest cunning in this was that of Britain and
America,

Superficially these rascals showed friendship toward India
also.

If the war starts this time the world will come to an
end.

When France is destroyed, all corruption will be
destroyed.

When America is finished, with it will go capitalism.

When the seed of London is destroyed, all the evil will
come to an end.

For twenty-eight days, night and day, the fight was fought,
When small guns were not enough, nor small bombs,
The bastard America came with its big bombs and Patton
tanks.

To conclude, the attitudes toward the West and Western institutions, as created by the history of the past two hundred years, are not very complimentary. Basically Western values are seen as diametrically opposed to Indian traditions, and despite their acceptance by India's leadership and the ritual participation in them by the folk, they are not really accepted by the village

people. Despite the actual material progress made by India in the last twenty-one years—which is not small by any standard—the system seems to be in a very transitional state. The results of the last election have cautiously reprimanded—though not repudiated—the ruling party, while showing no firm faith in others. When a system is in opposition to tradition and does not solve the problems it creates itself, such as bureaucracy, impersonal rule, costly justice, breaches between ruler and the ruled, it will find it difficult to function. In these days of bewilderment, when the glitter of Western civilization blinds India's rulers, the folk often find themselves in a hopeless situation. They sometimes find themselves asking Gandhi, who won freedom for India by Indian means, with the help of the Indian masses, dressed in homespun clothes as a boycott of foreign goods, to come and see his country's condition and do something to solve its problems before it is too late:

If you can, O Bapu (Gandhi), see the condition of your
country.

You, who brought freedom, come and see, at least for
once,

Who has spent the nights of misery, who has gotten
comfort.

Protest Songs of East Indians in British Guiana¹

British Guiana is a country of about 83,000 square miles situated on the northeast coast of South America. It is bordered on the north by the Atlantic Ocean, on the northwest by Venezuela, on the east by Surinam (Dutch Guiana), and on the south by Brazil. Most of the population of the country is located in the coastal region, a strip about 270 miles long and varying in width from 10 to 40 miles. The climate here is characterized by warm year-round temperatures and high rainfall. Much of the coastal land is below sea level and is maintained for agriculture by an extensive dyke and drainage system. The interior of British Guiana is largely equatorial forest with some savannah. It is thinly populated, predominantly by American Indian peoples.

Originally established and settled by the Dutch, the colony was ceded to Great Britain in 1814. In the early years a fairly flourishing native population was decimated by the fighting against the Dutch, intertribal warfare, the introduction of European epidemic and venereal disease, and the Indian slave trade. Attempts by the Dutch to acquire cheap labour by using the American Indians met with great resistance from the adult members of the Indian community, and the practice arose of capturing children to be brought up as slaves while slaughtering their recalcitrant parents.² The American Indian population numbered in 1961 approximately 23,600 out of a total population of almost 600,000.³ "Africans," as the descendants of the African slave population are called, constitute about one third of the total population, while East Indians, the descendants of indentured laborers from India, approach 50 percent of the total. Mixed peoples, Chinese, Portuguese, and other Europeans complete the racial picture.

At the time of cession to Great Britain, coffee and cotton,

grown by African slave labor, formed the major agricultural products. A decline in world prices for these products encouraged the increased production of sugar, and in later years, up to the present time, sugar became the mainstay of the colony's economy.⁴ In 1807 the slave trade was prohibited by Great Britain and labor problems began to be felt in all of her colonies. The slave population had no natural increase after being brought to British Guiana, and after the supply of slaves was stopped, there was a continuous decline in slave population. The slave owners had discouraged the formation of lasting family ties among their slaves and had never encouraged childbirth, since the presence of pregnant women slaves and small children lessened the amount of work that could be gotten out of their investment. The fact that very few women were brought as slaves in proportion to the number of men and the high death rate among the slaves were other factors in the decline of the labor force. Between 1817 and 1834 there was a decrease from 101,712 to 82,824.⁵ Efforts were made in this period to "breed" slaves, much in the manner of breeding stock, but without conspicuous success.⁶ Suggestions began to be made about searching for another source of labor—in 1811 a proposal was made for the importation of Chinese—but the planters refused to consider the possibility of using any but slave labor.⁷

In October 1833 an Act of Parliament was promulgated in the colony freeing all slaves and paying compensation in the amount of £ 20,000,000 to their owners.⁸ In British Guiana, the Act was implemented under the so-called Apprentices System, under which slaves were to work for their former masters for a further 4 or 6 years (depending upon the type of work) with reduced hours of work before obtaining complete freedom.⁹ In fact, slavery was terminated completely in British Guiana in 1838, two years before originally contemplated.¹⁰

Now the planters awoke to the necessity for tapping other sources of labor, for sugar production on the scale carried on in British Guiana requires a very large and steady work force. Even during apprenticeship the ex-slaves began to show great reluctance to continuing their former work, and after 1838 the situation became pressing. Africans left the plantations in large numbers to settle on small holdings or to live as squatter farmers on any

available land. Those who consented to continue to work in sugar demanded higher wages than the planters cared to pay, considering that this labor had formerly been free. Many refused to work long steady hours, preferring to work only enough to support themselves.¹¹

The first attempt to import free labor occurred in 1834, when a few Madeirans were brought to the colony. Ex-slaves from the West Indies were also recruited at this time, but these were in insufficient numbers to have any effect on the overall labor situation. In the next few years small numbers of Germans, Irish, English, Scots, Maltese, and Madeirans were tried, but none of these experiments met with outstanding success, principally because the imported workers were either unable or unwilling to accustom themselves to the climate and to the type of work demanded. Officials on Madeira were opposed to the drain on able manpower from the island, and indeed in all cases it would have been impossible to secure laborers in sufficient numbers without the active cooperation of the governments of their own countries.¹² India was, like British Guiana, a colonial possession of Great Britain, and it was not difficult to persuade the British Parliament and the British Government of India to concur in a proposal which an independent India, in the interests of her own citizens, would certainly have rejected.

Indian laborers had been shipped to Mauritius in increasing numbers since the abolition of slavery on that British-owned island in 1834.¹³ In 1836 an inquiry was sent to a Calcutta firm engaged in this trade with the purpose of obtaining similar laborers for British Guiana. The reply is worth quoting:

We are not aware that any greater difficulty would present itself in sending men to the West Indies, the natives being perfectly ignorant of the place they go to or the length of voyage they are undertaking.¹⁴

In May 1838 the first ships carrying Indian indentured laborers arrived in British Guiana. They brought about 400 men and women under five-year contracts, with guaranteed return passage at the end of this time.¹⁵ Shortly afterwards reports of mistreatment of Indian laborers in the colonies led to an embargo being placed

on all emigration from India, pending investigation.¹⁶ This first group in British Guiana remained, however, for the length of their contract period. Eighteen had died onboard ship; of the remainder one fourth died under indenture. In 1843 ships were chartered to transport the laborers back to India under the terms of their contract, and all but 60 sailed for home.¹⁷

In 1845 emigration was allowed to be resumed, but because of various abuses it was again halted in 1848.¹⁸ The planters in British Guiana and in the other colonies felt that India was a bottomless well of labor and that continuance of emigration from that country was the only solution to their need for large numbers of sugar workers. They pressed for reopening of emigration and finally succeeded in 1851. The indenture system then continued in operation without a break until its final abolition in 1917.¹⁹

In its final form, indenture consisted of a five-year labor contract. After serving his first five-year term, the laborer could sign on for another five years, under the same conditions, for the same or a different employer, or he could strike out on his own. Although in the early years no more than two five-year periods of indenture were allowed, after 1864 any number of additional contracts were permitted.²⁰ During the period of a contract the worker was not allowed to change employers, and failure to work, absence from the estate without a pass, or unsatisfactory performance of work was punishable by fine and imprisonment. Work days lost by such imprisonment were added to the indenture period.²¹

Employers were required under the terms of the contracts to supply housing, sanitary, and medical facilities for their workers. They were to provide regular work six days a week for seven hours a day (outdoors) or ten hours indoors. A wage of one shilling a day was to be paid to each adult male, with correspondingly less for women and children. If work was set on a task basis it was supposed to be such that could be completed in the time specified for daily work and at a rate that would not be less than the daily rate. Extra pay was to be given for overtime work. Although the laborers' part of the contract was enforced by penal sanctions, the planters could not be fined for failing to meet their obligations. A laborer was permitted to sue his employer for

unpaid wages, but in fact it was made difficult for him to do so, not only because in order to go to Georgetown to complain to the immigration officials he was required to have a pass signed by his employer, but also because the whole administrative and jural system was under the control of the planters and of those who were in sympathy with the planters' interests.²²

After ten years' residence in British Guiana, not necessarily all under indenture, the laborer was entitled to repatriation under the specific terms of his contract. Although in the early years repatriation was made without charge to the emigrant, the cost to the colony came to be regarded as excessive, and in 1895 the contracts began to provide that the emigrant pay one fourth of his own return passage (one sixth in the case of a woman). In 1898 the emigrant's share was increased to one half for men and one third for women.²³ This change had the additional effect of making it difficult for Indians to return home after serving their terms and thus pressuring them to sign on for additional terms of indenture. This in turn saved the expense of bringing more laborers from India to replace those repatriated.

The program of immigration from India was financed by the colony itself. The cost of administration and of medical attention for the laborers on the estates was paid out of the general revenue. The planters were, however, required to maintain their own estate hospitals. The costs of recruitment, transportation, and repatriation were paid from a special fund supplied from the fees paid by the planters who used indentured labor and from an acreage tax on sugar estates.²⁴

In the early twentieth century public opinion in India began to be aroused against the system of indenture, largely under the influence of Gandhi, whose efforts in behalf of Indians in South Africa had brought the problem to the indignant eyes of the world.²⁵ The Government of India was finally persuaded to forbid further emigration under this system in 1917. In 1920 all existing indenture contracts in British Guiana were cancelled.²⁶ In the entire period 238,979 Indians were brought to British Guiana under indenture and up to 1938 74,645 had been repatriated.²⁷ Even up to 1955 small numbers of Indians were returning to India under the terms of their indenture contracts.²⁸

Today the Indian population constitutes almost one half that of the total population of British Guiana. Although indenture has been abolished, sugar is still the mainstay of the economy and a large proportion of these Indians still work on the sugar estates. Rice is now the crop second in importance in the colony, thanks to the efforts of Indian farmers. Most of the rice is grown on small holdings, although a few large mechanized rice farms are to be found.²⁹ Although some Indians are employed in the mining industry, and there are Indian traders and white collar workers, the overwhelming majority of Indians are rural dwellers, engaged in some form of agricultural production.

The songs which form the basis for this paper were recorded in British Guiana in August and September of 1962. They were sung in most cases at my request, by persons in various parts of the country, by persons of all ages, in many walks of life. My total collection numbers almost 900 songs. Of these, the great majority were found to be of Indian origin, sung in the Bhojpuri dialect of Eastern Hindi, the language of the area from which a majority of the immigrants came.³⁰ These are the traditional songs sung on ceremonial occasions in India, as well as religious and festival songs, and they are the same types of song, in similar form, that are sung in India today. However, about ten percent of the songs in the collection are clearly of more recent origin, according to the evidence of subject matter and linguistic usage. Again, about half of this number are songs that I have grouped under the rubric "protest songs."³¹ These are songs which deal with the trials of the period of recruitment, the ocean voyage to British Guiana, and the time of indenture on the sugar estates. They tell of outstanding events in British Guiana's history, of the political events leading to India's freedom seen from the vantage point of the emigrant, and of the attempts to gain independence for British Guiana. Some of the later compositions deal with party politics of British Guiana, and others are concerned with the decline of Indian consciousness and Indian moral values in modern British Guiana. All represent an expression of protest against the singers' lot in life, against changing times, and against a political and economic atmosphere in which freedom is lacking.

Almost all the protest songs are sung in a language that

differs from the Bhojpuri of the older songs, brought from India. It can be characterized as a creolized Hindi. Its vocabulary is largely Hindi, but without the grammatical complexities of the standard language as it is written or even as it is spoken in India. Distinctions of number, gender and case, important in standard Hindi, are blurred, if not entirely disregarded. Words of the creole English, *taki-taki*, spoken by working-class Indian and African alike in British Guiana are interspersed. Some of the songs are almost entirely in *taki-taki*, or have creole English verses with a "creole" Hindi chorus.

The songs are usually sung with accompaniment of typically Indian musical instruments. Women use a small Indian drum, the *tablā*. Men sing with one or more of the following instruments: harmonium (although Western in origin, this instrument is extremely popular in India among folk musicians), *sārangi* (an Indian stringed instrument rested with its base on the knees and played with a bow), cymbals, and *tablā*.

The music of the songs is for the most part clearly Indian in form, although a few of the late songs show African or Western influence. An adequate analysis of the music of the songs in this collection awaits the examination of a trained musicologist.

Contrary to the persistent theme in the writings of British apologists for the indenture system, Indians did not leave for work in the colonies in order to escape religious or political persecution or widespread hunger and disease at home. On the contrary, Indians, particularly villagers, were reluctant to travel at all, and it took considerable persuasion on the part of the recruiters, or '*arkāṭī*,' to gather men and women in sufficient numbers to render their calling a profitable one. Recruiters were hired in India and paid according to the number of people they could recruit for indenture. Twice as much was paid for a woman as for a man because of the greater difficulty of recruiting women in a society in which there is no class of respectable single women. Deception, trickery, blackmail, and even kidnapping were employed by the recruiters, and the villagers' ignorance and gullibility were exploited. They were told that Demerara (British Guiana) was a place near Calcutta and that they were going to a land where plants grew gold. They were convinced that they would return to India in a

few years as wealthy men.³² Female recruiters wandered around such places as well at the outskirts of villages where women gathered, listened to their gossip and secrets, and played upon the weaknesses they discovered.³³ A song exclaims:

Oh recruiter, your heart is deceitful,
Your speech is full of lies!
Tender may be your voice, articulate and seemingly
logical,
But it is all used to defame and destroy
The good names of people.

After agreeing to go with the recruiter, the prospective emigrant was registered with the local magistrate and taken, with others, to Calcutta. Here they had to undergo medical examinations, so that those unfit could be weeded out. Even here, many people actually unfit to undertake the journey were slipped through by unscrupulous recruiters who were paid only if their recruits actually embarked.³⁴ Here also religious marks, such as pigtails and sacred threads, were often stripped off, and thus the first step was taken in the process of making the recruits feel fallen and outcast in the eyes of their people. Their own clothes were taken and they were issued with clothing for the voyage. One of the folk poets describes their feelings in this way:

When we reached Calcutta, our miseries increased.
We were stripped of all our beautiful clothes,
Rosary beads and sacred threads.
Bengali rags decorated us now.
The *sādhu's*³⁵ hair was shaved,
And *sādhu*, Dom,³⁶ Chamar,³⁷ and Bhangi³⁸
All were thrown together in a room.

While waiting for the ship to take them to British Guiana, the recruits were given meals not suited to their customs or religious convictions. If they refused to eat, the *bābūs*, Indian clerks placed in charge, used force:

They beat us with a cane, lifting us over their
heads,

They threw us on the floor;
In abusive language they called us *sālā* and other
names.³⁹

At this point, however, there was no escape; they had already signed away their freedom for the coming years. They were to be transported from one huge prison, as Gandhi called India, to another country of slavery:

"What sins have we committed, oh Lord,
That Thou hast given us these miseries?"
Repenting in their hearts they called for mother and
father,

Blaming their fate, their *karma*,⁴⁰ or even the Lord
Himself.

The voyage across the seas to British Guiana is likened in song to the Vaitarini River, the waters crossed by dead souls on the way to hell. One song tells of being fed rotten fish mixed with pulses and rice, and of being forced to lick leftovers and even steal food in order to fill the stomach. For the latter crime the emigrants were tied with a rope, their faces blackened, and paraded around the decks.

Before 1909, when steamships began to be used to transport the immigrants, the journey from India took at least three months, and often longer.⁴¹ Because of overcrowding and the lack of sufficient pure water and sanitary facilities, epidemics often raged on the ships. In 1856-57 shipboard mortality ranged from 5.75 to 31.17 percent, and in 1864-65 from 22 to 50 percent. In 1871 certain reforms in the provided facilities reduced the death rate, which then varied from less than one percent to 5.47 percent each year.⁴² The following song is sung by an emigrant who is coming to the realization of what he has committed himself to:

Listen, oh Indian, listen to the story of us emigres,
The emigres who cry constantly, tears flowing from their
eyes.

When we left the ports of Calcutta and Bombay,
Brother left sister, mother left daughter.
In the deep love of the mother country we cried;

Water flowed from our eyes.
The villagers were simple, and they faced the meanest
of mean people
For whom they were no match.
Painful is our story, choking is our voice;
When brother sold brother all shame was gone,
The mothers were looted.
In need of a few grains, we became beggars.

Upon arriving in British Guiana the immigrants were unloaded from the ships and distributed among the sugar estates. They were called "coolies," a name which has persisted to modern times as an epithet for the people of Indian descent. Resentment at the name appears in many songs:

We came to Dem'ra,
With the name "coolie,"

Says one line, and another:

Why should we be called coolies,
We who were born in the clans and families of seers
and saints?

At the plantations the laborers were housed in "lines" or "ranges," barracks of a single story, 50 to 100 feet long, containing a number of rooms, with a verandah extending the length of the building. The partitions between the rooms did not extend to the ceiling, thus facilitating ventilation but also making privacy impossible. The rooms, of an average size of 120 square feet, were inhabited either by a family or by a number of single workers. Provisions for clean water and latrines were notably deficient and crowding was common.⁴³ The "coolie lines" are described by the folk singers as "stables."

The planter was the guardian of the indentured laborer in more ways than one. He had judicial powers in the regulation of disputes between his laborers—"on some plantations the laborers were not expected to take their disputes to the magistrate's court until the manager had first given the plaintiff permission to take out a summons."⁴⁴ With the power to shift a man's residence within the plantation or to expel him, and to levy fines, he was

able to settle disputes—marital, financial and other—on his plantation.⁴⁵

The attitude of the white community in British Guiana toward the Indian laborers is reflected in the writings of Henry Kirke, a long-time resident of the colony, and himself a magistrate.⁴⁶ Kirke sees "nothing repressive in the colony"⁴⁷ and affirms that the planters were "uniformly kind" to their workers.⁴⁸ He attributes the failure of the majority of Indians to accumulate wealth under indenture to their character rather than to the system,⁴⁹ although a study made on this question shows that a man working for ten years at the best-paying job on the estates could with greatest thrift save a maximum of 162 dollars, while men in lower-paid jobs and women could save nothing, when their share of the cost of return passage is taken into consideration.⁵⁰ In Kirke's view, the Indians were lazy and intemperate, continually falling into dissolute habits, the most common of which was drink.⁵¹

Kirke's view of the judicial system is also enlightening. He feels that the cases brought by Indian workers against their employers were "purely imagined and grossly exaggerated" by "oriental imagery and metaphor,"⁵² and he describes several such cases which struck him as particularly humorous. In fact, it was very difficult for a laborer to bring any complaint against the planter, even to recover wages due him. Absence from the estate without a pass was a criminal offense, punishable by a jail term, and a pass had to be signed by the employer. In order to bring suit, a laborer had to go to Georgetown to the immigration officials for permission, and even if his case did come to court he had little chance of winning.⁵³ On the other hand, prosecutions against laborers for breaches of the labor laws were frequent. Between 1872 and 1915, the percentage of prosecutions for this cause to the total number of indentured laborers varied from 14.7 to 39.2 percent, with an average of about one fourth of the laborers prosecuted each year.⁵⁴ Nath says about this matter:

Nearly all the cases brought were either decided against the immigrants or withdrawn on the immigrants' paying the cost of the summons. A few of them were acquitted but those instances could hardly be considered acquittals

at all as they took place only when the charges were badly drawn up, or when the immigrants were found by the magistrate to be so sick as to be more fit to be sent to hospital than to the gaol.⁵⁵

The workers were never to remain in their barracks on a working day—they should always be either in the field, in the hospital, or in jail. The British Guiana depicted in the songs of this time thus shows an understandable preoccupation with the court house, the police station, and the jail.

It drives one out of his mind,
British Guiana drives us out of our minds.
In Rowra there is the court house,
In Sodi is the police station,
In Camesma is the prison.
It drives one crazy,
It is British Guiana.
The court house in Wakenaam,
The police station in Parika,
The prison in Georgetown,
Drive you crazy.

Working conditions on the estates were hard. Although the contracts stipulated a seven hour day in the field and ten hours in the factory, overtime was common in the busy times of year and the laborers were frequently occupied from 15 to 22 hours a day.⁵⁶ Whipping was used on some of the plantations as a spur to increased labor or as punishment for failure to work. The following song describes the course of a working day:

On one side are sitting Pama and Pulma;
On the other sits Hulkar.
Pama said to Pulma, "Wake up all the Kafris."⁵⁷
"How much work do you have for them?" asked the boss.
"To cut Number 20 field."
The Kafris were hardly sleeping when they were awakened.

They awoke startled, and Pulma reported,
 "I have shown them their way at 5 A.M.,
 To cut the cane in Number 20 field."
 With cutlasses in their hands the Kafris ate half-boiled
 rice and plantain.
 Reaching Number 20 they crossed trenches after trenches,
 full of alligators,
 And began to work.
 So the whips and chains began to pour on them.
 What's next, oh Lord?
 Our bread is snatched away too.

Another song describes the variety of work done by the
 Indians in British Guiana:

These capitalist fat cats have become our masters.
 They now do what comes to their minds.
 They made us clear the whole jungle,
 They made us cut cane, dig trenches,
 Harshly are we driven to build their palaces, to dig their
 canals,
 And to build their big city, Georgetown.
 And we wander street to street, remaining beggars.

It is perhaps no wonder that Kirke sometimes found that his
 prisoners preferred remaining in jail rather than being sent back
 to the plantations to work.⁵⁸

The conditions under which the indentured laborers suffered,
 conditions which did not cease with the abolition of the indenture
 system, were bound to cause resentment among the Indians. This
 resentment was not only expressed in song but was translated into
 action, as a long series of strikes and riots, beginning in 1872 and
 continuing into recent years, shows.⁵⁹ A song describing a meeting
 of workers at Port Mourant in 1939 is typical:

Listen to the astonishing event of 1939;
 Come and see the rally of Port Mourant.
 All the people entered the hall for the rally,
 And began to play instruments.

After the music they ate,
 And then one fire, two fires, fires were shot.
 Poor Mr. Singh fell down shot dead,
 Shot dead by the planters.
 Police came to take statements,
 But for what?

One of the worst evils of the indenture system was the great
 disparity in numbers of men and women. In 1838 only three women
 were brought for every one hundred men and although in later
 years the statutory requirements were changed so that after 1870
 a minimum of 40 women to every one hundred men had to be
 brought to the colony, this minimum was not always attained and
 seldom exceeded.⁶⁰ Because of the extra expense of recruiting
 women, and their lesser value as laborers, the planters were not
 eager to increase the proportion of women. Since the government
 did not in the early years make provision for the recognition of
 Indian customary marriages, couples were sometimes separated in
 the distribution of the laborers among the estates. Cases occurred
 in which husbands were tried in court for sleeping with their own
 wives, because the latter were underage for British civil marriage.⁶¹
 In addition to the difficulties thus made for the Indian married
 couple, severe moral and criminal problems arose from the disparity
 of women. All writers of this period speak of the prevalence of
 murders of women and other men by jealous husbands or lovers,
 and the songs describe similar cases. A story written by a British
 Guiana Indian tells a similar story, of a girl abducted in India
 after her marriage there and brought to British Guiana as an
 indentured worker, where she is forced to sleep with various white
 men. The girl commits suicide when she is unable to save herself.⁶²
 In such an atmosphere trafficking in women was bound to occur,
 and the planter or the foreman, in the role as arbitrator of domestic
 disputes, had the power to redistribute the available women as
 suited their interests. A frequent theme in the folksongs is the
 breakdown of Indian values and traditional behavior which began
 in the early indenture period. Thus in one songs:

Wonderful is this Dam'ra Island:
 All the traditions are going in the opposite direction.

Sisters wear long dresses, pressing them under their heels;
 Gentlemen wear short skirts, showing half their legs.
 Oh these women!
 Tying Madrassi *kortif* on the head, parting their hair on the side.
 Right in the middle of the market, pushing people with their shoulders, they eat.
 No shame is left.
 Cigarettes they press between their lips, they sit on chairs.
 With no shame before their father-in-law or brother-in-law,
 They giggle, laugh and talk.⁶³

Another song with a similar motif comments:

They don't give a damn for their brother or sister,
 Nor do they recognize their grandparents.
 They have cast away their parents.
 Without knowledge of Indian culture, the girls and boys do what they please,
 Throwing away the traditions of their home.
 Every day our race is becoming degraded, without the knowledge of Indian culture.

Although one solution to the lack of women in the Indian community—marriage to African or other women—was rarely resorted to by Indians, such marriages or liaisons did occasionally occur. They were, and still are, looked upon with disfavor by Indians; marriages of an Indian woman and an African man are considered even more reprehensible, as the following song demonstrates:

As the hot spices are mixed into the *dāl*,⁶⁴
 So mix the muskrat and the coolie girl,⁶⁵
 And produce the mongrel children.

To the Christian missionaries the Indians were heathens, and their religions, "by which they have been heretofore misguided and held in bonds to sin," worthy of contempt.⁶⁶ They needed only "proper management, discipline, and kindness," to become "excellent servants, trustworthy and faithful to their masters, the planters and proprietors of estates."⁶⁷ The missionaries were busy for the most part trying to save the coolies for the next world while closing their eyes to present conditions. Their teaching tried to instill contempt for the Indian past, and it is not surprising that the Indians on the whole resisted a gospel that taught them to love by rejecting as worthless their old religion, prophets, and society.⁶⁸ They continued to revere their own religious functionaries, as the following songs illustrate:

I bow to that Brahman, who reads me the Katha,
 Who teaches me the *pūjā*, *sandhyā*, and *havan*.⁶⁹

And:

Hail to the Brahman who built the temple here,
 Who saved us from the exploitation of the missions.

To the Christians, getting the Hindus to eat meat and the Muslims to eat pork were signs of progress. The Indians protested this trend by singing satirical verses like the following:

Listen, oh listen, ladies and gentlemen!
 What a pleasure it is in Dem'ra.
 Babus and Babas serve chicken.
 What a vegetable! They eat a plateful.
 What progress is this!

And in a more serious vein:

Where are you, oh Lord Krishna ?
 The pained cows are weeping and calling you.

The nature of the indenture system did little to assimilate Indians into the larger society and they remained foreigners in their own eyes and in the eyes of European and other populations.⁷⁰ They continued to look toward India for cultural inspiration and

for political inspiration as well, for India was suffering under foreign domination and had begun the movement for her independence. In India there were revolts, rallies, and shootings. With every shot fired an echo reached British Guiana, and the people sang:

They came to conduct trade,
And they are shooting India now.

With every stir of awakening in India they tried to awaken their fellow-exiles:

From Bengal our countrymen started and went from
village to village;
They awoke every Indian.
Oh foreigner,⁷¹ you too wake up!
This is no time to sleep.

Gandhi's struggle in South Africa against white supremacy and his efforts later in India echoed their own feelings and aspirations. They prayed for this success and the safety of their motherland.

Lord, save my motherland.
Lord, let the boat of Mother India sail across safely.
Fill my heart with love for my country.

In more than one song the Indian freedom movement is pictured as a marriage party, in which Gandhi is a bridegroom going to marry "Freedom." He is surrounded by the members of his marriage party, those who go to jail for resisting the British. When Gandhi finally succeeded in his efforts to win independence, the British Guianese Indians joined in the rejoicing and flew the tricolor flag over their homes. *Jai Hind* ("Long Live India") became a common greeting among Indians in British Guiana, and when I was recording these songs, it was almost invariably called out by the singers at the end of each number. The following lines are typical of the post-Indian independence songs sung in British Guiana:

Jai, jai, Gandhiji Maharaj!
Your mission is completed!

And:

Free from misery is India today, celebrate who will;
Victory came to Mahatma Gandhi, celebrate who will.

A complete song goes as follows:

A holy message has come from India;
Darling husband, pay attention and listen.
Sometimes traveling by train,
Sometimes traveling by ship,
Sometimes walking on foot,
Going from village to village, from state to state,
They [Indians] sowed the seeds of love.
Eating plain, unseasoned food,
Forsaking their sleep,
Becoming united, forgetting their differences,
They brought peace and pleasure.
They are repairing the age-old wretched situation.
They wandered in the dust in the cause of self-rule,
But they did not leave Gandhi.
Gandhi looks beautiful in his *dhoti*,⁷²
With a staff in his hand.
For the sake of self-rule he worked,
For the sake of love he died.
Praise to the brave British
Who returned India [to the Indians].

Now their efforts began to turn in earnest toward winning British Guiana's independence. The franchise had been broadened slightly in 1927 to allow almost all men and women who were literate in some language to vote, and in 1953 a new Constitution permitted universal adult suffrage. The years between saw an increased political consciousness and the development of a British Guianese national consciousness among the Indians. A multi-racial movement, with the People's Progressive Party as its political manifestation, began to gain support. In the first General Election this party, led by Dr. Cheddi Jagan, of Indian descent, and L. S. F. Burnham, an African lawyer, won a majority of votes. Shortly

thereafter the new Constitution was suspended by the British Government and the new Assembly dissolved. Burnham broke away from the People's Progressive Party, taking much of the African popular support with him. Since then the Party has had its major backing in the rural areas and from the Indian population, although it has also been victorious in areas where African support is crucial. In the two elections since 1953 (in 1957 and 1961), Jagan's party has won the majority of the popular vote and he has been Prime Minister of British Guiana since that post was established in 1961. His cabinet is multi-racial and multi-religious.

From the time of his first electoral successes in 1953 the British Government has been concerned with what it feels to be the Marxist orientation of Jagan and with the possibility of Communist subversion of the Government of British Guiana. Whatever may be the merits of these allegations, any criticism of Jagan on this basis has no relevance for his constituents, particularly for his Indian constituents, and there is no evidence whatsoever that the songs they sing about him and in support of his aims and policies are in any way influenced by Communist doctrines. The vocabulary of the songs has no similarity to that used in modern Hindi leftist writings nor is the tone of modern socialist realist poetry of modern India and British Guiana present. The Indians in British Guiana feel that attempts by the British and other Western governments to dismiss Jagan as a Communist are merely tricks perpetrated by those who oppose British Guiana's independence, and they point out that Nehru and Gandhi were in the past the objects of similar accusations. In fact, in the folksongs Jagan has become increasingly identified with Nehru and Gandhi and has attained almost the quality of a mythical hero, and his movement, by analogy with the Indian independence movement, is felt to be bound to win ultimately. Jagan is given the epithets "Mahatma," "The Nehru of British Guiana," and "Father of the Nation" in folksongs. In one song, the fact that Jagan was jailed for his political activities, as was Gandhi, is alluded to in the lines:

He went to jail for us poor people;
Jagan is the man of the poor.

The fact that Jagan mixes with the people and allows himself to be seen and spoken to as an equal are important to the Indians, who consider him, as in the above song, "a man of the poor." And they consider him responsible for many improvements in their condition during the last ten years. Jagan is the man who brought new land under cultivation, who provided clean drinking water and new settlements for the Indian villagers:

In the mother country there is Jawaharlal;
In British Guiana Minister Jagan is the true son of the
castes.

Bravo, Minister Jagan!

You established Palin City, settled poor people there.

Oh Guianese, listen, try your refrain!

Vote for Dr. Jagan once more again!

Praised are the parents who gave birth to a son like
him.

Lord Shiva bless his grace, the savior of the race.

There are literally dozens of songs repeating this and similar themes. Some ask God to make their leader's wishes come true; others urge people to fly the flag of the People's Progressive Party and to fight for independence. The differences between the political parties have become topics for current folksongs. In them the singers condemn the rightist politician D'Aguiar for his support of the colonial power and blame Burnham, who in political philosophy is very close to Jagan, for putting his aspirations for personal power above the nation's welfare. The following are indicative:

D'Aguiar is the fool,

Burnham is the mule,

The man Jagan is born to rule.

Play the mandolin, *bhāl*,⁷³

Play the mandolin.

All the young girls drink *palmalin*.⁷⁴

And:

Eat what D'Aguiar has to give

Drink the liquor he provides,⁷⁵

But vote for Jagan.

In the folksongs of these Indians in British Guiana there is reflected the history of over a century of servitude in the dominion of King Sugar. The songs retell in many different ways the story of a system which tried, and in some measure succeeded, in taking from the Indians a cultural heritage in order to maximize gain for the sugar planters. The extent to which this heritage did survive the ravages of the indenture system and its aftermath is evident in the preservation of the hundreds of folksongs brought from India and in the continuation of the folk singing tradition in the new environment. There is every evidence that the protest songs of Indians in British Guiana are not an indigenous phenomenon, but represent an old tradition in India of singing against the oppressors, whether they be the Moguls, the British, or the Indian landlords. Published materials on Indian folksongs bear this out.⁷⁶ It would be interesting to compare these songs of British Guiana with the rich fund of pre-independence songs in the various languages of India.

In reaction against the hardships of the indenture period and as a result of the feeling of apartness as a community that this period engendered, the Indians of British Guiana have throughout looked toward India for cultural and later for political inspiration, and have regarded India as their "Motherland." However, the gradual emergence of a national consciousness directed toward British Guiana, so vehemently urged by Dr. Jagan and other foresighted political leaders and encouraged by the post-independence policies of the Indian Government, is apparent among many Indians in British Guiana today. The following song shows that for some such an attitude is beginning to override the preoccupation with India and the identification with India as a homeland:

Oh Guiana, oh Guiana,
Crown of the world,
Whose fields give us greenness,
And whose rivers flow free.

With this trend there is at the same time a strong resurgence of interest in Indian culture, language and traditions, and the folk poet still speaks as an Indian when he sings:

We cut the cane, we make the sugar,
We raise the building, oh darling mine.

NOTES

¹ A shorter version of this paper was read at the Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Detroit, Michigan, on December 29, 1963.

I would like to thank the Colorado Research Foundation for a travel grant which made it possible for me to go to British Guiana, and especially to Dr. Maurice Albertson, formerly Director of the Foundation. I would also like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Usharbudh Arya for their hospitality and help during my field stay and to Sylvia Vatuk, for her help in the preparation of this paper.

The term "East Indians" is generally used in British Guiana to distinguish migrants from India from the aboriginal American Indians of the country. Here, since the context is clear, the word "Indian," except where otherwise specified, should be taken to mean the immigrants from India and their descendants.

² A. R. F. Webber, *Centenary History and Handbook of British Guiana* (Georgetown, 1931), 21, 42-44, 56-57, 68-69, 124.

³ *British Guiana 1961* (London, 1961), 26.

⁴ Peter Ruhomon, *Centenary History of the East Indians in British Guiana 1838-1938* (Georgetown, 1946), 8-9.

⁵ Dwarka Nath, *A History of Indians in British Guiana* (London, 1950), 2. See also Webber, 131.

⁶ Webber, 180; Nath, 3.

⁷ Webber, 131-132; Nath, 2.

⁸ Webber, 166.

⁹ Nath, 1; Webber, 166.

¹⁰ Ruhomon, 9; Webber, 193-194; Nath, 4-5.

¹¹ Nath, 6-7; Ruhomon, 16.

¹² Nath, 6; Ruhomon, 17-19.

¹³ See Burton Benedict, *Indians in a Plural Society* (London 1961) for a description of overseas Indians in the colony of Mauritius.

¹⁴ Quoted by Nath, 8.

¹⁵ Nath, 11-14.

¹⁶ Nath, 22.

¹⁷ Nath, 21.

¹⁸ Ruhomon, 40-42; Nath, 50.

¹⁹ Ruhomon, 65. See also Benedict, Hilda Kuper, *Indians in Natal* (Natal, 1960), and Adrian Mayer, *Indians in Fiji* (London, 1963).

²⁰ Ruhomon, 44-45.

²¹ Ruhomon, 147-148.

- ²² See Nath, 173-176 for copies of contracts, and Ruhomon, 286-298, for laws pertaining to immigration and indenture.
- ²³ Nath, 173-176.
- ²⁴ Ruhomon, 148.
- ²⁵ Ruhomon, 61-66. See also M. K. Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (New York, 1957), and Louis Fisher, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York, 1962).
- ²⁶ Nath, 123.
- ²⁷ Ruhomon, 66.
- ²⁸ Michael Swan, *British Guiana, The Land of Six Peoples* (London, 1957), 46.
- ²⁹ *British Guiana* 1961, 90-92.
- ³⁰ R. T. Smith, "Some Social Characteristics of Indian Immigrants to British Guiana," *Population Studies*, 13, 1959.
- ³¹ Compare John Greenway, *American Folksongs of Protest* (New York, 1953 and 1960) and Patrick Galvin, *Irish Songs of Resistance* (New York, 1956), for example.
- ³² Ruhomon, 98-99, 118-121. See also Kuper, 10 and Mayer, 14.
- ³³ Chandra Shekhar Sharma, *Ishvar kī Santān ko hai Varshā kī Nark and sūtāharan* (Berbice, 1930), 33.
- ³⁴ Ruhomon, 93-96.
- ³⁵ Ascetic.
- ³⁶ A low, untouchable caste of drummers.
- ³⁷ A low, untouchable caste of leather workers.
- ³⁸ A low, untouchable caste of sweepers. The point of these lines is that persons of all castes were made to sleep and eat together, disregarding caste restrictions on social intercourse of this type between them.
- ³⁹ A term of abuse, literally "brother-in-law."
- ⁴⁰ Deeds of a previous life.
- ⁴¹ Nath, 182.
- ⁴² Nath, 80, 85, 181; Ruhomon, 122.
- ⁴³ Ruhomon, 108-109, 128-131.
- ⁴⁴ Chandra Jayawardena, *Conflict and Solidarity in a Guianese Plantation* (London, 1963), 18.
- ⁴⁵ Jayawardena, 18.
- ⁴⁶ Henry Kirke, *Twenty-five Years in British Guiana, 1872-1897* (Georgetown, 1948).
- ⁴⁷ Kirke, 251.
- ⁴⁸ Kirke, 251.
- ⁴⁹ Kirke, 250.
- ⁵⁰ Ruhomon, 134.

- ⁵¹ Kirke, 251.
- ⁵² Kirke, 252.
- ⁵³ Kirke, 252.
- ⁵⁴ Nath, 53-56, 212; Ruhomon, 138-139.
- ⁵⁵ Nath, 53.
- ⁵⁶ Ruhomon, 127.
- ⁵⁷ Derogatory term for laborers, literally "unbelievers" (Muslim origin).
- ⁵⁸ Kirke, 139-140, 207.
- ⁵⁹ Ruhomon, 261-274; Webber, 280-281; Cheddi Jagan, *Forbidden Freedom* (New York, 1954), 19.
- ⁶⁰ Nath, 124-126; Ruhomon, 123-125; Kirke, 161-167; H. V. P. Bronkhurst, *The Colony of British Guyana and its Labouring Population* (London, 1883), 136-137.
- ⁶¹ Kirke, 184.
- ⁶² Sharma, 32-43.
- ⁶³ This refers to the customary Indian avoidance by a woman of her husband's father and elder brother.
- ⁶⁴ A kind of lentil preparation.
- ⁶⁵ "Muskrat" is being used here as a derogatory allusion to an African man. It may be noted that the distaste for such a match is so great that the term "coolie," so resented by Indians, is here used to describe one of their own group who has married out of the community.
- ⁶⁶ Bronkhurst, 238.
- ⁶⁷ Bronkhurst, 240.
- ⁶⁸ See Bronkhurst, 281-299.
- ⁶⁹ Different types of Hindu worship.
- ⁷⁰ See Vera Rubin, "Culture, Politics, and Race Relations," *Social and Economic Studies*, 11 (1962), 439-440.
- ⁷¹ Here referring to Indians in British Guiana.
- ⁷² Loincloth.
- ⁷³ Brother.
- ⁷⁴ Palm liquor.
- ⁷⁵ D'Aguiar is the owner of a large alcoholic beverage company.
- ⁷⁶ See, for example, P. C. Joshi, "Some Folk Songs on the First Indian War of Independence," *Folklore Monthly*, 4 (1963), 8-14; Sridhar Misra, "Kunvar Singh in Folk Song," *Folklore Monthly*, 4 (1963), 15-20; S. B. Pandey, "Freedom Struggle in Hindi Folksongs," *Folklore Monthly*, 4 (1963), 301-307; Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh* (London, 1946), 157-172; Shrikrishna Das, *Lokgītō kī Sāmājīk Vyākhyā*, (Allahabad, 1956); Suryakaran Parik, *Rājastānī Lokgīt* (Allahabad, 1955).

17

Protest Songs of East Indians on the West Coast, USA¹

with Sylvia Vatuk

I

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, a small-scale migration began from the Indian sub-continent to the West Coast of the United States and Canada. Consisting of a handful of men in the early years, the stream gradually increased and reached a high point in the years 1906 to 1911 when almost 6000 Indians were admitted legally to the United States and an unknown number entered without the government's knowledge. In 1914 and again in 1920 large numbers of these immigrants returned to India with the hope of taking part in a struggle to free India of British rule, and in 1947, when India finally attained independence, many more returned to their homeland. The effect of these periods of migration and of the restrictive Immigration Laws of 1917 and 1924 was a net decrease in the United States Indian population after the First World War. However, the movement of Indians continued throughout the period in both directions, as Indians were able to enter legally on student visas and illegally through Mexico until 1946. India and later Pakistan were included in the quota immigration program. Although the number of immigrants who enter the United States each year from India and Pakistan and from Indian enclaves in other countries is small, a great proportion of those who do immigrate settle on the West Coast, where an Indian community of long standing is in existence. The majority of these are, as in the past, Sikhs, whose ultimate origins are in the Panjabi-speaking area of northwestern India. However, other linguistic and religious communities have been represented in small numbers since the earliest years of Indian immigration.

Until 1946 the flow of Indians to the United States was almost exclusively male. This was due partly to social and economic conditions in India, but between 1917 and 1946 it was equally a result of legal barriers to Indian immigration imposed by the United States government. Those men who came to the United States had for the most part purely economic motives. The legal immigrants before World War I and the illegal immigrants of the inter-war period were mainly Punjabi peasants. Many had served for a time in the British Indian Army and had occasion to travel within India and to other outposts of the British Empire. They had heard of the opportunities open in the United States for industrious unskilled laborers in lumbering, agriculture, and railroad construction. In the minds of all but a few was the intention of working for a limited period until enough money could be accumulated for a return to their families in India with the means for a more secure future.

Besides this predominantly uneducated or slightly educated population, only a few urban intellectuals came to the United States from India before the First World War. Some of these formed the core of a movement for Indian independence, which was formally organized in the San Francisco area in 1913. This organization, the Hindustan Gadar Party, enjoyed the strong support, both moral and financial, of the mass of Indian immigrants in the U.S and had contacts as well in other overseas Indian communities and within India itself. The word *gadar* means rebellion or revolt and refers to the so-called "Mutiny of 1857," during which uprisings against the British government occurred in various parts of India. The avowed purpose of the party was to renew the spirit of revolt which had been aroused in 1857, to organize and arm Indians in India and abroad, and to undertake a well-planned and complete overthrow of foreign rule. To this end, the Gadar Party secretly supplied arms and ammunition to potential revolutionaries within India, attempted to organize overseas Indians for an armed return to the mainland, and published patriotic pamphlets, newspapers and song books. These latter were of two types: those intended to arouse sympathy for the cause of Indian independence in the United States and other Western countries, and those which sought support for revolt among Indians at home and in the many overseas Indian communities. Material was printed

in many Indian and European languages and distributed throughout the world wherever Indians gathered; when possible, the publications of the Hindustan Gadar Party were smuggled into India as well. In this effort it must be realized that the Party was not alone, for during the entire pre-Independence period a large amount of similar material was in circulation, sponsored by similar organizations in various countries and directed toward publicizing the evils of colonial rule in India and seeking support for the freedom movement in its various forms.

In 1915 the unveiling of a plot in which the Hindustan Gadar Party was involved with the German government led to the so-called Hindu Conspiracy Trials held in San Francisco in 1917. The Party was accused of breaking United States Neutrality Laws by initiating armed action against the British in India. This time of crisis brought to a head the growing factionalism within the Party. After the courtroom shooting of the Party's head and of his assassin, many supporters in the United States, particularly the non-Sikhs, withdrew active backing from the organization. However, the Party remained fairly active until 1947, concentrating mainly on the distribution of literature, the provision of scholarship aid for Indian students abroad, and the financial support of schools and other educational activities in India.²

The collection of songs on which this paper is based is contained in a number of booklets published in San Francisco by the Gadar Party between 1915 and 1918 and later reissued in 1931.³ According to one of these volumes, the songs have been collected and published in order to "create and intensify patriotism among Indians living abroad."⁴ They were circulated with other nationalistic literature by the Party. The songs to which we have had access are in Hindi and Panjabi, although collections in Urdu, Gujarati and Marathi were apparently also printed. We have also consulted a number of members of the Indian community in the Bay Area, the Sacramento Valley, and the Imperial Valley who have lived in California since before World War I. These consultants were able to sing some of the more popular songs for us and describe the occasions on which these songs were typically sung in the years before Indian independence.

The authorship of most of the songs is not given in the

booklets, although some have been attributed by our informants to a composer and active member of the Party who came to California in approximately 1917. Many of the songs featured in the printed collection were already current in the Indian community and had patriotic meaning for the singers. Their publications served as an aid to memory, a way of spreading songs of general appeal and introducing new ones, and, as far as the Party was concerned, a way of attracting followers to a cause. In this the collections might be compared to collections of American labor songs printed by union groups in the days of intense labor union activity. Traditional definitions of "folk songs," which use the criteria of exclusively oral transmission, anonymity of authorship and the existence of several variants as evidence of persistence for an appreciable time, do not completely apply to these songs. However, they certainly are such if we accept John Greenway's definition: "a song concerned with the interests of the folk and in the complete possession of the folk."⁵

These songs can usefully be compared with the Irish songs of resistance discussed by Galvin,⁶ which have similar themes ("appeals to nationhood and love of liberty"⁷) and even the same adversary (Great Britain). Like the songs in our collection, these songs were transmitted through written texts as well as orally.⁸ The Mexican *corridos*—specifically those of what Paredes calls the "*corrido* period," which developed out of an older song tradition as an expression of Mexican nationalism and revolutionary fervor—are also comparable in function, content, and mode of transmission, if not in form.⁹ Following Greenway's lead, we have thus chosen to beg the question of definition and have used his term "protest songs" as a useful characterization for this seemingly widespread genre.¹⁰

The protest songs of this collection are not an original phenomenon of the overseas Indian community, nor of the particular political cause espoused by the Gadar Party and its followers. They belong integrally within what may be called the Indian rural popular tradition. This song tradition should be distinguished both from the urban popular tradition (best represented by Indian film songs) and from those rurally based songs whose intimate connection with life cycle ceremonies, religion, and work and whose exclusively

oral transmission testifies to long persistence and conformity to conventional folksong definitions. The songs of this collection do not differ in style or content from similar politically oriented songs sung in India during the pre-Independence period, and many of them no doubt actually originated in India rather than in the overseas community.¹¹ A collection of folksongs made among Indians in British Guiana in 1961 also includes some protest songs of this type.¹² Although no actual data is available concerning the songs of other overseas Indian communities, it is not to be doubted that such songs were current in those communities also, if on no other evidence than the known fact of the widespread distribution of the booklets in this collection.

According to our informants, the songs were sung in public meetings of the Indian community on the West Coast, both political and social, as well as in gatherings in Indian homes or in the living quarters of Indian male laborers. At meetings the typical mode of presentation would find a particularly talented singer or a group of children coming to the front and performing a song. The audience would join in on the lines that they knew. If the song had a repeated refrain, this would be sung by the assembled people after each verse was sung solo by the performer. Most of the Panjabi songs in this collection are written in a characteristic meter called *baint*. In this meter the final word or the final two words of every line is the same, and the preceding word carries the rhyme. It is a meter ideally suited to this type of group participation.

In an informal group all might sing together, or those present would take turns singing solo those songs they particularly favored or knew best with others joining in as they liked. This type of group singing is characteristic of both formal and informal gatherings in India.

A small proportion of the songs in this collection are descriptions of particularly significant historical events, such as the Revolt of 1857 or the fate of a shipload of Indians who attempted to gain admittance to Canada in 1914. The remainder do not describe specific events but describe conditions in India in general terms and make an appeal for revolution and personal sacrifice. The remaining portion of this paper will attempt to examine the

content of these songs with a view to extracting the central themes and their variations and the symbolism in which they are most frequently couched. It would be possible to approach these songs from other points of view. Perhaps the most obvious would be to regard them as a type of historical document, as Greenway and Galvin have treated American and Irish protest songs.¹³ However, we are more interested here in the world view of those who found the songs an inspiring means of expression and in the clues that the songs give to an important area of cultural values. Although the revolutionary methods advocated by the Gadar Party and by these songs were not the methods that eventually gained most vocal support in India and which are generally credited with winning India's independence, the views concerning the nature of the British regime, the glories of India's past, and the desirability of freedom, as well as the symbolism used to express these views, were shared by advocates of non-violent methods as well. An understanding of these ideas is indispensable in any study of Indian values, political ideology, or historical development.

II

In the following discussion, "the present" will refer to the pre-Independence era—i.e., up to August 1947.

The common thread running through all the songs in this collection is the theme of India, a nation of past glories and great future potentialities, suffering intolerable oppression and exploitation under British colonial rule. All Indians must unite and fight, to the death if need be, for freedom. India's past, coupled invariably with recitation of her present miseries, is described as one of great wealth, flourishing overseas trade, unity among all elements of the population; in short, as a well-ordered, peaceful, moral society ruled by Indians themselves. For example:

There was a day when this country
Was the crown on the heads of all countries.
Unity was in vogue and Indians themselves ruled.¹⁴

In another song:

Where is our patriotism? Where has our unity gone?
Where is our virility and our prestige?

We who engaged in world-wide trade,
 Having lost that trade must starve.
 In the same India whose cloth once went abroad,
 Foreign clothes are worn today.¹⁵

And in a song addressed to India herself:

One day, oh India, your name was great
 Whether you remember or not (Refrain)
 To do your duty was your effort
 Your science was at its peak
 You were chief in the world
 Faultless, just polity was yours.
 Expert in all-around love
 You were most beautiful among the three worlds....¹⁶

On the other side of the coin is India's present condition, of which are stressed the drain by Great Britain on the Indian economy and the occurrence of famines due to the enforced export of foodstuffs and the maldistribution of grains within India.

Alas, dear country, to what condition hast thou been reduced!

Your whole shape has become deformed, your downfall is near.

Your whole house has been destroyed and the Goddess of Wealth looted.

Dear Mother, you are continuously robbed by the British. Every year they take 300 million coins, and your children sleep, engaged in slavery.

Millions are sacrificed in plague and famine, but what does Britain care?

She has no love for you, she only has to rob you in every way.

Business and science are to thrive only in London.¹⁷

And in another example:

Weavers, basket-makers, ironsmiths, shoemakers,
 carpenters and dyers,

All have become jobless, barely living hand to mouth.
 From needles to the necessities of life,
 All foreign things come and are sold in India.¹⁸

Another common target of the songs is Great Britain's "divide-and-rule" policy. This attack is often expressed in the phrase "monkey justice," which refers to a folk tale in which a monkey, under the pretext of acting as mediator in a dispute over some bread, manages to eat all the bread himself. The British are also described as deceitful and dishonest, and are accused of indiscriminate murder and molestation of women. The lack of freedom of speech and action within India is also criticized. The following lines are typical:

Where the people are not even free to write and speak,
 How can any invention take place there?
 When the police arrest people for having a knife,
 How can a steel sword shine there?¹⁹

India's place in world opinion is the subject of another constantly reiterated theme, and the thought is expressed that India is an object of ridicule and contempt because of her dependent status:

Some push us around, some curse us.
 Where is your splendor and prestige today?
 The whole world calls us black thieves,
 The whole world calls us "coolie,"
 Why doesn't our flag fly anywhere?
 Why do we feel low and humiliated?
 Why is there no respect for us in the whole world?²⁰

The lack of proper educational facilities in India is another complaint in the songs. For example:

Children writhe in agony without education.
 Why are not science colleges opened?²¹

And in these words addressed to India:

The world is making airplanes.
 Where are your fast airplanes?

The savages of yesterday have become learned today.
 Why are your scientists discounted?
 Every country respects its learned ones,
 But your learned ones live in exile.²²

In these lines we may note the often reiterated statement that the British were uncivilized until recently, whereas India's civilization is an ancient one. The same thought, combined with a statement of the importance of education as a key to national success, is expressed also in the following lines:

Those who were savages until yesterday are now civilized.
 It is knowledge that is the pride of Britain.
 The learned men of Europe make new things like trains
 with skill and knowledge.
 But India's illiterate Brahman lives off donations funeral
 shrouds.
 If there are any Kshatriyas left, they are cowards.
 They know nothing of arms, nor have they the strength
 to fight.
 Those whose ancestors were great, brave people
 Cannot even cut the ears of a rat.
 India's knowledge is in the kitchen;
 Feel the pulse, see if there is any life left.
 The life of an uneducated person is useless.
 It is much better to die than to live like that.²³

In this song, as in many others, it is significant that not only are the British objects of attack, but the Indian people themselves are repeatedly blamed for permitting the oppression and division perpetrated by Great Britain. Indians are criticized in the songs for indifference, lack of courage, a tendency to talk about freedom without acting, and outright cooperation with the enemy. Those who are guilty of active support of the foreign ruler are condemned as traitors in the strongest language:

These traitors to the race, these cheap dogs,
 They look innocent but have black hearts.
 Their nature is that of mules, two-faced snakes,
 They bite and kill those who feed them with milk.

They have sold their self-respect; now they sell the dear
 country to live on.²⁴

And in a warning against traitors among those in the overseas
 Indian community:

The Government has sent, my friends, many Indian
 traitors.
 Be aware of these sinners; they are not friends, they
 earn deceit.
 They never work with their hands; they eat money from
 the Government.²⁵

Thus are the statements of India's condition; the remaining
 themes concern the action to be taken, which, without exception
 in these songs, is armed action. The following lines are typical:

Die yourself or kill others.
 Renounce cowardice, be a man, be a warrior.
 Establish secret political parties
 Together from Bengal to Maharashtra.
 First of all take care of the traitors.
 Sink the ships of those dirty dogs.
 Drink the blood of the Kaffir race, the English.
 Drink your fill and be satisfied.
 Having overthrown the cheating foreigners.
 Be yourself masters of India.²⁶

Complementary to the theme of armed revolt is the rejection
 of religion, prayer, meditation, or non-violence as possible means
 toward the end of freedom:

If you desire to live happily,
 Take up the way of politics.
 The deceitful must be killed by deceit.
 This is a good way to remove tyranny.
 We don't need *pandits* or *mullās*,
 We don't want our ship sunk.
 The time for prayer is gone;
 It is time to take up the sword.

Empty talk does not serve any purpose.
It is time to engage in a fierce battle.
Only the names of those who long for martyrdom will
shine.²⁷

A more direct attack on non-violent methods is represented
by the following lines:

Peacefulness has made you impotent.
There is no strength left in your youths.
Playing a flute the English charmed Gandhi,
And deceitfully they rob India.
India's power has vanished.
The power of the truth of the *Vedas* and the *Kurān* has
disappeared.
The wave of Gandhi has done no good.
No self-pride is left in India.

Many songs in the collection are eulogies to the ideal martyr.
These are generally in the form of a vow, spoken in the first
person, that the singer will sacrifice his all for his country. Others
are calls to arms by India to her sons. The following are typical
of the first type:

Let this be the quality of my life, if I have a life.
Handcuffs on my hands, fetters on my legs.
The picture of death dancing before me.
The executioner's sword on my neck.
No matter how terrifying my end,
A double-edged dagger in my stomach.

Or an arrow in my heart.
Let the spreading of Gadar be my way of life.
Let me say, "I am the humble servant of India,
And if I am to be born again,
I will do my job again."²⁹

And:

Let the rascal tyrant cut my hands,

Let him deprive me of pen and ink,
Let him sew my mouth with stitches,
Let my tongue not work to utter my sentences.
Even then I will send the thundering waves of my heart
in every direction.
Saying "I am a servant of the country,
I will die for her."³⁰

The second type uses the symbolism of India as mother, the
inhabitants of India as her sons. With this is the notion that as
sons of one mother all Indians are brothers. All the brothers
should unite and free their mother from bondage. They owe her
their lives in the struggle for freedom in order to repay the debt
for her milk. Those who do not join in the fight are guilty of
forgetting their own mother and can only expect spiritual and
material destruction:

The child who does not serve his mother well,
Or who does not sacrifice his soul and life for the
motherland,
He is just like a dead body,
Floating in the boundless sea of the universe.³¹

In the following song, Mother India calls her sons to arms:

My darling sons, come to the battlefield;
Carrying the power of knowledge in one hand and a
sword in the other.
Be a lion with a happy heart, contented mind, and
healthy body.
Extinguish the fire of selfishness
By pouring over it the water of patriotism.³²

Those who have not heeded the call to revolt are chided in these
words:

Why are you, wasting time, oh sleepyhead?
Wake up and see what is happening!
What a sleep you are sleeping!
Think something of the country too!³³

And those who are still divided by religious and regional differences are reminded of their kinship through a common mother:

Come and embrace, friends, saying "Hail the Mother!"
 Serve your mother, saying "Hail the Mother!"
 We are all inhabitants of India, offspring of one Mother.
 Bengalis, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, you are all Indians.
 Unite and bow to the mother by saying "Hail the Mother!"³⁴

One of the major needs of a group like that of the Indians living on the West Coast in the pre-Indian Independence period is to keep its members reminded of the heroes of the past who have given their lives for their country. The songs in our collection not only describe the lives and times of the revolutionary heroes of India, like Tilak, Ghosh, Bhagat Singh, and others, but also draw heavily on the religious traditions of martyrdom in Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. All such stories are interpreted in terms of continuous struggle and personal sacrifice in defense of justice and honor. As heirs of such worthy forefathers, the songs say, Indians today must keep burning the torch of martyrdom. Many songs also ask for an alignment with people of other countries who, like the Irish, are suffering under the same tyranny, or, like the Germans, are engaged in war against the same enemy.

Our enemy is trapped in Europe, on bended kness.
 The lion Germany has surrounded him.
 Only we have been lazy.
 This is the time, my lion sons, to strike.
 Don't be tardy!
 This is the time to revolt, not to scratch your back.
 Rob the robbers, collect arms,
 Do as you see fit, think and act!³⁵

Few of the songs discuss plans for action after freedom has been attained. In most of them, liberty itself is the only stated goal. However, some of the songs do speak of the type of society that will be able to flourish after the British have been banished, and the following lines are typical:

Let us run together a new government.
 Where there will be no one big or small.
 All together will be equal,
 Everyone will have the same rights.
 Let there be no question of high or low.
 Let everyone have a job.
 Let the gardener of this garden be clever.
 Let no other one put his feet in it.
 Let the gardener serve it with love,
 So, as before, it may be splendid.³⁶

III

The songs in this collection are songs of a people subjugated by another people of different culture and historical background. They are sung by a people conscious of enslavement and humiliation, who like others in a similar situation, felt bound to fight for their freedom. In the songs the fight becomes a holy war, a just war, when put in terms of saving one's own mother from ignominy. The debate over means and ends was futile to the singers as it has been to others throughout history, and they asked why admirable means should be expected only of the downtrodden. The primary assumption of all the protest songs here discussed is echoed in a Hindi poem by Shri Ram Sharma 'Prem' that was written just after the trial of the Indian National Army, another revolutionary movement for Indian independence, in 1946.

Every slave has a right to fight with the master,
 And every subjugated man has the right to overthrow
 the tyrant.
 The only one who calls them traitors is the traitor British
 government itself,
 Whom we have a birthright to overthrow.

NOTES

¹ For their valuable help, without which this paper could not have been written, we would like to thank Mr. Charan Singh, Mr. and Mrs. Puna Singh, and Mr. K. S. Mota. Particular thanks are owed to Mr. Kesar Singh Dillon, who kindly made this song collection available to us.

The term "East Indians" is frequently used to distinguish persons of Indian and Pakistan descent from the aboriginal inhabitants of the New World. Since here the context is clear, the term "Indians" will be used throughout.

² For additional information on the West Coast Indian community and the Gadar Party, see: Harold S. Jacoby, "A Half-Century Appraisal of East Indians in the United States," The Sixth Annual College of the Pacific Faculty Research Lecture (1956); Rajani Kanta Das, *Hindustani Workers on the Pacific Coast* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1923); Gurcharan Singh Sainsra, *Gadar Parī dā Ithās* (Panjabi) (Jalandhar: Des Bhagat Yadgar Committee, 1961); Giles Tyler Brown, *The Hindu Conspiracy and the Neutrality of the United States, 1914-1917*; M.A. Thesis (Berkeley: University of California, 1941); John Spellman, "The International Extensions of Political Conspiracy as Illustrated by the Ghadar Party," *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. 37, pp. 23-45 (1959).

An article by Mark Naidis, "Propaganda of the Gadar Party," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 20, pp. 258-260 (1961), is interesting as an analysis of the themes in that literature which printed in English was aimed primarily at the American rather than the Indian audience. However, it is unfortunate that he uses "Hindu" throughout, evidently as a synonym for "Indian," despite the fact that the Hindustan Gadar Party was multi-religious in membership (numerically, Sikhs, not Hindus, predominated) and made its appeals for and to Indians as a national group, never to Hindus as a religious community. His concluding suspicion that "its energy may have been diverted into the larger stream of international Communism" after the 1920s is entirely without foundation. Some publications of the Hindustan Gadar Party, in addition to its weekly newspaper *Gadar* are: Surendra Karr, *British Terror in India* (San Francisco: The Hindustan Gadar Party 1920); William Jennings Bryan, "Die Britische Herrschaft in India," Special Reprint from *India* (July 20, 1906) (San Francisco: Hindustan Gadar Party, n.d.); Ram Chandra, *India Against Britain* (San Francisco: Hindustan Gadar Press, 1917); Frederic Mackarness, *Methods of the Indian Police in the 20th Century* (San Francisco: Hindustan Gadar Office, 1915); *A Few Facts About British Rule in India* (San Francisco: The Hindustan Gadar Party Office, 1916).

³ *Deshbhakti ke Gīt* (San Francisco: Hindustan Gadar Press (1916): *Āzādī kī Gūnj*, Nos. 12 & 14 (San Francisco: Hindustan Gadar Press, n. d.); *Gadar dī Goonj*, Nos. 1-7 (San Francisco: Hindustan Gadar Press: 1st ed. 1915-18).

⁴ Ram Chandra, "Foreword" to *Deshbhakti ke Gīt*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵ John Greenway, *American Folksongs of Protest* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1960), p. 9.

⁶ Patrick Galvin, *Irish Songs of Resistance* (New York: The Folklore Press, n. d.).

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹ Americo Paredes, "The Ancestry of Mexico's Corridos: A Matter of Definitions," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 76 (1963) pp. 231-235.

¹⁰ Greenway, *op. cit.*

¹¹ See, for example: P. C. Joshi, "Some Folksongs on the First Indian War of Independence," *Folklore Monthly*, Vol. 4 (1963) pp. 8-14; S. B. Pandey, "Freedom Struggle in Hindi Folksongs," *Folklore Monthly*, Vol. 4 (1963) pp. 301-307; Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Songs of Chhatisgarh* (London: Oxford University

Press, 1946) pp. 157-172; Srikrishna Das, *Lokgītō kī Sāmājīk Vyākhyā* (Allahabad, Sahitya Bhavan Ltd., 1956); Suryakaran Parik, *Rājasthānī Lokgīt* (Allahabad, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 1955).

¹² Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Protest Songs of East Indians in British Guiana," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 77 (1964) pp. 220-235.

¹³ *op. cit.*

¹⁴ *Deshbhakti*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁹ Personal communication.

²⁰ *Gadar*, *op. cit.*, No. 1, p. 1.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*, p. 2.

²³ *Deshbhakti*, p. 10.

²⁴ *Gadar*, *op. cit.*, No. 7, p. 3.

²⁵ *ibid.*, No. 3, p. 22.

²⁶ *ibid.*, No. 1.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*, No. 7, p. 7.

²⁹ *Deshbhakti*, p. 30.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 29.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 27.

³² *ibid.*, p. 10.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁵ *Gadar*, No. 2, p. 27.

³⁶ *ibid.*, No. 7, p. 10.

The *Bhajnopdeshak* as an Agent of Social Change¹

A complete catalogue of the types of folksingers and folksongs current in rural India would require some kind of division of the songs into categories according to types of singers (sex of the singers, whether adult or children, caste membership), time or occasion of singing, whether they are sung solo or in groups, whether they are religious or secular in content, and whether they have an explicit educative or propagandistic function beyond their use as part of the ritual cycle or as entertainment. All of these features are relevant in categorizing the folksong corpus in a given area of India, and are mentioned in order to place the singers and songs discussed here in perspective; however, an analysis of the immense variety and multiplicity of folksong types and folksingers present in this area is beyond the scope of this paper.

The research on which this paper is mainly based was carried out in Western Uttar Pradesh, North India, in the summer of 1965. I have, however, been familiar with and intimately associated with these singing groups and their songs from my early childhood. The singers I will discuss are the *bhajnopdeshaks* or *bhajnīks*, professional folk composers and singers who sing in order to encourage social reform, who sing of changing their society, of making a better world in terms of their perceptions and values. Literally *bhajnopdeshak* means "preacher through bhajans." Their singing groups are called *bhajan mandālī*, "bhajan circles." A *bhajan* in its primary meaning is a devotional song, but the word is used to mean any song, regardless of actual subject matter, that is sung in the characteristic style of the devotional *bhajan*; the religious *bhajans* and the cultural role of their singers are discussed, for example, by Milton Singer for the Madras area.² However, the *bhajans* described here are very different in subject matter, and

their singers, rather than reaffirming the great tradition of Hinduism, use this tradition and others as well to bring about major social change.

As his name implies, the *bhajnopdeshak* is a preacher, a man dissatisfied with certain social or political conditions and who feels that he has a remedy: that through his singing, people may be inspired to change society, to reform social evils, to right injustice. Various problems are attacked by the *bhajnopdeshaks*; not all of the singers have the same message, but their techniques and their moralistic crusading zeal are something all have in common. All are activists; the undeniable entertainment value of their songs is simply a means to an end.

The *bhajnopdeshak* almost always sings in a group, or *mandālī*, in which the leader is the most important member. Some *bhajan mandālīs* are professional, in the sense that their members make a living by singing. Others are amateur; their members have other sources of income and sing in their spare time. Some *mandālīs* are completely independent, although they may perform on occasion for the benefit of recognized social service organizations; other groups are actively affiliated with an organization. In this area a number are avowed representatives of the reform-minded Hindu sect, the Arya Samaj.

In reviewing the personal histories of many *bhajnopdeshaks*, one is struck by the fact that most of them came to their calling at an early age, and that they attribute their adoption of this profession to an early urge to fight injustice—political, economic, or social. Some were born into the lowest stratum of society as Untouchables, and felt keenly the discrimination against them because of this accident of birth. Others were affected by the circumstances of oppression under British rule, or felt a desire to improve the pitiable condition of widows in Indian society and to give women the opportunities open to men. Since religious faith is important to all *bhajnopdeshaks*, some of them have followed traditional ideals and have renounced their homes and families to become ascetics, living only for their cause. One famous *bhajnopdeshak* in this area is reputed to have castrated himself so that his sexual cravings would not divert his attention from the fight against social and political injustice.

As this suggests, the training of the *bhajnopdeshak* begins rather early, usually between the ages of ten and fifteen. Active *bhajan mandālī* leaders attempt to attract young boys and adolescents to their cause, to incorporate them into the troupe and train them well; when they reach adulthood they are able to compose and sing independently, and eventually may become leaders of their own groups. The ability to sing well is of course a primary concern, second only to the requirement of enthusiasm for the cause being propagated. A young trainee must learn to play several folk instruments, including the harmonium, castanets, drum, tong castanets, tamborine, and others. The control of the leader over the young trainee is complete, and even physical punishment is not considered out of place in his instruction. This control extends also to the personal life of the trainee, since all members are expected to live up to certain moral standards which are associated with the success of the social movement. For those who represent the Arya Samaj, even the clothes worn by the members are considered an important part of their image. The young people are also prepared ideologically for the struggle toward their goal, and are taught to be fearless before attack or repression of their ideals. In at least one group that I know of, the members were trained in archery, a fighting skill of only symbolic importance in the present age, but important in Indian tradition. The names they adopt—"fearless," "archer"—also contribute to their image.

Bhajnopdeshaks usually perform by invitation, and they may be invited to perform at any type of social occasion at which entertainers would be deemed appropriate. In this way they fit into the whole series of folk entertainers who typically perform at marriages, temple fund-raising, and private celebrations of various kinds. A *bhajan mandālī* may also be invited to perform by persons or organizations who want them to preach a particular message, and in this way they assist many organized causes, including government projects of technological and social change.³ The most common occasion for the employment of a *bhajnopdeshak* or *bhajan* troupe is a convention, rally, or public meeting. Such meetings may be sponsored by a school, political or social service organization, or a religious organization. If the convention is a

large one, lasting several days, the program will include many speakers and several *bhajnopdeshaks* will perform. Some *bhajnopdeshaks* may even come to a large and widely publicized meeting without invitation, and offer their services free of charge or for a nominal fee.

The fee charged by a *bhajnopdeshak* is normally very moderate in comparison to that asked by other folk entertainers such as the *sāṅgīs*, popular performers of folk opera.⁴ There are, however, some famous *bhajnopdeshaks*, much in demand, who must be paid in advance before they agree to perform. Others may perform always without charge, in the spirit of social service; these may have other sources of income or sing part-time only. In addition to their fee, if any, the *bhajnopdeshaks* must be housed and fed by the people who have invited them to perform. Except in the case of a performance for a private celebration, the fee is paid from contributions made at the time of the meeting, or beforehand, by the assembled audience.

The type of stage used by the *bhajnopdeshaks* depends on the overall setting of the occasion. It is usually a simple raised platform made of large wooden cots set side by side. In the center is a table with a tablecloth, behind which the singer stands, his foot on the rail. A harmonium is placed on the table, and the singer accompanies himself; generally each member of the troupe sings in turn, the most junior first, until finally the leader stands to preach.

It may help to make my generalizations about the *bhajnopdeshaks* more meaningful if I describe briefly the membership and organization of three *bhajan* groups, or *bhajan mandālīs* as they are called, and give some idea of the cause for which each is fighting and the style of their performances. I met the members of the first, a group called *anjāna mandālī*, literally "ignorant circle," at a rally to celebrate Indian Independence Day. The rally, held in a neighborhood inhabited mainly by people of the scavenger caste, had been organized at a school run by the Gandhi Memorial Fund, a society dedicated to the spread of Gandhian principles. The audience was made up mostly of Untouchables, but other caste members also attended in large numbers. The members of the *mandālī*, eight in all, sang their

songs in between the lectures and other performances. They were accompanied by a harmonium, an Indian banjo, drums, and jingling bells. Clapping was also used to accompany the singing.

The leader of the group first introduced the other members. Then he began with songs in a religious theme: a hymn to the goddess of learning for inspiration, voice, and proper rhythm; a song about Lord Krishna, and several others. Then he sang an ode to man, in which he reminded his audience that we have come into this world with a promise to fulfill: human birth is the hardest of all to attain, and we should not forget God while engrossed in the delusions of the world. We come alone and will go alone, responsible only for our actions. He gave his audience examples from the Vedas and other traditional authorities, and quoted other *bhajan* singers. He reminded his audience that the singer has no religion but truth. Finally, he sang some songs about patriotism, reminding the audience of the great dangers being faced by their country and the sacrifices that would have to be made if India were to be made a great nation again. Throughout, the leader began with the refrain of the song, which was picked up by the other *mandālī* members and sung in chorus to instrumental accompaniment. Then the leader sang the main verse, and, except at the end of each line when a beat of the drum was heard, the others were quiet. At the conclusion of the verse, the refrain was again picked up by the entire group.

The leader of the *anjāna mandālī* started his musical training at the age of ten, at which time he became a member of a dramatic singing group which has since broken up. His experiences in that group enabled him to start his own singing group, which he called *vālmīki mandālī*, a name associated with the scavenger caste. However, when he first entered into a singing competition with other *mandālīs*, the group members decided not to use this name, which clearly identified their caste membership, and so the name became "ignorant circle," a name indicating modesty and humility. Since its formation the *mandālī* has become well-known, and the singers have been invited by many organizations within the city and in the surrounding villages and by wealthy persons in the area. They have attended public meetings such as anti-China rallies and also are invited to private parties and

weddings. But they have never become professionals from a financial point of view. They accept money when it is donated during performances, but this is kept for the maintenance of the *mandālī* itself, for upkeep of the office and instruments. Nothing is paid to the individual members, who are all employed in their traditional occupation or in unskilled labor by the municipality or other government agencies. The group is proud of its services on behalf of the government, and they offered to entertain the troops at the time of the China crisis.

In terms of their cause, this *mandālī* is primarily concerned with the abolition of untouchability. But they maintain that in order to raise the status of the Untouchables it is necessary "to obliterate the bad customs within us." Therefore, they have themselves renounced drinking, smoking, and meat-eating, things which are associated with low status in the Indian value system, and preach these reforms to their caste fellows.⁵ They are continuously looking for young people with good voices to train and they direct much effort to teach the children of their community their songs. Although they are themselves semi-literate, they are concerned with the value of education and encourage the children of the neighborhood to attend school. They are religious in outlook, but critical of religious habits which allow people "to call themselves religious, sing in the temple, collect the offerings, and drink in the broad daylight. We do not want such people [in our group]." They are eager to take part in interreligious meetings and festivals. The leader explains how he attached himself to his Muslim spiritual teacher, or *guru*: "This *guru* sang of the equality of all religions. He did not drink or smoke. He sang wherever he chose but never made singing his means of livelihood. I decided to be his pupil when I heard him at a Muslim fair here, but we only established this relationship by mail."

A second group is led by an Arya Samaj preacher, from the Jat caste, who has been active for the past forty years, since the age of 13. He was inspired and later trained by one of the most prominent blind *bhajnopadeshaks*, who, after preaching for nearly 75 years, died at the age of 100, 20 years ago. His *mandālī* consists of four members and he devotes himself full-time to *bhajan* singing, unlike the previously described group. His group is one

of the most popular in the area and is invited to all types of rallies and conventions, as well as private social events. His own words illustrate better than anything else his aims and purpose in his chosen career: "There is not a single movement in which I have not participated. I went to jail in Hyderabad *satyāgraha* [the Arya Samaj protest against the Nizam of Hyderabad's oppression of Hindus] and also was jailed in the Hindi *satyāgraha* [the "Save Hindi" movement of 1957, protesting the suppression of Hindi for Panjabi]. I condemned bad customs in public, I propagate knowledge and education, I condemn the caste system and support the uplift of Untouchables. I think my life has been more than successful, and in the future I want *Rām Rājya*, that is, the rule of justice and equality. I want to see the whole world Aryan." He makes a distinction between private and social affairs, like weddings and public meetings, except for the former he charges no fee, but takes only whatever contributions may be given voluntarily. He says, "I feel satisfied with whatever is given during my preaching. In other words, I have been preaching free for the last forty years."

A third group, which I met in Banaras, was somewhat different from these two in that it was informally organized and amateur in membership. All the members were workers in the Bhoodan (land-gift) movement who had met during walking trips to gain followers for this movement some years before. They are from various castes, high and low, have different educational backgrounds, and had different occupations before they joined Vinoba Bhave. During most of the year they worked for the movement in their own areas and also traveled with other Bhoodan leaders to preach the message of Bhoodan in poetic form. They all know how to play several instruments and when they get together at the semi-annual conventions of the movement, they play these instruments and sing before, during, and at the end of the meeting.

Since the Bhoodan movement is based on nonviolent change of the social order, the songs sung by this group stress the messages of love, peace, and justice. The organization is prominent in the Indian peace movement and therefore many of their songs are on this theme. They say that the revolution of equality of rich and

poor, men and women, rulers and ruled, Untouchables and caste people, labor and bosses is bound to come. They say that they are striving to change the hearts of men to make this a peaceful revolution, before violence takes over and bloody revolution ensues.

Even though all *bhajnopdeshaks* have much in common, each has his unique point of view; each has certain ideals that he stresses more than others. Even those who are affiliated with a particular organization or religious sect, like Bhoodan or the Arya Samaj, have their independent message, though it fits in general terms with the primary message of that organization. The background of the singer is an important determinant of his message: a person who has been ascetic for his whole life may stress morality in his songs more than, for example, a farmer's son turned *bhajnopdeshak*, who will sing of the plight of the village poor. An Untouchable *bhajnopdeshak* will probably be concerned largely with the abolition of Untouchability. The message and the principles on which it is based may be altered slightly to suit the particular occasion: thus a *bhajnopdeshak* who is in theory opposed to the caste system may attend and perform at a convention of his caste members, if he feels that such a performance may achieve other of his ends without requiring him to give up his basic principles. The Jat *bhajnopdeshak*, described above, who as an Arya Samaji was opposed to caste as an institution, nevertheless supported the meetings of his caste association which set a ceiling on expenditures for wedding celebrations. A famous *bhajnopdeshak* preached at a rally of a movement in 1945-1946 to declare blacksmiths *pāṇchāl*, a type of Brahman.⁶ There are many examples of their participation in this type of movement. Since their avowed purpose is to raise the status of formerly low-status groups, not even staunch Arya Samaj members object to this kind of participation.

In composing his songs, a good *bhajnopdeshak* makes use of many features of the traditional or classical culture of India, as well as of the folk culture: what anthropologists call the great and little traditions of his civilization.⁷ He must be well versed in the epics, at least in the Hindi epics if not the Sanskrit epics. He must know some Vedic hymns and other Sanskrit *ślokas* and be able to quote from the popular folk poets of the area. Throughout

his performance the *bhajnopdeshak* makes reference to traditional heroes, folk legends, and proverbs, and to more recent national heroes such as Gandhi and Nehru, in order to buttress his points. For example, an Arya Samaj *bhajnopdeshak* begins his preaching with the recitation of a Vedic hymn in which the almighty impersonal God is invoked. He may then recite a popular *shair*, an Urdu couplet, or a *dohā* or *kavitta* from one of the great Indian poets known to the folk, or one composed by a popular folk poet. After a prayer in the language of the area, he will begin to preach. Throughout his performance he will tell jokes applicable to the culture of his listeners, retell appropriate tales from the *Mahābhārata* or *Rāmāyaṇa*, refer to local myths, and cite proverbs which illustrate his message. These local references encourage the close attention of his audience, and assure their appreciative participation in his performance; through these techniques also he shows his intimacy with the concerns of his audience and bridges any social distance that might otherwise be present between the preacher and his audience.

The *bhajnopdeshak* thus makes use of Indian tradition and identifies his goals with those of the recognized and revered leaders of the Indian nation. However, he is able to draw on these sources and use them to inspire the acceptance of and even the positive desire for radical change. He could perhaps be called an unconscious applied anthropologist!

The success of the *bhajan mandālī* in furthering the programs of nonofficial social service and of reform organizations has not been lost on the government of India. Even in the days of British rule in India, *bhajnopdeshaks* were employed to propagate such causes as recruitment for the army and fighting against Germany.⁸ However, most *bhajnopdeshaks* not only disagreed with these causes, but fought vigorously against them. Now these groups are frequently employed to propagandize in favor of programs of agricultural redevelopment and the like. All India Radio's nightly *dehātī* program is a two-hour feature, beamed at the villages, in which *bhajnopdeshak* singers urge the adoption of agricultural improvements and sanitary and health measures. At government-sponsored public meetings in rural or urban areas, a *bhajnopdeshak* has been found to be an effective means of gathering an audience

and holding it until the cabinet ministers and other officials have finished their speeches.

The structure of the *bhajans* typically composed by these singers varies, but within a circumscribed pattern. (Limited space will not permit me to discuss fully the question of metrical structure and rhyming here.) The songs consist of four or more stanzas, each containing between two and eight lines, plus a line rhyming with the refrain. The refrain introduces the song and is repeated before each new verse. Most of the lines are original in composition, but frequently lines or whole stanzas may be inserted from the popular epics or folk ballads. For example, in a *bhajan* about Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, the *bhajnopdeshak* may begin by singing several stanzas from Tulsidas or other versions of that epic; if he wishes to illustrate a point by mentioning the truthful King Harishchandra, he may introduce a verse from the poet Girdhar Kaviraya. It must be remembered, however, that all of these lines are familiar to the audience, as they have been for centuries part of the traditional literature, that is "in the complete possession of the folk,"⁹ and have been the sources of songs, folk dramas, and moralistic poetry.

In terms of contents, a structural pattern with two variants can be discerned. In the first, the *bhajnopdeshak* begins with a description of particular conditions he wishes to change. He follows this with a condemnation of these conditions, usually in quite colorful terms, and ends by proposing a remedy. A second variant neglects the condemnation, which is understood, and the proposed remedy follows immediately upon the description of present conditions. The final segment of the song elaborates upon the consequences of not listening to the *bhajnopdeshak's* recommendations, or, alternatively, paints a picture of the rewarding consequences of accepting his remedy.

Although, as I have said, each *bhajan mandālī* has a uniquely conceived cause, there are certain dominant themes in the songs of all *bhajnopdeshaks*; these correspond to some of the major social and political issues facing India today, and to some of the more prominent value conflicts that are to be observed in a changing Indian way of life. Basically, they all view the issues of modern India in black and white terms. They seem to view the attempts

of India to attain economic, social, and political well-being in terms of what might be called a class struggle on several fronts between opposing forces of good and evil. These oppositions can be summarized in the following terms:

1. Between orthodoxy and unorthodoxy, in terms of socio-religious institutions of traditional India. Here the *bhajnopdeshak* preaches justice to the formerly oppressed. He champions a casteless society in opposition to one structured by caste, the abolition of Untouchability, and the rewarding of individual merit rather than accidents of birth. Likewise, he preaches the equality of the sexes and their equal access to educational opportunities, the abolition of the *pardā* system, and the remarriage of young widows. He preaches reformed religious practices, the access of all to the revelations of religious teaching, and the abolition of meaningless idol worship, as he sees it. In general, on this front, he is waging a battle against what he sees as the unhumanistic aspects of orthodox religion, but not against religion *per se*. His recommendations for change are still deeply rooted in Hindu tradition.

2. Economically, the *bhajnopdeshak* views as his cause an alteration in the traditional relationship between capitalist and labor, between the haves and have-nots. Although mostly semi-literate and unschooled in Marxian dialectics, the *bhajnopdeshak* sees the relation of rich and poor, of landed and landless, of money-lender and eternal debtor in essentially Marxian terms. And the remedies he proposes are essentially revolutionary in nature.

3. In political terms, the *bhajnopdeshak* is concerned with the opposition between the rulers and the ruled. Here he concerns himself with corruption in government and with the use of political power for personal gain, on both the national and local levels. During the pre-Independence era, of course, his attack was directed against the British colonial regime, and the remedy was freedom—*independence* from foreign rule. It is significant that although Gandhi as a national hero is continually utilized in the songs of the *bhajnopdeshak*, his nonviolent methods were never those recommended by these singers. Both before independence, when violent internal revolution and support of Hitler and Mussolini against the British were being urged by the *bhajnopdeshaks*, and

now, when they encourage their countrymen to fight bravely against the threat of China and to some extent also against Pakistan, these singers are the supporters of active armed resistance to oppression and attack. Since India gained her independence, the opposition between rulers and ruled has remained, except that now the rulers are fellow Indians. The Congress Party has become the principal target of attack, but the smaller parties of the moderate left are viewed simply as splinters of the Congress monolith. This leaves only two: the rightist Hindu parties and the Communists. The rightists usually cannot be supported, because their backbone is felt to be the merchant classes of the city, who are being attacked in terms of economic opposition. This leaves the Communists; but the *bhajnopdeshak*, sharing the prevalent conception of the Communist Party as a foreign-dominated evil clique, cannot bring himself to advise their support either. He avoids this dilemma by two means: "Indianizing" the symbols of the Communist organization and ideology, for example, by identifying the red flag with the ancient Indian monkey god, Hanuman; and by denying the validity of all the trappings of the democratic process, such as elections, parties, courts of law, explicitly or implicitly because of their Western origins.

4. A fourth opposition follows from this: that between the irreligious, immoral, and heartless foreigner and the spiritual, humanistic Indian. On this front the *bhajnopdeshaks* reject the many forms of Westernization which are evident in modern social and political life. This opposition is also present in some of the attacks on Communism as an ideology and as a political program. It is implicit in the *bhajnopdeshak's* attacks on meat-eating and the attendant issue of cow slaughter, in his opposition to drinking and smoking (which, although regarded as indigenous to India, are not approved) and in his advocacy of improved opportunities for women, without the complete adoption of the Western type of relationship between the sexes. It appears in his polemics against the mental slavery of the Western educated Indian, in his suspicion of foreign aid and of any interference by foreign governments in Indian affairs, in his support of technological change and the spread of literacy while insisting that this change and this education should be adapted to Indian conditions. In summary, this opposition reveals the *bhajnopdeshak's* desire to Indianize whatever change

he proposes, to develop a new society, but one with a unique Indian stamp, one which owes nothing to the blind adoption of foreign ways.¹⁰

The *bhajnopdeshak* is religious without being sectarian; he is an advocate of change, radical change, while insisting on the preservation of what he sees as the essentials of Indian traditional values. A study of his message and of the techniques he uses to communicate it to the people is an invaluable guide to the complexities of the course of social change in India. His universal appeal to the Indian folk has been recognized by the Indian government in its attempts to direct this change; his approach can tell us a great deal about what is meaningful to the Indian people, and can lead to a better understanding of their motivation and the prospects for change.

APPENDIX

Seven Bhajan Texts

- | | |
|--|--|
| <i>ba:vl̥e kisa:n samai ki: cha:l
dekhiye</i> | Oh ignorant peasant, see the
tide of time, |
| <i>koṇ hitaishi: tera: drishṭi
da:l dekhiye</i> | Look around and see who is
your well-wisher. |
| 1. <i>tera: kuṇba: din ra:t
kama:ttā:</i> | Your family toils day and night, |
| <i>na: kade ṭha:l̥li: baitṭhan
pa:ttā:</i> | Never has it a chance to sit
idle— |
| <i>anda:ta: tu: phir bi: hai
kanga:l dekhiye</i> | Oh you giver of food, see, you
are still poor. |
| <i>beima:n ankarva: ma:la:
ma:l dekhiye</i> | And the deceitful, idle people
are loaded with money. |
| 2. <i>tere na:m ki: dekaṭ duha:i:
a:ja:di: ki: la:ri: la:ra:i:</i> | In your name
The struggle for freedom was
fought; |
| <i>pa:i: haku:mat pher karya:
na: tera: khyā:l dekhiye</i> | They received the kingdom, and
did not remember you. |

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>taiks barhāi roja:na: naya:
kama:l dekhiye</i> | Every day, new taxes are
increased—see the new
wonder— |
| 3. <i>kra:ntika:ri: kya: kamunist
ka:ngrais or kya: soslist
ishṭ tera: na: koi: naya: ye
ja:l dekhiye</i> | Revolutionaries or Communists,
Congress or Socialists,
No one is your <i>ishṭ</i> (benefactor),
see this new trap. |
| <i>kisi: se hal nahī hoga: tera:
sava:l dekhiye</i> | No one is going to solve your
problem. |
| 4. <i>apna: ek sangāṭan baṇa: tu:
kharya: ho bhi:shaṇ kra:nti
macha: tu:
a:ja: pher kysō: cha:hṭa: hai,
tatka:l dekhiye
thore din ke andar baihtar
ha:l dekhiye</i> | Make an organization of your
own.
Get up and start a fierce
revolution.
Why wait then, come and you
will see immediately—
In a few days, your condition
is better. |
| | —Contributed by Atar Singh at
Meerut, June 1965 |
| <i>panchhi: lekar a:ya: mere
ba:pu: ka: sandesh.
uske parō par likkha: tha:;
hai kaisa: apna: desh?</i> | The bird has come with a
message from my Bapu;*
On his wings is written: How is
our country? |
| | *Bapu = Father, Mr. Gandhi |
| 1. <i>ab-to videshi: lu:ṭ na hogi:
ghar ghar mē vo phu:ṭ na
hogi:
choṭe bare ka: phark na
hoga:
pya:r ka: sab par rang hi:
hoga:</i> | There must not be foreign
exploitation now,
There must not be any division
within our own houses,
The difference of big and small
must have vanished,
All of the people must be deeply
loving each other, |

- ū:ch aur ni:ch ka: rog na hoga:* There must not be any sickness or feeling of being high and low,
- varṇō ka: bhi: viyog na hoga:* And there must not be any division among various *varnas*,
- pra:ntō aur bhasha:ō ka: ragra:* Or the problem of provincialism or languages,
- jhu:te va:d larai: jhagra:* Or the fighting over false issues.
- dekhke sab kuchh a:na: panchhi:* See that all, Oh bird, and come
- sa:ra: ha:l suna:na: panchhi:* And tell me everything you see.
- desh ne ab tak kya: nahī: bhu:la: vo a:pas ka: dvesh* Whether the country has forgotten the hatred from within or not.
- panchhi: lekar a:ya: mere ba:pu: ka: sandesh* The bird has come with a message from my Bapu.
2. *charkha: ab bhi: chalta: hoga:* Spinning wheel must still be spinning.
- ghar ghar kapra: banta: hoga:* Cloth must be prepared in every home,
- jor barha: hoga: kha:di: ka: Khādī* must be at its height,
- shor macha: hoga: kha:di: ka:* The name of *khādī* must be rampant.
- khush hoga: shivarup jula:ha:* Weaver Shivarup must be happy.
- moti: aur anu:p jula:ha:* Weavers Gopi and Anup must be happy.
- in sab ko parṇa:m bhi: dena:* Give my regards to all of them,
- meri: taraph se pu:chh bhi: lena:* And ask their welfare from me,
- bachche sabke parhte hōge* Children of all of them must be in school,
- a: pas mē nahī larte hōge* They musn't be fighting among themselves.

- ab to bare hue hōge ka:lu: ba:lu: aur mahesh.* Kalu, Balu, and Mahesh, all of them must have grown up by now,
- panchhi: lekar a:ya: mere ba:pu: ka: sandesh* The bird has come with a message from my Bapu.
3. *gra:m udyog chala:ne va:le kaise hōī mere matva:le* Runners of home-industries, How are my happy jolly (people)
- barhai: shya:m luha:r tiva:ri:* Shyam carpenter, and Tiwari blacksmith?
- gha:ni: va:la: vo girdha:ri: dhandha: sab ka: chalta: hoga:* And that oilman Girdhari? All must be having success in their business,
- peṭ maze se palta: hoga:* And must be earning enough to enjoy life,
- ab na rahi: hogi: beka:ri:* There musn't be any unemployment now
- tan man ki: chinta: beja:ri: panchhi: sab se milke a:na:* And mental and physical worry. Bird, come after seeing all of them
- mera: sandesha: pahūcha:na:* And give them my message,
- gujri: ra:t vo rone va:li:* "These nights of crying have become a matter of the past,
- jai hai teri: hone va:li:* Your victory is near,
- ab nahī ka:tega: vo tumko ka:la: sā:p kalesh* That black snake of sorrow will not sting you now,"
- Panchhi: lekar a:ya: mere ba:pu: ka: Sandesh* The bird has come with a message from my Bapu.
4. *mere kisa:n hāī pya:re kaise?* How are my beloved peasants?
- halva:he banha:re kaise? mehnat khu:b hi: karte hōge* The ploughmen and cowherds? They must be working hard,

julm na hoga: ma:r na hogi:

Nor there must be atrocities and beatings.

nya:ya dharma ka: ra:j hi: hoga:

There must be the rule of justice and Dharma,

vo sachcha: svara:j hi: hoga:

It must be a true swaraj [self-government],

mere un sa:thi: sajnō ne pya:r kiya: tha: mujh ko jinhōne

The friends of mine, Who loved me,

mujhse pri:t nibha:i: hogi: meri: la:j bacha:i: hogi:

Must have fulfilled that love, And must have saved my honor, Those who boast of serving

seva: ka: jo dam bharte hāi mujhko ya:d kiya: karte hāi

And remember me,

unko meri: or se kahna: apne vachan par ka:yam rahna:

Tell them from me, That they should be true to their words,

bhu:l na ja:yē marte dam tak jan seva: ka: uddesh

Let them never forget the aim of the service of the people till death.

panchhi: lekar a:ya: mere ba:pu: ka: sandesh.

The bird has come with a message from my Bapu.

—A *bhajan* by Dukhayal, sung by Sarvodya Mandli at Banaras, September 8, 1965.

amar hai tera: na:m ba:pu: amar hai tera: na:m

Immortal is your name, Bapu, immortal is your name.

1. ba:pu mere pya:re ba:pu tu:ne hamē ji:na: sikhla:ya. majbu:ri: ke andhiya:re mē a:ja:di: ka: di:p jala:ya:

Bapu, my beloved Bapu, you taught us how to live.

In the darkness of helplessness, you lit the lamp of freedom;

tu:ne mar kar hamē diya: hai ji:ne ka: paiga:m

Having died you have given us the message for life.

2. julm se kuchle insa:nō ko julm se takra:na: sikhla:ya:

You taught people crushed by tyranny to charge against tyranny,

bhatke hue sansa:r ko tu:ne ek naya: rasta: dikhla:ya:

You showed the lost world a new path.

apne lahu: se tu:ne bhara: hai a:ja:di: ka: ja:m

With your own blood, you filled the cup of Freedom.

3. har mazhab ki: sachcha:i: ko jivan ka: a:darsh bana:ya:

You made the truth of every religion the ideal of your life;

ma:navta: ki: la:j bacha:i: a:n pai mar ja:na: sikhla:ya:

You saved the name of humanity, and taught us how to die for self-respect,

ek naye jivan ka: savera: la:ti: hai har sha:m

That "Every evening brings the morning of a new life."

4. ye duniya: anja:nepan mē yuddh ke darva:je pai khari: hai

In its ignorance, the world stands on the threshold of war

thake hue hāi na:pne va:le, du:r hai manjil ra:h kari: hai

Travelers are tired, while the destination is still far off and the path is hard.

kya: hoga: sachcha:i: ke path par chalne ka: anja:m

What will be the outcome for those who walk on the path of truth?

5. dekh sako to dekho ba:pu apne desh ki: ha:lat dekho a:ja:di: ke la:ne va:le a:ke jara: ek ba:r to dekho

If you can, Oh Bapu, see the condition of your country.

You, who brought freedom, come and see at least for once,

kisne ka:ti: dukh ki: ra:tē, kise mila: a:ra:m

Who has spent the nights of misery, who has gotten comfort.

—Contributed by Shyonath Singh and Atar Singh at Meerut, September 4, 1966

ye ja:lim sarka:r bha:iyo
 nahī: rakhni:
 a:yi:thi: bya:pa:r karan ko
 Jahā:gir ki: sharan gahan
 ko
 bani: gale ka: ha:r, bha:iyo
 nahī: rakhni:

This cruel government, Oh
 brothers, we will not keep.

They came here to trade
 to take shelter of king Jahangir,

And have become the noose
 around our neck.

This cruel government, brothers,
 we will not keep.

In their pride of being white,

They went to Jaliyanwala
 Garden

And killed many thousands.

This cruel government, Oh
 brothers, we will not keep.

—Contributed by Bhagirath
 Singh at Meerut, June 1965

A dialogue between the late Nehru and Indian peasants in heaven

"mere pya:re bha:ratva:si:
 kis liye svarg mē a:ye?"

"My dear fellow Indians, why
 have you come so far as
 to heaven?"

"ham tumhē dhu:dhte
 cha:cha: tamāi bari
 mushkil tai pa:ye"

"We have come here with great
 difficulty searching for you,
 Oh Uncle."

1. "aisi: kya: ba:t hui: hai?
 sab ha:l bata:o man ka."

"Why, what is that matter that
 brought you here? Tell me
 all that is in your heart."

kya: ann ki: kami: des māi,
 bigra: hai ha:l vantan
 ka:?"

Is there a food shortage in the
 country? Has the con-
 dition of the nation dete-
 riorated?

kya: mere des ke ab tak
 nahī: meṭ sake dukh jan
 ka:?"

Has the misery of my country
 people not vanished yet?"

"unhē thori: milti bha:i: jo
 baha: pasina: tan ka."

"They get very little who work
 with their sweat and
 blood."

achchhe se bi:j sachmach
 ke kyō nahī: tyu:vail
 laga:ye?"

"Why have you not used good
 seed, why have they not
 built real tube-wells?"

"sapna: nahī: baṛai ujla:
 nahī: ja:te pra:n
 gāva:ye."

"Our dream did not see the
 light, we can't give up our
 lives."

2. "kya: la:l baha:dur sha:stri:
 ab soya: kañi: para:
 hai?"

"Is that Lal Bahadur Shastri
 sleeping somewhere?"

"unke to sammukh cha:cha:
 ek or baba:l ara: hai"

"No, but Uncle, he faces a big
 mountainous calamity."

"kya: tha:re ja:t pā:t ke
 jhagre bha:sa: ka: sava:l
 ara: hai?"

"Is it your dispute of castes, or
 is it the question of langu-
 ages that blocks him?"

"nahī pa:kista:n liye
 phoṛē si:ma: par a:n
 khara: hai."

"No, it is Pakistan with its army
 on our borders."

"hā: bhai: pa:kista:n
 hama:ra: kyō itne anrath
 dhā:ye?"

"Oh, Pakistan, that brother of
 ours, why is it doing all
 terrible things?"

"kah ka:smi:r mera: hai,
 tum koñ kahā:se la:ye?"

"It says, 'Kashmir is ours'; from
 where did they come with
 it?"

3. "in ba:tō ka: phal kya: hoga:
 kya: tumne kiya:
 kalapna:?"

"What will be the result of all
 that, did you ever think
 over that?"

"ab to rah gaya: adhu:ra:
 cha:cha: ji tha:ra: sya:nti
 sapna."

"Uncle, your dream of peace
 remained incomplete."

"sab bhagva:n bhali: kar
 tha:ri: tum om na:m ko
 ratna:"

"God will do good unto
 you—always remember his
 name, Om."

"cha:cha: ji: chalo bha:rat
mē le khadaḡ sya:nti ab
apna:"

sun kar ye ha:l vatan ka:
nehru: kai ā:su: a:ye.....

matna: laṛo chuna:v, ab laṛe
ka: samaya nahī:

apne buzurgō ki: tu: dekhle
kholkar bahi:

1. neta: subha:sh gā:dhi kya:
chuna:v laṛe the

shri:ra:m aur krishna ye sab
se hi: bare the

nij a:n ma:n marya:da: ka:
kya: kuchh bhi: dhaya:n
nahī:

2. seva: tya:g nahī: man
mē adhika:r cha:hta: hai

mujhe voṭ do mujhe ra:t din
shor machu:ta: hai

hokar ta:kat mē andha: a:j
kuchh neta: karm nahī:

3. laṛe chuna:v mē ter mer
ki: dhuā:dha:r hui:

ja:t pā:t ka: bhed bha:v do
cha:r ki: ha:r hui:

"Uncle come back to your
country with your sword of
peace."

Having heard of the condition
of the country, tears flowed
from Nehru's eyes.

—Contributed by Chaman
Singh Fazalpur at Meerut, June
1965

Do not fight [contest] the
elections, this is no time
for fighting.

Open the ledger book and look
at the record of your
ancestors.

1. Did the leader Subhash or
Gandhi ever fight
elections?

And Lord Rama or Krishna? —
they were greatest of all.

Don't you have any thought of
your own dignity and
respect?

2. You don't want to sacrifice,
in your heart you crave for
power,

That is why you shout day and
night "Vote for me, vote
for me."

Blinded by power, there is no
action which is worthy of
leaders.

3. There is too much "mine and
thine" in election fights,

The difference of caste and
creed brings defeat of a
few,

a:ge pi:chhe khaīch rahe
kuchh karte karam
nahī:

4. ab mat laṛo chuna:v bhala:
jo sabka: cha:hte ho
ab band karo ye ka:m pher
kyō der laga:te ho
ab sabke hit ki: socho
sachcha: ma:nava
dharam yahi:

bha:iyo shighra pariva:r-
niyojan karo.

ta:ki bha:rat mē ka:yam
beka:ri: na ho

1. anna au vastra ghar ghar
mē sabhi: ko mile

a:pki: kaṣṭamaya jumme-
da:ri: na ho

2. phir bana:ye banegi: nahī:
umra bhar

sochalo ta:ki ji:van ki:
khva:ri: na ho

3. pher rahata: hai bha:rat
vahi: ham vahi:

du:dh ghi: ki: nadi: phir se
ja:ri: na ho

4. sarvashikshit sulabh gra:m
apana: bane

jami:dari hari aur da:ri: na
ho

Everyone is pulling his own way,
nothing is being
accomplished.

4. Don't fight elections, if you
want good for all,
Stop this act now, why delay?

Now, think of the good for all,
that is the only true human
religion.

—Contributed by Atar Singh at
Meerut, September 1965

Brothers, begin family planning
soon

So that India will not have so
many permanently
unemployed,

So that in each home there will
be enough clothes and
food,

And so your responsibility will
not be painful.

2. For your whole life you cannot
make up for it—

Think it over so that your life
is not wasted.

3. If you don't act, India will
not advance

And prosperity will not be.

4. Let our village be easy to
live in, with all educated
people,

And let there be no prosperity
for landlords and other
exploiters.

5. nojava: no kaha: ma: no
pya: re rasika

ma: naha: ni: hama: ri:
tumha: ri: na ho

5. Youth, listen to what Rasik
says,

So that the prestige of yours
and ours will not be
damaged.

— Contributed by Dudhnath at
Banaras, Sept. 9, 1965

NOTES

¹ This paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the California Folklore Society in April 1966 at Davis, California. I thank all my informants, particularly the members of various *bhajan mandalis*. I am especially indebted to Chaudhari Prathivi Singh 'Bedharak,' Dudhnath 'Rasik,' Atar Singh, and Parvana. I thank also Shri Jagdish Prasad Sharma of Meerut Gandhi Memorial Fund, and Shri Sunderlal, Secretary of Uttar Pradesh Harijan Sevak Sangh, without whose invaluable help this paper could not have been written. Thanks also go to Sylvia Vatuk for her assistance in the conception and execution of this paper.

² Milton Singer, "The Great Tradition in a Metropolitan Center-Madras," *Journal of American Folklore*, 71 (1958), 347-388.

³ John J. Gumperz, "Religion and Social Communication in Village India," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 23 (1964), 95-96.

⁴ See Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Jane Vatuk, "The Ethnography of *Sāng*: A North Indian Folk Opera," Chapter 8.

⁵ For a detailed discussion of such changes among the lower castes, see M. N. Srinivas, "A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 15 (1956), 481-496.

⁶ Henry Orensteing discusses the adoption of the name Panchal by members of Sonar and Lohar castes in the Maharashtrian village he studied. See *Gaon: Conflict and Cohesion in an Indian Village* (Princeton, 1965), 110, 113.

⁷ Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 3 (1954), 53-73.

⁸ Shankar Lal Yadav, *Hariyānā Pradesh kā Lok Sāhitya* (Allahabad, 1960), 396. Yadav tells of the extremely generous reward given by the British Government of India to Pandit Dip Chand who preached enlistment in the army in order to fight the Germans during World War I. Chaudhari Prathivi Singh 'Bedharak,' in a personal communication, informs me that he was similarly employed during World War II, but resigned this well-paying job during the 1942 "Quit India" movement against the British.

⁹ John Greenway, *American Folksongs of Protest* (Philadelphia, 1953), 9.

¹⁰ The process of "Indianization" is comparable to similar trends found among East Indians in Guyana, formerly British Guiana. See Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Protest Songs of East Indians in British Guiana," *Journal of American Folklore*, 77 (1964), 235. Similar in tone also are the songs of East Indians on the West Coast of the United States and Canada, collected in *Gadar di Gūnj*, Vols. 1-15 (1916-1947) [in Panjabi]. For a brief discussion of the themes in these songs, see Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Jane Vatuk, "Protest Songs of the East Indians on the West Coast," *Folklore*, 8 (1966), 370.

CREDITS

Chapter 1: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Method and Interpretation in the Study of Folklore in India: A Comment," *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society* 1 (1966): 156-166.

Chapter 2: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Poetics and Genre: Typology in Indian Folklore," *Actes des X^e congrès international des linguistes, Bucarest 28 aout-2 septembre 1967, III* (Bucarest: Éditions de l'académie de la république socialiste de roumanie, 1970): 107-114.

Chapter 3: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Amir Khusro and Indian Riddle Tradition," *Journal of American Folklore* 82.234 (1969): 142-154.

Chapter 4: Alan Dundes and Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Some Characteristic Meters of Hindi Riddle Prosody," *Asian Folklore Studies* 33(1974): 85-153.

Chapter 5: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Panjabi Riddles from the West Coast," *Western Folklore* 29.1(1970): 35-46.

Chapter 6: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Craving for a Child in the Folksongs of East Indians in British Guiana," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 2.1(1965): 55-57.

Chapter 7: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "*Malhor*: Type of Work Song in Western Uttar Pradesh, India," *Studies in Indian Folk Traditions* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1979): 111-136.

Chapter 8: Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "The Ethnography of *Sāng*: A North Indian Folk Opera," *Asian Folklore Studies* 26.1(1967): 29-51.

Chapter 9: Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "The Lustful Stepmother in Folklore of Northwestern India," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 11(1975): 19-43.

Chapter 10: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Let's Dig Up Some Dirt: The Idea of Humor in Children's Folklore in India," *Proceedings of the VIIth Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences* (1968): 274-277.

Chapter 11: Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "On a System of Private Savings among North Indian Village Women," *Journal of Asian And African Studies* 6.3-4 (1971): 179-190.

Chapter 12 : Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "Chātorpan: A Culturally Defined Form of Addiction in North India," *The International Journal of the Addictions* 2.1 (1967): 103-113.

Chapter 13: Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "The Social Context of Gift Exchange in North India," in *Main Currents in Indian Sociology*, Vol. 2, *Family and Social Change in Modern India*, edited by Giriraj Gupta (Delhi: Vikas, 1967): 207-232.

Chapter 14: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "The Position of Women in Hittite Laws and Manusmriti," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 2.3-4 (1967): 251-265.

Chapter 15: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "An Indian Folk View of the West and Western Institutions," *Thieves in My House: Four Stories in Indian Folklore of Protest and Change* (Varanasi: Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan, 1969).

Chapter 16: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "Protest Songs of East Indians in British Guiana," *Journal of American Folklore* 77.305 (1964): 220-235.

Chapter 17: Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "Protest Songs of East Indians on the West Coast, USA," *Folklore: English Monthly Devoted to the Cause of Indian Folklore Society* [Calcutta] 7(1966): 370-382.

Chapter 18: Ved Prakash Vatuk, "The *Bhajnopdeshak* as an Agent of Social Change," *Journal of American Folklore* 80.317 (1967): 255-270.