THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL:

AN ANALYSIS OF HINDU CULTURE

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PART A

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

They all waited. Crushed into the hierarchy of steps supporting the temple at the top were hundreds of women their red saris vibrant enough to be detected through the mist. Only later would one see the red powder slid into the hair-parting of those who were married. Opposite was another edifice of huddled women. Most of the men were segregated into their particular groupings on the ground. It was impeccable. The persons who had brought the site to this state, were inconspicuous, a single sweeper bearing on the side of one building or another, only to dart forth when a horse rode by and fouled the road. Right in the middle was a long red carpet-runner, to mark the route of the uncrowned king on his way to the coronation, and his return as the crowned king of the country of Nepal, five times illustrious, the living incarnation of the god Viṣṇu, Sri Panch Maharaj Diraj, Birendra Bir Bikram Shahdeva, the five time sacred great king of kings, Birendra of the Shah dynasty, and God.

His police pushed back any of the men who lurched beyond the boundaries of their allocated positions, not being able to contain their curiosity and trying to catch a glimpse of anything that might be happening around the bend, further along from the Kumari palace. It houses another living deity, the virginal premenstrual girl. Then again, all premenstrual girls are a form of the goddess, and are worshipped as such. Though not worshipped in the same way, every man and woman are said to be later forms of the original pair, Puruṣa and Prakṛti (primal person and primal force) from whom the whole vast universe evolves.

Then the dignitaries of practically every nation in the world started to come. Limousine followed limousine. Then the procession, so many groupings, modern soldiers with modern equipment, the old brigade sporting swords, traditional musicians unperturbed by the militaristic modern brass bands nearby playing another tune, the members of the bureaucracy, with the men wearing the traditional Nepalese dress, pants tightened at the ankles, and the lap-over jacket showing underneath a western sports coat of black, and the women in burgundy toned saris, and a formation of Brahmīns, bare-footed in pure white, carrying torches, Then royalty, the king's uncles, the king's mother, cousins and then the royal pair. They rode in a coach from prior times, when the British Raj reigned in India, past the spectators along the route, turning right past the biggest bell and biggest
drum in Nepal, and it might be in the world, because they are gigantic, right to the door of Hanuman, the monkey-god, champion of the protector god-king Rama, which stands guard by the thick gilt door. That door is the entrance of the old durbar, the palace and offices of the prior Malla dynasty, which ruled the Newar peoples of Kathmandu in earlier times. Inside that palace the proceedings started.

Many things happened, but perhaps the most spectacular was that moment when four ordinary citizens poured water over the god-king. Each represented a varṇa—the Brahmin, the Kṣatriya, called the Chetri in Nepal, the Vaiṣya and the Śūdra. The Brahmin was drawn from a category of peoples known as the Parbatya as was the Kṣatriya, and the Śūdra, but the Vaiṣya chosen was a Newar. Inside the palace the ritual work continued, and events would be undertaken at the time stipulated as appropriate and auspicious by the royal astrologer. Outside the people waited.

The sudden burst of music relayed the message that a procession was afoot. Down the red carpet it moved, and huddled inside the throng strode the king, in spotless white, white from top to toe, except for the brilliant red ruby in the middle of the crown resting on his forehead. Immediately behind came the queen. Both on route to the shrine of the Kathmandu Ganeśa, the god who renders any endeavour successful. Any time of day, or any old day, there will always be somebody seeking his favours. Their majesties returned to the old palace. The limousines drove past, the people began to disperse, to take the luncheon break.

If one happened to be walking alongside the palace complex and perchance lifted one's eyes to the top floor of the temple of Taleju, a form of the goddess, and tutelary deity to the rulers, one would have caught a glimpse of the solitary figure of the king circumambulating the parapet and entering into the enormous edifice. This temple has several stories starting with one deep in its bowels, and which houses the image of the goddess. It is a pot (kalaśā), and perhaps also a sword, and is only accessible to the people, except for Untouchables and foreigners, once a year during the festival of Dasain, otherwise known as Durga Puja. This pot, in a way, signifies the primal goddess, Śakti, a power which operates towards three different kinds of effects, to generate, to sustain and to disintegrate. As a tutelary deity, she is the devotee's special protagonist, championing his cause in the face of obstructions. The king was going towards her, and disappeared inside the structure. The people ate their lunches.
Again they waited. And then the striking, wonder-spinning spectacle began. Whether limousines preceded or went after the processions does not matter, because the event that stands out is the moment when the king and queen come by, sitting in a howdah at the top of that fantasy animal, the elephant. Its toenails were painted, and its ankles decorated in elaborate designs. Around its back hung a piece of brocade. Down its trunk another exquisite piece of embroidery. It is big enough to carry the house, the howdah and the passengers effortlessly. They are up so high, that they seem to merge with the sky. To see them, the citizens craned their necks looking up and up. Moreover, to catch a glimpse of the god-king is worth the while, because it gives the beholder good fortune.

This event introduces some of the characteristic ingredients of a Hindu society. Caste differentiation; the special relation between men and women; a concern with pollution; a universe which is perceived as being inhabited by seen and invisible forces, who are contactable through ritual performances. There is the hint of metaphysical concepts in the terms Puruṣa/Prakṛti and the notion Śakti (energy) and an inkling that time goes in cycles, since each year attention is given to the same cosmic forces which are around at that point in time, as with the yearly event of Dasaī. Where people venture through the transmigratory cycle of lives and deaths, this cannot apply to the king who constitutes an incarnation (avatara) of the high god, Viṣṇu. He holds sway over more than twelve million people of Nepal, the only extant Hindu kingdom in the world.

Underneath the formal, sometimes pedestrian, usually conscientiously detailed expositions, one generally detects the scholar's fascination of the Hindu world. Its compelling attraction is perhaps a response to the elusiveness of the key. Approaches come at various tangents, yet the target is the same - to understand Hindu conceptions and arrangements. As is the way with academic disciplines, apart from the problem itself, there is the current paradigm, thereby making the task doubly difficult. With caste society not only is there the perplexing material confronting the analyst, but there is also Dumont and the accounts of those doing battle with him. None is as comprehensive as Dumont nor attempts to offer a general theory but each remains within a limited frame, restricting interpretations to certain recognisably characteristic Hindu phenomena.

The exemplar of such phenomena, is undoubtedly caste, that is the ranked arrangement of the people, and sooner or later most dogged scholars
face the problem of how to tackle the conceptions about it. In a way, it is taken as axiomatic that if this puzzling dimension of Hindu life is cracked, then the Hindu way of doing things will become intelligible, and vice-versa. Most anthropologists appear to take it for granted that there is a key to Hindu thought in general, and that it can be gleaned. With this I concur, though attempt to unearth its presence in a different array of phenomena as well as that of caste. However, I do not see it as the hierarchical encompassing of oppositions, as presented by Dumont, but something entirely different. If it is a key it should help us to understand contentious issues like pollution, purification, rituals, kingship as well as caste. Therefore, I use this as a frame to analyse a number of Hindu phenomena, so as to attempt to bring into relief the indigenous approach to things. This is one of the main aims of the thesis. An investigation, in my view, should not stop short at this point since formal ideas are applied and in the application disagreement between people can occur, especially when this also entails advantages for some but not for others. Therefore, where relevant a perspective which will bring out those aspects will also be adopted in looking at the same material, something which is not always possible with an indigenous approach(es). In a way, there is one central issue, the puzzle of Hindu society as manifested in Nepal, and two ways of exploring it.
CHAPTER 2

A MATTER OF THEORY

The sweepers finally went home. It is beyond the city confines, down by the river. The other castes come here once a year to visit the fierce goddessess' temples, otherwise they steer clear of the place, which is intimidating enough, not only because of the fact that this is the home-ground of the Untouchables\(^1\)(the Pani nachahne jāt Nep.)\(^2\), but also because it is a cremation area, where the ash remains of such people has grown into mounds since they, unlike other castes, are prohibited from throwing their ash into the river. With regard to everybody in a caste society, which would include these people, Dumont says, in a commentary on his mentor, Talcott Parsons,

In other words, man does not only think, he acts. He has not only ideas, but values. To adopt a value is to introduce hierarchy, and a certain consensus of values, a certain hierarchy of ideas, things and people, is indispensable to social life. This is quite independent of natural inequalities or the distribution of power. No doubt, in the majority of cases, hierarchy will be identified in some way with power, but there is no necessity for this, as the case of India will show (Dumont, 1972:54).

Would the sweepers agree that the "hierarchy of people" is "indispensable to social life?". Is the "distribution of power" irrelevant to their caste position? Such queries create difficulties for Dumont's adoption of the Parsonian posture. The imputation that a "consensus of values" exists throughout the society is one of the distinguishing features of the Parsonian model. The other is that "integration" characterises the nature of the social system (ibid:54). Yet there is something missing. What the Parsonian model omits to stress is that in the ideational package, values and hierarchy, one invariably also finds rules. Though rules entail meanings and values, they also generally carry an authority which enforces them. Therefore power, in such instances, is not independent of the hierarchical system that we know as caste society. If power is relevant in directing behaviour, then it queries the validity of Dumont's contentions. For some, acquiescence, rather than value consensus as Dumont proposes, might be a more apt notion to describe the nature of the system of relations. Yet Dumont, failing to entertain this as a possibility, insists that according to Hindu formulations, power is not of primacy, and that this

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1. Since capitals are generally used for Brahmins etc. in the literature, I also do the same with the label "Untouchables" and all other caste names.

2. Wherever I use the Nepali rather than the Sanskrit term, this will be signified by Nep. after the transliteration for which I follow R.L. Turner's Nepali Dictionary.
lies elsewhere. Nevertheless, despite such difficulties, or perhaps because of, Dumont has captured the centre of the stage and subsequent accounts by anthropologists, either take up and develop from him, or present a reaction to his formulations.

It is only Dumont who gives an interpretation of the overall structure of caste society within its political locus, the state, and at the same time incorporates a consideration of characteristic Hindu phenomena. Anthropologists, like Bailey (1957, 1959; 1963) and Beteille (1969) have an overriding interest in power relations while not being overly concerned with topics like that of pollution as understood within the indigenous framework, and when such topics do feature, it is primarily to illustrate some aspect of power. Otherwise anthropologists may refer to issues such as political roles (e.g. Marriott, 1976) or differential access to power and privilege (e.g. Tambiah, 1973) but these are not pursued within the wider societal frame. Their importance is not to be found in their offering a general theory of caste society so much as to their interpretations of Hindu thought and practices as manifested by various phenomena, like caste classifications, pollution, marriage rules, food exchanges, cosmology and so forth. It would seem that, like Dumont their primary concern is to identify Hindu conceptions, but unlike Dumont it is approached within a limited area. Consequently, their contributions are made with regard to only certain aspects of the Hindu scene, rather than providing a general account of caste society. Meillasoux (1973) is the exception in that while not ignoring the state, he presents a Marxist analysis of Hindu society and following this format charts a path of historical development according to changes in the relations of production. As his effort is devoted to an overall Marxist approach to caste society, Hindu ideas are thereby relegated to nothing more than ideological superstructure, and hence they provoke no further intellectual queries other than understanding their "masking" function in this context. Not so for the other anthropologists whose theoretic postures are to be considered as they arise in the body of the thesis. Now to return to Dumont.

If I have understood Dumont's account of Hindu society as elaborated in "Homo Hierarchicus", it reveals several major features apart from the obvious, that is a ranked and unequal society. According to Dumont, the nature of caste society is characterised by a particular kind of relation where the politico-economic is distinct from the religious, its contrary and is also subordinate to it - as Dumont says, it is "encompassed" by it. This also means that the totality, the whole system is religious, takes a hierarchical form and has primacy over any of its parts. Dumont appears to
be saying that there is the clear separation of the two areas where religion, rather than power, is accorded the highest value, and in addition, even though there is this "disjunction" as he calls it, ultimately power is encompassed by that higher value. Thus his model is one where structure and content are intermeshed in that the encompassing (a structural relation) also illustrates the idea of religion's greatest value (the content). As we shall see, it is his starting point, the imputing of religion and power as contraries, involved in a disjunctive relation, which is highly contentious. The idea of "contraries" or "opposition" and the further encompassing constitute a structural theme in that this patterning also applies to the nature of caste relations where the rank order is said to be based on the relation of what he identifies as a basic value, the "pure" which stands as the superior term which is discrete from and opposed to the "impure", the inferior. Dumont explains how to rank any particular caste (jāt) in an order:

Consequently, the caste is ranked by effecting a series of dichotomies of this kind, two at the minimum (supposing there exists a strict linear order of castes): one dichotomy which separates it from what is beneath it, and another from what is above, each at the same time uniting it with the corresponding complement in each case (1972:95).

Complementarity here is hierarchical in that the scheme means that all criteria involved in caste ranking "permit the operation of an overall dichotomy of the society" and "this is really the hierarchical principle, of which the linear order of castes from A to Z is in any case only a by-product" (ibid:95-6 and see 106). Thus again there are the two interrelated points. Firstly, the presence of a two-fold relation of contraries which provide the elements of the system which is built up by the subsequent encompassing. Secondly, for Dumont, the caste order is not to be understood as a sliding scale of ranks nor even an order exhibiting the series of dichotomous relations, but an order which is at any point dichotomous and in overall structure is also dichotomous. The leit-motif is oppositional or dichotomous from the point of view of structure, and contains the contraries (pure/impure) from the point of view of content. The idea of pure/impure opposition is religious. Dumont presents this as crucial, for this feature distinguishes the caste order of ranking from all other status systems found elsewhere. Caste status, then, is independent of power, and its valuation rests with the religious idea of purity. In addition, the "theory of purity" is fundamental in that it is said to render the caste order explicable "to those who live under it" (1972:82). Given that such terms as "the religious", "power", "pure" and "impure", "opposition" and "encompassing" constitute the building blocks of his conceptualisation of the problem.
then how these tally with Hindu notions will have bearings on the validity of Dumont's exposition.

First of all, two key elements of his theoretical framework, namely, the "religious", and as Meillasoux (1973) has noticed, also "caste", have not been defined by Dumont. As I shall argue later in the thesis, that by leaving caste more or less unexamined and co-terminous with status, one misses out on the possibility of revealing the essential character of "caste". With Dumont's rendition of the idea of the "religious" which can only be understood by extrapolating its meanings from different contexts, I would cavil, because I think it is often misleading and does not exactly accord with indigenous notions. Furthermore, though the construct "power" is defined, albeit loosely, (ibid:197), this too, appears to diverge from Hindu formulations. The next major difficulty relates to methodology. Somewhat ironically, given Dumont's insistence on the importance of the totality and not the part, there is a tendency for him to isolate one feature of a system of relations of any universe of discourse and infer from this, that the particular relation will reflect that of the nature of the rest. As we shall see, it applies to the way in which Dumont constructs his scheme of the total caste order from the relation only pertaining between Brahmin and Untouchable. The other methodological practice which is most perturbing is that sometimes he raises all the relevant data that would challenge his thesis, possible because of the enormous and enviable extent of his knowledge, thus giving the illusion that the controvertible has been handled, but instead is then totally ignored rather than incorporated into the argument. For example, the king's divinity as absolute sovereign in caste society is hinted at (ibid:301) but it makes no difference to his insistence that religion is discrete from power (ibid:55, 95-96, 111 and 114). Moreover the idea of opposition, the kind of structure said to characterize all relations, is sometimes handled in a most cavalier way where any set of relations which illustrate differences are turned into contraries, whereas in my view, they are simply different, as we shall see when Dumont's treatment of the varnas is considered. Finally, his rendition of caste society as one to be understood primarily in terms of the oppositional relation of purity/impurity, I would suggest, is an artifact of the application of his model, an application which can work efficaciously in that his categorization of the material is not always in accord with the indigenous approach, the approach which he claims he is articulating. Thus we are faced with several problems: understanding his conceptual framework,

1. Dumont's only outline of the concept is mainly in terms of what caste is not (ibid: 287-307).
the oppositional relations within the hierarchical totality, as well as the meaning of the constructs themselves, and how these accord with the indigenous approach. In a way, all the important questions can be collapsed into one: "is power separate from the religious?". Let us consider some of the details of Dumont's argument.

According to Dumont, in Hindu society primacy lies with values, specifically religious values. Insofar as he maintains that it is the religious which constitutes the key value then power can only be secondary though encompassed by it. To describe what this means, Dumont outlines his hierarchical mode for evaluations which operates from a binary base of opposing terms, where the "religious" constitutes the superior, and the "secular", the inferior. In this kind of scheme any universe of discourse will be dichotomous. There is the famous pair, the "pure" and its contrary the "impure", associated in a relation of "superior" to "inferior". The format is imposed on a range of paired terms, not only those cited, but also on variants like, "idealism and materialism", "form and content" (ibid:117-18). His conceptualization, both of format with its binary character and content, are questionable. One would have to reject the assumption of a dichotomy, that the "religious" is contrary to "power", in the context of the position of the traditional Hindu ruler. Dumont's argument is an outcome of his analysis, since he ignores the king's divinity, totally, and categorizes him as a mere Kṣatriya, albeit, "royal" (ibid:331) and in so doing can yield a framework which suits his case.

By analytically demoting the king, rendering him Kṣatriya, Dumont can present a model of caste where high status does not correlate with power. By minimizing the king's divinity and thereby in effect "secularizing" him, Dumont removes the king, the sovereign power, from his religious ambience where, in the one person, divinity and sovereignty coalesce.

It is Dumont's handling of the material which creates a picture of both opposition and encompassing but which does not flow axiomatically from the data. The priesthood is allocated to the religious category which is depicted as a sacred function (ibid:107), yet the king's administration of sacred laws is not allowed similar analytic treatment, but is imputed to constitute the contrary. Obviously, there is no good reason for this initial categorization, other than as one which conforms to the parameters of Dumont's model. However, since the laws cannot but be recognised as sacred, this is the cue for the portrayal of the subordination of power to religion (ibid:117) and with this the fulfilment of the other feature of
the model. In addition, Dumont's manipulation of the material is discernible in his idiosyncratic treatment of the scriptural declaration that the king is always pure (Manu, I, 93-4, in Buhler (tr.), 1969:185). Purity, as we know, is pivotal in Dumont's conceptualisation, being taken to signify what is religious, what is superior, and is used as the major point of his argument regarding the top position of the Brahmin at the apex of the hierarchical order for the general proposal that religion has primacy. The king is not meted the same treatment, however. Though Dumont raises the point that the king is never impure, it is explained away by what seems to me a spurious argument, that the king must always be pure for pragmatic reasons. In Dumont's own words, "Thus the king is never impure, as he must not be reduced to idleness even temporarily" (ibid:89). Where on the one hand, purity is taken as the index of religious significance for the Brahmin, on the other hand, it is reduced to expediency for the king. Contrariwise, the reason Manu gives for the king's special condition is his divinity (I,96-7, in Buhler (tr.), 1969:185-6).

Central to his discussion is the idea that status is discrete from political power. As Douglas emphasises in her introduction to the Paladin edition of "Homo Hierarchicus" Dumont's great contribution lies in demonstrating how in India status is independent of political power (1972: 12-15). Yet the first thing we observe is that the proposition only applies to the top out of a scheme of four, if we take the varṇa order as the arena for discussion. Despite Dumont's interpretation of the scheme, it could as well be said that status is not entirely independent of power because the second rung is closely associated with political action. However, he approaches the matter quite differently:

Then this sort of complementarity can lead to a real contradiction when it is a matter of completely ordering the datum in accordance with a single principle. In our case, power exists in the society, and the Brahman who thinks in terms of hierarchy knows this perfectly well: yet hierarchy cannot give a place to power as such, without contradicting its own principle. Therefore it must give a place to power without saying so, and it is obliged to close its eyes to this point on pain of destroying itself. In other words, once the king is made subordinate to the priest, as the very existence of hierarchy presupposes, it must give him a place after the priest, and before the others, unless it is absolutely to deny his dignity and the usefulness of his function (ibid:117).

The convolutions of this illogical passage indicate that an alternative renditon of the patterning of the varṇa order might be preferable. Whatever else, there is no doubt that the problematic construct is "religion" on which Dumont bestows an analytic self-momentum. Then there is the difficulty of what is to be taken as its referent.
That there is a disjunction between power and religion, Dumont emphasises time and time again. Yet he also says that power refers to the legitimate use of force in a territory (ibid:197). But because the ideational support for legitimation is religious the initial assertion of disfunction is open to question. In the medly of propositions there are shifts in perspective: if force is legitimated by religion and is accepted as the official ideology then it is an indigenous value as much as "purity" is supposed to be, and any of the other central values, like the rank of caste statues. There is no reason why political legitimation ought to be analytically treated differently from the other values. The disjunction he imputes for religion and power cannot hold even according to the terms of his own discussion, since power is not an isolate, nor naked force, but as he himself says, it is "legitimated".1 The point is compounded by the belief that the ruler of such a territory is divine and whose presence is made imperative by the sacred texts, and whose role is to implement the sacred laws themselves. Hence, the matter is not as neat as Dumont outlines, nor to repeat, does it readily admit of Dumont's initial categorization which sets a barrier between religion and power. Rather the situation is one where these two analytic constructs are inextricably intertwined according to the indigenous conceptions.

That is one difficulty in his conceptualisation. Then there is the proposal that there is a disjunction between religion and politics which as noted above is a confusing way of approaching the issue because implicit in its expression is the idea that there exists in Hindu formulations a category of endeavour, the political, which is unrelated to the religious. It is misleading because the whole system according to the Hindu world view is religious. Now in his exposition Dumont does not take this as the logically prior point from which to build up his constructs and his argument but instead, begins by isolating one specific specialisation, the Brahmin priest, to signify the religious. With this kind of categorisation, others, including the divine sovereign of the polity, are then relegated to the contrary category, the non-religious. But since there is also the general world view which is cosmic or religious and cannot be ignored, Dumont then accommodates this by proferring the construct of encompassing, that the superior, religious term then encompasses its contrary, the non-religious. Now, had he approached his material differently, then the tortuous patterning said to typify the Hindu system of thought could have been avoided.

1. Power is also said to operate at another level, the submerged part of the "ice-berg", or the "residuum" (ibid:74-6). However, if power is legitimated, then this residual power is perhaps redundant and without any societal locus. Therefore I shall not treat it further.
Where Dumont wants to avoid the dualism of the west (ibid:118) and so introduces the construct "hierarchical encompassing", the problem need not have arisen at all, if he had not initially posited the presence of the dualism of opposing terms. The claim that there is a disjunction between religion and politics is an unusual proposition arising from what appears to be a non-Hindu way of categorising things. If in Hindu society, the king is designated as divine, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, then politics is not divorced from religion and to set up barriers arises through his mode of categorisation, following the binary format. Yet if it is to follow Hindu orientations it would not accurately reflect their perspective. Of course, rituals directed at invisible forces are different from collecting taxes and for convenience we label them religious and political and could even use the Hindu words dharma and artha to distinguish the different arenas. But if the king is divine, then it is not so easy to assert that there is a disjunction when confronted by the intermeshing in the one person, the king. But more important, if the entire cosmos flows from the supreme being, then to start with a dichotomy misrepresents the complexities. But then to accommodate to this, Dumont introduces the construct encompassing, that religion subsumes politics. However, had he initially categorised his data differently, and heeded the unambiguous point that religion cannot be divorced from politics or anything else, he might have avoided the pitfall of contraries in this context.

In as much as Dumont starts with one aspect as signifying the religious, and not the entire system itself, then he can set up imputed dualities which subsequently are to be resolved by hierarchical encompassing. Yet, there is no logical, or, more important, no anthropological reason why the issue need not be approached differently. The whole system is religious because it is based on religious laws; the country (Āryades or Bhārata) is sacred space containing Mt. Meru which connects it to the territories.

1. Monier-Williams (1878:126) draws attention to the interesting point that there is no Sanskrit term for what we understand by our word "religion" and which I think reflects the Hindu orientation which does not carve up arenas comparable to those found in the west as with the religious and the secular. There is no area of life, including the political, which is not underpinned by religion and therefore Dumont's stress on the primacy of religion is accurate. But this would also mean that religion is not opposed to politics as he interprets the relation.

2. Hinduism, especially the Vedanta school, as is well known, often speaks of the illusion of opposites, but this refers to the individual's perception of himself as discrete from the Absolute soul, erroneously believing in his own individuality, whereas he is said to be a fraction of that Absolute which he can realise in the advent of mokṣa. This is not quite the context that is being discussed. See Manduka Upanisad, II,9 in Basu (ed.), Vol. I, 1911:304-5.
(the lokas) of the gods (see Manu, II, 17-25 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:32-3 and Woodroffe, 1969:1-3, 27-32, 41-42) and any who venture beyond its sacred confines must undertake purification on their return, and this territory is to be protected by the second varna, the Kṣatriyas and there is no reason why they are not to be designated as religious and why only the priests deserve this analytic epithet. All varnas owe their origin to Brahma from whose body the forebears evolved in the beginning of time. Not only people, place, time and laws have a religious base, but the entire cosmos itself since ultimately everything derives from the Absolute Being, by a process of evolution which moves from the simpler to the more complex and composites entities which constitute this world. As all comes from the Absolute, so all will return and the affair starts again. Each human is said to contain his fraction of 'That' in a relation of the individual (the jìvatman) as to the Absolute (the Paramatman). Even the Untouchable belongs to this religious order though he may constitute a lowly and polluting person. But this does not entail him in a contrary relation with others. His particular plight may have arisen by his committing sin in some previous life, yet he too is human and with a soul, and will be absorbed back to the Absolute, at the end of the yuga, and he too will reach moksha, the ultimate for all humans in the end. This is no problem because there is infinite time. Now if the Hindu territory is sacred, its laws sacred, its ruler sacred, all varnas (and not only the Brahmin) are said to evolve from the body of Brahma, and all humans are part of the Absolute, then to isolate the Brahmin's specialist function as the index of the religious, is a bit narrow-minded. And to say that other functions, other events and other arenas where the Brahmin does not figure, constitutes the contrary to the religious is a bit heavy-handed, in my view. Of course, the Brahmins as ritual specialists exemplify the religious, as Dumont stresses, but from this one cannot infer that the other persons stand in a contrary relation, as non-religious. Moreover, from another tack, since many non-Brahmins including the Untouchable Pore in Nepal are often ritual specialists, they cannot fit into Dumont's categorization. My misgivings relate to the designation opposition, and to the methodological procedure which begins with the part, and is imputed to be involved in an oppositional relation.

If the order is religious (the Hindu polity) and its ruler is religious (taking divine descent to that territory) then it is not surprising that the Hindu theory of stratification places the ritual specialist at the pinnacle of the rank order of humans. In fact, it would seem that the Brahmin's import is to be understood within that general frame, rather than through his particular function. If the order is religious, then it is arbitrary to depict those occupations (or varnas) which are not those of the priesthood as non-religious, as Dumont insists, since those people constitute the lay
members who act as the jajmān for the priests.\footnote{Apart from the Untouchables, or the Vahya.} They are different assuredly, but the difference does not necessarily entail a relation of contraries.

Having maintained that everything is related to religion, it would be sleight of hand to leave the matter at that, because there are certain areas of behaviour which appear to be conspicuously religious and lend themselves to being depicted by this word, religious. In a way, the issue is made difficult through our utilising one word for both the "cosmos", and phenomena like rituals. If we were to talk of a cosmic or metaphysical order which refers to everything, and keep the term "religious" for those specific activities directed at the forces underlying that order, a lot of complications could be circumvented. However, to do this would require an overhauling of our entire vocabulary, and one which is also used by many Hindus, both in India and in Nepal where English is spoken, and for some it is their best language.\footnote{The king of Nepal, for example.} Anyhow, the point remains that one cannot assume that Hindus do not distinguish certain kinds of behaviour, like worship from other kinds, like paying taxes, so the problem for us is how to identify their demarcations given the religious nature of their world view.

It is not that areas of behaviour are not differentiated. Hindus do regard worship (pūjā) as religious and distinct from paying taxes, which is perceived as relating to affairs pertaining to the kingdom (raja), and for that matter, also different from a man's involvement in the personal world of his family and his concern and attachment for them. However, this does not mean, to repeat, that these areas stand as contraries opposed to the religious, even though they are distinguished from it. If everything has a religious component, or a religious locus, then the construct of opposing dualities is out of the question for any imputed pair. What appears to distinguish a religious area like worship, from any of the others is that there is attention directed at the deities\footnote{Though as we shall see later, this does not mean that worldly advantage is absent in such endeavours.} and the requirement that the ritualist puts himself in a special state before he confronts these invisible cosmic forces. It would seem that for such contexts, their categorisation takes reference from the area of the human's attention. This attention is focused on the cosmic forces which, for Hindus, constitute the "realities", the entities which endure behind the appearances of the manifest world.\footnote{On this point see Manu, XII, 118-114 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:511-513. For an elaboration of this same point see \emph{Nātṛi Upanisad} Ch. IV, Verse 6 and Ch. V, verse 1 in Basu (ed.) Vol. XXI part 2, 1926:38 and 40, respectively. See also \emph{The Garuda Purana} Ch. XV verses 53-90 in Basu (ed.), Vol. IX, 1911:147-152 and as well, \emph{Katha Upanisad}, Ch. III verses 10 & 11, in Basu (ed.), Vol. I, 1911 : 97-101.}
This is as far as I can get to an accurate depiction of those kinds of instances they present as being essentially religious. It is not that the other activities are categorised as contrary to religion, though differentiated from it, but that their distinctions appear to be based on the fact that conscious attention is directed at those invisible forces, where behaviour must follow a prescribed format in procedure. Where attention is directed at say, clinching an advantageous business deal, this is not regarded as being distinctively religious though of course religious beliefs might impinge, affecting how the individual handles the transaction especially if he is concerned with merit. That, however, in turn would also relate to the cosmic forces, specifically the laws of cause and effect operating in time.\(^1\) Despite the complications, I think two points stand out clearly. Firstly, theirs is a metaphysical or religious conception of the universe, consequently, the idea of dualistic realms, the religious and the material etc., does not accurately reflect this. Secondly, even though there is this broad frame, activities are distinguished and some are perceived as distinctively religious while others are placed in other categories. Had this general idea of a religious order been used initially, as the logically prior notion, then Dumont's exposition could have proceeded differently. Perhaps it was pushed by the presumption that the Hindu approach to things is based on the binary mode of discrimination.

Even though Dumont says he is offering an account of the indigenous scheme of things, yet, where he does in fact evolve his conceptual framework for analysis, the binary mode of discrimination, this is executed by reference to modern linguistics, Levi-Straus's structuralism, quantum physics and Evans-Pritchard's paradigm of Nuer social structure (1972:76-80). There is not one word from Hindu thought, popular or metaphysical, in this part of his exposition. At least, one would have expected reference to some indigenous context as the venue for generating his model. If he had done so he might have identified the presence and relevance of an indigenous scheme which is not binary. A great part of my thesis is devoted to this non-binary Hindu scheme. However, the immediate concern is not with this but with Dumont's outline of his binary framework.

The format of the model is structured around two elements, one term and its contrary, as detailed earlier. For caste (jātt) relations, there is one notion, "purity", entailing the two terms, the "pure" and its contrary, the "Impure". In this way purity is the idiom for evaluation where what is to be regarded as "superior", is what is "pure" and so the "inferior" corresponds to its contrary, the "impure" (1972:81). Additionally, there is the rider, that the pure or superior will encompass the impure, the inferior. In all

1. This will be discussed later.
2. Whose insights, Dumont seems to be implying, derive from the fact that he is Francophile (ibid:79).
this, one notion, "purity", is central. However, this is challenged by
the Hindu way of talking about caste.

Caste is the English translation of the Hindu term for "species" or
"category" (jāt)¹ (Monier-Williams, 1878:58) which must then refer to
differentiation as species to species. Dumont's scheme, in contrast, simply
revolving around one idea "purity" (and its contrary) is "univocal", as
Dumont himself describes it (1972:299-300). Thus the pure/impure opposition
provides the key relation for caste classification and evaluation in the
rank placement of terms. Dumont's version of the caste order, built on the
oppositional relation then does not accommodate to the idea of differentiation
embedded in the notion of species. To repeat because it is an important point,
since the oppositional framework is "univocal" containing one notion,
distinction only arises by virtue of a relation between superior and inferior
terms, which also means that it cannot identify differentiation because it
deals only with one notion and its contrary. Apparently this does not
constitute a problem for Dumont, despite his cognisance of the fact that
jāt denotes "species", for in his view, the caste order is not a scheme for
differentiation which highlights the distinctiveness of each caste category
but simply a by-product of a series of oppositions (ibid:95-6). Though it
has to be admitted that the scheme with purity (and its inferior contrary)
at least has the advantage of discriminating high from low and thus provides
the criterion for the rank ordering, whereas the idea of differentiation
(species, category) is limited just to this and with the relevant criteria
for both differentiation and evaluation left unspecified. What, I think
does provide the criteria for evaluating caste categories in a rank order has
to be left in abeyance for the time being. Nevertheless, Dumont's
deficiency remains and is also recognised by Marriott (1976) who takes up
the point and attempts to demonstrate the presence of differentiation, what
he calls "diversity", though he approaches the problem from an entirely
different angle from the one I shall outline. If the relations between
jāts entails differentiation as we have suggested, rather than a series of
oppositions based on the discriminating value of purity, as Dumont argues,
there are comparable inadequacies when Dumont applies the oppositional
framework to the varnas.

What the four varna classification exhibits is again differentiation
and not oppositional relations, as Dumont would insist following Dumezil.
It is not the data which reveals opposition but the imposition of the mould
(ibid:106-7) and any mould will give the pattern of the imprint it bears.
Rather than take up Dumezil's elaborations, let us focus on the Hindu myth
of origin, itself. As I understand it, the myth illustrates the idea of
differentiation since each varṇa, as is well known, evolves in a sequence of emanations from the different parts of the body of Brahma, his mouth, arms, thighs and feet (Manu, I, 32 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:14). Clearly the procession outlines the idea of differentiation between types, as well as that of gradation according to each varṇa's correspondence with the different correspondence with the different body part. It appears to present a scheme which both differentiates and ranks, yet Dumont, rather than take up this possibility, turns instead to stress the occupations and required behaviour associated with each varṇa type, imposing the hierarchical model (Dumont, 1972:107), and as is the way with models, generates what it, in particular, is programmed to do, even if it sometimes also means a maladroit fit which Dumont himself notices (ibid:107). Yet despite his acknowledgement that the structuring is not systematic he chooses to overlook this deficiency, rather than entertain the possibility that the model might well be inapt. If the model is not apposite in the context of varṇas, nor is it so with regard to caste (jāts).

Drawing on alleged Hindu perceptions, Dumont asserts that the members of the top castes, the Brahmins, are regarded as "pure", while those at the bottom of the caste structure, the Untouchables, are regarded as "impure" (Dumont, 1972:92-3). As it stands, this rendition does not appear to be problematic. However, it does not allow him to make two unnecessary leaps. Specifically, Dumont infers that the relation of top to bottom in fact entails a relation of opposition, an easy presumption if it is maintained that the Brahmins are "pure", while at the same time insisting that they are not perceived as "sacred". Thus Dumont can demonstrate this "superior", "pure" category's neat opposition with the lowest category, the "impure", Untouchables - top to bottom, as "pure" to "impure". Yet, though widely adhered to by anthropologists, such a restricted presentation of the Hindu perception of the Brahmin and in turn the relation with the Untouchable, is I think, contestable. Even though Dumont unequivocally stipulates that "in India", the "priests are pure", whereas "elsewhere they are sacred" (1972:87), Manu's proclamations challenge this assertion since he delineates the Brahmin as sacred (Manu xii 24,25,26,48 or Buhler (tr.), 1969: 489-90, 494). Here the Hindu term for "sacred" is sattva. Therefore Dumont's interpretation that Brahmins are never sacred does not hold.

1. Though Buhler translates "sattva" as "goodness" it can be translated variously, and in fact is implicated in a whole metaphysical system. It can be translated as "real", "essential", "true", for the adjectival form, as in Apte's rendition (Apte, 1973:596) Or, the noun form as "being", "existence", "essence". Its association with the sacred comes through in this statement, "it is said to predominate most in gods and heavenly beings" (ibid:580).
Moreover, the fact that killing the Brahmin constitutes a great sin also indicates a divine-like (divya) nature for this type out of the range of humans. He, like the cow, one form of the goddess, and like all women, also forms of the goddess (Prakrti), cannot be killed. Had Dumont heeded the necessity to take cognisance of the point that Brahmans may sometimes in fact be portrayed as sacred (sattva) or divine-like (divya) then the apparent semblance of opposition would disappear since sacred (or divine-like) is not so easily opposed to "impure". It is just different surely, but difference is not opposition. With specific reference to the sacred, the opposition Dumont does offer is the usual combination, which links it with its contrary, the "secular", or "profane". In contradistinction, the terms "sacred" and "impure" do not lend themselves to this kind of oppositional structuring. The presence of sattva is significant because it hints at the likelihood of the relevance of bona fide indigenous scheme for differentiation and evaluation of which sattva is one of the given terms of the scheme, a possibility not to be dismissed since the proposal that the pure/impure opposition is not incontrovertible for it cannot illustrate differentiation. Now, let us consider the second major difficulty - the other leap.

Given that Dumont's crucial relation of Brahmin/Untouchable is open to another rendition entailing that of "sacred" to "impure" which denies a relation of contraries, then this format need not necessarily be pertinent elsewhere in the caste order. Anyhow, irrespective of what distinguishes the nature of the relation between Brahmin and Untouchable, this particular relation would not automatically constitute a blueprint which is paralleled throughout the caste order, as Dumont implies (ibid:92-3). In arriving at his conclusion it would seem that Dumont draws some unwarranted inferences which result in his particular version of the structure of the caste order.

The relevance of purity and its contrary for the entire scheme is deduced from Dumont's focus on what he discerns as the characteristics of the top caste and the bottom caste - pure Brahmin and impure Untouchable (ibid:92-3), yet it does not necessarily follow that what is identified as applicable for the relation between extremities will also be relevant for the relations that lie between, other than to assert that it must be so (ibid:91-6). In other words, can the example of the Brahmin and Untouchable be used paradigmatically, if each stands at special levels in the caste order? Dumont's proposals can be challenged from both the logical and content points of view.
It does not logically follow that what pertains to the relation between two terms located at special positions (top and bottom) will also pertain to any two terms which are not located in this way, since such positions diverge from those at top and bottom because they are involved in different kinds of positional alignments. These others are both adjacent (unlike those of the top and bottom) and they are within the extremeties (again, unlike those at the top and bottom). In which case, the nature of the caste structure as comprising a series built up through dichotomous relations between adjacent terms is founded on unwarranted assumptions. As one would expect, similar difficulties arise if the situation is scrutinized from the angle of content.

Dumont himself highlights the category distinction of the Untouchables, the polluting persons who exemplify impurity, associating them with the tabooed commodity "leather" (ibid:92-4), which is removed before any ritual as the array of sandles in front of temples demonstrates. Yet would it be plausible to posit that what characterises their kind of relation with others, would be comparable to the kind of relations between those others at the higher levels, an outcome which would occur in Dumont's version of the nature of the caste structure as a series of dichotomies. According to the format of this series, the relations obtaining at the intermediary levels would have to be of the same ilk as that kind of relation where the polluting or impure Untouchable is involved, which one would expect it to be strikingly distinctive and not paralleled elsewhere. If the category distinctiveness of the Untouchable is to be retained in the formulations about the caste structure, then the single rationale cannot apply throughout the series indiscriminately. Not only is opposition theoretically inadequate, it is also of limited heuristic value in application.

Dumont, along with others who all avow commitment to the idea of opposition, end up by talking in terms of "more" or "less", whether this be expressed as "relative degrees" of purity or impurity (Dumont, 1972) or just simply as "having more impurity" etc., (Marglin 1977). Despite the espousal of opposition, they revert to the discipline's older mode of discrimination, quantification. For example, Dumont says that it is "less impure to eat game than domestic pig" (ibid:94) and in so doing, opposition as the principle for discrimination is rendered ineffectual. The shift of ground from a scheme of opposition to that of quantification does suggest that opposition is not exactly the "single fundamental principle" (ibid: passim) which provides the key to an understanding of Hindu behaviour.
If the assessment of Dumont's dichotomous model, up to this point, is valid, then it has certain implications. First of all, Dumont claims that the idea of opposition between pure and impure will discriminate as superior to inferior, but if that pure/impure oppositional notion is tenuous given the possibility that "sacred" might be relevant, then the rationale for evaluation of the terms is also thereby thrown in doubt. Secondly, if the dichotomous structure identified as applying to the castes located at the extremities is of a special kind and therefore cannot rigorously be invoked to characterize the relation between castes in other positions of the rank order, then this in turn questions the validity of Dumont's depiction of the caste structure as essentially based on a two-fold relation. Thirdly, despite the alleged centrality of the oppositional relation between pure and the impure, in discussions, the idea of weightings is employed. Then there is the additional difficulty arising through the juxtaposition of the two major propositions, as in the construct the "opposition of the pure to the impure" on the one hand, and as in the construct, "the disjunction between the religious and the secular" (and all other like dualities), on the other hand. Since one cannot correlate the inferior "impure" of one proposition with the inferior "secular" of the other, then the two propositions are not at all in accord but discrepant. Yet Dumont tends to give the impression that these are co-terminous, variations on the same theme. If the basic elements of the two key propositions are incompatible, then this suggests that a reconsideration of the approach to the data might be necessary. In addition, the positing of "religion" as a term in a dualistic relation with the secular (and all the other dualities) was found to be controversial since it mistranslates the nature of Hindu perceptions. All these major difficulties raise the likelihood that an alternate scheme may accommodate to the material more easily. As we have suggested, such a scheme would have to be of a kind which reveals category differences, first and foremost, and which, in the case of castes, must also arrange these differences in a rank order. Despite the deficiencies we have identified so far, any assessment of Dumont's thesis would be incomplete without an examination of his construct hierarchy which, after all, gives title to his work.

What characterizes the Hindu system, according to Dumont, is its designation of a particular kind of totality - a totality that takes a hierarchical form (ibid:80-81). Another way of saying this is that the nature of the whole is hierarchical. What distinguishes hierarchy is the relation of encompassment, where one notion (or term) encompasses its contrary and so there is always the "encompassing of" and "being encompassed
by" (ibid:24). In Dumont's exposition, there are then two dimensions, the totality (the whole) and the nature of the structure of that totality, the hierarchical form it takes. Hierarchy is said to appear in diverse contexts. There is the hierarchy of the "pure", where there is a complementary relation between it and its "contrary", the "impure", and to illuminate "encompassing" in this context, Dumont has recourse to the now famous metaphor of the "Virgin Mary's mantle" (ibid:118). Then again it is used in the context of spheres of action, where the all "encompassing" value of the "religious" incorporates what Dumont presents as its antithesis, secular "power". As the left-motif, hierarchy, which is the "religious", runs through his opus. Since the idea of hierarchy constitutes the basis of his conceptual framework, and is applied for analysis throughout the work, it is therefore crucial for his argument, an argument which he proclaims is based on indigenous notions. The question is: does it in fact reflect the indigenous scheme as Dumont claims? To explore this problem let us take the Hindu concept, "dharma", which Dumont posits as one which entails a hierarchical relation as well as exemplifying the "religious" (ibid: 242-43 and 30-1).

"Artha", is presented by Dumont as the contrary of "dharma", and is encompassed by it into the hierarchical relation. Of "dharma", he says that it refers to "(action conforming to) universal order"; and of "artha", that it refers to "(action conforming to) selfish interest" (ibid:300). Yet this curious rendition is not entirely in accord with the proclamations of no less an authoritative figure than Manu who maintains that dharma, artha along with kāma are all necessary for life (II,224 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:70). If both dharma and artha are necessary for life, then the opprobrious dimension introduced by Dumont for artha only is contrived to suit his case. Moreover, it is well established that these three forming the set (trivarga, the three paths, or the human objectives puruṣārtha) are the "pursuits of the world" and it is only the fourth goal (mokṣa), which can stand separately (Zimmer:1961:41 see also, Viṣṇu Bhagavata IV, XXII, 34, 35 cited in Woodroffe, 1969:154). Therefore it would seem that Dumont has simplified the matter by omissions (two goals which provide the dualistic frame for opposition, instead of the trivarga) and by distortions through not taking cognisance of certain complexities (that within the samsara circuit "self interest" figures for all three goals, to a greater or lesser extent, though not for the fourth and special state, mokṣa, which is irrelevant for that part of Dumont's argument anyhow). By utilising only two terms, it is not difficult to construct his version of the totality, the encompassing of power
by its superior contrary, or artha by dharma, but one which is a truncated universe, where the meaning and significance does not faithfully reflect the indigenous formulations. However, in this context, where dharma and artha figure, his account may appear to have some credibility mainly because dharma has at least two important meanings.

It has to be admitted that Dumont's isolation of dharma as signifying a hierarchical relation has a seeming degree of persuasiveness especially if the reader recalls the fact that dharma can have relevance for some kind of totality, an idea that Dumont himself evokes with his phrase "universal order" to translate the term "dharma" in this context. More specifically, Lingat refers to dharma as "the eternal laws which maintain the world" (1973:3) and here it can be seen to stand as a single concept and not one inextricably tied to the three goals. The kind of point it connotes is imaginatively evoked by Van Buitenen (see Walker also) who seems to be saying that it refers to the inherent nature of things, "it is the dharma of the sun to shine, of the pole to be fixed, of the river to flow, of the cow to yield milk....." (Van Buitenen, 1957:36). Also if one reflects on the content of the dharmaśastras, as for example in Manu's exposition, a vast range of topics are covered, beginning with a metaphysical enumeration of cosmic creation, and ending up with a disquisition on the nature of the Absolute, as well as referring to the requirements of kingship, to particular codes of conduct required varying according to caste types, etc. Thus, in this context, "dharma" appears to refer to everything, a Vedic synonym would be pta (see Walker, Vol. I, 1968:275) and a Śaivist, Kala, the laws for the operation of time (see Tantraraja Tantra in Woodroffe (ed.), 1971:115-123). Therefore this "cosmic dharma" could be seen as an apt Hindu concept with which to illustrate the idea of totality though not necessarily of a hierarchical form. Nevertheless if Dumont has this cosmic meaning of dharma in mind, then it would introduce its own kind of difficulty for his argument. Even though cosmic dharma would bring credence to the proposal that dharma constitutes a term which refers to some kind of totality but then, at the same time, it would lose its ready association with its imputed contrary, artha (ignoring the third term for the sake of argument). This would mean that when the idea of cosmic dharma is relevant, then more things are involved, and not only artha. On the other hand, where Hindu thought does expressly provide an explicit relation between the two critical terms, dharma and artha, dharma here does not appear to refer to the grand cosmic order, rather to one of the three particular goals of human endeavour. Thus one reaches the expected impasse. When dharma can be used to depict the idea of totality, the vast spans of time, processes and the laws governing
the universe, then it is not specifically related to dharma, but to artha and everything else as well. Consequently, if one has cosmic dharma (the religious) in mind, then its specific association with artha (power) is irrelevant, yet it is this specific association which is critical for Dumont's argument. Nevertheless, it might be said that the examination is merely proceeding on technicalities and missing the "spirit" of Dumont's thesis, that Hinduism does provide ideas about encompassing.

If we turn to The Bhagavad Gita for one particular instance where Hindu thought proffers the idea of encompassing, this would not however exactly reflect the features of Dumont's model, because of the essentially transcendental tenor of the Hindu conception. Consider what Krṣṇa says to Arjuna:

By me, in my unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in me, I am not in them (IX,4).

And yet everything that is created does not rest in me, Behold My mystic opulence. Although I am the maintainer of all living entities and although I am everywhere, still My Self is the very source of creation (IX,5).

Though the idea of the greater containing the lesser is articulated at one point, it does not stop at that, but there are the metaphysical conundrums also and a lot else as well which are implicated but omitted from the idea of hierarchy. That idea, deriving from Euler's geometry via Dumont's student, Apartman (Dumont; 1972: 24, 334), is an abstraction, whose static tenor cannot easily evoke the complex process of "creation".

The nature of the totality which Dumont portrays via the construct "encompassing of" and "being encompassed by", the essential feature of hierarchy, constitutes, as we know, his specific attempt to indicate that the Hindu view is not a western kind of dualism (ibid:118). What is problematic is not the veracity of the issues Dumont poses but the methodology of his procedure and the validity of his solution. Dumont, I think, is right when he insists that a dualistic approach to things, which appears to characterize western thought, does not exactly hold for the Hindu approach. Yet, at least in the instances discussed above, Dumont himself stays within the parameters of the western two-fold base since it is the base on which he constructs hierarchy. Where a base of two might be relevant for certain Hindu phenomena, it cannot be for all, as the previous discussion has attempted to illustrate. Therefore, the presumption that Hindu cognitions conform to a method of

1. There are of course various ways of portraying the Absolute, other than by reference to the totality. What is especially important for humans is the proposal that their bodies encompass "I". According to the Maitri Upanisad, the Absolute is located "in the lotus of the heart" (see V, 2-3 in Basu (ed.), 1926, Vol. XXXI Pt. 2: 41-5).
binary discrimination, a presumption so entrenched that it is taken as axiomatic in the discipline, loses its unexamined credibility. It is imperative to move out of the two-fold bind and to this end much of this thesis is directed. While my discussion has been primarily concerned with the validity of the binary mode, little attention has been paid to the other dimension, that hierarchy is religious and therefore carries its own significance. Religion appears to be approached by Dumont from two angles, firstly this hierarchical encompassing; and secondly, in the context of dualities where the superior term represents the religious, as with the opposition of the spiritual and the material. To begin with the first, religion as the totality.

Given that Hindu thought covers everything from metaphysical speculation on the imponderables, the pukka Brahmin's refusal to eat tomatoes, divine kingship, to name a few at random, then the least the reader expects is some idea of what Dumont means by the religious. Though the word appears on practically every page, nowhere does Dumont give a detailed statement to help the reader understand what he means exactly by this complex term. Extrapolating from the pages, religion appears to refer to an intellectual abstraction, "the whole". His exposition is perplexing. Consider the discussion on the jajmān relation (ibid:147). To enlighten our understanding of the phenomenon, Dumont refers to the idea of the interdependence of the parts of the whole. Turn the page (ibid:148): in commenting on his findings, Dumont says that "it is founded on an implicit reference to the whole, which in its nature is religious, or if one prefers, a matter of ultimate values". First of all there seems to be a misuse of the adjective "ultimate" which for Hindus can only be mokṣa, which then means sliding right away from life itself and hardly of relevance to the jajmān's distribution of grains. Apart from that, the religious is to be understood as referring to the interdependence of the parts of the whole or simply the "whole", and in either case, obscure. Yet one has to admit this is neat, because if religion means the whole, it can encompass by definition, and all the difficulties with its samsara circuits, the mokṣa release, the pursuit of merit, divine descents, the context of pūjās for material ends can be by-passed by this incomplete and static version of what constitutes Hindu religion. Moreover, specifically to an understanding of the inequitable distribution of grain, if interpreted via the Hindu religious framework, in my view it would not relate to the interdependence of parts of the totality, but rather each to his specific deserts according to the tenet of reward and punishment.¹

¹. This issue will be taken up later.
Dumont's rendition of the threshing floor has more to do with Parson's integration model (or Hocart's conceptualisation of intercaste relations) than the indigenous rationale for the presence of inequities. That aside, the idea of religion as referring to a totality, or any of its variants, rather than facilitate our understanding of this complex area end up in obscurantism. If Dumont's portrayal of religion from the angle of the whole is inadequate, what of the other angle, where the religious refers to the superior term in the relation of opposition?

To understand what Dumont means by the religious and the non-religious, we must further scrutinise how he renders the relational significance of the important notions, dharma, and artha because here we are given an indication of what he has in mind. How Dumont illuminates this distinction is important because it will also have relevance for the other dualities he refers to, such as the opposition of the "spiritual/material" (ibid:300); the "dharmic/temporal" or "dharma/political" (ibid:242); and the "religious/political-economic" (ibid:118), to cite some of them. In a way, Dumont presents a misleading interpretation of the relation between the religious (dharma) and the material (artha) by connecting artha to "selfish interest"¹, leaving dharma vague as action directed at the "universal order" and by implication not holding any "interest" for the actor as mentioned earlier. Behind the idea of opposition for this and any of the pairs, Dumont is trying to make the same point that in Hinduism power is devalued and that power relates to interest. It would seem that by attributing "selfish interest" as the diagnostic of the non-religious, he is implying that religious behaviour is without this motivation. Leaving aside the contestable idea of opposition, one cannot agree with the implication of his statement, that religious activities are somehow disembodied from desired goals and are without any kind of pay-off. Activities oriented in terms of a person's dharma entail rewards like the others, and like the others there is some express purpose, some objective in mind.

The set of three goals, as we have noted before, deal with life in time, each with its specific aim. Pursuits around dharma are not exceptional.² If, as I am suggesting the adherence to dharma can have its

1. The treatment of interest as selfish implying perhaps that interest can be non-selfish is certainly curious. Interest can only be selfish and it would entail a contradiction to talk of "altruistic" interest.

2. Irrespective of what Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna in the famous dialogue. As we know, he advocates that a person adhere to his own particular dharma without any desire dedicating all actions to himself (Kṛṣṇa, the godhead). What is critical in the instruction is less about dharma and more about the admonition to adopt the attitude of utter devotion and surrender, the bhakti yoga. In fact, this speech is taken as the point where this type of yoga originates as an authentic mode for obtaining release, mokṣa, (see Guurye, 1965:275).
own particular kind of advantage in the present, and also for a future historic existence, then interest can hardly be absent, as Dumont appears to be implying, by relegating interest only to those actions associated with artha. Even if we simply consider any everyday occurrence like concern with retention of caste, involving conformity to dharmic rules, it would be ill-advised to deny that the actor has some kind of interest at heart. For example, if a Brahmin diverges from some specific requirement rather than adhere to the strictures according to his duties, this person may lose caste (leaving aside till a later discussion what this problematic term "caste" means and simply repeating the way people talk about it). Consequently, the orthodox person behaves in a way which ensures the retention of his caste excellence. Should a breach occur and his state change, then he will take the necessary purificatory acts so as to return to the required state. In this, interest, assuredly figures. It would seem that Dumont's scheme demands a dichotomous carve up of actions in terms of selfish interest, the worldly, the immoral activities, a kind of Machiavellian approach on the one hand, and a nobler, unselfish, a kind of Kantian categoric imperative, on the other. Otherwise he would not have his contraries. But in so doing, a lot of Hindu orientations are in fact distorted, as with the everyday concern that the orthodox Brahmin has for his own particular state. In fact, this concern also shows where the matter actually becomes interesting because it introduces an important dimension, the Hindu concern with a special kind of materiality.

That the practitioner does regard his activities as having certain benefit is self-evident, otherwise he would not fulfil the requirements, adhering to the strictures befalling on him as a twice-born and implementing the countervailing rituals when he is negatively affected and his particular state is lost. These pursuits involve tangible advantages even though they may not be empirical. Insofar as such purificatory and sanctifying activities involve a transformation of the person, then they are goal-directed ritual work where the goal hearkens to changes not only of the body but the whole person (see Manu, II, 55, 65-9, 75 in Buhler (tr.),1160:40, 42-44). Moreover, such changes are necessary before other day-to-day activities can be undertaken. That such ritual actions entail a special kind of materiality must be highlighted if we are to understand what the practices are all about, and especially why ritual pursuits are accorded great value. As I understand these practices, they are rated worthwhile for they bring what we would call "real", if not "empirical" advantages to those who have access to them. Of such activities, Dumont in commenting on the Brahmin brings into relief the western orientation, that the Brahmin..."is characterised by inessential.... activities" (ibid:108) and appears to be less concerned to delineate the
significance that this has for the Hindu. It is fair to say that in this presentation of Hindu society he does not draw out the "material" advantages that the Brahmin especially enjoys by virtue of his particular caste and its corresponding state that this holds for him as a person, but let it be added, that others may also seek such advantages in their own ways. Furthermore, what one finds in Hindu practices are people's preoccupation with the possibility of change. To continue with the everyday example, the Hindu concern with "purity" and one which Dumont places centrally, one cannot but notice that there is the concern that this state not be lost. The activity of purification articulates the measure for regaining that state when it is lost. Just as important, if not more so, than Dumont's abstractions (that the pure must be kept separate from the impure, and that the pure is opposed to the impure) are the principles which govern such changes. If such peculiarities of Hindu thought are to be identified, they are not likely to be unearthed through the abstraction of opposition. Be that as it may, it must be stressed that ritual work has its own kind of pay-off and to depict religion as somehow the contrary of interest is disturbingly misleading.

Perhaps the only situation where Dumont's pairs have the significance that he attaches to them would be in the context of the individual who strives to attain mokṣa (and reach the ultimate state) as compared to the others who revolve in saṁsāra, propelled by the consequences of their own actions.

Those activities directed at the realisation of mokṣa apparently must be devoid of self-interest, since a precondition for reaching this supreme end is the discarding of I-ness (ahamkāra or abhimānā) and the disengagement from all attachments (see ‘Maitri Upanisad VI, 30 in Basu (ed.), 1926, Vol. XXXI Pt. 2: 103-9; The Garuda Purana, XVI, 92-9 in Basu (ed.), Vol. IX 1912: 165-7; Woodroffe, 1969: 154-7; The Bhagavat Gītā VI, 8-13 Monier-Williams, 1878: 210-11). Some authorities indicate that it can only be achieved when there is no desire for reward (See Manu, XII, 89 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:503). That it is quite distinct from the other three can be gleaned from its label, "apavarga" which Zimmer says means to "destroy", "avert" (1961:41) in contrast to the label "trivarga" the three paths of the other set of goals. It is also the path of cessation (nirodha) unlike that of the other three where continuity of existence (prasārṇa) remains (see Manu, XII, 87-90 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:502-3). Thus the mokṣa endeavour can be isolated as the arena where selfish-interest is not at issue. But if that is the case, then there is a relation between those outside worldly life

1. Though of course, Dumont refers to "purity" which must be associated with some kind of materiality in the end, he is, I think, less concerned with a substantive understanding of it, than with purity's presence as the means of distinguishing caste from other forms of status found in other societies; and as the factor, which he maintains, reveals the separation from power.
which operates along the transmigratory circuit on the one hand, and those caught on it, on the other. If it is a context where these two kinds of situations actually apply, then this obviously reveals that the parameters relevant here are different from those of Dumont's model. Consequently, when there appears to be some kind of affinity between the features of Dumont's model, and a particular Hindu relation, that relation is irrelevant for the analytic purposes Dumont has in mind. Moreover, if the religious (non self-interested) were taken only to apply to mokṣa, then it would leave out a lot of practices that are ordinarily labelled religious. In such practices gain is certainly very much at stake. Conformity to dharma, as well as other activities, when considered against the background of transmigratory time, underlines this point.

The stipulation that present actions of various kinds have consequences for the individual in subsequent rebirths is outlined by the theory of karmaphala,1 when they are correct, they yield merit, when incorrect, then sin (Churey, 1965: 185-90). Most important in the configuration of ideas is the formulation that according to the nature of the action committed in one particular life, the nature of the consequences realised in a future life, are commensurate. There are three types of actions which appear to correspond with the three kinds of goals (Manu, X, 19-51, in Bühler tr. (ed.), 1969: 489-95) and all stay on the time circuit. This would mean that behaviour guided by dharma is not to be simply treated as behaviour directed at "universal order", and any account must also introduce the positive and attractive "material" advantages that it can bring in the long term.

In all of this, the concept of karmaphala (literally "fruits of action") is critical since it is linked to all actions, including those associated with dharma, and where abiding by its stricures generates substantial reward. So against these beliefs, Dumont's depiction is insufficient and as a result somewhat misleading because, even though dharma may refer to right conduct, it can have its particular reward for the individual not only in the present as noted before but in rebirth as well. Therefore right behaviour can be related to matters of interest as well as the fulfilment of the sacred laws. If Dumont wants interest to be limited to artha this can only follow if the western approach to time and existence is adopted and analytic sights are cut off at a person's death. To slur over the positive and material advantages that can accrue through right living and not bring into relief this dimension is to misrepresent this central Hindu tenet and ignore its peculiar orientation to time. Karmaphala indeed dents Dumont's rendition

1. Or Karmavipaka, "the ripening of karma".
of the imputed contraries, and it is no wonder that in his great opus, the Hindu theory of karmaphala is relegated to a mere aside in a footnote (ibid: 326) and is not even mentioned by name. Apart from just two features, sin and merit, which appear to be oppositional, though we shall see later, it is not as simple as that, the configuration of factors, cause and effect, time passing and transmigratory routes do not easily adapt to the format of the oppositional mould. This discussion has bearings on Dumont's orientation to religion in general.

Dumont says that in Hindu thought the highest value is accorded to the religious. However, the important question is why is this the case. The answer Dumont appears to be giving, when he does address himself to the matter in Homo Hierarchicus, is often merely descriptive as when he refers to the great value of the "spiritual" or otherwise returns to the chorus that the pure is accorded higher "value" and is "superior" to the "impure". There is the ever ready tendency to account for matters by reference to the oppositional relation. For example, the "purity" of the Brahman is approached in terms of his association with the cow, and the Untouchable's impurity, by reference to association with the hide of the cow, leather (ibid: 92-3). One is not exactly persuaded by presentations of patterns of concordances. If you think on the religious activities what comes to mind?

Perhaps the most conspicuous thing about Hindu behaviour that hits the observer is the pervasion of what we call religious activities into the area of what we call worldly (or empirical) existence. There are the purificatory acts taken to acquire a special state of being; the recoiling from certain foods because they will pollute; there is the holiness of the metal gold, which Untouchables are traditionally not allowed to wear; then there is the idea that the cow is the embodiment of the goddess whose five products purify, and two in conjunction with three other items comprise the elixir pañcamañta, rendered as such by ritual work. A great wrench from our own preconceptions is required if we are to recognise that Hindu religious activities are very much concerned with this special kind of materiality. Some kinds are avoided and some sought, and the desirable stuff is regarded as being of great benefit. Some of it is not equally distributed, like the sacred thread, access to which is limited to certain castes. The other striking preoccupation which requires a lesser wrench because it is not peculiarly Hindu, at least in practice, though it could well be in intensity, is the constant recourse to religious work for certain worldly ends, whether this be executed in a ritual context where a devotee is earnestly seeking a deity's support in the successful realisation of some enterprise; or when a pursuit of right conduct is
espoused with the hope of better future conditions, though this is probably less popular than attention to the deities in the hope of gaining immediate largesse, or at least soon. Then again these may be worshipped in the desire to gain grace and favours and override the laborious merit path. In this context of religious actions, there are also the purificatory acts realised through mantras etc. All these activities in fact relate to that area of behaviour where invisible forces are believed to be implicated in everyday affairs and to be amenable to man's ritual effort. We return to two points raised earlier, that Hindu cognitions delineate a special kind of materiality which works through a religious idiom; and that religious enterprises are directed at the acquisition of advantages of diverse kinds but which do have relevance for the individual's existence in Time. Such complications indicate the inadequacies of Dumont's approach to religion. It does not bring into relief the substantial advantages that come through religious practices, which allows us to understand why they are so significant in Hinduism. That the gods figure in such practices is a point that hardly needs to be underlined. Their almost total absence in Dumont's account is remarkable. One wonders where have all the devata gone, the thirty-three crore of them. Bring them back, with the import they have for most humans, and the opposition Dumont wants surely evaporates.

If the application of the model means that a distortion of the material results, then no matter how neat those analytic patterns are, it is ill-advised. After all, the goal of the academic enterprise is an understanding of Hindu thought and practices. The formidable problem is to correctly identify and make intelligible those intractible conceptions according to their formulations. At this stage it should be clear, that I have two major criticisms of Dumont's account of Hindu society.

His claim that he has identified the fundamental principle underlying Hindu perceptions and evaluations, the principle of hierarchy (with its two steps) has not been demonstrated in my view. He may well insist that western preoccupations with equality have inhibited our understanding of the caste order, yet, it would seem that the western proclivity for binary discrimination imposed, as Dumont does, on Hindu ideas and practices, has produced a version which seems to be at variance with the Hindu approach, at least to some things, people and relations. The second reservation lies with his sociological model derived from Parsons. This could be inadequate because it does not allow for the possibility of discrepancy of values among the people, but instead builds in the "integration of value positions " as a precondition of the
framework. This would mean that although Dumont stresses that he is presenting the indigenous view, it could well be the view of a fraction of society and not representative of the totality. Methodologically it cannot be presumed that consensus is the case and therefore it cannot be included in the theory as one of the given features. If this is done, then when applied it is most likely to reflect consensus, yet this should be a matter for demonstration. If it is demonstrated that the ideas and values are those of a fraction, then there is the likelihood that coercive pressures are a primary feature in the operation of this kind of system. However, even if investigation reveals that ideas and values are in fact held uniformly throughout the different segments of the society, the point that some are definitely disadvantaged, a conspicuous and undeniable feature of caste relations, necessitates, I think, a critical account, in addition to one based on the cultural notions. This issue will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

A MATTER OF METHOD

An anthropological study, I think, can adopt two kinds of perspectives. Let me clarify what I mean. I am not referring to two areas of investigation but rather to two different modes of discourse about the same material. It is, and can only be, a cultural perspective when there is an attempt to accurately identify and formulate indigenous ideas and ways of behaviour. These are gleaned primarily from informants who present their ideas either in a piece-meal fashion or more systematically, and also from texts, ritual procedures, legal institutes, newspapers, in fact anything that comes from these people. The aim in bringing them into a coherent outline is to present a rendition of the characteristics of their system in its own terms. In this way, one hopes to make that particular society recognisable. One of the main difficulties which arises when confronting an alien system is the anthropologist's different background and always there is the risk of imposing his own kind of perceptions and assumptions and presenting these as indigenous, a difficulty of which anthropologists are aware. Though seen as a difficulty, it is not taken as insurmountable, but it is taken for granted that the anthropologist, even if imperfectly, can make some sense of these exotic societies. The critical perspective differs substantively.

Though the same material constitutes the basic building blocks for both perspectives, the difference between them lies in the manner of treating that material. The critical perspective is fully interpretive. In the process of interpretation, it might well be called "re-cycled data". Though sometimes the account, generated from the critical perspective might tally with the local point of view, that is neither here nor there. That is not its intention. The aim of this perspective is to render an account which makes intelligible the operation of this kind of society which exhibits advantages for some and not for others.¹

Both the critical and the cultural perspectives have their own specific attractions: the cultural attempts to bring into relief the characteristic features which provide that society's distinguishing marks; while the other, the critical, highlights the relations of power which then should allow us to account for situations of disadvantage. If only one approach is used and is not supplemented by the other, there is a danger of inadequacy if a more comprehensive account is desired. Perhaps more important than the necessity for one approach to supplement the other, is the possibility that unless

¹. It should be noted that the cultural and critical perspectives do not correlate with the "emic" and "etic", in that an outsider's approach, as with Radcliffe Brown's structural-functionalism, need not adopt a critical perspective.
both are considered, acute deficiencies may arise within one particular perspective's own terms.

If the critical perspective does not take stock of the indigenous preoccupations, ideas and values, using these as a basis for formulating a theory, then it may run the risk of taking up any theory that is available. Similarly, if the cultural approach, after gathering the material and grasping an understanding of the "flesh" of the society, does not venture further and ponder on why the pattern of arrangements fails as it does, where some have benefits and others do not, this would fail to treat humans as anything more than mere parts of the order, just the data for the pattern - a mechanistic treatment of people as units of the social system. Just as important is the likelihood that the cultural perspective may commit the methodological error of presuming that the "official line" in fact does represent the perceptions and values of all segments of the society concerned. This most striking shortcoming could be avoided, I think, if some relevance were ceded to the critical perspective. To spell out these points.

A critical approach is not primarily concerned to present the system within its own terms, terms derived from the percept and values of the formal system. Therefore any charge that it is lacking in the presentation of the distinctive characteristics of the particular society is likely to be rejected on the ground that that is not its intention. Pointing out, for example, that in Meillassoux's (1973) picture of caste society, apart from the last pages, there is little that reveals what is distinctly Hindu about the relations, and if the Hindu terms (like the varnas) were omitted, its provenance would remain opaque, would not at all disconcert the proponents of the critical approach. They are concerned with different issues, as we have said. However, inherent in this perspective are certain dangers relevant for its own goals.

A critical perspective could run the risk of presenting an account which is procrustean, because by not heeding the particular features of a culture it is easy to assume that the theoretical framework, prototypically a Marxist framework for the analysis of class relations, appropriate for inquiry elsewhere, is indeed also relevant for the caste order. An easy assumption, because of a similarity in an important issue, the inequalities. When that theoretic framework is imposed, it can create a curious analysis. By not catering to the simple point that caste may not be co-terminous with class, and instead equating them. Meillassoux, for example, produces an historical account of changes in class (caste) relations over the millenia according to
the corresponding changes in the modes of production. Though neat and imaginative, it is more conjectural than substantive. Had Meillassoux paid greater attention to the local formulations which specifically apply to Hindu culture, certain rash inferences could perhaps have been avoided. These will be considered in that part of the thesis where they are pertinent. If there are dangers in omitting the cultural, where a critical perspective is being utilized, then the same hazardous situation may apply for the cultural if it ignores the critical.

Where I have referred to two major prespectives, the critical and the cultural, there are of course others, which do not fit into either of these two. For example, there is the structural-functionalist with its in-built optimism, that certain institutions function generally in a positive way for the maintenance of the total system. This could be labelled an "optimistic" perspective of anything else. I do not envisage my task as requiring a categorization of the numerous theories in terms of their orientation. My concern is only with the cultural and critical perspectives.

The validity of the critical perspective has been recently challenged by Sahlin in his work, *Culture and Practical Reason* (1976). He insists on giving preference to the investigation of symbolic meanings, which is another way of advocating the adoption of the cultural perspective. Though his exposition covers a diverse range of contexts from traditional ethnography to clothing fashions in the United States, it also contains a succinct and explicit position in defence of the utilisation of the general cultural approach and therefore is worth considering even briefly at this juncture. Specifically, he is concerned to dismiss a range of theories which he labels "utility", including the Marxist framework which, from the point of view of our argument constitutes the prototypical theory of the critical perspective, as mentioned earlier. Sahlin's general thesis can be summed up in the sentence - society is constituted by the symbolic process (see 1976:x, 205-6,207). At bottom it means that it is ideas, values and meanings which have primacy in orienting behaviour. While accepting the point that the cultural system is important, this in itself, does not necessarily invalidate the attractiveness of the critical approach, at all. As I understand his argument, he tries to discredit a range of theories in terms of their particular inadequacies. But as I see it, the question centres around a broader methodological issue. While it has to be admitted that a specific theory may carry its own inherent weaknesses, this is not exactly an argument against the general approach (or perspective) to which the specific theory belongs. The issue is not about a particular theory's shortcomings but whether the perspective to which that theory belongs is relevant for the
analyst's purposes or not. The test is whether a critical perspective yields results, which might otherwise remain undisclosed if the inquiry were limited to a focus on the cultural notions. There is a related difficulty.

In a way, Sahlin's argument could be viewed as a non-debate because he is considering how society works from the indigenous point of view (leaving aside all the difficulties of his theoretic assumptions within those parameters) whereas the critical perspective (as for example the Marxist) is primarily concerned to indicate how the system works from an "objective" point of view, in terms of a system of control, where some are disadvantaged and others not. In a cavalier fashion, Sahlin goes against the spirit of this kind of perspective in labelling it a "utility theory" (1976:vii-x). The Marxist framework is especially concerned to show that ideas play a part in the system of relations. It is on this score that Sahlin's thrust is aimed, trivialising the orientation, that ideas support the power position of the dominant group, and he challenges the inherent functionalism. Yet, it is impossible to deny that sometimes, some ideas (ideologies) do appear to be doing just that.

It was Marx's insight which perceived how, on the one hand the talk of the times disseminated appealing ideas about "freedom, liberty", choices in exchange situations, while, on the other hand, the practicalities meant that a person had no option but to sell his labour, being deprived of other forms of substance (see Marx and Engels, 1968:62. Miliband, 1977:45). The choice of being able to sell one's labour to any range of employers, is a choice, but undoubtedly, it is a forced choice, because there is no other alternative but to do this. Thus for Marx, such ideas are "ideological". While the ideology stresses freedom, choice to exchange, it ignores the pragmatics that in order to survive in such a system such persons must sell their labour which then serves the interest of those who buy that labour. The ideological formulation which points to freedom etc., does not at all bring out the ramifications of the situation. Yet Sahlin insists that the Marxist approach which presents ideology as maintaining the power position of the advantaged is misconceived. Making a pun, he alludes to this kind of approach as one which stipulates that "custom is merely fetishized utility" (ibid:x). In contrast, he insists that the starting point for analysis is the construct that "society is constituted by symbolic process". To think on some aspects of Hindu society which come to mind, makes one wonder about the tenability

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1. To repeat, he attacks a range of utilitarian interest theories, including the Marxist. My concern is only with that since it is the exemplar of the critical perspective.
of Sahlins' proposals.

In Nepal, which is our concern, there is absolute autocracy. Until recently following traditional practices, punishment took the form of body mutilation, dismemberment and capital punishment, the last of which still applies. Today as in the past some people are categorised as utterly low, and are excluded from a range of activities open to the rest. Against these few features, the theoretic framework of symbolic interaction, which aims to outline the cultural values and meanings would seem to be politically off-key. Society is not only "constituted by the symbolic process". There is more to its operation than the meanings of what is presented as its cultural notions. This brings us to the suggestion made earlier, that a study through the cultural perspective invariably leads to questions which prompt the desirability for a critical investigation.

A fully developed cultural approach almost inevitably does raise sociological issues, because culture (or society) is, amongst other things, "political". It is political because it classifies people into different categories of various kinds and insists that certain behaviour should follow accordingly. It orders the many (politics) into different types, whatever these may be. Thus, not just meanings but rules also are involved. Rules are often made by some people which can be known, other times their provenance is unknown, but whether consciously made or merely evolved, rules more often than not determine advantages for some and not others and a focus on meanings will not alter such empirical facts. The culturalists talk of percept and concepts as well as symbol but tend to underplay precept. But yet that is where the bridge between the two perspectives lies and imposes the methodological necessity to move from one perspective to the other.

The presence of rules requires a breakdown of "culture" instead of leaving it as a reification. The presence of rules necessitates an inquiry into who promulgates them, to unearth who in particular is making and disseminating them, and to consider how this tallies with the relations of power. Otherwise it is to treat people as signs, mere digits in the cultural patterning. One cannot agree with Sahlins who says:

> Force is a physical attribute to which men must yield if they cannot do otherwise; but the question is, what makes submission a duty? To say that Might makes Right, Rousseau observed, is to mistake the cause for the effect (1976:207).

Taking this point by point, let us begin with his statement about force, which is puzzling since sometimes people do resist and refuse to "yield" even if the ultimate cost is death. The Nepalese political martyrs of the
1930's, to mention one example, is evidence of this. In fact, to die is not to yield but to defy. Sahlins' next point is also problematic.

Because Rousseau makes the proposal, this does not render it a verite, despite its French-Swiss provenance. It is too important to be dismissed with an assertion and is surely a matter for investigation. There is enough evidence to indicate that sometimes "Might" indeed does make "Right". The issue is not whether this ought to happen, but that it does. And that is what ideology is about. Whether all ideas of a people can be reduced to mere superstructure is another question, but it does not negate the fact that at least some ideas are ideological insofar as they hide coercion behind a screen of rightful certitude. As for his suggestion that submission can be made a duty it too raises all kinds of difficulties.

Certainly, "what makes submission a duty?" is an important question, yet the sentence is, I think, somewhat slanted where the stress appears to be on the person's acceptance rather than on the avenues of imposition of the ideas that they may make for the acceptance, though it is not at all exactly clear what Sahlins has in mind. At least one point is clear; when a person perceives submission as a duty, then that person is taking his own submission to other's domination as a rightful imperative. In a way there is the assumption that submission is in fact regarded as right and proper and Sahlins appears to be unconcerned to explore the possibility that submission might not actually be perceived as a duty at all and what might appear as adherence to duty might simply be a matter of silent acquiescence. Behaviour can be deceptive, as is well-known, because one may only be viewing conformity to the requirements of the rules and not the person's acceptance of the ideas at all. In the Hindu context, for example, authors are wont to point to the presence of the dharmic rules, and also to the behaviour of conformity, yet their co-existence might not be causally linked, and it could well be the presence of power that is the lynch-pin, and whose operation seems to be of little interest to Sahlins. Culture has its own particular avenues which do not accommodate to the general tenor of Sahlins' work. There are, after all, the traditional law-enforcing agencies, the law courts, the police, the detention compounds, part of the "cultural" paraphernalia where "Might" indeed defines what is to be taken as "Right", and punishes those who do wrong according to its definitions, regardless of what the offender thinks or values. That society is symbolically constituted, the theme of Sahlins' approach, seems inapposite in the face of such facts. Not that I am suggesting that the presence of punitive sanctions is the only reason for conformity, some people will conform because they agree with the values anyhow. But it does indicate that for those who diverge, or want to
diverge, for whatever reasons, punishment will eventuate. Breaking a rule, of course, does not necessarily mean that a person does not regard the rule as right, either, or that the disinclination to accept that particular rule implies that person's rejection of the entire cultural system of values. Yet none of this precludes the possibility that some people may not share the definitions disseminated by official policy ("Might"). It would seem that Sahlins will not entertain this as a significant possibility and a worthy venue for study, but instead he presents culture as a belief system which penetrates to every level, regardless. This comes out clearly when he says that man lives in a symbolic or meaningful order doing this "according to the meaningful scheme of his own devising" (ibid:vii). While one cannot deny that humans are devising the schemes, the term "man" is a rubric which hides methodological inadequacies because more often than not, it is not all men in the society but only some who are specially involved in establishing the official line, which of course, may or may not be accepted universally throughout the society. Underpinning this kind of argument, is the assumption that in a culture there are no discrepancies from group to group.

For Sahlins' orientation, Dumont apparently has had some influence, since Sahlins not only acknowledges his contribution to the cultural approach (ibid:55) but also uses one of Dumont's main constructs, "encompassment", to argue his case:

This does not imply that we are forced to adopt an idealist alternative, conceiving culture as walking about on thin air of symbols. It is not that the material forces and constraints are left out of account, or that they have no real effects on cultural order. It is that the nature of the effects cannot be read from the nature of the forces, for the material effects depend on their cultural encompassment (ibid:206).

At least in this context, it appears that Sahlins is using the term differently. If it were Dumont talking, this would only mean that the politico-economic is devalued in the face of the religious, whereas what Sahlins probably intends is that it is culture which provides the meanings of the "constraints" and their effects, orienting how they are supposed to be "read". However, because culture furnishes the meanings, it does not necessarily follow, to repeat, that a critical inquiry not be pursued. It all depends on the problem at hand. Whatever the assets of his work, it is a non-argument against the critical approach, and let me add, it does not accurately delineate what is entailed by the cultural.

Time and time again the cultural is portrayed as "symbolic". One is warned not to ignore "the unity and distinctiveness of culture as a symbolic structure" (ibid: 205-6): or again, "practical interest of men in
production is symbolically constituted" (ibid:207). With a stress on symbols one is not likely to come to grips with the way traditional societies like Nepal deal with issues — a way which is substantive and cannot be brought into relief by the construct symbol. For example, the cow is not a symbol of the goddess, but a form of the goddess. An Untouchable does not simply symbolise impurity, but is a person who pollutes and should water handled by him be drunk by other castes, they will undertake purificatory rites to cancel the effect the Untouchable had engendered. Undoubtedly, the abstract nature of symbolism is somewhat remote from the kind of conceptualisation that is involved here, for there is a marked and important difference between this kind of cultural orientation and what pertains in the use of symbols. Moreover, the statements illustrate the methodological shortcoming in that they presume a uniformity in the acceptance of ideas throughout the society, as if positioning in the different divisions will not make the slightest difference. It is the presumption of a consensus in the acceptance of the value system by many of the culturalists that is most contentious.

Should it eventuate that there is acceptance of values and rules uniformly throughout a caste society, then this in turn would open up as many problems as it is supposed to answer, since it advocates that it is the cultural values which determine behaviour willy-nilly. In the caste context, it would mean not only that certain people espouse ideas that go against their self-interest, foster their disadvantaged conditions, but also their acceptance of a categorisation which defines self as the lowest of the low. Acceptance of hierarchy means when the scholarly formalism inherent in the phrase is untangled, that some people take to heart a belief in their own degradation. While it is not so difficult to accept the idea that one is great, or almost so, or not bad at all or perhaps even to accept the position at the bottom of the stratification ladder, it is not so easy to endorse the idea that one is "vile", an epithet used for the Untouchable of the caste order.

There is a dimension about caste which gets lost in the vague term, "inequalities", evoked to contrast it with the western ideology of equality. Yet usage of this term and "hierarchy" oversimplify the ideas implicated in caste differentiation as they particularly pertain to the Untouchable, since caste is not only about "inequalities" and different locations in a rank order, but is about differentiation of persons as different kinds of species located at different levels of the universe of people. Those at the bottom are not simply thrust with an unequal status according to the "criterion of purity"
but are characterised as beings whose very person pollutes other things and persons. It is a substantively different kind of depiction. The significance of what this might mean to those so designated does not arise for Dumont (and others who follow his charted path) whose major concern is to spell out the features of the culture (or, more precisely, the "dominant" culture).

Douglas not only accepts Dumont's thesis about hierarchy but she also seems to be implying that this is natural. She says,

Unless we take account of the hierarchical nature of man in society, we are limited to thinking of our own species as something that came into being with the Declaration of Human Rights (1972:19).

To typify the parameters of human thought by reference only to two geographic regions is strange and hardly renders the idea of inequalities as natural for all humankind, the interesting thing is the variations from society to society. Be that as it may. Endorsing Dumont's argument, Douglas appears to be saying that despite our own western presumptions, "man is essentially hierarchical" (ibid:19). For her, Dumont's work heralds a breakthrough in the sociology of knowledge. In my opinion, it constitutes less a breakthrough but more an enormous problematic, since it raises questions about man's rationality, his powers to sit back, reflect and be sceptical, and be defiant about the givens. If all that there is, is mere acceptance of such negative definitions as somehow normal, then one must conclude that man is no longer sapiens but a sop.

That there could be a problem generated by the terms of Dumont's discussion has not even occurred to Douglas. The outcome of what such person's acceptance of Dumont's hierarchy would imply for the sociology of knowledge is not perceived as a difficulty which has bearing on certain assumptions about man's capacities. All very odd for an approach to the sociology of knowledge which places mental capacities as central. Such shortcomings seem to apply to many of the protagonists of the cultural perspective. It could well be argued that this is unfair and that acceptance of such lowly definitions are backed by "reason" - the "principle of purity and its contrary impurity" - in the case of caste.

Within the parameters of this exigesis, however, one would still have to depict the human as a"sop" because the relation of purity/impurity does not constitute a reason but rather provides an index of "superior/inferior status" (to use the standard phrasing), and one would still have to seek answers to the "fundamental" question, "why am I impure"? The "theory of purity" said to account for hierarchy is more a basis for a ranking scheme and less a Hindu notion which accounts for those people's rank positionings in that
cultural order.

If ideas and values are to have any success in inducing these people to accept such negative definitions about themselves, I would expect them to contain a dimension which is extremely persuasive in provoking credibility; and perhaps also appealing so as to mitigate the sting of their current situation, though this is not as important as the first requirement. It is only through presuming that the relevant ideas would fulfil these requirements that one could make sense of people's easy assimilation of negative notions (impurity) of themselves and their lowly position, if that in fact occurs. It is not the rationale of the value system or the meaning of the symbols which are relevant, but rather the presence of a set of ideas which will persuasively account for those people's position in the ranking scheme. Not the meaning of the caste positions, but the reason for placements there, which should be the issue for the sociology of knowledge relating to caste.

Hindu thought does provide explanations for a person's conditions, explanations of the kind which fulfil the requirements of credibility and therefore persuasiveness. But the specific notion has not been identified as such and its critical function has not been elaborated by the culturalists (neither Dumont nor Douglas).

Perhaps this has not happened because of their apparent indifference to the Marxist concept "ideology", where an idea accounts for the disadvantage of some, and mutes the possibility that this disadvantage can serve the interest of others. The total disregard of the critical perspective has resulted in their not identifying and highlighting the idea which explains the placement of particular people in their corresponding positions in the caste order. It is to Meillassouëx's credit that he did notice its presence, and, as we know, he adopts the critical perspective.

Douglas culls forth the proposition that human thought rests on society (1972:13) as if this means universal consensus. Divergence can also occur, in that certain people, or different groups, within the same society may disagree about some values and perceptions out of the entire cultural stock. While on the one hand, the Hindu definitions about "purity", "death" and "time", for example are not likely to provoke dispute, on the other hand, where the official line is devastating in the definition of self, those to whom it applies, are likely not to concur. The likelihood of disagreement exists as a real possibility, and one which could arise even in the context where the indigenous theory does convincingly account for the lowly placement of some people. In other words, even though the ideology is there, it should not be presumed that just because a notion of this kind has an aura of
plausibility, that it will be accepted either. Simply stated, the existence of an ideology does not mean that some will not reject it and there is a case in point to illustrate that the possibility does exist in fact.

The example has become famous in the literature on caste. Rejection takes the form of a myth of origin of certain Untouchable washermen, who stipulate that they are descendants of a Brahmin whose pernicious brother ousted him from his rightful place and as a result he had to become a washerman and they, his descendants, share the same fate. A standard interpretation of this story is that it illustrates an acceptance of "hierarchy": that the lowliest, by projecting themselves to the highest level, reveal their commitment to the system, even if not their own particular place within it. Though, appealing at first sight, the interpretation is somewhat premature.

What the washermen's account of their position exhibits, in my view, is an orientation that the rank order is acceptable only as long as they are at the top, which is not an endorsement of the total "hierarchical" scheme at all, but only the acceptance of that scheme when self is positioned in the upper levels. If the Untouchable's rendition is interpreted simply as a straight-forward acceptance of the totality, it falsifies the complexities involved. "Hierarchy" is not just an idea, a value, but a rank order whose referents are people, and how they respond to it has bearings on the scheme as a system held in the minds of people. If the analysis is to depict the scheme in operation then their version has to be taken into account.\footnote{As it is, complications like the perception of others in the middle ranks, are being left out here.} There is no debate about this, the debate figures on the issue of whether they are accepting the scheme or not. The culturalists are saying that they do, despite the fact that the Untouchables reject their own particular position. I am saying that this rejection of their particular position does in fact modify what constitutes the outline of the scheme, and also questions the interpretation that there is acceptance of the value of "hierarchy".

If attention is given to the Untouchable's version, this would mean that we have a picture where location at the top of the order for those who "officially" belong there entails their ready acceptance, whereas placement at the bottom with the washermen provokes a projection to the top which they justify in terms of wrongful location at the bottom. In other words, high caste people do not question their position presuming that they are rightfully placed, or otherwise it does not constitute an issue for them whereas low caste people see their official position as wrong and locate themselves at
the top also claiming that this is rightful. What the washermen's modification reveals is not a concern with "equality" as Dumont and Douglas rightly insist, but neither is there the acceptance of the idea of "hierarchy" with its two major components, the acceptance not only of "superiority" but also, and most important, the acceptance of "inferiority" as well. "Hierarchy" as a complex formulation with its two wings then, is not espoused because the washermen reject the designation of lowliness and allocation at the bottom. Of the other wing, the interesting aspect is that there is no demand for an ousting of the standard incumbents at the apex, the Brahmins, as commentators are wont to stress (see, for example, Tambiah, 1973) but simply that they, the Untouchables, rightly belong there alongside them. This is important because the washermen's orientation to the rank order does not illustrate a denial of the idea of excellence as we have already noted, however rejection of their own position at the bottom makes the same point, the aspiring for excellence and top rank, also. If this were phrased in Dumont's terms it would mean that these particular people want "superiority" and disavow "inferiority". But if they are denying their "inferiority" and their low location in caste rank, then they are rejecting in the application the other dimension of "hierarchy", one of its two essential features, the idea of "inferiority". This would mean that in operation, Dumont's scheme is only left with people's avowal of only one dimension, "superiority".

The proposal that hierarchy is a value in caste society can only stand when all people believe that some are rightfully placed at the bottom of the rank order. While the top castes appear to take this for granted for others, what we find is that there are no takers for "inferiority" and low rank. But if the idea of "hierarchy" requires both dimensions in its formulations, then Dumont's proposal that hierarchy is a value is not entirely exact. There is not an espousal of hierarchy down the line, but only an espousal of "superiority". The rank order is without its necessary bottom. Therefore the operation of the system cannot be accounted for via the avenue of ideas since those to whom the relevant ideas apply, do not acclaim them. In other words, given the discrepancy between the Untouchable's positioning and their own ideas about it, then ideas cannot account for the Untouchable's particular locations, and so an explanation of the discrepancy and the positioning in the caste order must be sought elsewhere.
While we have the two perspectives, which in isolation may generate difficulties which can more readily be avoided by utilizing both, within either of the perspectives at any point in time, a particular paradigm tends to be dominant in the discipline. This situation also carries special risks for the ethnographer.

The current model no doubt affords the opportunity for "instant" analysis and is particularly enticing since so much dogged effort, patience and conscientious application has already gone into the collection of the material. The methodological error has precedence in the imposition of African models on the social arrangements in the New Guinea Highlands, as Barnes has neatly demonstrated. A similar risk is embedded in the approach which claims that actors are seeking meanings and is propounded variously by the symbolic-interactionists of the Chicago School (Sahlins, for example) and the Delhi School (Das, for example). Both Berger and Schutz's influence is patent, though the impact initially on the discipline moved through Douglas. This approach which sites symbolic meaning centrally may take the analysis up a wrong path in certain instances because it misses out on the important point, especially in the area of rituals, where work (karmakhanda) is involved and is directed at achieving certain goals, like "sons, crops and victory over the enemy" taking the specific goals of Dasar. It may also give the wrong impression by pointing to meanings when, as mentioned earlier, something more substantive is implicit as in caste designations. Though this is not to say that meanings are irrelevant, it is to say that far more important for the Hindu is a concern with tangible matters, despite the point that their kind of conceptualisation differs in orientation from ours. If this is overwhelmed by the construct symbolic meaning this crucial characteristic can be overlooked. Instead of coming to grips with an understanding of such exotic phenomena, such approaches tend to present them as simply mental abstractions. Another case in point is the binary model which, I have suggested in the previous chapter, is a mould which ignores the indigenous way of conceptualisation, in certain instances. Nor are the advocates of the critical approach exempt from the charge of a too-ready adoption of the current paradigm since there is a tendency to presume that disadvantage will be discerned in the sphere of economic relations and so the local material is arranged accordingly — often with curious malformations resulting, as was mentioned before.

The risk of falling into the snares of the current paradigm, whether belonging to the cultural or the critical perspective can be avoided, I think, if one tries to render one's own material accurately. It is this, in my view, which justifies giving primacy to a cultural rendition, since it is
the cultural version which provides the groundwork for the theoretic argument whether it is being developed in terms of a cultural perspective, or a critical one. This is the reason why the anthropologist's work as ethnographer is important. But to say this, is not to endorse Sahlins' contention that the cultural approach which uses symbolic interaction, or any other framework of this nature, is preferable and that the critical is to be dismissed. Rather, I would suggest that the cultural perspective be given primacy, and that the critical follow as a matter of course. As I have tried to show, it is not a matter of either/or because one leads inevitably into the other. It is a matter of both, if one is to include two important issues. Firstly, to understand the way humans of cultures other than our own, handle the problem of living, vis-à-vis each other and the world around them, while also not ignoring the possibility that there can be variations within. Secondly, to attempt to interpret the social relations where humans are treated differently within a particular society. If primacy goes to the cultural perspective and if current paradigms are to be treated gingerly, then a prescription for this thesis is to begin by trying to identify the indigenous formulations for ordering the world.
PART B

DIFFERENTIATION
CHAPTER 4

TIME AND CHANGE: A Hindu Preoccupation

The whole world moves. In fact, one word for world is "jagat", moving thing. The only thing in this whole massively expanding and contracting universe that does not move at some point in time is the Absolute, Paramatman. Parbatya pundits refer to it as being totally still (śānta) and outside of time (niśkala). As for the rest, it is in time (śakala) and therefore subject to the three great forces, the trīgūnas which underlie the invariable progression of creation, its maintenance and dissolution. In any part of the Hindu world, there will be some form of Śiva's momentous destructive dance whose rocking eventually devastates it all, ending one era, after which there is stillness.² And then the rousing of Energy, the stirring of the gūna forces by the male principle and it all starts again. From these great productions, the rest is made up.

The discussion began with a more or less simple notion, that kinesis means change and change can only happen in time. Hinduism posits that movement characterises the cosmos and through movement there is some kind of change at some point in time. Implicit is the ontological dimension. We cannot talk about time unless the idea of change is incorporated and change must refer to something. Merely to highlight the kinetic stress would omit the complexities of the Hindu approach which views the world in terms of process.

In this unfolding, three components are isolated as the basic entities of which all else are mere transformations.³ What is especially relevant for the discussion is that these are produced according to what I think could be called processual principles, since change is viewed as proceeding in terms of an entity's developing into something else. The example invariably cited

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1. And each human has some of this - his jīvātman. The secrets of metaphysics make it difficult for me to specify exactly what this is since the information is given to initiates only. As I understand the formulation ātman would constitute a separate fourth term, distinct from the human's other components, his life force, mind and the capacity for acting upon and being acted on, and his material body. In this discussion, I am not concerned with the concept of ātman.

2. Needless to add the outlines of creation are complex, not only because the issue is so, but also because of the variations from school to school, and the great secrecy surrounding the precise details. Nevertheless, certain principles are clear and these are my concern.

3. These are the mahātattva which comprise mahat (the capacity to exist in time) aham (I-ness) and the five essences of materiality (ether, air, fire, water, earth), according to the Sāńkhyan school.
by texts is that of the seed. Though itself complex, the general notion of changes of one entity into others is not problematic since we can see the modifications that occur when it develops with its planting in the soil and with watering changes to a new entity, the flourishing shoots and finally to a dead plant and a dormant seed encased in a useless husk. Of course, what is involved in the metaphysical ideas about the creation of the multifarious world will be more complex. Nonetheless, the same principles hold in that what succeeds one stage may also contain within itself the prior form. The stuff of creation, the vast myriad of things moving and unmoving, which dot the directions are said to arise by a series of transformations, where the later, more complex and tangible contain the prior, the divine and imperceptible.¹

Nothing comes out of nothing but must have its ultimate and prior source² - a principle relevant for creation (see Monier-Williams, 1878:193-4). Destruction also has its specific formulation. Two things can happen. An entity can simply progress in its path of continuing procession (pārvṛtti) break down and become inert. Or, if the path is a backward movement when contraction (nīvṛtti) rather than proliferation is relevant, then matter is reduced to its prior material base - like the ash remains of things, burnt in the fire ritual, homa, and which is very special stuff, a point condensed in the saying, "burnt seeds do not regenerate" (Sankara, XVII, 26 in Jagadananda (tr.), 1973:187). For a new entity to be created, it is only through the merging of the two principles, male and female (the power of time and its energy) which together begin a new cycle of processual development (see Dasgupta, 1955 Vol.V: 120 and Monier-Williams, 1878:26-7). This means that the husk, the end product of a cycle remains devoid of life, and the seed only latently so. For a new entity to emerge and begin its cycle, then there has to be the union of seed and soil again and with it the activation of the female force by the male principle.³ Within this kind of processual orientation

1. For the somewhat divergent account of the Hindu conceptualization of matter, see Marriott (1976:109-10). Among other things, the critical difference is that he posits grades of matter where I allocate the primal stuff as separate and distinct. Moreover, he refers to two kinds of matter, subtle and gross, whereas, as I understand Hindu formulations, there are three, the third being the indestructibility of source material (karaṇa sarātra). This will be discussed in a later chapter.

2. See Kane, 1962, Vol. V, Pt. II:1359. The technical concept is "sāthāravāda", from Sāmkhya philosophy. Of this Kane says that it is "the theory that the effect already exists in the cause and does not arise from nothing".

3. Obviously, the human is more complex than the plant and will be dealt with later in the thesis. Here it is necessary to give a general account unencumbered by the details specifically relevant to humans.
differences between one entity and another is to be understood in terms of each entity's location at different stages of its development, and in addition, the changes of an entity move from simpler to more complex, where complexity is signified by further elaboration through which the different entity is demarcated.

In a way, the complexities of process entailed in the development of entities could be understood through the idea of ripening because it brings together the two critical factors, the guṇa forces which bring about the particular changes and the duration of time in which these particular changes occur. Changes of an entity may also be called the different states of being and for which, time is especially relevant. If one simply stated that the duration of time is necessary for such processual developments to occur, though this would not be inaccurate, it would ignore the import of the power of time. It is not just a mere dimension, units that can be measured, (the kālas), but appears to be the guiding power that orients the guṇa forces. We read or hear it said, for example, that at the time of creation, nājuguna is predominant, so if there is the question of "when" that guṇa is to become predominant, then it can only appear to arise as determined by the law of time (kāla). Time after all rules the rhythms of the universe. Hence time and process are inextricably bound together. Texts cite that time develops, sustains and destroys (see Kane, Vol.V Pt. I, 1974:466). Things happen at the appointed time as the Hindu incessant consultation of the astrological calendar illustrates. There is no conceptualisation of arbitrariness, what we would call chance, but a pre-given sequence of developments. It is also said that "Time and Energy (Śakti) create the diversity of objects in the universe" (Lakṣmi Tantra in Gupta, (tran.), 1972:29). Thus if one's focus is on events, like the activity of creation, or on entities, these two powers time and energy, operate. But whatever the focus, changes are conspicuous. Another way of expressing this kind of conceptualisation, is the idea of mutability of things in time, though with mutability there are some variations according to the nature of the entity, details of which are taken up in a subsequent part of the thesis.

If there is any doubt about the centrality of time and change just think of the characteristic preoccupations of Hinduism. There are the cycles of time (the yugas) with the repeated coming out of the cosmos, its stabilised state, and then the contraction moving back into the Absolute. There is the perpetual circuit of transmigratory life which is the lot of the human who exists in different forms in the world, the after-life and in the womb. These, along with the goal to get off this roundabout of time (through mokṣa), the twice-born ritual, the influences of time demarcated through
benign and inauspicious planetary pulls, together constitute the distinguishing features of Hinduism, if we set our visions beyond our preoccupation with the phenomenon of pollution. Even this, belongs to the tail-end of a cycle comprising the deteriorated state. One striking feature clearly has been omitted, which is the unswerving commitment to the belief in the power of gods and their involvement in human affairs, yet this belief also relates to time in two important ways. The five gods (Śiva, Višnu, Surya, Devī, Ganeṣa) which are always attended to are nothing less than the primal forms of creation. Furthermore, other gods which are worshipped to on specific occasions, are accorded this attention by reference to the schedule of the yearly calendar.

Though we may tend to see festivals as merely occasions for worshipping a particular deity, the requirement means that specific cosmic forces are regarded as operative at those precise times of the year, one after another, year after year. In other words, under the idea of "time to" worship is the implication of "time when". And "time when" points to the constant changes in the world, changes whose forces (the cosmic power or the particular god in whom that power resides) are to be approached through the relevant ritual work. We can see then that the Hindu ideas about time and change are not only expressed in their conceptualisations about cyclic progression, nor in their esoteric notions concerning the metaphysical origins but they also provide the rationale for the yearly cycle of Hindu rituals. If there appears to be a preoccupation with time and change, then we might ask; is this at all evident in the way persons, things and events are categorised?
CHAPTER 5
THE THREE GUNAS AND THE PROCESSUAL MODE

One of the first things a Hindu will tell you about his religion is that Brahmā creates, Viṣṇu maintains and Śiva destroys, and adding perhaps, that they do so on and on in unending cycles. His summary statements distil the characteristic Hindu approach to the world and one which is essentially processual. Less well known is that the underlying powers of the great gods are technically referred to as the guṇas, as expounded by Śāmkhya thought.

That the idea of process entails the operation of the guṇa forces is to be gleaned in the Samkhyan elaboration which proposes that when the three guṇas, rajas, sattva and tamas, are in equipoise, nothing happens. When rajas predominates, however, there is activation and the move to the phase of creation; when sattva, the integrating, sustaining force, predominates, there is the phase of preservation or stability; when tamas predominates, a breaking down force, a force with the capacity to render inert, is operative so that here is the phase of disintegration. The guṇas in this perspective therefore are not so much qualities but propensities or driving forces and as such are critical for an understanding of the processes involved in the workings of the cosmos.

Not only are these notions expounded in philosophical texts but they are also voiced by Kathmandu pundits, nowadays. This is how one pundit outlined the relationship between the guṇas and the scheme of progression:

In creation we get rajo-guṇa plus a little tamo-guṇa and sattva parts. The part of rajo-guṇa is big and tamo-guṇa and sattva are little. During the period of maintenance the part of sattva is big and the parts of rajas and tamas are little. At dissolution, the part of tamo-guṇa is big and accordingly the other guṇas are smaller. When destruction comes all the world is destroyed...the elements vanish into each other. When it is going towards dissolution, the earth is vanished in water, water in fire, fire in air and air in space...the sequence goes backwards. After this, they dissolve in Prakṛti and Puruṣa, the female and male principles who are parallel and then in the Absolute (Paramātmā).

When the Lord Iśvara touches Prakṛti then Prakṛti starts to make these things again.

According to this outline the processual approach contains several diacritical features. Firstly, that progression follows a predefined tripartite sequence which is cyclic. Secondly, that during one particular sequence of a cycle, one of the guṇas is the predominant force at play.

though the other guṇās are also present. Thirdly, that the triple energy derives from the female principle. This idea is not held exclusively by the experts but ordinary folk are also aware of it. When talking of deities in general, they commonly refer to the same point when explaining that each god has his consort, his energy, Śakti.

I want to explore areas outside the metaphysical texts where this approach could be relevant. I begin with Dasai, the chief national festival of Nepal. In the subsequent sections, other areas of social life where processual ideas are not patently evident are investigated with the same objective of demonstrating the presence of the guṇā approach in a contemporary tradition.
1. Dasai:

According to the determination of the astrologer's calendar, Nepal sometime in September or early October celebrates Dasai, an event which for the castes which belong to the Parbatya category, is the most important festival of the year. It is an extremely complex rite with a number of themes operating at a number of different levels and involving different procedures or variations within one procedure. From the sensational point of view, a Brahmin aged about thirty-five goes into a trance for the whole period of the festival outside the temple where he usually acts as priest and, flat on his back, wearing only his dhoti (Nep.) he lies there with barley seeds sown on his chest and does not move till the finale, when those seeds have sprouted. With less mystic prowess but a lot more endurance, the last Rana ruler used to stand in the river near this temple, for the entire period, growing those seeds in his cupped right hand. He claimed, according to one of his grandsons, that it was with the Goddess's strength (jakti) that he was able to maintain sway over his kingdom. These feats underline an important point about Dasai as it is practised in Nepal. The growing of the barley shoots is a critical feature of the Nepalese enactment, since "without the barley shoots jamar (Nep.) it wouldn't be Dasai" respondents say.

The goal of the rite at the popular level is "victory" - "triumph over the enemy". According to the procedural text, acquisition of sons, crops, wealth and a trouble-free life constitute its "fruit" (phal Nep.). A more general formulation involves ritually obtaining "good continuity" in the face of obstructions, in terms of "courage, strength and success". These variations are subsumed by one respondent's rendition, "We want good luck for the following year".

Though the popular theme of this rite, otherwise known as Durga puj or navarathim , relates to protagonism and the gaining of ritual potency to overcome the enemy, it also has another theme, the one central to this chapter. This entails the idea of cycles which progress in terms of three.

1. The term Parbatya, as currently used, has an ethnic connotation, referring to specific peoples "of the hills" (parbatya) distinguishing them from the people of the valley, the conquered indigenous, the Newars. It is in their valley, that the capital is situated. The Parbatya comprise not only the conqueror king, but certain Brahmins and Chetris, a curious caste composed of the descendants of renouncers and called Sanyasi, and the Untouchables. The Brahmins, Chetris and Sanyasi castes constitute the twice-born category, while Newars (except for their Untouchables), along with the diverse assortment of tribal peoples are allocated to a middle caste, termed "Matwali", according to the traditional legal code, to be discussed later.
The rite is generally performed by the head of the household, dressed in red (red trousers, red cap) against a red background, since the shrine room especially prepared for the occasion is also draped in red not only to keep out the light but also because red signifies the potency of rajas and the colour for Devi (or Šakti). Therein, with a tray of seeds, a load of sand, a pot and the certitude of a believer, the household head performs special events for the Goddess. These are:

1st Day ghatastāpanā (Establishment of the Pot): Barley seeds are sown in soil beneath the pot (ghata) otherwise known as the mūla kālaśa. The powers of the Goddess are invoked into the complex.

6th Day belodhanā (Nep.) (Stirring the bel fruit with Devi's Spirit): Bel fruit are brought into the shrine room and placed among the other items of saera.

7th Day phulpāti (Bundle of plants): also known as navapatrikā (the nine plants). These are worshipped as forms of the Goddess. On the occasion, Mahāsarasvatī pūjā is performed.

8/9 Midnight kālarātri (Black Night or Night of Death): On this occasion a perfect black goat is sacrificed to Mahākāli in most Parbatya households. Homā, the ritual to the sacred fire, is also performed.

1. The term guṇa has two referents, one having the meaning of "quality" and another which has a more dynamic connotation, so that it refers to "tendency", "propensity to" or "driving force". It is this Sāṁkhyan meaning which is relevant: See Lākṣmi Tantra (Gupta 1972:25-9) for a religious application of these concepts; Kane (1962, Vol. 5 Pt. 2: 1352-84) and Williams (1878:193-20C) for a philosophical discussion; and Dasgupta (1932, Vol. 2. 455-70) for a discussion of their meaning as used in the Bhagavad-gītā. See Danielou (1964:56-7) and Eliade (1971: 19-26) for an account of the concepts from the point of view of the religious endeavour. Though reference has been made to these expositions I have always followed the orientations and slants of the Nepalese religiosi.


3. The fruit of the wood-apple tree (bilva in Sanskrit, bel in Nepali).
9th Day mahānavaṃḍī (The Great Ninth): The Goddess is offered the first shoots. The Śakti (energy) in things like cars, motor cycles is worshipped. This is referred to as the time when Durga routed the enemy.

10th Day vijaya dasamī (The Triumphant Tenth): The shrine room is now opened up and the family members obtain a prasāda which, as a cluster, is unique to the Dasai format. These are black ash, red tikā and golden barley shoots (jamarā).

Each Day: On each of the nine days, there is morning and evening worship (pūjā) and the watering of the seeds. Each day there may be a worship of a virgin girl (kumārī pūjā) or alternatively nine such girls are worshipped on the ninth day.

The idea of progression is evident in the ritual's time span. This notion is also embedded in two of the names for this festival, Dasaṛṇā, from das meaning 'ten', or navarātram which means 'nine nights'. Progression, however, is not just a linear movement of passing time but entails transformational events. The affair begins with dormant seeds which through growth change into something else, the shoots. Within this process there are the stages of generation (ṣṛṣṭi), growth and strengthening, (sthiti) and dissolution (pralaya). The final stage is effected by removal from the environment of the soil and so leads to the beginning of another form of existence, away from the soil.

The potential of the seed to develop and grow into something else is accredited to the presence of Devi who, in Śaṅkhyan terminology, is known as Mūlaprakṛti, the root power of creation. This power entails three driving forces and it is these forces which orient the path of development along a predefined course. The sequence of creation, maintenance, destruction, is so well known a formula that the impact of its significance tends to get lost through familiarity. These different kinds of energies constitute the three guṇas, rajas, sattva and tamas which are designated as belonging to the female principle. This principle is known as Śakti which means energy, or Mahāmaya the power of the manifest world, or Mūlaprakṛti, the root power of nature; or the primal Mahālakṣmi, the power to proliferate, or simply just Devi. The three guṇas are delineated by Parbatya experts as three different forms of the Goddess. There is Mahākāli, the tamas driving force; there is Mahāśarasvatī, the sattva driving force, and; there is Mahālakṣmi, the rajas driving force. It is just these different kinds of forces, or propensities that at each stage propel the process along its
predefined sequence of events. At the time of dissolution or destruction (sāmhāra) the tāmas force is predominant and this is wielded by Mahākālī; at the time of generation and regeneration, the rajas force prevails and this lies in Mahalaksmī; at the time of stability the sattva force, wielded by Mahāsarasvati, is uppermost.

The element of time is unambiguously incorporated into the proceedings through the rattling of the double-sided drum, exclusive to the Dasaī format. It is the drum of time shaped to include the male and female principles signified by two kinds of triangles. Time is specifically associated with Kāli and Śiva, the deities with tāmas power. Hence this guṇa is given a special loading. As one pundit elaborated,

Mahākālī does the work of pralaya (destruction)...
Her colour is black and her action is black. But there is another meaning of Mahākālī. Kalā is time, so Mahākālī is the Devi of continuation.

The inevitable processual patterning is underlined in that destruction leads to creation. In this approach death is depicted not as the opposite to life but as part of a continuing cyclic movement.

As can be seen from the outline given earlier, there are highlights occurring at different points over the ten day span: ghatastāpanā on the first, belbodhana on the sixth, phulpātī on the seventh, kātarātri at midnight between the eighth and ninth, and mahānāvami on the ninth. The discussion will focus on these as the critical markers of the phases involved in the development.¹

FIRST PHASE (days 1 to 6 inclusive)

The ritual begins with ghatastāpanā, the installation of the primordial pot, the mūlakalāśa² and the sowing of barley seeds beneath it and on it. Though many activities performed during Dasaī occur in other contexts, it is only for this procedure that the sowing of barley seeds and harvesting of the shoots occurs.³ It is this event which gives specific identity to Dasaī and hence provides the essential clue to its meaning.

¹ The outline is drawn from the Sanskrit text The Autumnal Durga Puja (Katayani Kalpa) translated into Nepali by Rana, 1976, as well as from respondent’s commentaries.

² Mūla literally means 'root' and kalaśa means 'pot'. This special vessel is to be distinguished from the ordinary kalaśa used on other occasions as well as on Dasaī.

³ Though some people plant other grains as well, barley (jau - Nep.) is critical and the word for its shoots (javar) is used to characterise the grown product given to the worshippers, at the finale.
The energy that generates temporal change is the energy of Sakti, but as the process develops over time different forms of that energy are brought into play. That the Devi is designated as the source is seen in the complex symbolic structuring of the physical setting. On the floor is drawn a red half-moon yantra. It signifies the capacity to evolve and is associated with fluidity, which also connotes the idea of change. Above the yantra is the soil into which the seeds are planted. These signify vital energy according to the ritualist's address, "Oh barley seeds you are the life-force of all living forms". In addition, the soil is identified as the goddess Earth (prithvi), the water is likened to a raincloud and the conjunction of these two harkens to the union of the two principles, male and female. "When the Absolute got bored he divided himself into two...then these two were united...and after that the world begins to evolve", as the religious say.

On top of the soil another and even more elaborate yantra is drawn so as to include the forces of the cosmos and its manifestation. The yantra as a form, "consolidates vast ideas at one place". Out of the numerous meanings collapsed in this diagram the idea of the three forces appears as a single triangle around the central point. This particular yantra is the munificent type and thereby harkens to the idea of largesse: The great goddesses, Mahālakṣī, Mahāsarasvatī and Mahākāli, each with her corresponding guṇa power, will be evoked therein by the ritualist. On that yantra is placed the primordial pot which is filled with water. Around its side more soil and more seeds are stuck. Thus mulahalāśa in the Dasa procedural text is referred to as having "ten phases" and so the changes which will take place over the ten days of the Dasa sequence are anticipated. The water inside the pot is also described as having the capacity to expand, although in this context it is through "sixteen phases" like that of the moon. In this way the imagery echoes back to the moon design drawn on the floor on which the whole elaborate construction rests. Since the moon's existence itself is a matter of progression, the idea of development is reinforced.

1. The day before, the seeds are steeped in water so as to break down their dry state and activate a swelling process referred to as "the rise". Thus, dissolution precedes the state of generation.

2. This comprises: (a) the single female triangle around the centre point. The single triangle signifies the three guṇas. (b) a set of interlacing triangles, male and female, around this and then (c) a surround of petals, etc.
On the top the ritualist places a receptacle for the Goddess's invisible presence. We believe that the spirit of Devi comes to our house during Dasar and thus it is with her presence and energy that the ritual transformations will be generated.

Ghatastapana pushes out a momentum which moves towards the culmination point of growth in the future. In some households the idea of expanding evolution is played out by worshipping a set of navadurga, one on each day where each goddess is given different offerings correlating with what one temple priest called "an increase in each of the goddess's powers". These may be understood as the ritual application of metaphysical formulations which stipulate that out of Mulaprakrti (sometimes also called just Prakrti) evolve certain basic forms which in turn evolve other forms. Force and matter are necessarily interrelated in a process of creative expansion. Here is the metaphysical version of this process, according to one pundit:

When Purusa touches Prakrti, Prakrti starts to create form. To have an effect, cause is necessary, for one effect there is a cause, for another the preceding cause and so back to the original cause. At first, Prakrti (with the three gupta factors) changes into mahat. This is the first change. Mahat is so great and wide that we cannot measure it. After that is aham. Aham is defined in different ways. In Sankhya it is the sense of "I". In yoga, it is nada, sound or vibration. When sound is heard trembling also occurs. Without one there cannot be the other. In our sense, aham is trembling or sound. It becomes akasa. Akasa is space, the first of the great five tattvas. From this come tejo, fire, then air (vayu or vata), then water, then earth.

Where metaphysics refers to a series of factors evolving from Prakrti, the ritual uses the same idea in terms of the eight forms which emanate from the one prior Devi.

1. Reading from (a) at the bottom to (f) at the top, the structure can be visualized from the floor upwards as:
   (f) On top there is some kind of receptacle for Devi's presence. The ritualist may use a special tray, or an idol or cult object, according to family tradition.
   (e) Primordial pot filled with water and seeds under and around it.
   (d) Devi yantra (munificent type) on the soil,
   (c) Soil with some of the seeds,
   (b) Half-moon yantra,
   (a) Floor.

2. Variations in exposition occur. Another expert described mahat as relating to cosmic intelligence, the discriminating factor buddhi(Sk).

3. These primordial elements are known as mahatattva (great essences).

4. The order of the sequence of the tattvas in this account varies from the well known pattern, space, air, fire, water, earth.
For those who follow a format which separates the navadurga there is variation in the details of day to day ritual performance. For the others, nothing very spectacular happens until the sixth day, the occasion of belbodhana.

Belbodhana is the time when the breast-shaped fleshy fruit of the bel tree are central. These must form a pair and should be cut from a forked branch of the tree, and into this fruit the invisible presence of Devi is infused. Once the bel is brought into the red-draped shrine room and is placed on the mālakalāśa this suggests that the whole complex is being quickened by Devi's power. As one pundit commented, "On the sixth night there is some 'stirring' (bodhanā) to make the 'energy' (śakti) form in the 'pot' (ghata) to move". If the Śakti in the pot is made to move then we may infer that all else here would be simultaneously stirred to life.

The ritual enactment over time appears to exhibit features of processual movement. In the first phase of the total cycle, the activities reflect the notions involved in cosmic creation and in this the important term is the primary form, the comprehensive Mulpākṛti, or Śakti or Mahālakṣmi. Whatever name is used to designate this primal goddess, in her the guṇa potencies, tamas, rajas and sattva, will be inherent with rajas predominating in the first phase.

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1. There are different timetables according to three possible approaches: relating to different kalpas (ritual procedures). My research indicates that most respondents follow the same basic approach and thereby follow a comparable timetable. The other two approaches are esoteric and appear to differ from this popular one in their being more elaborate. Other variations, more often than not, are variations in detail, for example whether a person worships with his right or left hand in certain parts of a sequence.

2. The bilva is associated both with Śiva and Devi. When associated with the male principle, it is the seed, a particularly enduring kind, which is used. When the bilva refers to the female principle, it is not the seed but the white fleshy fruit, which is relevant.

3. If the fruit are not available then a forked branch from a tree is used.
SECOND PHASE (day 7)

While the critical activity up to the sixth day has been interpreted as a vitalising of the 'cosmic womb', the next phase of the process may be characterised as one of integration. This can be inferred from the centrality of Mahāsarasvatī who is "full of sattva guna".

Mahāsarasvatī has come as a bundle of vegetation containing ripe plants signifying her nine forms. In that the set of nine forms is placed on top of the cosmic womb there is concentration of nine different powers imposed on it. This ritual action may be interpreted as one of creating forms, materialisations where the integrative process is operating. A religioso commenting on this sequence said, "In the root kalāśa from the first day of Dasaī, we worship Devī, and meditate on her. But she is not with form. Up to the seventh day when worshipping we may meditate on her with form". The process of change from "without form to form", in my view, relates to the metaphysical scheme of evolution in terms of stages, where initially the evolutes are imperceptible, but as the process develops over time forms are manifest.

Until the introduction of vegetation in the form of the bel fruit during the previous event, the 'cosmic womb' had not been stirred but once this quickening occurs then materialisation is realised. The possibility that the whole complex is undergoing an integrative process is revealed by the important announcement the ritualist makes after this. "You Chamunda are in the soil. You bel stabilise". This reference to other objects (the seeds in the soil) which are around the primordial pot is made in the context of invoking the power of vegetation (the bel). This assortment of activities devoted to the structural complex (yantra, pot, soil and seeds, vegetation) suggest that a period of consolidation, relevant to the sattvik power of Mahāsarasvatī, is occurring at this point in time.

The strengthening capacity of this goddess is reflected in her depiction as the "wish-fulfilling cow", an idea in turn repeated through the bundle of plants which is reminiscent of the "wish-fulfilling tree".

1. Although on the sixth day mention was only made of the introduction of the bel, this bundle of nine plants is also introduced into the proceedings then. Since on that occasion, the major attention is given to the bel, the bundle was not discussed. However, during the event of the seventh day heed is especially given to the bundle. The occasion is variously described in terms of vegetation. Locally it is called "phulpati", bundle of plants. The texts refer to it as the event of "navepatikā": Some experts point to this occasion as "the time we do pūjā to Sarasvatī".

2. They may also be interpreted as the protective (sattvika) goddesses who guard the nine apertures of the body.
As preparation for the move to the next phase, there is the installation of the sword and other cutting instruments in the darkened quarters on the seventh day. Hence a premonition is given of other kinds of activities which are to follow.

THIRD PHASE (days 8 and 9)

The key event during mahāastamī ('the great eighth') is called kālarātrī. Kālarātrī is the name of a goddess as well as the name for the occasion. The event occurs at midnight between the eighth and ninth day of Daśaī. Kālarātrī connotes the idea of "dissolution since it means black night or night of time", to quote one respondent. Kālarātrī is a form of the great goddess Mahākālī.

It is the spirit of this fierce goddess, Kālarātrī, which is invoked into the sword which will be used to kill the perfect black male goat on this night. As one pujāri (Nep.) expressed it, since "Devi at this time is in a fierce form (krōdha) she must be given tamaś type offerings". Another expert tied together the set of links associated with the event:

The sacrificial animal is black and it is offered to Mahākālī who is also black. It is thought that Kālī is affected by tamoguṇa. (Mahāsarasvatī, knowledge, is affected by sattvaguṇa and Mahālakṣāmi, wealth, by rajoguṇa ...). Tamaś is a sign of darkness therefore, Mahākālī is black. And when persons are affected by tamoguṇa they are angry (Krodha). To make a person powerful, we should give him meat and honey - wine sometimes. Our Mahākālī drinks wine. We worship Kālī to destroy our enemies (śatrū). The action of killing is the work of tamoguṇa and therefore the goddess Kālī is worshipped by bālī, killing the goat and giving it to her. Kālī is black bālī.... Mahākālī is the one worshipped on Kālarātrī night.

Although the protagonist theme is brought out in his commentary, the same pundit added, "Kālarātrī is the time of praḷaya, the time of dissolution", and this broader frame of reference is particularly relevant for the images and activities during the performance at midnight.

Devi presiding over the root kalaśa is given the total life of the animal where its "length and breadth is represented by head and tail, while the lit wick placed between its horns signifies its life....". In a separate part of the proceedings, Devi is also given blood which must be uncongealed and still hot and flowing. Before the goat is killed it is transformed through ritual technology into a pristine being.1

1. As with other aspects of the ritual sequences, the ideas that I am highlighting in this account of animal sacrifice are not the only ones pertaining to it.
The goat's head is placed near Devi by the 'cosmic womb' (the mūlakalāśa) which stands on a series of things with the half-moon yantra at the bottom on the floor, as will be recalled. This same half-moon image recurs in the sacrificial situation in that the sword used to kill the black goat may be the "moon sword" (candrahas) whose swollen shape stimulates the half-moon. In this way, the idea of the power for both death and life is pressed through the coalescing of the two events in the one image. The interconnectedness of life and death is verbally repeated in the final statement made to the sword before it is brought down in the killing when the ritualist addresses it as "Auspicious Womb" (sri garbha). That Devi devours her own creation is an idea often cited in the texts and is expressed at the folk level, "Devi gives life so she takes life".

The blood of the animal is also poured over the 'cosmic womb'. As the animal had been erased of its phenomanality through ritual technology so too the blood is transformed to a pure state. This is "even beyond holiness" in the hands of adepts, who can convert blood into the essence vayu (the mahātattvā, air), according to one Tantric expert who elaborated: "When you plant the barley in soil this is the growth stage. When you kill the goat this is decay. But when you offer it to relatives later it is turya. Turya equals all three stages in one, 'creation' (srsti), 'maintenance' (sthiti) and 'destruction' (saṁhāra) together are turya... when creation, maintenance and destruction are in one, this is the fourth state".

There is a third important sequence on this night which involves the sacred fire. Where the animal is transformed into pure body, its vital blood is "melted" back into cosmic air, while its flesh (either liver or hump of the neck and the heart) is reduced to ashes through a Tantric version of homa. Ash is the final form of the destructive process and, I would suggest, may be likened to the essence particles which during the time of prataya are not destroyed but merge with the Absolute. This ash signifying the stuff of total dissolution is also given to the Goddess.

In order to understand what is involved in the ritual procedure it is necessary to refer to some of the metaphysical notions regarding cosmic dissolution. The Tantric's account and the ritual activities on Kālarātri

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1. The text stipulates that fruit may be used as an alternative for the heart. It should be added that some Parbatya maintain that they do not place any part of the goat into the fire of homa.
night indicate that there is more to blood sacrifice than placation of the destructive force appearing at the time of pralaya; and that there is more than concern with the transition from this phase to the next.

Rather than merely placating the destructive forces so as to move into the next sequence, the Tantric uses this point in time as the one appropriate for doing certain things and obtaining a special kind of potency. He ritually "takes a journey" to the primordial source and to do this he can only go backwards by the retracing of the preceding steps. Because the forward flow of evolution entails a process of expansion and creation, going backwards entails contraction or the process of dissolution. The reduction of the goat to dust particles is the ritual idiom. This dust, I am suggesting, constitutes essence, matter which belongs to a special state since it has had its phenomenality removed. It is phenomenality which progresses in unending cycles of creation, maintenance and dissolution and therefore it is phenomenality which is involved in time's control. But by reducing the animal to its ultimate particles, that is, by ritually manufacturing a mahatattva, the Tantric thereby obtains the stuff of "indestructibility" which is the characteristic of such essences because during "actual cosmic pralaya", it is believed that they are not destroyed but in their paramana state merge with the Absolute. The ash is referred to as vibhuti which in this context means "superhuman might" or "divine power".

It is significant that eternal particles are placed on the 'cosmic womb' complex since in this way, the complex is itself infused with indestructibility. From this point of view, therefore, the dissolving force (the goddess Mahakali full of tamoguna) has been tapped so as to obtain the stuff of imperishability which is then imposed on the 'cosmic womb' and thereby strengthens it. In short, by tapping the destructive force, one becomes "indestructible". This makes sense in that if the individual wants the power to destroy his obstructions, and thereby become impregnable\(^1\) (indestructible) to them, what better to tap than the destructive power itself.

Where, from one perspective, the destructive force is placated so that time progresses past dissolution into the next phase and desirable continuity eventuates, from another perspective the potency of this same force is

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1. One of the Sanskrit words for 'impregnable' is durgam. One of the names for Dasa\(^{\text{Y}}\) is "Durga Puja", which is particularly relevant for the other major theme, that of protagonism. With k\(\text{\`a}\)\(\text{\`a}\)\(\text{\`a}\)\(\text{\`a}\)\(\text{\`a}\) night the two major themes of Dasa\(^{\text{Y}}\) (protagonism and \(\text{\`a}\)\(\text{\`a}\)ktism) thus merge.
acquired so that the adept gains through ritual the capacity to destroy adversity, siddhi power. ¹ More plainly, it can be said, that on the one hand the destructive force is ritually averted, while on the other, the potency of that same destructive force is ritually sought. When people claim that with "Devi's help we may succeed in overcoming our troubles", they are expressing in simple words the hoped for outcome of this highly intricate ritual procedure.

On the night of kālarātri the destructive forces are heeded, whereas in the subsequent phase on the ninth day, a different form of the goddess appears. "After pralaya is over, Devi is peaceful, now we worship Devi as the mother", commented one expert. This is the time for Mahālakṣaṇī and the different form is treated accordingly. "Where on the night of pralaya we use the Kālī yantra which is ablaze with fire at its edges and within this is the circle of skulls, on mahānvāmi (the great ninth) we use a munificent bhadra yantra in keeping with the nature of this new form".

The advent of the forces of regeneration may also be discerned in the practice of worshipping the nine virgins which is performed on this ninth day.² An examination of the names and attributes reveals that these nine little girls represent the nine primal forms of Prakṛti. As a totality they encapsulate the composite power, Prakṛti or Mahālakṣaṇī or Śakti.³ Whatever epithet is used this is the power from which the manifest world evolves and here the relevant guna is rajas in the cycle of creation.

Moreover, attention is directed at the specifically dynamic dimension since Parbatya offer sacrifices to the power believed to inhere in the engines of their cars, motor cycles, and the jets of the Royal Nepalese Airlines. Though from one point of view it might appear that it is the mechanical force which is being worshipped this would ignore the orientation, the conceptualisation that it is the fundamental force underlying all other forces. A pujārī of a famous Devi temple articulated this orientation. Picking up a pair of spectacles, he said: "These would not work without Devi's energy. Energy is power. Without this power nothing in the whole world could work".

On the tenth day, the forces involved in the progression of the cycle

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1. Siddhi has two senses: Firstly the ability to accomplish with success, in ordinary contexts; in the Tantric context siddhi refers to extraordinary powers of diverse kinds.

2. The Newar Kumārī cult is somewhat divergent from the Parbatya practice of the worship of any of their prepubescent girls. For an account of the Newar cult, see Allen (1975).

3. Even for those who follow the practice of worshipping one virgin each day, the ninth presents the culminating point in the development.
are collapsed into the three prasādas given. For the first time humans obtain their jamarā, the golden shoots of sustenance (the sattva potency). As well, they are given the black ash of dissolution, (the tamas potency) and the red saguṇe tikā (Nep.) signifying the power to activate, to propel (the rajas potency). Perhaps the coming together of the three guṇas hearkens to the idea of equipoise, the moment of rest before the next beginning of time. Whatever else, the family has now tapped the potencies of the three cosmic forces.

It is reasonable to claim that the DasaĪ ritual unfolds in a cyclic pattern consisting of three major phases where the character of each phase is prescribed by the predominance of a particular guṇa. This claim is not an extraordinary one since the idea of processual development entailing the three sequences of creation, maintenance and destruction, each propelled by the relevant guṇa, is a central Hindu tenet. The question that now presents itself is whether this kind of processual approach has relevance in contexts of Parbatya social life, other than the DasaĪ ritual.

1. Prasāda is described as something coming from the deity worshipped. "We do not believe that we are taking back our offerings, we believe that prasāda is a gift from Devī", is how one respondent explained prasāda in reference to Dasaī.

2. Three different grains (sesami, rice and barley) are treated differently so as to express the thematic notion evoked by each guṇa, in the special DasaĪ combination of prasādas. There is the ash called which means " of sesami " and is associated with Śiva, the destroyer. The ash is made through the act of destruction when the grains are thrown into the fire, part of the ritual of Vedichoma performed on the tenth day. (The reader will recall that during kālaratri in the Tantric variation, the animal's heart, liver and flesh are used). In order to express the idea of generation, there is the saguṇa tikā, a mix of red powder and rice held together by curd, where the red powder and white rice symbolise the union of the male and female principles. The union as we know is part of the activity which propels creation, and thus the rajas factor is signified. Ordinarily, rice is the grain associated with Brahma, the creator. In so far as the word "saguṇa " means "with form", the tikā specifically relates to the manifest world as well as the relevant force which determines this. Finally, there is the jamarā, the golden shoots of a kind which do not decolourise. "Jamarā does not fade, its colour is retained."Jamarā", the harvested shoots as we have seen are grown from the barley, the seed traditionally associated with Viṣṇu, the god of maintenance. As a set, the three prasādas epitomise the primal forces, the three potent guṇas, now affixed to the body of each worshipper.
2. FEMALE CYCLES:

(a) Menstruation, pregnancy and the three guṇas:

I would like to suggest that the format of cosmic cycle in general and the disintegrative phase in particular are relevant for an understanding of the ritual treatment of the Hindu female during her monthly cycle.

At the onset of flow, she is believed to have destructive powers to harm the life-span of men and vegetation, and immediately following is said to have the potency for reproduction and, after that, to have the capacity for neither destruction nor generation. It would seem, therefore, that these everyday beliefs provide a schema of the female's menstrual cycle which exhibits a sequence of progression comparable to that found in the cosmic cycle. Thus as far as the human female is concerned there is a culturally formulated cycle whose sequences correspond to those of the cosmic progression, pralaya or saṃhāra, srṣṭi and sthiti - the capacity to destroy, procreate and do neither. If, at those particular times, the corresponding driving forces are at play, namely the tamas, rajas and sattva, then it may well be that in the case of the human female they are also relevant.

Since it is during her "not-to-be-touched" phase that she is imputed to have the capacity to damage certain living things, then this, I would suggest, corresponds to the occasion when tamas predominates. Similarly, since it is during the subsequent days that she is regarded as having the potential for reproduction this would correspond to a condition where rajas is prevalent. In the third phase, when she is deemed to have neither destructive nor reproductive potential, she is in a condition which corresponds to that of sattva predominance in the cosmic cycle.

Diagram of the Female's Monthly Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAYS:</th>
<th>1-----4</th>
<th>5-----16</th>
<th>17-----32</th>
<th>Lunar System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAYS:</td>
<td>1-----3</td>
<td>4-----15</td>
<td>16-----30</td>
<td>Solar System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaging Phase</td>
<td>Reproductive Phase</td>
<td>Neither Reproductive Nor Damaging Phase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamas predominates</td>
<td>rajas predominates</td>
<td>sattva predominates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other beliefs and practices relating to the monthly cycle fill in the details regarding the progressive development of intensity and diminution of the woman's capacities. There is the belief that the fourth solar day
after menstruation has begun is the most potent time for realising the procreative potential, but this sloughs off at the fifteenth day. If a son is desired, then the would-be parents are admonished to indulge in sexual intercourse (maithuna) on that fourth solar day but if a daughter is desired, then the next day is regarded as the appropriate one, these two days being regarded as the most potent of all.

Similarly, there is a convergence of the female and cosmic cycles in the play of ideas regarding the number sixteen. While people believe that the woman's powers fall within the sixteen day period, the DasaY procedural text stipulates that the water in the pot kalaśa has sixteen parts.¹

The identical three-phase structuring of both the cosmic and the menstrual cycle occurs also in the pregnancy cycle. The Hindu formulations² regarding life in the womb illustrate a sequence of development comparable to that found in the process involved in the 'cosmic womb' as inferred from the brief analysis of DasaY. After the initial activities devoted to the barley seeds in the female field the next radical event occurs on the sixth. On this night Śakti's power invigorates the 'cosmic womb' and from then there is movement. This demarcation through the numeral six also occurs in the case of pregnancy since the sixth month is the time when "the life-force' (prāṇā) enters into the baby and it begins to move". Consequently, the process of development in the human womb and in the 'cosmic womb' appears to be comparable. From the pregnant woman's point of view this is the time when she begins to feel the baby kicking.³ Furthermore, the belief that a pregnant woman after the sixth month may not enter a Devi temple for fear that she might abort indicates the same significance for the sixth in that prior to this time, the foetus would not be vulnerable because the life-force (prāṇā) has not as yet entered.

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1. Ṭikā may be given to other family members who visit after the tenth up to the full moon, the sixteenth phase. While some people do continue to worship up to that date, the tenth, with the distribution of the shoots and the opening up of the shrine room to the family, terminates the substantive part of DasaY. The number ten, needless to say, is the number of months Hindus ascribe for pregnancy.

2. For the Ayurvedic account, see Dasgupta 1932, Vol. 2, 3.2-319.

3. The idea that the sixth month is the time for the concentrating of the vital forces also figures in a rite performed for the infant at the sixth month of existence in the world. This (annaprāśanna) rite marks the first taking of solid food when the infant is fed boiled rice and thereby recognised as a bona fide member of humanity. Prior to this ritual, the infant is not usually given new clothes but hand-me-downs, thus highlighting the uncertainty of existence prior to this point in time.
After the eighth month of pregnancy disturbance occurs. There is disturbance in the flow of vital fluid (ojas) between the mother and child. The baby rejects some of this ojas and returns it to the mother, signalling the process of disengagement of the foetal existence from the womb and entry into the outside world. The parturition winds creating the turbulence which will finally lead to separation are said to begin operating at this time also (The Garuda Purana 1922:48). This disturbance anticipates the movement from one cycle of existence to a new cycle. As for the pattern, it is from the eighth day that the phase of dissolution (pralaya) moves in.

Clearly, whether the focus is on menstruation or pregnancy we can discern the same tripartite patterning of development. That patterning reveals that at the destructive phase tamas is predominant, at the generative phase rajas is predominant and at the stable phase, it is sattva.

(b) The Tamas factor and the damagers:

Earlier we noted that at a particular phase of the female's menstrual flow when the tamas factor predominates a woman is believed to have the capacity to curtail the life-span of men and impair vegetation. The menstruating woman, however, is not the only type of female harmer who is believed to be capable of causing debilitating effects. Other types are the widow and the witch. Therefore, we might reasonably ask, whether the idea of cycles and the tamas factor are also relevant in these contexts? In other words, can the designation 'harmer' be understood as comprising persons in whom it may be said tamas predominates and who stand at a particular point in a cycle?

The widow is alleged to promote inauspiciousness in those around her and so is particularly excluded from celebrations like weddings. As for the witch-suspect, the alleged malign powers of her gaze are shielded off from such entities as the cow's udder, mother's milk, menses pad, eater's meal and bride's red mark in her hair parting because her evil eye on such items will make the person associated with them ill. Witches are also said to suck blood and to cause bruises. Despite the discrepancy between the alleged harm potential of the two types which for the witch is deemed to be horrific and for the widow merely ominous, both types, nevertheless, are said to be capable of provoking negative effects. Thus the alleged harmers have two features in common: they are regarded as capable of causing some
kind of harm through supranormal means and, because of this, there is a concomitant pattern of avoidance.

The significant feature about widows is that whatever the individual differences in age, biological state, social position or anything else, the only thing they have in common, apart from their sex, is that they husbandless. Therefore it is highly likely that this common feature is critical for understanding the negative attribution.

In Parbatya society a woman's husband is said to be the half of her (ardhāngini), hence without him she is likened to an amputated person. When he dies that half of her also dies and with it the raison d'être of her existence. In the social world this state of a living death is played out by the demanded withdrawal from social life, applying even to a young girl whose fate is not necessarily different from the older widow. The only mitigating circumstance would apply to a widow with children, but then she would only be involved in life's activities up to the time of their marriage. Thereafter widows are expected to mark time till death. In the past, widow remarriage was prohibited. Though legal reforms now permit it, the traditional attitude of disapproval still persists. Furthermore, in so far as the children of a marriage belong to the father, by remarrying, a mother must forsake her children, which in turn constrains remarriage when children are involved. It is ironic that the widow, the one whose presence is supposed to bring about bad luck, is herself the one without a future. Since the only change that can come to her moribund situation is the advent of her own death, which would move her into another kind of existence, the widow is socially placed at the terminal phase of her own current life-cycle, with only death and rebirth to look forward to. Perhaps the most incontestable piece of evidence for this conclusion lies in the not so remote practice of satī, in that within the traditional perspective the widow should have cremated herself with her husband's corpse. In terms of the guṇa framework, the widow's lot entails conditions that locate her in a tamaś phase of existence.

With regard to the witch-suspect the matter is not so straightforward. Nonetheless, it can be shown that if follows the same format. Statements from both male and female informants reveal that it is women who are typically suspects. In fact, one of the reasons given why some women choose not to participate in the kālarātrī procedures is that they "might turn into witches" since the Devi mantra necessary for attendance is also the

1. Although some informants say men may be witches, the latter are rarely suspected of perpetrating such malpractices. Men are generally cast in the role of healers.
mantra for witches. Though women in general are believed capable of becoming witches my data indicate that suspects are typically either those who are arid or those who are widowed young.¹

Though witch-suspects and menstruating women are both alleged to have supranormal capacity to cause harmful effects, the duration of alleged power varies: in the case of the menstruating woman, it is merely recurrent whereas with the witch-suspect it can happen at any time that her gaze should fall on the vulnerable item.² The two harmer types also differ in their respective areas of vulnerability.

A consideration of the particular items regarded as vulnerable to the witch's gaze indicates a relation with the generation of life in that they comprise what I would like to label the 'stuff of life'. These, it will be recalled, are a mother's milk, a woman's menstrual cycle,³ a cow's milk supply⁴ and the bride's reproductive potential.⁵ The suggested negative relationship between the typical witch-suspect (as widow or arid woman) and the generative process is in conformity with their own imposed or natural infertility. In other words, a person designated as capable of attacking the 'stuff of life' is herself unable to generate life. The widow is placed outside the generative cycle by remaining husbandless; the barren woman through her own lack of fertility or society's attribution of this to her.

1. It should be evident to the reader that I am not concerned to give a sociological account of the complex phenomenon of witchcraft as it occurs in this culture. My concern is to explore the relevance of the concept tams to instances of female harm causers, one type of which is the witch-suspect.

For a detailed account of the witchcraft phenomenon in a Nepalese village, see Stone 1976: 55-80; and for a discussion of the cultural repercussion of childlessness also see Stone 1978: 7-36.

2. Like the witch-suspect the widow is ominous at any time. This aura, however, is most intensely experienced at festivities where the idea of a joyous future is paramount.

3. Dire consequences are alleged to befall the woman's procreative cycle in that if her menstrual pad is sighted by the witch, later that woman's menstrual cycle becomes erratic or even produces black blood.

4. Since the effect of the witch's gaze on the cow's udder is believed to dry up the milk flow, again this indicates that the sustaining things in life are affected.

5. Śīdur (Nep.) is the red powder marking that a married woman wears in her hair parting. The first marking is done by her husband during the marriage ceremony. Hence, Śīdur also, fits into the proposed categorisation because it stands both for the bride's conjugal status and for the husband's conjugal potency (vīrya).
However, since the premenstrual girl and the menopausal woman do not generate life either, yet are not imputed to be harmers, one cannot therefore presume that the problem merely hinges on the lack of procreativity. What is significant about these harmless female types is not so much their infertility but rather their freedom from the menstrual cycle. It would seem that the menstrual cycle is a key factor in that it demarcates the harmless from the harmful women. Among the harmers the potentially fecund woman menstruates, it will be recalled, as does the witch-suspect type. In so far as marriage traditionally occurs at an early age then by the time of menstruation girls are already married and there is hope that offspring will soon issue. Therefore the somewhat broad categories, 'premenstrual', 'fecund' and 'barren' are justifiable within the framework of traditional practices. The major difference between the witch-suspect and the fecund woman is that the former is not in the generative cycle, whereas the latter is. Yet both types are in the menstrual cycle. In the case of the witch-suspect, she cannot or does not reproduce yet is involved in the monthly cycle where the blood with its destructive capacities is ejected from the body but is not brought to the point where it is subsequently transformed into a living being. In other words, witch-suspects are ideally sexually potent since they menstruate but this potency is unrealised because they do not procreate. This, of course, means that they are in one cycle (menstrual) which does not develop to the next cycle (pregnancy). With no possibility of advance such women remain permanently in a negative condition that threatens dissolution to entities and processes that are themselves vital. Hence such persons are rivetted to the tamaś phase, a location which is the characteristic feature of the various types of supranormal harmers.

A possible problem, however, still remains: a harmer type, the menstruating woman, is known as rajaswālā (the carrier of generative power) and not tamaś. Practices and beliefs all testify to the depiction of a complex set of powers, despite the simple epithet rajaswālā. Reference has already been made to the tripartite division, the period of damaging, the period of reproductive potential, and the period when neither of these operates. In the case of the first, one could hardly use the epithet rajas in reference to a capacity which can shorten the life-span of man and impair vegetation. Undoubtedly the woman is depicted as having rajas capacity not only in the field of human reproduction but also in relation to ailing vegetation. With regard to the latter, Parbatya believe that if on the fourth solar day, after her purificatory bath, the woman takes pure water

1. The Parbatya believe that a baby is formed by the mother's menstrual blood and the man's semen.
and using her hair as a brush sprinkles it over the vegetation, this action will revitalise that vegetation. Nevertheless, beliefs and practices about the regenerative power do not negate the beliefs and practices about her different kind of capacity prior to the fourth day. One time span is depicted negatively and the subsequent positively, an orientation reflected in every day terminology where during the earlier phase the blood is referred to as "bad" ("narāmro", Nep.) while during the subsequent phase, it is referred to as "good" ("rāmro", Nep.).

The cultural classification which ascribes her as rajāswalā isolates the alleged properties of the beneficial phase and not the earlier. The fact that the positive dimension has been singled out to provide the base for the social epithet does not negate the cultural stipulation of the negative phase of menstruation. Nor, for that matter, of a time when she is neither with the tāmas power, nor with rajas. The fact that the rajas factor is used for the social label in no way denies the presence of other aspects of the same phenomenon.

A disembodied soul (preta), either male or female, the only remaining type of human harmer with the power to supernaturally affect others, though a curious case, strengthens the argument. The preta is said to linger in the precincts of the living, causing all kinds of disturbances, rattling stones, shaking roof tops etc. Because of an unnatural death it cannot be given the full traditional funeral rites, hence not allowing it to progress in the transmigratory circuit. Without these rites it is caught at the end of its cycle of worldly existence and cannot move to the next cycle of existence in the realms of heavens, hells and ancestors. Thus halted in making any advance, it stands at a tāmas stage, just like the other harmer types.

Irrespective of differences between the various types of harmers, one feature is common to all. Each stands at the same phase of its relevant cycle. At that phase tāmas predominates. One of the harmers, the menstruating woman, as is well known, is alleged not only to have the capacity to damage supranormally, but also to defile. We therefore have to consider whether the tāmas factor is relevant here too. Consequently we must confront the analytically dangerous area of impurity and pollution from this point of view.
3. **DEFILEMENT:**

   (a) **Waste:**

   The general area of defilement covers an array of phenomena, menstrual blood, mouth juices, the corpse, birth, stale rice and the Untouchable, to mention only those which are treated with great circumspection by the Parbatya. These are called impure (*aśuddha*). Our first problem is to identify what is common to the diversity.

   The menstrual condition not only requires that the individual avoid other persons and things but also that she must undergo purification on the fourth day. The same kind of effect is imputed to other bodily processes as well. Firstly, there is the instance of the accumulation of spittle in one's mouth which also requires that the person cleanse himself of this impurity (*juto* - Nep.). Now, spittle entails the dissemination of juices in the mouth and constitutes what in Ayurvedic formulation is a waste product (*kitta*) involved in the bodily process of development and decay.¹ "What goes in the mouth should be pure, what comes out is always impure", is a relevant Parbatya saying. With the third type of pollutant, the corpse, the process of development and decay can be identified in unambiguous terms. Since a corpse is decomposing and "is just rotting flesh" as one informant commented, it stands at a disintegrative phase of a cycle. Other bodily substances also appear to fall into the same format. Birth-blood constitutes waste in the generative process of reproducing another human. Even though creation is involved, birth-blood etc., is comparable to the other substances in that it is shed in the movement where the foetus becomes a being in the world.

   It hardly seems necessary to belabour the point that these entities belong to a phase of natural process where dissolution or some form of material decay has occurred and therefore may be identified as being redolent with *tamas*. Although treated less gingerly in everyday life, sweat, semen, hair, nails and excreta also constitute matter expelled by the body or detached from it like waste and thereby would also fit the

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¹ See Dasgupta for the various Ayurvedic approaches to this topic 1932, Vol. II: 331-334.
general pattern. We may conclude that it is their location in the disintegrative phase which underpins their designation as impure.

The same general principle applies to the categorisation of a corpse as impure, though the cycle refers to a wider order of existence. The corpse constitutes the discarded frame of the individual soul in its journeys through the death and rebirth cycles. When the life-spirit and soul (prāṇa and ātmā) quit the corpse, it becomes waste, having lasted for one life-time only. The same rationale appears to be pertinent here, as the substances are expelled from the body in its cycle of biological process. At another level, the body is expelled by the individual soul in its cycle of transmigration.

We have seen that an entity is designated impure when it is inert, just dead matter, whose diagnostic feature is its location in the tāmas phase of some cycle of development. Can these ideas illuminate the impurity of leather, a curious classification since leather derives from the holy cow, a form of the goddess and worshipped as such in Nepal? The rationale does appear to hold if we recognise that leather is this dead animal's skin which has been so treated that it is permanently stuck at tāmas. Like the other impure substances leather cannot progress in its appropriate cycle. Ironically, it is through having been 'preserved' that it is rendered impure.

(b) The Human Condition:

What is important in the Hindu ideas about human impurity is that it occurs with everybody, males and females, high caste and low - a point that tends to get forgotten in the literature with the stress given to the Hindu female and the Untouchable, as the exemplars of the phenomenon. All individuals are bound to impurity since the substances exude from the human body and all humans are embodied in the corporeal frame. Therefore, according to Hindu thought, impurity has universal applicability.

1. Though certain bodily parts, like hair and nails are generally regarded as impure by Parbatya, according to the textual formulation, hair and nails would constitute unclean places, where waste (kīṭa) would collect. Of course, once hair and nails are cut by virtue of this action they become waste, now devoid of association with the life-force of the body. The following declaration comes from The Garuda Purana, well known to Parbatya since it is the text chosen for readings to family and friends, after a death.

   The Vyāna air makes the essence go all over, and the waste, forced through the twelve gateways, is ejected from the body.

   Ears, eyes, nostrils, tongue, teeth, navel, nails, anus, generative organs, head, trunk, hair - are called unclean places (Ch. XV 43-4 in Basu 1911:146). As with so many other cases of listings there are variations in the number of items included, needless to add.
The universality of impurity should also alert us to differences between this kind of negativity and the dangers provoked by the damagers discussed earlier. In the case of the damagers, harm is allegedly projected onto others, whereas human impurity arises in the self first and foremost and thereby through the individual's own processes the person is rendered as being in a negative condition for others. The corresponding treatments also vary; for example with witchcraft effects, healing is sought from an exorcist, whereas in the case of defilement, purification is undertaken. Most important is that people perceive and respond to each differently.

What impurity signifies according to Hindu conceptions is distilled in the concept *vikṣṛti* which refers to a process of deterioration. In ordinary usage the word is applied in the context of stale rice, for example. Here stale (*bāśi* - Nep.) and deteriorated (*vikṣṛti*) are used interchangeably. Stale rice is also designated impure, *apavītra*. Thus we have a collapsing of the diverse aspects associated with the phenomenon of impurity. Though this stale rice will not necessarily make the individual sick, since after all it is edible¹, it is not the best. It has deteriorated after the activating process of heat and water within a span of time. Consequently, rice cooked in the morning cannot be eaten in the evening, and rice cooked in the evening cannot be eaten the next morning. Nor is rice that has got cold and requires reheating regarded as acceptable. Where initially it is at its best possible state, later through the inexorable process of development instigated by the action of heat and water, it reaches its deteriorated state. This is important since the concept of deterioration lies at the heart of Hindu ideas regarding the nature of man and his place in the universe.

The cosmic process is also depicted as entailing a movement of deterioration, bringing about the creation of entities and things, including man who as a being is limited and vividly demarcated from the perfection of the Absolute, Paramātman. Such a delineation is in accord with the characteristic tenets of Hinduism which posit that worldly existence does not constitute the highest possible kind for man. To achieve this goal the human should quit this worldly life which includes the *samsāra* circuit and merge his own individual self (his *jīvātmīn*) with that of the Absolute (Paramātman) of which he is a part. The same idea of distancing, depicting a movement from perfection to lowness through process, is inherent in these metaphysical formulations as with the phenomenon of everyday impurity.

1. Nepalis ridicule westerners who eat left-over rice.
The issue of distancing, or deterioration, constitutes a central question of Hindu metaphysics which asks how is it that from this perfect being such impure, imperfect, limited phenomena could stem. The answer is that this production does not directly stem from the Absolute. At the time of creation, from Prakṛti there begins the outward expansion where a series of transformations occurs, which in turn generates other transformations so that it is by progression that different kinds of entities are created, ending up with the diversity of the world as we know it. The primal forces involved in this are the deities if we employ religious terminology rather than metaphysical. In the anthropomorphic perspective there is the lord, the male god, his consort, or his specific energy and an associated form. The process of creation, as well as maintenance and dissolution can be initiated by the gods and their energies since it is they and not the Absolute who perform these tasks.

These primal forces, though they generate a series of transformations, retain their autonomous identity and do not themselves undergo changes. In short, the gods are stalled at the sattva stage in the cosmic processes of development. Nor are their forms destroyed during pralaya (dissolution) since these comprise the "paramānus" and are absorbed into the Absolute. That is what divinity is about. The retention of autonomy, whether in outward or return developments, means that as far as their own nature is concerned, the deities are not involved in the processes of growth and deterioration. For example, though Śiva and his energy Kālī hold the ātman force for destruction, they are not depicted as themselves comprising disintegrated beings.

The ordinary person, though he may not be cognisant of the niceties of metaphysics, displays a similar attitude towards the deities. He believes that the non-corporeal deity has taken residence in the idol and will insist that "the deities are always sattvikā". Gods, he believes, constitute the

1. The process of creation is not only extremely complicated but different schools give different stresses and details. Despite variation, certain general points are constant.
2. It is not a simple linear progression of something becoming manifest but entails the production of diverse entities. The major ones are (a) the primal cosmic forces, (b) the faculties for individuation (mind and the sensory and action potentials, i.e., the indriyas) and (c) matter or concrete form. From man's point of view these constitute the forces of his life-spirit which keep him in existence; his mind and the associated faculties and his own material organs and body in which these other components are located for one life-time. One pundit referred to these three as entailing "finitisation", "individuation" and "materialisation", aspects of the process which distances man from the Absolute.
3. e.g. Viṣṇu, and Lakṣmī associated with the essence of liquidity.
superior, powerful, pure and holy beings in his life. But unlike humans, 
gods are said to be "not womb born" (*ayonija*)\(^1\). From a different angle this 
introduces the same point, that is that the later transformations are 
different from the anterior forms though linked to them. For man it is his 
womb-born corporeality which identifies him not only as a later production 
but as a lowly kind of being.

In terms of ontology, the gods are beings who are always integrated, 
whereas with humans there is a constant breaking down of matter. The impure 
entities (matter stalled at *tamas*) signify the human condition of 
perishability or deterioration. Though waste might be essential in progression, 
its negativity lies in the fact that it is stuff which does not endure.

(c) The Untouchable and the Twice-Born

It may appear that I have merely isolated instances of pollution which 
serve the interest of the argument and held in abeyance one of the key issues 
in the anthropological literature, the common base which might underlie the 
attribution of impurity to both the Untouchable and the menstruating woman. 
One of the major difficulties in the area of pollution has been the 
recalcitrance of the data to any overall statement which will include not 
only the Hindu woman and the Untouchable, each of whom has become a cause 
celebre, but the bodily impurities as well. If, as I have been suggesting, 
the basic formula which can identify the capacity to defile is the 
preponderance of *tamoguna* then this should hold in the case of the Untouchable, 
who in Nepal, is known as a person "from whom water is not to be taken" 
(*Pani nachalne - Nep.*). This phrase also constitutes the general caste label 
of these people (*Pani nachalne jat*).

What can be said about the two exemplars of impurity, the menstruating 
woman and the Untouchable? As defilers, they are unlike in that the woman 
is involved in a particular bodily process (menstruation) which the 
Untouchable is not.\(^2\) Interlocked into this difference there is a further

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1. The term *ayonija* is generally translated as "not womb born", though 
literally it means "not born of the female organ". The term for womb is 
*garbha*. "Not deriving from the human female physiology" is the sense 
implied by the term *ayonija*.

2. Of course, Untouchable women when they are menstruating would have the 
same set of beliefs and practices applied to them by the clean castes 
because they are females. However, I have not researched what happens 
within the Untouchable category but I suspect that since Untouchable men 
will not allow clean caste women to come near them if they know that these 
women are menstruating, a comparable set of practices might be followed 
with regard to the Untouchable women in the same condition.
point of divergence. The Untouchable stands as the defiler par excellence since his touch renders entities like water and any type of cooked food, absolutely unacceptable to clean castes at all times. In contradistinction the female's touch only periodically defiles, by virtue of the operation of the particular bodily process. If the Untouchable's impurity is permanent and does not arise by virtue of a particular bodily process, then these notions imply that impurity can only relate to him as a particular kind of being. That is to say, his total being is at issue, and it is this totality which distinguishes him from other persons whose impurity is contingent on specific bodily processes. In so far as the epithet Untouchable designates a member of a social category this means that it is this category membership which is relevant to the issue of his particular kind of impurity.

When people describe Untouchables, they refer to aspects of their lifestyle which they discern as unclean, as in matters of occupation, eating, living, environment, sexual and marital customs. Yet despite the undoubted importance of such unclean elements, even if an Untouchable lived in a state of pristine purity, he would still not be accepted by the Parbatya clean caste members unless he were able to keep his birth position secret. He may change all else but he cannot change the condition of that birth.

Matters however are somewhat different for those who undergo the critical upanayana ritual. People maintain that "until this initiation a man has no caste". What they mean is that the male offspring of a twice-born must undergo this rite in order to actualise his caste membership, which in Nepal is called "the thread-wearer" category (Tāgādhārī jāt -Nep.). Furthermore, since the female offspring, according to the Parbatya, obtains her caste at marriage and since marriage can only take place if the groom has been previously initiated, it follows that the woman's caste membership is contingent on the male's twice-born rite.

1. In Kathmandu, from the Parbatya point of view, the relevant occupations are, washermen, sweepers, butchers, barbers, manicurists, tailors, leather workers, Parbatya blacksmiths and goldsmiths.

2. Many Kasa̱i, the Newar butchers in Kathmandu, have become rich, mainly through the tourists' partiality for meat. This financial success, however, does not seem to have dined their unclean caste rank as far as the Parbatya are concerned.

3. With regard to females born into clean castes, the general principle cited by Parbatya is that "women obtain their caste at marriage". Needless to say this would not apply to a woman who came from the Untouchable category because if she married a male from a higher caste, her husband would lose his caste membership rather than she obtain his.
This means that though birth is critical to the issue of caste, it is not in itself sufficient for the acquisition of membership to the twice-born category. I cannot reiterate too often that people unequivocally insist that these males attain their caste through this ritual.¹

Since ritually undergoing a second birth is what happens, then it entails not just a simple change of status but an ontological change from one kind of being to another. This existential change moreover can be detected in the fact that certain restrictions are imposed after initiation or marriage, as the case may be, for either sex. Before initiation, a male may eat certain kinds of foods like chicken, may eat food cooked by members of any clean castes and may eat seated with the woman. These are all activities which would later compromise his special twice-born level of existence. The point is supported by this respondent's statement:

Until my son performs the twice-born ritual, we will not accept cooked food from him because until then he has not obtained his caste ..... And so with our daughters until marriage.

The female who does not undergo initiation but belongs to a high-caste family will obtain her caste at and through marriage², as stated above. The nature of the single girl's casteless position and the fact that her acquisition of caste is contingent on that of her husband is expressed in the term given to such persons who are called "the ones whose life fate is not yet acquired" (karma nachleko - Nep.). Until then the same set of practices regarding food that apply to her uninitiated brother also apply to her. With the advent of her caste acquisition, the same set of restrictions are similarly imposed if she marries a twice-born. It is only after marriage that her special state can be jeopardised by breach of the restrictions.

In so far as the performance of this rite presages marriage and with marriage comes the fulfilment of life's role then the ritual is a fundamental springboard. Without the initiation, the male cannot enter the marital state which in this society is regarded as an imperative³ and which allows him to pursue his life destiny as husband and father; without marriage he could not produce sons who are perceived as one of life's essential achievements.

1. It is curious that despite Parbatya's insistence that caste is not acquired till the twice-born rite for males and marriage for females, this point has hitherto not been incorporated into the literature on caste for Nepal.
2. Except in the case of a woman from a lower caste marrying a Brahmin who does not acquire Brahmin membership, though she undoubtedly belongs to the family and belongs to the broader twice-born category. In operational terms, this means that the woman from a lower caste does not cook but leaves this to the other woman in the house, or the men. The male offspring of cross-caste marriage fall into special categories generally at a level below that of their father.
3. For all except the sadhu.
As a direct consequence of being twice-born the male can undertake the performance of formal rituals, either for himself or for the family since he is now in the appropriate (adhikaři - Nep.) state required for such performances. Similarly, as a son he redeems his obligations to his parents at their death when their souls are believed to spin through the cycle of samsāra and require the special filial obsequies.

In so far as the twice-born rite entails an ontological change from one kind of being to another, then a consideration of what is involved in this ritual should advance the discussion.

It is said that the "guṇas ¹ like a cord bind man to this world" and as is well known in this ritual the initiand obtains a special cord, the famous sacred thread, thus signifying a special localisation in the here and now. More precisely, a "spiritual birth" is entailed, as informants stress so often. Therefore he is rendered ontologically different from other kinds of humans. The epithet 'twice-born' differentiates him from others who are merely womb-born. As far as the uninitiated person is concerned, "let him consider that (he received) a (mere animal) existence, when his parents begat him through mutual affection, and when he was born from the womb (of his mother)" (Manu II, 147 in Buhler (tr.) 1969:57). As far as this 'once-born' person is concerned, he has not been dislodged from but remains entrenched in his personal heritage of a mere phenomenal birth. Undoubtedly a womb-born birth is negatively delineated in Hindu formulations since the womb is imputed to be full of mucus, waste and bodily secretions ². The ideas are played out by the pragmatic requirements of purification in the advent of birth, as we have seen in the previous part of the discussion. The twice-born ritual in a way can be understood as superseding the condition of being human arising by virtue of this womb-birth in that by undergoing the ritual birth the initiand is then taken to another level of being, which is comparable to that of the gods, who are also delineated as not being womb-born.

Not only does the initiand acquire the insignia of a new body, the ritually derived umbilical cord, the precious sacred thread, but he also acquires sacred knowledge, the Gāyatri mantra and the framework for understanding the primordial sound "Om". Hence, as an individual he is given the possibility of reflecting on a higher order of existence. In addition to the new dimensions there is the third, the diagnostic top-knot

1. The original term "guṇa" means "cord" and the formulation "bind like a cord" derives from Śākhyan thought.
2. "Filled with urine, faeces and other filthy matters" (Basu 1921-23:254). It is worth making the aside that this idea is present in the myth about Ganesa's birth. Though not womb-born, Ganesa is a mythological fact created through the dirt, the scruff of Parvati's body.
of hair (*sikhar*) which is never shaved except when a twice-born is outcasted. The *sikhar*, which is created when the rest of the head is shaved during initiation, consists of the hair left around the place where it does not grow and leaves a vacuum of space where the life-force (*prāna*) and soul (*ātmān*) are said to exit and enter. As we know the *ātmān* is part of the Absolute and therefore is not conditioned, nor subject to change, unlike the other components of man. In this way, the three components, namely mind, body and life-force are reconstituted at this high level, the rite transforming him into a kind of being which is god-like (*divya*) and therefore *sattvika* (holy and pure) vis-à-vis other kinds of persons in the social universe who have not enjoyed transformation.

Within the Hindu framework we detect the positing of different levels of existence for humans in so far as there is the state arising out of womb-birth and later another state arising from the special spiritual birth. This means however that for the twice-born the womb-born state would entail a mere transitional state that will be dissolved after being ritually born. Thus existential states are to be understood in a dynamic framework where differences are generated by transformations. In terms of our theme, the acquisition of a different state depencs on reaching a different stage of the particular cycle concerned. It would seem that the Untouchable who does not advance to a second birth is a being transfixied at one level of existence (*tamas*) which for the twice-born merely constitutes one stage in a development, a stage which he discards, expells like waste. As will be discussed later, a third category of castes, known as the Matwi in Nepal and who are neither Untouchables nor twice-born, advance to an intermediate level of existence (*rajas*).

Thus far, in terms of the *guna* scheme, we have identified two social categories, the twice-born and the Untouchable, where the first is associated with the preponderance of *sattva guna* and the second with the preponderance of *tamas guna*. In so far as we have argued that where one *guna* is present then all three must also be present, it follows that the caste order itself must assume a tripartite pattern. This suggestion is contrary to the binary model of successive dichotomies based on the idea of the opposition, pure/impure, put forward by Dumont (1972: 92-6).

I attempt to substantiate my claim in some detail in the following section.
4. CASTE ORDER:

(a) The Legal Classification of Nepalese Castes and the Gupas:

It is significant that the Nepalese legal code's rank order of castes presents a general tripartite structure, with three broad categories -

The thread-wearing castes (Tāgādhāri - Nep.)
Alcohol-drinking castes (Matwāli - Nep.)
Water-not-to-be-taken-from castes (Pānī nachalne - Nep.)

The Nepalese caste order was codified about a century ago as part of a general formalisation of the Nepalese legal system. In addition to its tripartite pattern there are three other features which are relevant for the discussion: firstly, the code outlines an ordering of the total population, secondly, the order is politically created (Sharma 1975:278-299): thirdly, this particular ordering of caste society, proclaimed in 1853, carried on the traditional Hindu orientation which continues to the present, despite the democratizing forces manifested in recent legislative reforms (ibid 1975:278).

1. Sharma (1975:282) divides the last category into two distinct segments.

(a) "Pānī nachalne chhoi chhito chelu naparne" = Castes from whom water cannot be taken, but whose touch does not require aspersion of water.

(b) "Pānī nachalne chhoi chhito chelu parne" = Castes from whom water is not to be taken and whose touch requires aspersion.

Since the criterion "water not to be taken from" occurs in both segments. I take this to indicate one major category with an internal subdivision. Regmi (1970) appears to take a similar position in that he lists all such persons under the one heading "Untouchables". This approach furthermore is vindicated by social practice in that Parbatya do not ordinarily subdivide this category but refer to the members as one block, calling them the "Pānī nachalne jāt". Thus, according to the application of three different criteria, the thread-wearers, the alcohol drinkers and the water-not-to-be-taken-from castes, the legal code delineates a tripartite structure.

2. This code is known as Sri Panch Surendra Bikram Shah Dev Ka Kalma Baneko Mulki Ain (Legal Code enacted during the reign of King Surendra Bikram Shah ). It dates from 1853 and incorporates amendments and additions made up to the year 1866 and operated till 1963 (Sharma 1975:277).
While Parbatya currently employ the legal code's classification, they fluctuate in their usage between this and the classic varṇa scheme. However, when they attempt to apply this formal scheme to the social referents, the various peoples of Nepal, the emergent pattern does not correlate with the categories prescribed by the code. To give one example, when respondents employ the varṇa term, "Śūdra", they are referring to those persons who belong to the category Pāṇi nachalne called the Untouchables in this thesis, and by the English-speaking Nepalis. Because Parbatya's formulations exhibit a pattern of correlations which distort the social actualities, I will not consider the pattern here. Suffice to say, their associating the varṇa ideas with the contemporary situation provides it with legitimacy derived from the sacred source, the eternal Vedas.

To return to the legal code's order. There is a folk version of this official tripartite scheme where the top category is called "of import" (ḥūlo - Nep.) the next is of "little consequence", "small" (sano - Nep.) and at the bottom there is the "base" jāt (talo - Nep.). For both the legal model and the folk version, respondents employ the same set of referents.

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<tr>
<th>Legal Code</th>
<th>Folk Version</th>
<th>Referents - Peoples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thread-wearers</td>
<td>&quot;of import&quot;</td>
<td>Parbatya</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Brahmin/Chetri</td>
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<td>Alcohol-takers</td>
<td>&quot;of little</td>
<td>Newars and tribals</td>
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<td>Water-not-to-be-taken-</td>
<td>&quot;base&quot;</td>
<td>Parbatya and Newar</td>
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<td>Untouchables</td>
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The clearly demarcated tripartite structure questions the thesis that caste is to be understood in terms of an opposition around one idea, the pure and its opposite the impure (Dumont 1972:92-96). What we find is not one idea but rather three different ideas which provide distinct designators for each level (i.e., the thread-wearers, the alcohol-takers and the water-not-to-be-taken-from jāts). In so far as it comprises a rank order it also presents some kind of evaluation in terms of these ideas each with its own discrete meaning. Whatever else, it is not an evaluative system based on the principle of "more or less" of some entity (e.g. more or less land), nor is it a system based on the presence/absence of some prized entity, (e.g., prestige/no prestige), nor a system of opposition in terms of say pure/impure where one term figures as the undesirable in relation to the other which is highly desired.
Nevertheless, given the political nature of the legal codes' manufacture, it would be tempting to dismiss this classification as sleight of hand, as an arbitrary division devised for political expediency. Consequently, it would be highly unlikely that it would contain an underlying rationale and constitute a formal system of classification, let alone one relating to the guṇas. The phraseology of the labels presents a pattern without apparent rhyme or reason with an injunction used for the lowest, a facet of eating habits for the next, and a ritually gained item of dress for the highest. Nonetheless, the terminology does demand closer scrutiny because it is an indigenous scheme which differentiates humans.

Beginning with the lowest rank, however, we note that the code's terminology connotes a restriction. In addition, implicit in the phraseology of "water-not-to-be-taken-from" are indications of what would happen if perhaps it did occur. In such an eventuality the taker would be rendered polluted and would have to undergo ritual cleansing. In this way the Untouchable is categorised as having effects comparable to impure matter. The idea of "mere object", occurs in the phraseology since the persons are not even designated as the actors, unlike the others who are. Instead, with the focus on the restriction and the possible repercussion of what could happen if this were not followed, the features locate the Untouchable as polluting substance. Through the evocative nature of the descriptive label, this type is depicted as being comparable to other pollutants, the waste aspect of man's phenomenality. Inherent in the terminology for this jāt, therefore, is the idea of tamas.

The legal code characterises the second category in terms of a particular kind of indulger, the "alcohol-taker". It would seem that the concept rajas is relevant here, since alcohol taking according to Hindu belief, is said to stimulate the emotions and stir the imbiber to action. In addition, inherent in the designation is the idea of the individual's catering to worldly pleasure by indulging in his predilections. For both implications, rajas is pertinent in that it relates to the area of emotions and passions, as well as involvement in worldly things.

1. It is given to Kālī "to make her angry with the enemy". Apart from its specific ritual context, this statement alludes to an important general belief which maintains that different kinds of food and drink have correspondingly different effects on the disposition and temperament of the consumer. The food items are classified, predictably along guṇa lines, according to the effect said to be engendered, so that a food classification reveals the set of sattva, rajas and tamas types.
The code's specification "thread-wearers" for the top category, directs attention to the concrete item which signifies a type of person distinct from the others. Technically the thread is called "pavitra" which means "pure", "holy". There is no need to embroider the point further that the twice-born level imputes a predominantly sattvika, kind of existence.

From the analysis we see that the terminology of the caste classification reveals, firstly connotations of phenomenality, secondly, individualistic indulgences and thirdly reference to the sacred kind of being, each label having its particular guṇa correlate.

Alongside this set of ideas associated with the caste categories is a string of cultural formulae which bear affinity with them. Any person familiar with the culture will recognise them immediately, since they are repeatedly referred to both in texts and by respondents. Often the guṇas are specifically associated with these formulae.

There is the cultural classification "godly, manly and animal-like" (dīva, vīra, paśu) which is often applied to kinds of humans. Another set refers to the person of "knowledge (jñāna), of will (icchā) and of mere activity (kriyā)". Then there is the important listing of the three goals of life, the pursuit of "right ways (dharma), the pursuit of material gain (artha) and the pursuit of desires" (kāma). Another which has been referred to previously outlines the set of the individual's components as comprising "life-force or sound (prāṇa or vāk), mind and body".

The notions sattva, rajas and tamas are clearly inherent in each formula. This possibility is not analytically fanciful because experts often, and lay persons sometimes, specifically correlate the guṇas with the cultural formulae. For example, against the set relating to kinds of beings (godly, human-like and animal-like) the guṇa format is aligned so that godly correlates with sattva, human-like with rajas, and animal-like with tamas.

Because the particulars of these cultural formulae can be reduced to the more general ideas of the guṇa format we can say that these processual ideas provide a common blueprint for conceptualisation. Given the Hindu philosophical tenet that the whole world is created by the operation of the guṇa forces and that one guṇa predominates in any one item out of a range of three possibilities, then the guṇas become the basic differentiators in any area of discourse. Therefore the characteristic mode of conceptualisation is essentially one where differentiation follows the guṇa demarcations.

1. The fourth, mokṣa, released from the saṃsāra circuit and transcending life altogether, stands as an entirely discrete notion, distinct from the three goals which pertain to that circuit.
Differentiation can also carry evaluation. As is well known, the 
guna format entails a system of evaluation where sattva is rated highest, 
rajas next, and tamas lowest. Given that the guna format is inherent in 
these cultural formulae then the differentiation within a cultural formula 
automatically carries this evaluative guna framework. Let me put it this 
way: in that each of these cultural formulae contains a scale of evaluation 
by virtue of the inherence of the guna format, clearest in the existential 
types "godly, human-like and animal-like", it also constitutes a system of 
preferences. In short, the guna blueprint, embedded in each of the cultural 
formulae, provides the common base for its operation as an order of 
preferences. Thus we have an evaluative scheme, not based on the idea of more 
or less, presence or absence, or one of opposition, as noted earlier, but a 
scheme based on the gunas with three different values which articulate the 
order of preferences.

Let me hasten to add that the application of the guna set as an 
evaluative scheme is not limited to such contexts but is explicitly employed 
in other fields as well. Its relevance to the area of food has already 
been mentioned (also see Khare 1976). In no way can it be said that the 
gunas are rarified notions merely preserved in unopened texts stored away 
in some Brahmin's trunk, but are proclaimed in The Bhagavat-Gita, a text 
frequently cited and taken as the subject for community readings. Moreover, 
the authority who employs the scheme is no less a person than the divine 
Kṛṣṇa. One hardly needs to state that the Gita is regarded by Hindus as a 
"profound philosophy" and Kṛṣṇa as nothing less than a great god. He 
declares:

Abiding in sattva,  
man goes to higher realms;  
Remaining in rajas,  
In this world he remains;  
Sunk in tamas,  
His lowest nature,  
He sinks to the underworld.

Let the wise man know  
These gunas alone as the doers  
of every action;  
Let him learn to know That  
Which is beyond them, also:  
Thus he will reach my oneness.

When the dweller in the body  
Has overcome the guṇās  
That cause this body,  
Then he is made free  
From birth and death,  
From pain and decay:  
He becomes immortal

-(XIV Verses, 17 to 19 in Prabhavanda and 
In so far as the gunas are the forces that bind the individual to the world of time and keep him separate from the Absolute and only by discarding them does he transcent it all, Krsna indicates that in these three factors the parameters of the world are contained. In addition, here we see the usage of the gunas as a hierarchical set.

From a different angle, Sarasvati (1978), a present-day scholar, also claims that the gunas are critical to the Hindu approach. He insists that for any cultural change to be incorporated into Hindu life, it will be amended to the guṇa scheme thereby indicating both the ubiquity and centrality of these notions for contemporary life. Sarasvati lists several gate-through which cultural change enters with the guṇa set as the fourth in his outline:

...there are four concentric fortresses which protect the essentials of (India's) classical cultural traditions. An element totally acceptable to this system has to pass through the gates provided at these fortresses.

...in order to occupy a key position in the functioning of the system it (i.e. the new element) has to concede at the fourth gate the ordered hierarchy of the śāttvā, jājas and tāmas. Whereas at the first three gates the interpreting mechanism has shown considerable liberality, it now rigidly abides by the law of the śāttvā and no compromise could ever be effected in interpreting this law (1978:23-4).

Given that the set is applied in an assortment of contexts, and that it constitutes a central conceptual and evaluative framework we could say that the guṇa set appears to be a typical approach in the categorization and assessment of diverse realms of experience. If the guna paradigm is typical then it is not surprising that it also appears to be inherent in the Nepalese tripartite caste order, in spite of the political nature of its manufacture. Because each of the three caste labels has a discrete meaning and each meaning has a different weighting based on the guṇa format, we have a preferential type of evaluative scheme utilising three separate values. Notwithstanding the fact that the predominance of one guṇa in an entity does not preclude the current presence of the other two, it is the predominance that gives both core and meaning and weighting to the particular entity in the predefined set of three ideas. This means that if a focus were to be placed on two terms it might well give the appearance of a binary discrimination (as with śāttvā and tāmas), but to assume that this is so would be to distort the nature of the scheme which demands that the frame incorporates a set of tripartite relations, where each term has its discrete meaning.
Whilst the guṇa format is implicit but not explicit in the Nepalese legal code, Nepalis as well as the texts unambiguously correlate the classic varṇa scheme with the guṇaś. By this procedure they present an evaluation of the social order, though of necessity thereby amending the classical number of categories. The law-giver Manu, when referring to the destiny of man, at the climax of his book, specifically relates the guṇa terms to the varṇa categories—reduced, of course, to three so as to make the required fit.

Manu (in Bühler (tr.), 1969:49-50) presents the Brahmin as caused by the quality of godness (sattva), the Kṣatriya by the quality of action (rajas) and the Śūdra by the quality of darkness (tamas). He is here concerned to outline the range of possible futures befalling the individual according to the laws of cause and effect as operative within the samsāra circuit. But he forgets the inviolability of the four-termed varṇa outline in omitting the Vaiśya. Ghurye (1965:187) also draws attention to this distortion exclaiming "the Vaishyas are left out!"

A comparable approach is taken by the Nepalis who correlate the sattvika factor with the Brahmin, the rajas with the Chetri and the tamas with the Śūdra, but erode the meaningfulness of the situation for the Vaiśya by merely making the circular statement that he is involved in financial activities. Thus differentiation and evaluation proceed according to the relevance of one guṇa in each instance, and can be discerned in the way people talk about caste types. These are differentiated from each other according to each type's characteristics. Therefore, when a Brahmin is depicted as a special person with "holy" and "pure" characteristics (sattvika) we should not presume that differentiation of other caste persons is based on a relationship of opposition to this. When distinguishing a Chetri from the Brahmin for example, Parbatya refer to the Chetri's characteristics, epitomising him as "the man of action" rajas as compared to the Brahmin as "the man of holy characteristics". This of course is not to deny that Parbatya rank the Brahmin highest and the Chetri next within the thread-wearing category but this is because sattva is regarded as having highest value, with rajas next.

These instances indicate that a guṇa-based assessment is expressly articulated for the various levels of the caste universe. 1

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1. The terms 'jāt' and 'varṇa' are not necessarily seen by the Parbatya as having different referents. Both are used to denote social categories. Varṇa is the Vedic word for a general social category, jāt is the everyday word for a particular as well as a general social category. In other contexts jāt merely means category or species. That varṇa and jāt are to be taken as synonymous is cited in an everyday Nepali text on the essentials for worship (see Upadhyā 1963:2).
caste category is omitted so as to produce a resultant tripartite social order which would accommodate to the guṇa scheme is not the issue here. What is significant is that there is the propensity to employ the guṇa notions in the context of the caste order whether these be stated by informants or the texts. If there is any doubt about the relevance of the guṇas to caste types this quotation from a Nepalese pundit should help dispel it:

"Without the mixing of the three guṇas (after moving from the state of equilibrium) even our bodies will not be active....all this world will not be formed.... Each of the castes has all the guṇas but as you know only one guṇa will prevail at any one time in each case. We can classify the castes according to their natures which rest on the guṇas ........The Brahmin is cool-minded (sānta so he bears a predominance of sattva ........"

If, according to Hindu pronouncements, without the guṇas "all this world would not be formed" and differentiation goes according to the predominance of one guṇa, then to suggest that the guṇa scheme is likely to provide the conceptual base for the rank order of caste society (whether in terms of varṇa or jāt) is not a fanciful claim. The Nepalese case cannot be dismissed as some Himalayan aberration, given that it is the only extant Hindu kingdom where such Hindu values pertain. I also suspect that it applies in other Hindu societies. This, however, is a matter for demonstration which cannot be attempted here.

It could be said that a singularly different kind of usage has appeared in the discussion, in that the guṇa set is employed to provide a framework for hierarchical ordering whereas the guṇa terms can also have meanings associated with aspects of process. This however is exactly what happens in the different ways Parbatya (and texts) use the guṇa set. They may employ the guṇas descriptively in the context of process, whereas in other contexts they may also use these terms as a scheme for evaluation. When used as a frame for hierarchical ordering such an approach is static. What I would like to indicate is that the two seemingly different kinds of usages are in fact interrelated and that hierarchical arrangement has a locus in the stages of processual development.

(b) Ritual transformations:

What appears at this point as static classification might also be based on, or associated with, processual movement. One possible area has been anticipated in a previous section, when reference was made to the need for
the twice-born caste to realise this membership through ritual production.

The twice-born rite, as is well known, belongs to a series of life crises and, according to one Brahmin's commentary,

One only becomes a twice-born by one's actions....when a person is born he is like a Śūdra even if he is born into a Brahmin family....the same applies for the Chettri and to the others...After that he undertakes the saṁskāraś and by these he becomes dvī-ja (twice-born).

His exposition contains several important points. Firstly, the twice-born ritual, as was noted earlier, does not merely generate a change of status but a change in one's existential level through a spiritual birth. Secondly, it is not just one particular rite which is involved, though this one is undoubtedly critical, but a series of life crises. Thirdly, the series itself is perceived as bringing about changes which relate to caste types. The name for the series, the "saṁskāraś", underlines the idea of change in that it has the sense of "refining man's nature" in terms of his affinity with the gods.¹

Typically the saṁskāraś as performed by the Parbatya consist of a limited number of the possibilities available in Hindu tradition.² There is nāmakarana, the rite of purification and naming performed shortly after the birth of a child; anna-prāśana, the first feeding of solid foods performed around the sixth month; upanayana for the sons of the twice-born performed around the age of eight; the marriage ritual and the funeral.

The discussion will stay within the confines of those rites which unambiguously deal with ontological changes.³ Out of the series these refer


2. Though the conception rite is first on the traditional lists, it would appear that it is not typically practised. Sometimes one rite, e.g., the first tonsure, may be incorporated into the proceedings of another, as in this instance into the twice-born rite. For an account of Nepalese life crises, especially from the point of view of the female, see Bennett 1976:1-52.

3. As I understand the series some deal unambiguously with ontological change as with the upanayana and the rituals at birth. Others are simply an extension or a refinement of a prior rite. This applies with annaprāśana which can be perceived as a supplement to the ritual performed earlier when the child was named and purified, as we shall see below. Marriage though it undoubtedly involves a change of social status, would I suspect also incorporate an ontological dimension but this would hinge around the idea of the cosmic male and female and thereby relate to the sexual demarcation between humans. Since my focus is on human beings rather than the sexual demarcation this rite would not be relevant for the discussion. Death without any shadow of a doubt entails an ontological change in so far as the dead individual is said to move to a different realm of existence, the disembodied state which demands that the son ritually create a surrogate body for it. This rite also is not relevant since the analysis is dealing with changes rendered on the living.
to the rites associated with birth, and upanayana.

It is significant that the first life-crisis ritual for Parbatya Hindus concerns birth not just because it occurs at the advent of a new life, but because it revolves around the negative ideas associated with the physiological aspects of human birth. On the eleventh day, the taint of the womb and all it signifies is removed by purification. This ritual therefore moves the baby away from the predominance of phenomenality. In addition, through the naming ceremony which is an integral part of this complex enactment, the baby is given entry into the society of clean castes as the offspring of the man recognising its paternity. Should this not happen, the child will be treated in a manner comparable to an Untouchable and be located outside the society of clean castes.\(^1\) Thus the social position is actualised through the ritual process. After this the baby is not just a biological entity but a human with a particular locus in the social world.

Seen in terms of our concern with ritual process this rite demarcates entry into the saṃskāra series, and converts the baby from a mere biological entity into a human and social person.\(^2\) This then constitutes the first transformation.

In so far as this ritual complex constitutes the first in the saṃskāra series, it is the entry point which affords access to subsequent rites and allows for the possibility of moving through the series to another stage of existence realised by becoming ritually born. Although no doubt the twice-born rite provides a second birth it is the birth purification which is contiguously and specifically associated with womb impurities. This purification occurs much earlier in the ritual series as we now see.\(^3\)

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1. Respondents maintain that they "will not interline with, nor marry an unpurified and casteless person, since this person is just like an Untouchable".

2. The first feeding of grains at annaprāśana establishes the baby as a separate individual now removed from the biological dependence on the mother in that it is given the products of the earth by all the members of its family, paternal and maternal. Thus the baby is no longer a contingent entity hinged to its mother's biology, but an autonomous being to be sustained through its social base. In so far as the rites at birth establish the baby's specific social base when its father assumes paternity, annaprāśana plays out the same idea but in this instance in the context of the nutritional means of survival.

3. We are distinguishing between this first kind of purification from the purification which occurs as part and parcel of every formal ritual. The birth purification and associated rite is the one which gives entry to the series and thereby it provides the base for access to other rites in the saṃskāras.
access to the formal Hindu saṃskāras; the next have access to some only, beyond which they cannot advance; and the select can avail themselves of all of them. In other words, there is a ritual cycle of possibilities where the different stages are demarcated by closures as much as progress. The process entails more than a serialised tripartite movement in that each stage also relates to a different level of being, ritually produced at each stage of the progression. Further, the blockages in the possible range or progression could hardly be interpreted as arbitrary. Consider where the closures are imposed: at the entry to the series, and at the twice-born rite, just at those two junctures where the critical ontological changes can be realised.

There is little doubt that the ritual closures are implemented around ideas stipulated by the state. In so far as a person is categorised as Untouchable he is debarred from the enjoyment of the saṃskāras and accordingly no purohit (Nep.) will officiate for him. As a corollary, where the tribal is legally defined as Matwali, a purohit will officiate for him. Even though the tribals are not Hindus, the Parbatya Brahmins will act as their priests, something they would not do under any circumstance for the Untouchable. Whether the tribals avail themselves of this opportunity or not, is not the issue here. More important than possibilities are the impossibilities—not what can be done but what cannot be done. Though the

1. At present, the Untouchables may choose to perform their version of the life-crisis rituals, and even a variant of the sacred thread rite involving an improvisation of their own mantra, but such actions are not recognised as legitimate and authentic by the clean castes. A test came when they attempted to enter Pasupatinath, the great temple housing a Śivalingam regarded as self-generated and being chachatī, (Nep.) i.e., part of Śiva himself and not just a stone vehicle for the god's presence. After the establishment of democracy and the introduction of certain reforms, the Untouchables stormed the place but the response was an outburst from the clean castes and the continued exclusion of the Untouchables. A Brahmin's comment summed up the value orientation in the decision and the position of the Untouchable in the social order with the insistence "After all, Nepal is a Hindu Kingdom". The same attitude holds internally within the Newar community for both Hindus and Buddhists alike. The following comment from a Vaṣajacarya should dispel any doubt on this point: "If an Untouchable dared to venture beyond the threshold of our house, my father would bring down his cane on that fellow's head".

2. Access to Hindu rituals has been availed especially by Gurungs, Rais, Limbus and Magars. With the Magars, according to Sharma (1975:295), involvement in Hindu rituals has reached such an extent that in some areas "they have no other priests of their own". This would mean that Brahmins have ousted their traditional religious officiants.
Parbatya Brahmins will act as their priests in namakarana and other ceremonies as well, they do not render them twice-born.

As with the tribals, the state classifies all Newars, other than their Untouchables, as Matwali. Such a classification in effect treats the descendants of an earlier Hindu polity with its own lingering caste structure and traditions as if they comprised one undifferentiated block vis a vis others in the social order. By implication, the Newar internal initiations and concomitant transformations are legally irrelevant in the context of the wider social order. To justify the fact that all Newars (apart from the Untouchable) are treated as one block, regardless of the internal levels, Parbatya refer to the Newar proclivity for drinking alcohol and eating meat. It is, according to the Parbatya, these habitual impure practices that render invalid any Newar claim to twice-born position.

The code stipulates what persons will be allocated what caste level, and in so doing directs what kind of ritual transformations will be made, or are to be recognised as having been made. In so far as these transformations and non-transformations are generated by the saṃskāra series, it is this series which provides the processual base for the different caste ranks of the social order.

If we consider the different kinds of beings produced by the saṃskāras then one of the cultural formulae previously discussed fits neatly into the schematization. I refer to the formula outlining the different kinds of beings as "animal-like, human and godly". Since the lowest epitomises mere substance, phenomenality would stand as "animal-like"; the next where the individual enters the society of clean castes and is treated as a fellow human could correspond with the ontological type "human-like"; and finally at the top level is the twice-born, the "godly" person of the cultural formula. Considering now the caste labels, we find that there is no divergence of basic ideas but a repetition which merely uses different words. We find the same basic pattern within the code's terminology specifying polluting substance, the human indulgence of alcohol imbibing and the wearing of the sacred thread. These could not be perceived as fortuitous variations since in each set the particular guṇa would be relevant, thus linking it with the corresponding term of the other set. Within any of the schemes it is the prevalence of one of the guṇa factors which provides the core idea which distinguishes the particular term and thereby differentiates that term from each of the others.

1. The Buddhist life-crisis correspond to the same set as the Hindu saṃskāras and follow the same general principles. Though divergences are important, this is not relevant for our argument.
Though the schemes as classificatory sets may be static, the analysis has attempted to demonstrate that the persons to whom the labels apply are bound up with a series of rituals where social processes apply. With the *saniskāras* there is not only progression but also a series of transformations created by that progression. This is how cosmic creation works also, notwithstanding the magnitude of complexity involved. Things which differ from each other acquire that difference through process whereby at one particular stage one kind of entity is formed, at the next another kind, and so forth in a series of developments. At each stage the particular *guṇa* force is operative. When an entity is differentiated from something else we observe that it stands at a different stage in a process. Of course, the frame of reference may be vast as in the grand sweep of cosmic cycles, or minuscule as with the commonplace bodily waste substances, but whatever frame is taken it is the location at a particular stage of a cycle which provides the rationale for differentiation of the entities concerned. Differentiation is based on process and process generates differences. Or, in the more usual formulation, process lies at the heart of the multifarious world.
CHAPTER 6

THE HIDDEN BASE OF THREE

Generally, when a Parbatya is asked about caste, he will spontaneously refer to the Vedas, citing the four formal terms of this scheme. Most likely, he will continue with the elaboration saying, "the Brahmins were born from the mouth of Brahma, the Chetri from the shoulders, the Vaisya from the thighs and the Sudras from the feet" just like the text says. Adding colour to his account by touching his own head, shoulders, thighs and finally pointing to his feet, and by making such gestures he conveys the idea that the origin from the different body parts holds a significance, that ought not escape the listener. In so far as a Parbatya is twice-born, in all probability he will mention this fact indicating unequivocally that he had acquired something worthwhile. It is likely that if you are a friend he'll take out the thread from between the closure of the shirt thrust it towards you so that you can see it but somehow also manage to prevent your touching it. In other contexts, however, when current practices are being discussed, the Parbatya will refer to the other, the local tripartite scheme previously described. Though Nepalis do not see the two classificatory schemes as incompatible, it is however problematic for the thesis which is promulgating the idea that the mode of caste classification is based on the *triguna* format. Moreover, since the charge could be made that the scheme only applies to a local Nepalese tradition and is nothing more than a minor aberration, it is imperative to demonstrate that the format is operative in other caste contexts. What could be more substantive, as well as standing in the mainstream of Hindu tradition, than Manu? Firstly, Manu provides the simple Vedic outline with the four terms based on a sequence of progression, and is the oldest of all the schemes.¹ Then there is the classification of later provenance where the twice-born idea, a central tenet of Hinduism is expressed, and since it must be heeded it thereby changes the nature of a simple differentiation based on sequence, and it is this scheme which is problematic for the thesis having the appearance of a dichotomous structure dividing the twice-born from the once-born Sudra. It would seem that this apparently dichotomous scheme is in fact a truncated version of the social universe in as much as it excludes a particular category of people, and so the scheme must contain five terms. The next question is whether this five-termed list breaks down into a tripartite structure or not. This will be considered in two contexts. Firstly in Manu's institutes a legal text traditionally used in Hindu kingdoms, and still referred to by members of caste society; and secondly,

¹. See Monier-Williams, 1878: 30-1, 56-62.
in the context where Nepalese discuss the topic.

1. **Manu's Models:**

The exercise in search of hidden three is not to be dismissed as fanciful, given that sets of three do occur throughout Manu's work, including his account of the differentiation between the three twice-born, an area most relevant for the immediate problem. What appears in Manu is simply a matter of the numeration three, which in itself need not constitute the *guna* format, so whether that is present would require further analysis. For example, the necessity to attend to three ancestors is proposed (IX, 186 in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 366). In one context several sets of three are brought together, namely the three worlds, the three orders, the three Vedas and the three fires (II, 230 in ibid:71). Sometimes, however, the *guna* base is immediately evident or can justifiably be presumed to be inherent. For example control over the three capacities of the individual (XII, 13 in ibid:486); the three,states of consciousness (I, 51-3 ibid :17). As well, there is the threefold sacred science (XI, 266; ibid 482); the three goals of life (II, 224 in ibid 70); and the *gunas* themselves are outlined (XII, 24, in ibid 489 - 490).In describing the Vedas, Manu hints at a *triguna* basis (IV, 124 in ibid: 148), and he also lists the variations in the requirements falling on the three twice-born categories (II, 36, 41-2, 45-6, 49 in ibid :36-9). Therefore it is to be expected that the tripartite approach will be present in this caste context, so here one is simply following a lead. If the tripartite mode of ordering were not present in Manu's outline of the critical area of caste categorisation, then the importance of the scheme would be somewhat diminished despite the range of contexts where it does occur. Moreover, this law-giver's relevance is hardly obsolete, for some contemporary Nepalis continue to consult his work and cite his pronouncements. Till the advent of recent reforms, the state utilised it as a reference for caste matters.

In one version of his exposition of caste society, Manu follows the strict classical Vedic lines of the four *varnas* (estates, castes, colours). Even though it is well known, for the sake of comprehensiveness, the listing is given below.
The Inviable Four-Termned Vedic Model

Brahmins
Kṣatriyas
Vaiśyas
Śūdras

Though the demarcation of twice-born from Śūdras does not appear in the Vedic account, it is stressed by Manu throughout his work (II, 47 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:57; II, 26-7 in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 33-4). In fact, Manu portrays a vivid differentiation between the twice-born (Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas) and the Śūdras where the latter are delineated as types embodying phenomenality and impurity on the one hand, while the twice-born are presented as ones infused with purity and goodness. Thus he imposes on the list of varṇa grades, another kind of demarcation breaking down the terms into two blocks – the twice-born and Śūdra without violating the pristine Vedic list but as well he specifically incorporates ideas about human ontology. The four-termed Vedic model must fall into two basic divisions since one cannot do otherwise than heed Manu's stress on the significance of the twice-born as special human types. This sacrosanct model is tabled as follows:

Inviolable, Four-Termned Pristine Model
(but now demarcating Twice-Born from Śūdras)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twice-born</th>
<th>Brahmin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kṣatriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vaiśya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Once-born   | Śūdra       |

Despite the sanctity of four, the lawgiver Manu when discussing peoples, presumably of his period, sometimes also incorporates another term in his classification making a total of five instead of the classic four. Though he declares that there is no fifth, he talks about them constantly.
Specifically, these are the peoples who are even lower in the social order than the Śūdras. They are demeaningly listed as those outside (Vahya) (X, 29-36 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:408-411) and not given a category distinction other than this. These peoples must be taken as constituting the members of a fifth category, despite Manu's protestations to the contrary, that there is no fifth (ibid, X, 4 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:402). Moreover, they must be included since it cannot be said that they are strangers living outside the jurisdiction of the kingdom for they are specifically included within the King's dominion (ibid, X, 55, in Buhler (tr.), 1969:415 as are the varṇas. Presumably, the alternative label "Dasyus" also covers this assortment of peoples, one way or another:

"All those tribes in this world, which are excluded from (the community of) those born from the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet of Brahman, are called Dasyus, whether they speak the language of Mlekkhas (barbarians) or that of the Aryans" (ibid, X, 45 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:413).

Presumably this cluster would include tribals and outcastes (Vratyas) one of whom is the Chandala infamous for his degraded nature and called by Manu the "lowliest of men" (ibid, X, 16, in Buhler (tr.), 1969:405). Since these people, the Vahya exist, are referred to by Manu and are stipulated as coming within the King's dominion, there is a second version of the social order which points to the necessity for a fifth category. This means in effect that Manu presents in addition to the classical inviolable four-termed Vedic scheme, another which is an extension of this, never explicitly outlined but nonetheless present. Thus we have a surreptitiously extended five-termed classificatory scheme.

Since historical peoples corresponding to a fifth label exist, they must therefore be slotted in somewhere. This issue is no longer whether there is a fifth or not, but exactly where it should be allocated in the context of the other four terms, because depending on allocation, the resultant pattern will be either threefold or twofold. Should they be placed in a sub-category of the Śūdra block, then Manu's outline of a two part system based on the differentiation between twice-born and once-born would remain intact. Diagrammatically, this possible scheme, would be the same as in diagram II, but simply with the addition of a sub-category to that of the Śūdra.

1. Outcasting can occur through committing a crime and through descent as an offspring of a prohibited kind of union (Manu, X, 24 and Xii, 55 in Buhler (ed.), 1969:407, 435 and 496).

2. Dumont, who refers not only to Manu but other cognate texts, comments: "These texts were to make the emergence, the factual accretion, of a fifth category, the Untouchables, each emulating the others in proclaiming that 'there is no fifth'. . . ." (1972:108).
III

Possible Extended Bipartite Model

Twice-born
Brahmin
Kṣatriya
Vaiśya

Once-born
Śūdra
Vahya

This possibility, however, would have to be discountenanced because Śūdra women provide acceptable partners in marriage to the twice-born males (Manu, 12-14 in Buhler, 1969:77-8), while those "outside" apparently do not. In fact, the barrier is so extreme that even simple interaction is prohibited and should it occur dire consequences are said to follow for the upper caste person. If a twice-born, say a Brahmīn, unintentionally approaches such persons, accepts food or gifts from them, he will lose caste and require purification. This would mean that his ontological state is regarded as being affected simply by interaction and even sheer proximity. If these things are done intentionally and not through accident, then the offender becomes their equal and is forever barred from regaining caste (XI, 176 in Buhler, 1969, 466-7). Given this kind of designation for the Vahyas, therefore, only when the Vahyas and Śūstras are each allocated category autonomy can the social facts of Manu's times be accommodated. In this event, a tripartite structure becomes imperative, and the picture of the Śūdra takes on a new colour.

Although in certain portions of Manu's exposition, the Śūstras are presented in extremely negative terms (II, 31, 103, 172 in ibid: 35, 49, 61; V, 104 in ibid:187), distinguished from the ritually transformed twice-born, the lowly portrayal of the Śūdra is somewhat jostled by the possibility of hypergamous unions with the women from those castes. The discrepancy here directs attention to another version of this type.

Manu appears to be presenting two versions of the Śūdra, where in one he is lowly but in the other not quite so lowly. Manu's elaborations which

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1. Though not first wives. Similarly the Nepalese legal code permitted hypergamy only with women from the Matwali level and above.
2. With regard to intercourse with a Vahya woman, the penalty imposed by the state is in a geometric progression of magnitude compared to that for intercourse with a woman from the four varṇas (Manu, VII, 385 or ibid: 321).
fluctuate between these two kinds of depiction appears to be related to context. In one version, Manu is emphasising the superiority and religious advantage which accrue to the twice-born and so as a contrast the once-born Śūdra is demeaned. Such a lowly depiction of the Śūdra has already been referred to where mere animal existence is dignified as the lot of those who are not ritually transformed (II, 147 in Buhler, (tr.), 1969,57) and seems to be applicable to the once-born Śūdra (II, 24-7, ibid : 33-4). Yet in contradistinction, the other version of the Śūdra does not quite tally with such a negative delineation. Here, though the Śūdra is not presented as elevated, neither is he presented quite as the type dominated by animality. In fact, in one section, (IX, 335 in ibid : 401), the Śūdra is even referred to as "pure". Moreover, since the Śūdra is said to be able to indulge in purification (V, 139 in ibid: 193; V, 99 or ibid, 186; and II, 62, in ibid:41), it may be inferred that this type is not stipulated as being permanently impure which means in effect that he could hardly be taken as the embodiment of awful phenomenality. This raises a point which is important for the general discussion.

Even though the sacrilised state of the twice-born and the contrasting state of the Śūdra might appear to stand in opposition (twice-born/once-born) this is merely apparent arising through a focus on two terms. To impute dualism would be to pre-empt the elaborations of Hindu cognitions. When the third category is borne in mind there is a threefold universe comprising three kinds of people distinguishable according to their existential states. Those outside, the Vahyas, whose origin is not from the body of Brahmā but is generally due to some crime either committed by them, or by their parents through a prohibited union, or again through a crime in a prior existence which has generated rebirth in some heinous form (Manu, X, 24 in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 435), all point to the degraded nature of their being. Then there are the once-born Śūdras inside "the community" and originating from Brahmā. Different again are the sacrilised twice-born persons. We will return to this set but first to continue the discussion on the nature of the social order.

Given the differences between the Śūdra and those outside, it would seem that category autonomy is necessary if the Śūdra is to be kept distinct as a type from the Vahya. This is necessitated not only by the different social prescriptions applying but also by the utterly degraded kind of depiction Manu bestows on the Vahyas, and in such contexts, appear strikingly distinct even from the Śūdras. It would seem, therefore, that the notion once-born collapses two discrete categories, the once-born Śūdra
and the once-born Vahya. Thus the possibility of a twofold scheme with a demarcation applying between the twice-born and the once-born would present a false dichotomy, because the once-born block would then subsume two autonomous categories which must be kept discrete from each other, if the distinctiveness is to be preserved then the scheme must break down into a tripartite structuring.

If the five-termed scheme were presented as a twofold model with no differentiation between the two lowest peoples then this would provide a distorted account of the situation. When the social difference between the Śūdra and the Vahya is accommodated by holding the latter as a discrete category, then this necessitates the usage of a tripartite structure because category autonomy must also be given to the twice-born. This is inherent in Manu's exposition which implicitly extends the four-termed Vedic format. With this type, the twice-born would fall into one major block separate from the Śūdra, and the Vahya would belong to an autonomous category also discrete from the Śūdra positioned at the bottom—a tripartite structuring.¹

### IV

**Manu's Scheme, Revealing a Tripartite Format**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twice-born</th>
<th>--------- Brahmin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--------- Kṣatriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--------- Vaiśya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śūdra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vahya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹. Tambiah in his article, "From Varna to Caste Through Mixed Unions," provides a scheme which could appear to be comparable to that being outlined here. It is merely a semblance and not a real similarity since there is divergence on two counts. First of all the procedure Tambiah employs is different, in so far as he arrives at his scheme through the process of segmenting the order according to a series of imputed oppositions (1973:192–6). Secondly his scheme is not tripartite at all, but is structured in terms of a series of dichotomous pairs, and also including the terms said to arise through the mixed unions (ibid:195). A series of dichotomous pairs is essentially different from a tripartite structure where category autonomy is a critical feature of the scheme and the criterion for each category is the ontological nature of each type.
So far we have identified several caste structures. Let me briefly give a resume.

I The four-termed Vedic outline whose vaṣya grades are based on time/space differentiation in terms of the origin from the body of Brahmā.

II The four-termed list may be broken down into a bipartite scheme whereby the importance of the twice-born level is acknowledged and differentiated from the once-born Śūdras. In so far as this retains four terms it does not violate the Vedic numeration. The Śūdra is depicted as the lowliest. But here part of the social universe (the Vahyas) would be missing.

III This could contain the Vahyas as a sub-category of the Śūdra but would be inapplicable since it does not accommodate to the social requirements which imply the necessity for category autonomy for them. Therefore it is to be rejected as a viable possibility.

IV As with III there is the inclusion of peoples (the Vahyas) as well as those who belong to the vaṣya categories, but incorporates the Vahyas as belonging to their own category. Consequently this renders the Śūdra not as lowly as in II, and instead it is those who Manu describes as being outside "the community" (the Vahyas) who would signify lowliness par excellence. Given this point, plus the fact that the twice-born demand category autonomy, this necessitates a tripartite structuring of the social universe.

It is interesting that while Manu articulates the tripartite division for the twice-born, he does not expressly apply it to the wider social universe. When Manu does employ a threefold division, this occurs in the context of possibilities for different rebirth conditions but then, as noted in the previous chapter, he omits the Vaiśya, as he must if he is to obtain the required three. Nevertheless the tripartite approach with its guṇa format is explicit in that part of his discussion. Whereas, according to our analysis, it is merely inherent in his exposition of the social universe so that the intrinsic tripartite patterning has to be extrapolated from his outline of the practices and ideas. One may suggest several reasons for the proclivity to retain the Vedic set.

The Vedic outline, though shortened and therefore inadequate, is not entirely irrelevant nor unimportant for Hindus. This commitment to the old formulation over the contemporary could be understood I think in terms of
the sanctity of its origin - the primal Vedas, which renders that formulation inviolable (see Manu II, 13 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:31). Moreover, though there is some divergence between the four-termed Vedic scheme, and the tripartite outline, the relationship between the two is close in one critical respect for both highlight the fundamental idea of human differentiation. It would seem then the Vedic outline continues to be relevant because it is the original formulation of the central notion that humans are in no way the same. How could they be if they evolve from different body parts? It declares that humans are distinctly different, and this is the core idea in Hindu classificatory schemes, be it the primordial Vedic or Manu's implicit tripartite pattern underlying the ordering of practices of his historical period.

Hindu categorisation of peoples means ontological differentiation according to type and as a rule evolves through ritual transformations, at least for some. How this occurs with the Nepalese has already been discussed in an earlier chapter. Here, as there, a pattern of exclusions seems to pertain. Taking what was said about Manu's prescriptions and ideas on the three major categories, it would seem that he also sets up closures at the two predictable points. The Vahya is excluded from "the community" and cannot undertake any of the ritual transformations at all. The Sūdra is included in "the community" and permitted to indulge in purification but his exclusion relates to the twice-born rite. The encumbent of the top category is not only part of the community, can undergo purification, but also may acquire a sacred existential state through the second birth. Having indicated the relevance of the tripartite scheme for Manu's institutes, the fact remains that Parbatya consistently employ the four-termed varṇa set as a contemporary scheme for themselves.

2. How Parbatya Use the Available Scheme:

When discussing the social order, Parbatya, fluctuate between two schemes, and comparable problems arise in utilizing the Vedic format as occurs in Manu. Again, it would seem that the four-termed varṇa outline presents an inadequate picture of their social universe.

In response to the general question about caste society, the Parbatya generally reply by outlining the classic fourfold varṇa scheme and frequently

1. This highlights the divergence from Tambiah's (1973) approach where the structuring of the social universe is said to follow oppositional segmentation and also the accretions of new terms arising by virtue of descent from mixed unions.
locate its source in the Vedas. They may also make a division between twice-born and the Śūdras. Then endeavouring to correlate this with people on the ground, respondents refer to the classic listing beginning with the local Brahmins, the local Chetri (the Nepalese for Kṣatriya) to merchants (bedana Nep.), who correlate with the Vaiśya term, and finally the Śūdras. Parbatya are quick to state that the Śūdras are the contemporary Untouchables, members of the "low" category "from whom water cannot be taken". We observe that several criteria are being used, occupation as in the case of the merchant type, Vaiśya and ethnicity as in the case of the Brahmins and Chetri, for in Nepal they are referred to as "ethnic" as well as "caste" categories. Finally the polluting state of the Śūdra is evoked. Regarding the type "merchant", if one asks what people it refers to, the immediate response is the ethnic group, the "Newars". Since such replies omit any reference to other groups like the tribals, the Vedic categories are being filled by reference only to a limited number of the peoples of present Nepal. If one then asks where would these tribals fit, the immediate response is that they are the "alcohol-takers" (Matwali), neither twice-born nor Śūdra. But having raised the term alcohol-takers, they may then recall that the Newars are also classified as alcohol-takers just like the tribals who are not twice-born. By this stage confusion has arisen in that the Newars, previously placed by the Parbatya as the twice-born merchants, the referents for Vaiśya in the one scheme, are, at this point in their discussion, being placed with the alcohol-takers which is definitely not twice-born in the other scheme.

More important than the confusion is that by this stage a more comprehensive incorporation of peoples is being followed and a more exact correspondence between the social referents and caste categories is beginning to emerge. The complication echoes that raised earlier in that the lowliest people in the society must be allocated to a special category. When the Parbatya slot them into the Śūdra category this then displaces the Newars to a new high at variance with the legal code and at the same time also omits the tribals. Having reached the impasse, people quickly abandon the Vedic format and resort to the contemporary Nepalese scheme and allocate the people accordingly but do not express any critique of the varṇa outline nor acknowledge a discrepancy between the two schemes.

Recourse by the Parbatya to the Vedic outline is not limited to this kind of situation since it is also employed for certain ancient ritual ceremonies like the coronation, mentioned at the beginning of the thesis. In this instance, political considerations may intervene in the selection
of the persons to represent a particular varṇa, a consideration that might well apply in the case of the Newar selected to stand for the Vaiśya. Whatever the reasons, a person designated Matwālī represented the twice-born Vaiśya at the recent coronation ceremony. In addition, a member of the Pāni nachalne jāt was selected to depict the Śūdra. Thus the placements for these people in the varṇa scheme does not tally with their particular placement in the local scheme, as the diagram shows. Despite such complications what is significant is that the four varṇas are incorporated in the ritual and not the three usual categories of the Nepalese caste order. In this way, the state, like its citizens, articulates the sanctity to be accorded this format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varṇa Scheme</th>
<th>Referents</th>
<th>Nepalese Scheme</th>
<th>Referents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Parbatya</td>
<td>Tāgadhārī</td>
<td>Parbatya twice-born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kṣatriya</td>
<td>Parbatya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśya</td>
<td>Newar</td>
<td>Matwālī</td>
<td>Newar &amp; Tribals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śūdra</td>
<td>Parbatya &amp; Newar 'Pāni nachalne jāt'</td>
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Pāni nachalne jāt Parbatya & Newar

Why reference to the Vedic scheme by the Parbatya is made in the first place can be perhaps understood in terms of its providing the sacred and authoritative origin of the contemporary fact of caste. That origin which is the Vedas cannot be dismissed lightly as merely providing any kind of validation of the rank order, but as belonging to those special validations, the primordial pronouncements which are divinely expressed and have no human authorship, merely human reception. They are heard (āruti), a point relevant for Manu as much as for contemporary orthodox Hindus (II, 13, in Buhler (tr.), 1969:31). As such, the Vedas are even more revered than the legal texts, the śṛtis (see Monier-Williams, 1878:18). The Vedic varṇas are important because they articulate the basic idea of differentiation of the human universe, a point that cannot be repeated too often. Moreover, by providing some of the terms (e.g. Brahmin, Chetri) for the Nepalese scheme, it indicates that there is a connexion between the two, the old and the contemporary. That an affinity is seen to exist between the two is encapsulated by the Nepalese saying, "four varṇas, thirty-six jāts"1 which presumes that the two belong to the one overall outline, with the varṇas as the major categories, and the jātis as the sub-categories.

1. The number of jātis is metaphorical and has no correspondence with the actual number of Nepalese jātis (see Sharma, 1975:281).
CHAPTER 7

OTHER NUMERATIONS

If, as I am suggesting, the critical blueprint for Hindu conceptualisations is the trīguna format, yet one finds other numerations like the four, used in a range of contexts which are surely significant (such as the "four stages of life", the "four yugas", as well as the "four Vedas" and the "four directions"). There are also the two terms of the pair "Puruṣa/Praṅṭi", and the special pair, "virtue and sin", which appears not only to entail two, but to stand in an oppositional kind of relation. It is imperative that this situation can be confronted by the analysis, even if Manu's four vāyuṇās hold a hidden three, as it is only one set among many. Numeration, by itself, however, is not an indication of a scheme with a particular rationale, but simply a listing of a number of terms to be included. Therefore the important step is to locate the rationale of each list which renders it a scheme. If the claim, that the trīguna format constitutes the dominant scheme, is to hold, then it is necessary to indicate that other numerations relate to schemes where time and change are at the helm. Hence, at least the idea of process and movement would pertain, or at best, the guṇa format would be explicitly present. If this is not the case, then I would expect the set to relate to a transcendental idea which is connected with the Absolute for which time and change are irrelevant. In short, either the list relates to a concept which stands in time and where movement is intrinsic, otherwise, it relates to a concept which overrides all that.

Let us start with the list using the numeration four. There are two major types, firstly where the set of four signifies the idea of totality, and secondly, where the guṇās and time pertain. In the latter instance, where the guṇās are relevant there can be two variants. The four here, as with the "human goals" discussed in the opening part of the thesis, may be broken into two dimensions where one in particular relates to the Ultimate, and the other three form a set concerning existence in time, and where there is some idea of sequences in a cycle of development. In short, the four break up into two divisions where there is the set with three of a cycle, as against the One of stillness. Akin to this type, the other variant also leads to the idea of movement but through a different intellectual route, as we shall see in the case of the "four directions". Let us examine the first possibility—four connoting the idea of totality.
It would seem as in the case of the Vedas, four may signify a totality, since these stand as the sumnum bonum of all truths (Monier-Williams, 1878; 17-20 see also Manu, X, 99 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:506-7) and thereby four here constitutes a transcendental concept rather than a particular scheme for categorizing and assessing each of the four terms. Roy, renowned as a discloser of the secrets of Hinduism, explains their standing: "...the Vedas...are affirmed to be coeval with the creation!" (in Stein, 1967:2). In such contexts the four as totality corresponds to the notion of "pūrṇā", "complete" or "full", where that which is complete is also "perfect". Similarly the concept totality, also carries the same transcendental turn for only the Absolute can be total, holding everything within itself, every power, (see Kena Upanisad, IV, 4 in Basu (ed.), 1911:40). That the concept totality also transcends time is inherent in the Nepalese Tantric's comment: "Everything has rise, growth and decay (ṣvasti, sthiti, samharā). There is also samasti (totality). A Tantric has to bring these three into that one. Moreover, he renders "totality" as synonymous with another term, the "fourth" (Turiya), which also relates to the Absolute and cannot thereby be taken to refer to the next numeral after three. In this context, it is definitely not a number but an esoteric concept and is given a capital "T". The mystical nature of the fourth may be gleaned from the fact that it is applied to the impertible hum (Nādā) of the primaevil sound Om, which according to Hindu thought constitutes the first vibrations (and last) of the cosmos. Where the other three parts (aum) are said to refer to the conditions of existence oriented by the three forces of cyclic development, the fourth goes beyond, thus rendering it non-empirical and thereby "really true" (satya), a notion relating to the Supreme. The Manduka Upanisad puts it this way:

The partless fourth is not an object of experience to the unredeemed. He who knows Him, resembles Him in becoming inscrutable to the unredeemed; in becoming a destroyer of all bodily bonds; in getting bliss, and in destroying false knowledge. (IV, 1 in Basu (ed.), 1911:315).

Madhava's commentary makes the point for us by bringing the various aspects together including the role of the fourth (Turiya),

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1. This would apply whether the set contains four or three terms as some texts like Manu cite the number for the Vedas. However it can also happen, that the three are treated according to the guṇa format, as mentioned in an earlier footnote.

2. "Pūrṇā" when applied to Viṣṇu invokes the idea that "there is no one anywhere equal to Him. It is out of question that any one should be greater than Him, when no one is equal to Him" (Katha Upanisad commentary on III, 11 in Basu (ed.), 1911:98).
Knowing Hari the supreme goal is the Turiya called also the Nādā, the worshipper enters into Him alone (in Basu (ed.), 1911:316). 1

In comparison, the individual who has not arrived at the fourth state and lives in time's conditions is directed by the three powers and therefore belongs to different existential circumstances. 2 What of the other lists

1. See Zimmer for his interpretation of "The Fourth" (1961:372-8). Let me also cite some verses from the Lākṣmi Tantra which according to one Nepalese pundit is a "fine and difficult text":

XXIV

19-20. O Śakra, the three fires, three worlds, three Vedas, three guṇas, three gods, three Vyuhas,* three social classes, and the three (basic) vowels, whatever group of three you find in this world you should consider it to be (representing) the first three (components of om ), while the half-measure (bindu ) xx stands for the pure (existence).

21. All words have emanated from the letter a. From u have emanated the three brilliant energies (i.e. sun, moon and fire). O Puraṇādara, out of m emanate (all the cosmic principles) starting with the earth and ending in prakṛti.

22. The brilliant half measure-unit is the supreme kāla (nādā), consisting of consciousness (in Gupta tr.), 1972:129.

* descents

xx bindu is the material form (point or seed) of the sound form, the hum.

2. The transcendental nature of the Ultimate, and of the special state in reaching this, comes through in this pundit's delineation.

For mokṣa we worship neither Brahmā nor other gods with form, but to remember Īśvara who is without form (nirguṇa) we use a process of samādhi ........

Because Īśvara is not available to our organs, because we cannot smell Him, taste Him or touch Him, our sages obtain Him in samādhi, and by this way they become mokṣa or mukti. When in the stage of mukti we are also nirguṇa, (without guṇas ) which is also the stage of formlessness.
where the numeral four occurs.

The four "human goals" also appear to fit this patterning where in the set of three the individual stays in the world of time, while the fourth relates to mokṣa, an observation made in a previous chapter. Similarly, the four "life stages", whose labelling itself invokes the idea of progression, also appears to belong to this kind of frame where the fourth stage entails the commitment to this highest pursuit. Since it has been treated by Marriott (1976) utilising his transactional model which is of theoretic interest, his account will be discussed in a later chapter. Pertinent now are the "four ages" (yugas) where time itself is signified by the numeration four. Despite this direct combination of four and time, I think that even here, the three gūṇa formulation is relevant.

Following Manu's description of the four yugas, it may be noticed that they break into two sets where one is a perfect yuga, while the remainder form a set of three and show a progression moving to the worsened state, thus echoing the metaphysical notion of deterioration, though here couched in moralistic terms (see Manu, I, 81-3, in Buhler (ed.), 1969:22-3). This is expressed through the metaphor of change in the number of feet, since all the yugas are referred to as footed animals, but only the first has the full quotient of feet which therefore signifies the perfect entity. Since it is perfect, it is unconditioned and must relate to what is Absolute. After that, the next age, loses a foot, so that it is an age with only three, then the next with only two, and finally only one, which distinguishes the present age, the Kālī Yuga. The last of the three by its name (death and blackness) and position in the sequence heralds the end of the worst in the three-phased movement of deterioration. This Kālī Yuga, is the terminal age when one complete cycle will end, having passed from the special one at the beginning through the gūṇa plan to dissolution and back to the Turiya state and then to begin all over again. In case it is thought that such an approach is simply textual, let me cite a Nepalese Brahmin temple priest's

1. Couched in Tantric terms and less cryptically than with Manu's metaphor of lessening feet, the same point is made in the Kāma-Kalā-Vilāsa where the first age (the kṛṣṇa) is treated as quite separate, for this age is also designated the "sātva", or "true" age, while the other three relate to manifest time. Elaborating on this point, the text correlates the ages with places whence the first age again appears to be special since it refers to the "uddāñjana-pītha" which is "replete with the Bliss" of Siva's "Own Illumination", whereas it is only with the subsequent three ages that the three gurus of each particular period emerge, and with them a different kind or order (see verses 525 53 in Woodroffe, (ed.), 1971:236:8).

2. It is interesting that, generally speaking, the west perceives the events of time as moving in a direction of advance, for example, we talk of "progress" of evolution, technology, civilization, whereas the Hindus present them moving contrariwise.
version of the ages. He was discussing them in the context of Dasaśi and what forms of the goddess are to be worshipped.

In the Satya Yuga, there were no Durgās as we know them now. No forms, names, no powers. There was only one Devī. Due to the environment at that time no trouble, no different ideas and means. all were equal everywhere. During that time there were no karmena (desires or wants) and no sattva. So the division of the Nine Durga is not necessary.

In the Tretā Yuga now the mind changes. Karmena appear and people begin to think in different ways. Some want tapasya or one deity only. People want specialists and therefore the goddess wants to show herself as a separate identity. Then the body becomes separate, and name and form (nāma and rūpa) become separate.

In the Duṣṣara Age further changes in people's minds, and kings and aristocrats appear. Therefore the works of Devī become different. Then the works of the nine Durgā appear, just as we have them today.

Now we are in the kālī Yuga, the final one.

The patterning of the set of three plus the special one, appears to be the same for the āśramas also, though the detailing of the sequences are slightly different, but with a cycle it does not matter.

Ignoring childhood entirely, the life-stages commence with the period dedicated to learning how to become spiritually enhanced, and called the student stage (brahmaśāra). Since the student is expected to wholeheartedly attend to the study of sacred things, blinking off all else unswervingly, then this would constitute a sattvika stage of life compared to the others. The next is definitely one which takes him into worldly affairs (rajas stage) for this is the time when he must marry, produce sons and become a householder. However, he is not expected to remain rivetted to such pursuits, but eventually relinquish his hold and responsibilities, proceeding to the next stage by withdrawing and becoming a semi-recluse. So the third stage is one of disengagement, the breaking down of the old ties, though not yet completely detached, and does appear to carry the idea of disintegration (tamas). Finally, there is the fourth, so often the special state of existence, quite distinct from others because it involves the catapulting from time. In this context the fourth stage refers to the sannyāsi who strives to attain the fourth goal, mokṣa, and is the occasion when the individual severs all bonds, especially those dearest to him like his children, parents and wife. It is a separate stage quite distinct from the other three because its goal, if realised, would rescind
the possibility of ever having to undertake the life-stages again. The interesting feature about the pattern is not that it is one of movement, something intrinsic to stages anyhow, but that it contains the idea of two kinds of existence, one belonging to the world circuit, (pravṛtti), and the other to its cessation (nivṛtti), the ultimate end.

Thus far, it has been suggested that the different kinds of sets belonging to the formidable four, either belong to a special totality or appear to consist of two divisions, one with the triguna blueprint and the other standing as a special type. But can the idea of a tripartite movement also relate to conceptualizations about space, like the four directions, a seemingly static situation? The four directions entail a spatial universe, a particular, like Kathmandu valley, or the vast cosmos, but in any case, it is imperative that there is a centre, a reference point and so the system would move to the numeration five, or sometimes nine when there is the incorporation of the intermediate zones. With a centre, the directions link it as the spokes of a wheel, or a cycle and the idea of time passing enters. So the idea of a static bit of space, the square, shifts to that of a kinetic cycle. Not surprisingly, all the four-sided diagrams used in rituals to represent space are simply stylistic and are always called circles (cakras) according to the Nepalese procedural text for such performances, 

1. Many published and public illustrations however omit an outer circle. For example, the Kāli yantra, depicted as ending with the squared portals with the four entry/exit points, also contains two further surrounds, a circle of skulls and a circle of glowing flames.

2. Space is one of the differentiators, see Lakṣmi Tantra XIV, 41 in Gupta (tran.), 1972:77.
a lot of which is kept secret compounding the complexities which interrelate places with events. Most vivid of these, is the southern point, the place associated with the terrific form of Śiva, destruction and death, and no Nepali will sleep in a bed which takes up this inauspicious alignment. It would seem that with Hindu conceptualisations, place and event are presented as inherently interconnected. Adding complexity to it all, place is related to a range of other ideas, and such a configuration is brought together in the five-faced Śiva lingam. Each side (direction) relates to one kind of matter, and one kind of conscious power as well as entailing the idea of development (see Sharma, 1976:1-4). Now the five kinds of matter can be divided into the three guṇa parts and, though this is often rendered differently by different persons (and schools), all do impose the division. One approach proffers the scheme where earth, water, fire, constitute the concrete perishable and destructible kinds (tamas); whereas, in contrast, wind is the stirring element whose form is barely detectible though its effect is conspicuous (rajas); and then there is ether, the stuff that is the support of the cosmos penetrating all around, while itself is impervious (sattva). Each of these material elements corresponds with a particular face and its kind of consciousness. While these fall into the three-fold scheme, the sixth, the last, here the transcendental notion is the face above the lingam itself, and beyond past, present and future. Metaphorically, it is to be kenned in Śiva's trident for it comprises the three times in the three points fixed to a shaft which He holds. Such details are introduced to indicate that place is not presented simply in spatial terms but also incorporates ideas about kinds of matter and corresponding kinds of consciousness which all together interconnect a complex of interrelated factors, where the triguna format appears to be one of the discriminators.

1. Moreover, where a division can be rendered internally on the five elements, a division can also be made of three types of matter (comprising the range of five) which appear along the path of creation. The first to evolve are the five mahātattva, the potentials of materiality which are hardly perceptible (avyakta). Later subtle matter (sūkṣma) evolves and finally the concrete stuff (sthula) that we register with our sensibilities.


3. See Beck, 1976: 224-5, 232-4. Beck's scholarly discussion on the subject brings out a range of related factors. What is also interesting in her account are the several blanks in the diagram, which are not itemised along with the others, presumably because these are the key terms not to be disclosed. Also see Dasgupta, 1955 Vol. IV, 42-64; and Lorenzen, 1972: 83-5; Sharma, 1976: 1-3.
Each direction has a referent, a form of Śiva, which has its particular power and ultimately all kinds of powers can be reduced to the guṇa forces. Furthermore, the same point, that directions are inherently associated with a particular guṇa force, can also be made by considering the planetary yantra used for the important ritual of homa. It contains the eight planets corresponding to the eight directions with the ninth as central as procedural texts illustrate, and according to the relevance of each planet at a particular time a specific kind of influence is unleashed. These influences are described by the Hindu scholar, Kane (Vol. IV Pt. I, 1974:574) as falling into the triguna format. Inevitably, whatever the focus, one comes back to time's powers,

Kāla is ultimately supreme and everything takes place according to the desire of Kāla. Even the growth of trees and their flowers and fruits are due to Kāla. The Highest lord creates Prakṛti not different from Him, and through Her, the Omnipotent One, creates the sentient and the insentient objects. He is creator, sustainer and destroyer, and He is the Cosmic Dancer (Devi Bhagavata IX, 21: 37-58 cited in Lalaye, 1973: 141).

Yet despite the identification of the presence of development in the context of numerations considered so far, there are instances of other sets, like "sin and merit", which not only entail two terms, but to all intents and purposes, appear to be oppositional. One would expect binary discrimination to be relevant with a chestnut, like the pair good and evil, but is it when viewed according to the Hindu approach?

The epitome of evil is the demon Mahiṣāsura. The demon is killed by the Goddess after a bloody, protracted battle and every year the victory is celebrated by Hindus during DasaY. Despite this, the demon is also worshipped, appearing on the ikons used during the performance. Its grandmother, according to the Kalikā Purana, was a buffalo cow, and a special one since the form was assumed by Śiva (LXII, 138-164 in Van Kooij (tr.), 1972: 117-19). This is not as perturbing as it might seem, for all things have the great gods as their primal source. Therefore, the likelihood of an easy rendition of the pair, evil and good, as entailing an idea and its contrary, diminishes in the context of such complications. Further complications are introduced in a Nepalese Tantric's commentary:

1. As well as more detailed kinds of influences, Kane elaborates some of the important astrological principles, without disclosing the secrets (Vol. V, Pt. I, 1974: 463:603).
In the different *kalpaś* (periods) three forms of the Goddess came into existence and killed Mahiśāsura. Even if we may make victory upon evil, there will be some remains of the evil. If you cut or deduct a hundred from a hundred or a thousand from a thousand, the remainder will be zero but that zero is something. Every action has its reaction. So even if good or true (*satya*) wins over evil, the untrue (*asatya*) will have to remain to show the existence of *satya*. In our Hindu philosophy only Brahman is beyond action and reaction and cannot be described by words and no artist can paint it.... At three different periods, Durgā fights Mahiśāsura. In the last, this form of Durga did not have to kill Mahiśāsura, because Mahiśāsura himself worshipped the goddess Durgā for many years, and so his evil genius was gradually purified. She appeared and asked what he wanted. When Mahiśāsura replied, "Show me how you had killed me twice before?" So the Goddess showed him the other two forms. At last he said, that there should be a victory over evil. It is a must - and so the buffalo's soul mixed with the Goddess. According to Hindu Tantrism, there will be no rebirth of Mahiśāsura.  

Several ideas which prohibit viewing good and evil as contraries, impinge. Nothing can be totally bad because everything derives ultimately from the Absolute. Thus an evil person is a composite, not an antithesis. Just as a good person is a composite, for, if he were perfect, he would not exist in time. Secondly, though good deeds bring rewards, and sin punishment, both have to be exhausted as the law of *karmaphal* stipulates and even then, the traces (*vasana*) remain. Following from this, both good and evil are subject to the same law which keeps the individual riveted to time's circus. If both have the same consequences, then antithesis is not exactly apposite to represent the relation between them, despite the different kinds of conditions pertaining in the execution of one or the other kind of action. Thirdly, since the eventual destiny, *mokṣa*, is what gets the individual out of the run of cycles, then it is this factor which would afford the contrast with the other two, the interconnected good and evil. Hence, in this context good and evil belong to a cognate set which is part of a situation of action and consequence, while the other moves one entirely out of it all.  

That a deity's grace (*anugraha*), in this instance Devi's, is important in helping a person reach *mokṣa*, is also expressed here. Finally, the further point of cyclic repetition is raised by the myth, for it describes that in different ages the demon appears only to be killed by Devi  

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1. Needless to make the aside, the quotation opens up a lot of interesting points, which cannot be raised here, but were not omitted from the full quotation because though not exactly relevant for the discussion, contribute to the general tenor which is so different from our own. To indicate that the concept zero carries a comparable metaphysical connotation for others, let me cite two lines from the Nepalese poet, Devkota: 

   At last the God is remaining. 
   I dissolved in Zero as a zero. 

2. Though the formulations do leave opaque the question why souls are evolved in the first place, a problem that the *Lakṣmi Tantra* for example leaves as an imponderable (see III, 37, in Gupta (tr.), 1972:18).
each time, and each occasion is demarcated through the taking of a different form and thereby underlines the allied notion of time, change.

Now if good and evil are not exactly discerned as entailing an antithesis since lingering traces (the vasana) affect the individual in both instances, despite the fact that one is positive and the other negative, the individual remains in existential time, and given the relevance of the idea of ripening, that acts have consequences which the individual must exhaust while leaving those effective traces, then the seeming antithetical pair also relate to process. In other words though in this particular context, good and evil could be called "moral" notions, the same principle seems to hold. Hinduism appears to place these situations within the one metaphysical formulation, that the effect derives from its cause or source (the tenet of sat kāryavāda) as mentioned in an earlier chapter. Now, even though this particular pair does not quite fall into a pattern of opposition, one would expect opposition to apply for what we generally regard as the epitome of contraries, "insider/outsider".

One could presume that the idea of outsider would fall into a rendition of "them", as opposed to "us", reflecting the assumed universal proclivity to perceive "outsiders" as distinctly different from "ourselves". One would also expect that if ever binary discrimination, said to be a universal structure of mind, would be relevant, then it would appear in such a context. But Hindu formulations do not discriminate this way since the outsider is not left stranded outside, but incorporated into their universe in the bottom pile, along with the other Untouchables, but designated as Mleccha. Their approach then is essentially comprehensive whereby all are allocated to some slot in the entire scheme. In Hindu categorizations there are no Dinkas. Let me stress that the incorporation is not a matter of the foreigner's being encompassed by the totality, but being positioned in a rung along a series of rungs which constitute the entire differentiated order. By incorporating outsiders as members of one category of the threefold order, rather than set up the usual opposition, this suggests that the alleged universal proclivity of mind to discriminate along the binary mode could well be uncharacteristically Hindu. Can the same be said of the sex pair, which do appear to exemplify opposition?

In Hindu thought, apart from the guṇas sex provides the other important scheme for categorisation. Everything in the world contains both principles since everything has its source in that primal union, and everything takes the form of one sex or other except hermaphrodites. It is
only the Paramâtman which does not admit differentiation, hence the convention in English to distinguish It as neuter (napûsta). The complexities regarding this conception of the Absolute which contains the idea of the indefinite which is Its nature, and the idea that the two sexes also have their source in It, are brought out in this Nepalese pundit's commentary. He says,

Tat is neuter
sa is feminine
sa is masculine

Whenever Brahmam is appointed, the phase "Om tat sat" is stated. It includes, the indefinite, the male and the female.

It does not admit of differentiation because this is a modification and a modification is a move away from perfection. Two interrelated issues demand elaboration. One point that requires some discussion is the proposal that everything contains both principles which is so vague it is not very meaningful. As well, if everything contains both principles, yet things are distinguished sexually, what factor determines this differentiation? Only when these are considered can one begin to discuss the nature of this particular relation containing the two terms.

One might expect that the sexual pair would entail an unambiguous formulation of contraries and an instance where Dumont's formal ideas would be pertinent. It would also be important, because, though universally male and female are distinguished, with Hindus it goes further, extending not only to men and women, bulls and cows, but also to things like the earth, a specific goddess, and the male thunderbolt which brings rain and makes the earth fecund, and so forth. One of the features of contraries stressed by

1. "Napûsta" means "neither man nor woman", or "hermaphrodite", or "neuter gender" (see Apte, 1973:279) and clearly differs from the English meaning.

2. Roy's interpretation is offered as a comparison, and even though there are different stresses, ultimately the same general point is being made. He says,

The Ved begins and concludes with the three peculiar and mysterious epithets of God, viz. first, ONG; second, TUT; third, SUT. The first of these signifies "That being, which preserves, destroys, and creates!" The second implies

"That only being, which is neither "male nor female!"
Dumont is the necessity for both to be present. He says, that the "two poles are equally necessary, although unequal........" (1972:93). While this feature could be seen to apply to the Hindu formulation about the male female pair, there are other aspects which, I think prohibit its delineation as a contrary. Though the matter is highly complex, not only with details varying from philosophical school to school and also compounded by the technique for avoiding disclosure as mentioned before, a technique called "wilful scrambling" (vyakulita), or "śamdhya" (dusk or twilight) language" nevertheless certain general points can be made. There is the idea of Being and its Power to become which signifies "illustrious Being", and Śakti, its "energy" to make things manifest, grow and change, all points noted before but repeated for the sake of comprehensiveness. The statement also means that both facets must be simultaneously present for the existence of any one entity in time.  

Such a meaning is divergent from the formal relation of contraries because the contrary terms (e.g. the pure and the impure) can have an independent existence even though their presences may be "mutually necessary". In contradistinction, the male and female principles, to repeat, demand the simultaneous presence of both factors for the existence of the unit itself because it is only with the union of these two that any one entity can appear and operate in time. Now it could be said that while the two principles relate in this way with regard to any one entity, nevertheless one perceives humans who are distinctly different sexually and are categorised as one or the other.

It would seem that it is a matter of dominance which determines the sex of the life form taking the basic entity, the foetus: if the male sperm predominates then a male child will be born, if it is the female blood, a female, and if both components are equal, then a hermaphrodite results. What determines predominance is possibly related to the influences of time, for specific dates of a wife's cycle are posited as the right time to produce a son, or a daughter, as will be recalled from an earlier discussion. Just as sperm is male and blood female, the rest of a person's components are also differentiated in sex terms, for example bone is male, flesh is female, hair is male and blood is female; and in this way parts from both sexes constitute

1. In this particular context, he is referring to the opposition, pure/impure, but the idea is used for any range of contraries which are then resolved through encompassing (ibid:106-8).

2. The principle of "śamavāya" or mutual inherence (See Monier-Williams, 1878: 191-2), though not irrelevant is, I think, not precise enough to bring out the subtleties of the Puruṣa/Prakṛti relationship, for śamavāya can refer to the kind of relations between pot and clay.

3. A pundit elaborated these details citing one of the samhitās. Most people simply say, "blood comes from the mother and bone from the father".
the one entity. The idea that a unit comprises both is presented in the visual form of the androgynous image of Śiva/Śakti. If composition of one person is a combination of both male and female, therefore the relation is a combinatory one rather than oppositional. If opposition (contraries) are not involved then what is the nature of this problematic pair? ¹

Bharati commented that the male principle appears to be depicted as somewhat ineffectual, constituting a mere catalyst to the powers of the female (Bharati, 1964: 158-9). This observation, though not inaccurate, does not bring out the significance of the male principle. In this regard Manu's declarations are helpful and more fully indicate what is implicated. He says that it is the nature of the particular male seed which will determine what kind of plant will evolve, if it is barley, then barley will spring from the female earth, if rice, rice, and so forth (Manu, ṬX, 39-40 in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 334 and see Kāma-kalā-Vilasa, 11, in Woodroffe (ed.), 1971:166). Another school expresses the idea in the terms, "Śakti" and "possessor of Śakti" (Śaktiman) for he who possesses, also directs (see Lākṣmi Tantra, XXXVI, 36-9 in Gupta (tr.), 1972:215). In other words, it is the male principle which orients the kind of form which will emerge from the female power. In this context, the Vedantic notions of "nāma" and "rupa", the "designator" and "its particular manifestation", appear to be relevant also (Sankara, I, 19-20 in Jagadānanda, 1973: 11-12).² Yet, these formulae tend to leave obscure how the female term features.

Discussing these relationships, one Tantric expert brought into relief the importance of the powers of the female principle by citing the saying, "that Śiva (Being) is but a corpse (Ś-va) without Śakti". This is represented by the 'i' sound which is her mantra. So, behind the play of words (Śiva Ś-va) is a significant esoteric dimension. A Brahmin expert's rendition of the nature of the Śiva/Śakti relationship also highlights the import of Śakti as power:

1. Now it might be said that left and right as in the half/half images do in fact entail opposition even though they constitute a combination because such images as in a drawing or sculpture show a left and right relationship even though a relation like "left and right" can, I suppose, be called "opposite", it cannot be delineated a contrary, for a contrary entails a negation (as with pure and impure), whereas opposites are implicated in a particular kind of differentiation.

2. The usual translation for "nāma" and "rupa", "name and form" could be misleading especially since name simply means label, whereas nāma signifies the idea of "designator or referent".
Vedantis say that Isvara has two šaktis (Para and Apara), one who is indefinable and the other who takes form - Devi in her sojna rupa (with gunaś) - and without these Īsvara cannot do his actions. He does all His actions with these two. By this way, according to this metaphysical view, Īsvara also has become Almighty with His Might. Without Śakti, Īsvara cannot do nothing, and so he embraced Her and performed his works.

Nevertheless one does not want to stress separateness, the idea of discrete powers, because, though the gunaś be in Devi, the male principle must touch Her if they are to be stirred. So again one can only highlight the relevance of the interconnectness of the two, which together are necessary for the creation of the manifest world. If one remembers what the relationship of male and female does, then one may see that the parameters of that relationship are not contraries, and even the idea of opposites can be misleading to a certain extent, for opposites tend to carry a submerged connotation of contraries. Another comment from one of the Nepalese pundits can be quoted, even though it makes the same point.

The root Devi (Mulprikṛti)\(^2\) has no form, as Purusa has no form at the beginning. By the connexion of the two, the forms occur. Then Prakṛti starts to make these things and Purusa comes there - for in the metal rope current flows. In this way, both Purusa and Prakṛti take form.

If form is the connexion of the two principles, and forms exist in time, then we have one unit with Being and Its energy to become, grow and change. So the nature of the relationship takes reference from process, and what distinguishes them is the part they play in that process. Thus we have the idea of "inciter and Producer", "Being and its Power". In a way perhaps, the terms of the relationship are collapsed in an everyday label: "we prefer to think of Śakti as Mother and Isvara as Father".

The important points can be brought together, at this juncture. According to Hindu thought, to exist in time means having the combination of male and female principles and therefore the two cannot be disentangled. There is the idea of intrinsic interconnectedness for each shares in the other, which together form one unit. As for the difference, this appears to derive from the predominance of one set of features in each sex. If a person has both and what distinguishes one sex from another is simply a matter of predominance, then the sameness in composition (if not of dominance) denies

1. It is worth stating in parenthesis that the different schools are distinguished according to which power is taken to correlate with the Absolute, which is indefinable, and which "sat, cit and ananda", the experience of mokśa rests. According to the saktas these are lying on sakti, according to the vedantas these are lying on Isvara, but both schools want the same three things, "sat, cit and ananda." (Absolute existence, which is imperishable and everlasting consciousness and bliss).

2. The higher Devi of the other formulation.
the idea of contraries. One can discern that the difficulty lies less in expressing what the nature of the relationship is not, and more in trying to define what it is. The nature of the male/female relationship is, as I understand it, more readily understood in the formulation of Being and Its power of Becoming (Siva/Śakti) for not only does it bring into relief the idea of the intrinsic interconnectedness, but also specifies the natures of the two basic powers — Being as the orienter, and Śakti as the energy which generates the changes.

Whether reference is made to the Sāīkyan pair (Puruṣa/Prakṛti) or the Śāivite (Śiva/Śakti) or the Vedantic (Nāma/Rupa) or the composition of a man and woman, at least each in its own way appears to bring into relief the idea of the intrinsic interrelatedness of the two, despite variations from school to school. But what of those people who are not cognisant of the elaborations of metaphysics?

The idea of the interconnectedness of the male and female is expressed by ordinary people, when they maintain that "every deity has a consort.... There are the couples, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, or Pārvatī and Śiva". Furthermore the idea that the male is distinguished as the designator, or referent, and the female as the principle which joins with it, is to be detected in the everyday saying that "Devi takes many forms", with the implication that the female changes according to context, and where the context is determined by the male deity concerned. In human life, the same notion appears in the homily about the fate of the Parbatya daughter as "the one who will go to prop up another man's wall", so that her identity is contingent on the man she unites with, and her energy will be utilised at his place. Again from the human point of view, the adage that every "wife is a man's Śakti", repeats the terms regarding the nature of the male/female relationship. In all of this, however, there is one crucial point that must be underlined and takes us back to our starting point.

If, as Sarasvati nicely states,

From the relation of linga and womb all the world arises, therefore the mark of linga and womb is found in everything (1941:68),

then that relationship is of a kind on which the existence of every entity, be it person or thing, depends. Consequently its significance is not simply to be found in the idea of "mutually necessary" (as employed by Dumont for the context of binary opposition), or in the idea of "inseparability" (as used by Marriott for Puruṣa/Prakṛti and like pairs) but that the conjoined presence of the male and female terms is the basic power for any unit's existence in time and change over time.
Dumont's caste rank is not so much a classified order as an order oppositionally built up according to certain kinds of behaviour (the "absolute criteria", for example, customs; and the "relative criteria", for example, avoidances) which are said to be based on the principle underlying the theory of castes, namely, the oppositions of pure to impure, as superior to inferior. The resultant pattern, the series of successive dichotomies, is thus "effected" (1972:93-6). This is repeated, not only for the sake of emphasis, but also because the idea of oppositions remains entrenched, for Marglin (1977:250-5) and Tambiah (1973: 192-3) apply it specifically with regard to the varnas, and whether intentionally or not, opposition is implicit in Marriott's transactional model (1976:122-3; and see 134). Nor have the ideas "purity and impurity" been superseded since they are still applied, albeit in terms of quantities (Marglin, 1977), or in the case of "purity" as a "mingle" with power (Marriott, 1976). So, the oppositional format is still dominant in the literature as are the ideas pure and impure. Against this general approach for an understanding of caste phenomena, the guna scheme is offered as an alternative.

The guna scheme is a precise code with a predefined set of meanings and values for each term, reducing any universe to a set of three which differentiates according to the prevalence of one of the gunas. One of the important features of the scheme is the provision of a ratlinne for differentiation. We do not have to infer it. The guna prevalence in each instance affords the rationale for the specificity of each type and thereby the scheme stands as classificatory in a rigorous sense specifically with reference to caste, while the dominance of one guna in each caste type provides the rationale for differentiation. The formulation that all gunas are present in each caste, provides the link that incorporates all three terms as related members of the same order. I have suggested that the caste order presents a universe of humans, differentiated into three major discrete ontological types. Since the range of castes is differentiated into three separate categories, this distinguishes a diverse order of beings. This is the first important point. Secondly, these differentiated humans are evaluated into a rank order where the divine-like gets top priority, the worldly person, second place, while the person defined as the embodiment of animality, last. The caste arrangement then also presents a system of preferences regarding these three major types of humans. In other words, this approach means that people are to be perceived as being basically
different from each other, and these differences hold different values. The scheme which can both order and weight the categories is the *triguna* format.

Whether the issue is phrased in terms of ontological differences, always bound to ideas of time and change in this culture, or whether approached via the processual associations inherent in the *guna* blueprint, either way, the arrangement of caste rank carries the idea of three stages in a possible ontological progression. Therefore castes should not be understood as an order of 'statuses' arranged in a hierarchical series of oppositions but rather, the caste arrangement is to be viewed as an order of three stages of ontological progression. This approach to the caste order should then facilitate understanding certain problematic areas associated with caste. We begin with some comments on the nature of the caste order.

The caste order is first of all a categorization of the population, breaking it down into named units, the *jāts*. The compendium of labels thus presents a scheme which identifies and differentiates the entire social universe into precisely distinguishable categories, via the *jāt* label, and thereby provides a kind of census of social types. In other words, the order of *jāt* names gives us the composition of that society in terms of specific categories. In Nepal, if you know a person's caste name you also will automatically know a lot more about him. Thus the name has predictive value. The fact that the *jāts* are ranked does not deny the classificatory nature of *jāt* designations, just that a designation also carries an evaluation. However, it is the classificatory feature that must be considered first.

In so far as the *jāts* are named and differentiated groupings, this indicates that the universe is depicted as highly diverse, a feature hardly incorporated by the principle of opposition or the ideas of "pure" and "impure". Moreover, though *jāts* are numerous, they are reduced to three major categories (also called *jāts*)\(^1\) as conceived by Hindu thought, thus providing a scheme which is flexible, allowing for broad divisions, as well as numerous sub-divisions, though always following the threefold breakdown. By imposing the oppositional model, not only is diversity reduced to two terms around one idea but the problem of the variety of behaviour, the

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1. For example there is the Thakuri (*jāt*) which belongs to the general Kṣatriya or Chettri category (*jāt*) which belongs to the Tagadhāri, the thread-wearing broader category, also referred to as *jāt* (see Sharma, 1975:281-9).
customs and the avoidances, which impress the observer, is shuffled into
the analytic category, the relative and absolute criteria (see Dumont,
1972:94-5). Thereby what constitutes problematic data (the customs and
avoidances) which need to be explained are presented instead as heuristics
components (the criteria) for the model. In a sense, other theorists
assume Dumont's position, despite any extensions they may add. Even Marriott
appears to take behaviour as the criterion of rank position, though as a
principle, he disavows the Dumontian line. Denuded of the "substance"
additives, the following statement indicates that Marriott, in this context,
is professing the same principle as Dumont, specifically what a person does
is an index of rank differences:

In the absence of reciprocation in the same or an inferior
medium of substance-code, those who give are to be recognised
as differing from and as standing in rank, power, and quality
of substance-code above those who take; the takers are thereby
recognised as inferior, but are also made partly like the

In its most extreme form, Marriott's distinctive approach maintains that
behaviour (the transactions) generates the caste order (ibid:112). Since
Tambiah endorses Marriott's posture agreeing that at least in the context of
food exchanges, if not in hypergamy, "high rank derives from giving"
(Tambiah, 1973:218), it would seem that for him, also, behaviour constitutes
the criterion for the different caste positions. Otherwise to his own
particular thesis, Tambiah presents the behavioural rules as correlations,
for example, "the higher the status, the greater his defilement" (ibid:210).
Even though he talks of the "logic....based on the principle of the direct
order of castes" (1973:212), what this appears to mean is that different
rules apply to the various ranks (of varnas and jatis) and are to be
discerned in a vast array of situations which Tambiah has meticulously
outlined. This is the most important part of his analysis, yet he turns
away, to raise the thesis that the rules simply reflect differential access
to power and privilege according to "the direct order of castes", rather
than bring out the simple but important point that the varnas are distinct
categories where different behaviour is required to realise and maintain
those specific differences. Tambiah's general thrust has been continued by
Marglin, who insists that the different rules "express the greater
restrictions and lesser privileges of the lower groups compared to the higher
groups" (1977:259, 264). On the one hand, these authors seem to be saying
that what a person does, constitutes a criterion, or an index (or a
correlation) for his particular caste position, while, on the other hand, I
would say that what he does is a requirement following from that ontological
position. Although the matter will be pursued in more detail in the next
chapter, let me state the major difference between these approaches and that which I am trying to propound in this thesis. I am not denying that behaviour is an index of caste, but I am suggesting that this approach has limitations because it does not tell us what caste is, nor why behaviour may serve as the index, nor why in each instance behaviour may serve as the index, nor why in each instance behaviour must take the specific form it does. Up to a point by using behaviour as an index, a commentator may sidestep the issue of what the behaviour is about, and it can get catalogued in the appropriate box applying to the different castes. Marriott's analysis for example is replete with the listings of correlations. Dumont’s rationale that the "pure must be kept separate from the "impure" does not account for important variations that pertain from caste to caste (his absolute criteria); and when there might be a connexion between this principle and behaviour (the relative criteria) like avoidances, it ends up by demonstrating the relevance of the principle, that the "pure" must be kept separate from the "impure", rather than account for the variations of behaviour that do occur. Though Tambiah (1973) and Marglin (1977) do look at the significance of the rules for behaviour, explaining them in terms of differential access to privilege and power, this does not tell us why the behaviour takes the specific form it does, and ultimately their solution 'comes back' to correlations, for example the higher the castes, the greater the "purity", the shorter the period of relational pollution, the greater the privilege (see Marglin, 1977). From the point of view of this thesis, however, behaviour is to be approached differently.

That what a person must do constitutes a requirement of his particular caste position, comes out most clearly in the breach. People say, that a person will not take rice and dhal from someone lower because he would lose caste if he did. If a person's caste is jeopardised by breaking the rules then such rules and behaviour relate to the realisation and retention of a person's particular ontological state. In short, such practices though they may serve as criteria or indices for caste positions, are more importantly the specific requirements of behaviour for the continuing realisation and retention of the particular state which is located in the relevant caste position of the order. Though at first sight, such formulations may not appear to apply to the Untouchable who is fixed at his

1. When he does confront the issue of the significance of behaviour, it is the tactical behaviour of his four types which are said to mingle what Western analysts understand as the values of "purity" and power in differently defined strivings toward higher rank, toward.......a superior quality of life on a scale extending from life to death" (1976:123). at least in one dimension it is inadequate for it cannot accommodate to the conditions of the Untouchable.
particular caste level, his special case does not present an insurmountable problem.

To understand the complexity of caste and the caste order, it is imperative that general ideas about time and change are borne in mind. A person's existential nature is not permanent but is mutable given the vast time spans involved. The word for "individual" (bhava) itself contains the idea of modifiability. Or to take an everyday event, where the issues are immediate, there is the ubiquitous phenomenon of pollution which expresses the same idea of mutability, as do the avoidances practised so as to retain caste. Or expressed differently, susceptibility to pollution and avoidances of these, presupposes the relevance of the idea of mutability. Given the centrality of modifiability, how do caste differences relate to it? As far as the caste ranks are concerned we have seen how rituals may generate such transformations of men into different kinds of beings, except for the Untouchable. You will recall that this caste type is stuck at the stage he acquired through birth, therefore, unlike others, his state is entrenched for the duration of his life. In contradistinction, the ontological levels of the other castes may be ritually realized and since this is acquired it is tenuous. This means that these higher castes, the Matwali and Tagadhari, are said to be susceptible to negative effects because theirs is not a fixed state but one that has been actualised and, just as important, has to be sustained. Since the state is not inherent in the individual at birth, but entails a move away from the human condition of womb birth, to the acquired state, he must adhere to those rules that are appropriate for it. In other words living appropriately is a continuous process of sustaining the acquired state.

If the special ontological states of the higher castes are malleable since they are acquired, then they can also be lost and therefore persons must continuously sustain these states through their behaviour. If the particular ontological state is to be retained then a person's behaviour must be commensurate with his specific level. It can be lost through the individual's not adhering to the requirements appropriate with the particular ontological state. Therefore all the avoidances and, let it be added, the compulsion as well, belong to the general principle of "sambhava anusara."

1. My intent here is to elaborate the features of a cognitive system. That some Matwali tribals might be indifferent to Hindu niceties does not negate the point. Their deviations from required practice of Hindu ideal behaviour can be accounted for on other grounds. Nevertheless, while these people may choose not to implement the ideal Hindu practices, they could not break the prohibitions, (like hypogamy and inter-caste commensality, both offences in the legal code), without incurring legal penalties (see Sharma, 1975: 285,287).
doing what is commensurate with one's particular existential state. Consequently, the requirements are not merely criteria, indices, caste specificities, etc., but they are also imperatives for ontological variations and need to be understood as such. In the caste context the various states are differentiated according to the guṇas and hence what is to be commensurate with that ontological state is also oriented according to that format.

This means that a series of requirements would apply to all persons, except the Untouchable, if they are to maintain their specific ontological states according to this kind of conceptualization. Most restrictions would apply to the twice-born, fewer to the Matwāli and none for the Untouchable. Just considering food in the instance of the twice-born, we find that if he is to consume stuff that is only sattvika then he must eschew the rajas and the tamaś types. Whereas for the Matwāli, only the tamaś items are to be discountenanced if he is to keep his rajas nature. In contradistinction, none of these prohibitions are to apply to the Untouchable. Now as far as the twice-born are concerned they appear to be the most susceptible, for the sattvika, pure, integrated, stable, holy state is most divergent from the conditions of life where man is constantly involved in the process of change. But perhaps more important is the fact that to retain the sattvika state a greater range of things and events are to be avoided (the rajas as well as the tamaś) if any change from the proper state is to be thwarted. Things are different for the Untouchable.

Demands of this kind are not made on the Untouchable for his is a negative state anyhow. Whether the Untouchable indulges in the carte-blanche possible is another matter, for it is frequently reported that they imitate the Brahmanic mores. What is pertinent are the formal or official promulgations. Of their pursuits, like 'impure' work, Parbatya twice-born say that this "is acceptable for them". However, for the higher castes certain prescriptions must be followed, which are the rules for the retention of the person's particular caste. There should be no misunderstanding here regarding the different set of rules pertaining to the Untouchables and to the other castes. For the high castes the restrictions are heavy and perhaps bothersome but not odious. For the orthodox Brahmin, the acquisition of the top sattvika state is highly prized and the rules are simply directives for and routes to maintain this state. When it is lost, then the purificatory move is made to restore it. If it avails himself of the measures which bring about a return, then this underlines its importance, either for the individual concerned, or for his peers who demand it, if
they are to interact with him. Such requirements, needless to add, starkly diverge from the prohibitions imposed on the Untouchable, like being prevented from drinking at the same taps as the other castes, and from entering certain temples, the former prohibition which was enforced by the Nepalese legal code till very recent times and the latter still in force. However, as far as their own ontological state vis-a-vis self is concerned, caste is fixed and current behaviour cannot alter it for this historic form, though it will have consequences within the scheme of reincarnation. Since he is a polluted being, then polluting activities are not incompatible with that state. Thus, there is a kind of parallel where the Untouchable, excluded from the series of ritual alterations which in turn bring corresponding demands of behaviour commensurate with these, is also excluded from having to adhere to the behavioural requirements appropriate for these existential states. At this juncture, let me clarify a possible bone of contention, that all this is technical talk, specialized knowledge of the erudite.

I have found that though the specialists know the system best, ordinary people, nonetheless, have a working grasp of both the issues and the principles. Specifically in the present context, the relevant ideas are not restricted to those cognisant of the metaphysical details, for ordinary Parbatya's comments about others, such as "that is alright for them", constitute the layman's expression of the technical notion of *sambhava anusvare*, the idea of commensurateness. Although a lot of the discussion in this chapter has been about the nature of caste and the caste order, it has been mainly couched in generalities. Therefore if weight is to be given to the exposition some elaboration is necessary.

If the different rules pertaining to the different castes are to be understood as the requirements for the continuing maintenance of the relevant ontological states in each instance for those concerned, then central to the complex phenomenon lie the ideas of ontological differentiation and mutability - for rules relate to what is brought into the individual's being. Of the vast range of things pertinent, food is critical. This will be used as the talking point which brings into relief the various factors involved.

In realizing and maintaining a person's existential state, food is regarded as one of the most potent. Not only that, but it is a thread which links the human to the cosmic, according to Śaṅkara's outline of the workings of the cosmos (see Jagadananda (tr.), 1973: 12-3). More
important for our discussion is the Vedantic proposal that one of the
individual's casings, the annamayakosa which is the physical body, is
constituted of food (see Walker, 1968, Vol. I:162-3). In fact, the word
for this casing literally means the "food form sheath" (anna maya kosa).
The possibility of its engendering a negative effect may be discerned in the
strictures of the Nepalese legal code where the higher caste person's
acceptance of food handled by an Untouchable was stipulated a crime (Sharma,
1975: 279-80), and in the detection, the state not only imposed a fine but
also prescribed the appropriate purificatory rite (Hodgson, 1834:48) for a
return to the prior caste. Though there the nature of the person contacting
the entity impinges, what is important is that his influence is upon a food
item which is to be taken into the body of a person of another caste. Of
particular significance is the Hindu formulation that the particular nature
of food has the capacity to bear down on the state of the eater, according to
type. Numerous examples of this are to be found in Manu's institutes (see V,
6, 19 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:170, 174). As of yore, so currently there is
the orientation that according to the nature of the food eaten, different
effects will eventuate. Needless to say, the issue is not so much about
the proposal that food carries special significance in Hindu thought, since
it is well noted in the literature, as about the obscurities surrounding
what exactly is involved in phenomena relating to food. Clearly the topic
is important, standing as the particular in the general theme of mutability
and ontological differentiation. "Whatever we eat we become" is the Hindu
aphorism which crystallises their orientation to food. This is how one
Nepalese expert described the details of the matter:

Things are classified according to the effect which is
important for humans. For example, meat might be tamas
according to the food classification, but its influence
is rajas. We classify according to the effect, prabhava.
When I drink wine, I become tamas and rajas by the
influence of the wine. But drinking water I do not
become like that, therefore water is sattvika. Piety
and coolness are the gunas of water. Fruit also. But
an effect can be different again. By eating meat we become
strong, with wine, bad tempered. Food affects our
dispositions. 2

1. There are six sheaths of which the food casing is the gross type. Though
anna means food in general it is specifically used with regard to grain
perhaps because these constitute the staple. The goddess Annapurna's
temple stands in the centre of the market place in the heart of Kathmandu
right beside a great stretch of numerous bags of assorted grains which
change hands daily. The name of the goddess means "grain" and "full".
2. The general idea is echoed in the verse, "The mind, my child, consists
of food", see I, 22 in Upadesa Sahasrī of Śāṅkarachārya in
The idea of ontological malleability recurs in situation after situation and is not restricted to contexts where the nature of the specific item is relevant but also where through certain kinds of contact its nature becomes transformed, polluted. If anything, it is instances such as these, so alien to the western mind, which continue to fascinate it (see for example Orenstein, 1968, Tambiah, 1973, Marglin, 1977). Let me cite the pundit's outline of the negative influence through contact where he is referring specifically to the Śūdra:

We believe that we can be affected by the Śūdra's influence. The only things which are acceptable from him are things not open to his influence like uncut fruit and vegetables and things packed in a sealed container.

His exposition raises a number of interesting issues. First of all there is the presupposition that different ontological states of both persons are involved in the situation, and should the rule of avoidance be breached, then it will have untoward effect for the upper caste Brahmin. It is evident, therefore, that the requirements demanded of each caste in its relations with other castes (or other things) presume the existence of some proper state which can be jeopardised and, in so far as it can be jeopardised, implies malleability. While rules of behaviour delineate what should happen if caste is to be retained, such rules are based on the underlying rationale of this mutability. In addition, one kind of state in this instance, that of the Untouchable, is deemed capable of effecting negative consequences on another, through sheer influence of his contact with an item which is then taken into the other person. Avoidance of this is imperative if the higher caste person is not to be affected and therefore, such rules are measures for the retention of caste, which we have argued constitutes an acquired ontological state. Though the discussion might appear fiddly in details, it is important to grasp what is involved, otherwise inadequate renditions of the phenomenon might follow. Marriott, as we shall see in the next chapter, misinterprets food transfers going in the opposite direction from our example, from a higher to a lower caste person, as a transfer of positive "substances" rather than interpret these as the avoidances of a negative effect, as I would depict it. Moreover of a person's vulnerability to influences, what I call mutability, Marglin would minimize its relevance in such instances. Yet, the fact that a person may lose caste irrevocably not only highlights the relevance of mutability but indicates that this idea can in no way ever be left out of a discussion on caste and caste relations in my view. This is another issue which will also be discussed later, here, the point to be stressed is that out of all

1. He also maintains that food transactions generate the castes.
the factors implicated in the situation entailing caste and caste relations, the base lies with ontology and its concomitant, mutability.

Following the pundit's commentary, we can say that ontological differentiation (i.e. as caste to caste, species to species) is recognised, and in any interaction this must be viewed as logically prior, for unless this is borne in mind, the requirements of behaviour in an interaction situation cannot be made intelligible. Although this point may sound unnecessary, it is important because it can short-circuit so many futile debates and mistaken interpretations around caste which are argued in terms of the primacy of interaction, as against that of the nature of the actor, or that it makes no difference, since they are simply "aspects of each other", as Marriott, for example, proposes (1976: 109-10, 123). Such argumentation can be avoided if the ontological state is accorded primacy, and it is recognised that it is ontological variations which provide the reference from which people take their bearings as to what is happening, or ought not to happen. If behaviour is to be commensurate to type and these follow caste lines, then one would expect some kind of systematic display of this in the critical area of food. First of all, however, let us bring together some of the threads from this and earlier chapters.

To repeat the pundit's commentary,

Castes can be considered in the light of the gunas. These reflect their natures. The castes are classified according to their nature. The Brahmin is cool-minded (santa) so he bears a predominance of sattva. . . . .
the Ksatriya is strong and of a forceful temperament so he bears a predominance of rajas. . . . .

The pundit's outline points to internal divisions of the twice-born category in terms of the triguna scheme, the same principle, as we know, holds within the wider order which is our concern here. Now if there is to be a predominance it has to be actualised by living in a certain way, where the twice-born would avoid the rajas and tamas activities which constitute the bases of the mores for the two lower categories. To some extent, despite the changes of modern times, the Parbatya twice-born proffer a general outline, which illustrates a patterning, as they see it. They distinguish their behaviour from that of the Matwali by avoiding buffalo and alcohol, practices taken by them to characterise the mores of the Matwali; and also from the imputed indiscriminate practices of the Untouchable, for whom such strictures do not obtain. According to the formal requirements, then the twice-born should consume only the general sattviKa types like fruit, vegetables, grains, sweets but also some meat, like goat and game, avoiding buffalo and alcohol 1 which in their view characterises the Matwali.

1. Unless the particular occasional ritual demands it, like worship of Káli.
level; and also totally reject stale food that is said not to affect the Untouchables. As for the Matwālis, they may indulge in buffalo and alcohol, as well as sattviṇa, though they will reject the tamas items. For his part, the Untouchable may eat anything. 1 The recurrence of the tripartite design here, raises a central theoretical issue. Often when confronted with a dyadic situation of acceptance or rejection, either in a transaction; or when an activity is to be adopted or avoided, it is easy to presume that there are only two possibilities. It is easy to presume that what is acceptable is therefore the "pure", and what is to be rejected is therefore the "impure"; or, as Marriott details, the desirable is the "superior substance-code" as opposed to the "inferior substance-code", staying within a binary perspective, despite the talk that these belong to one flow (1976:110). The assumption of two possibilities is inadequate and oversimplifies the situation since a twice-born for example will ideally reject the rajas as well as the tamas items or activities, since neither is compatible with his nature. In other words, what is rejected need not be the "impure" (the term standing at the tamas predominance) but may be that which is rajas. Here two kinds of entities are unacceptable, one standing at tamas and the other at rajas.

So there is the opposition of acceptance/rejection, as in pure/impure (or superior substance-code/inferior substance-code) which is an insufficient rendition and therefore falsifies the picture. Not only does it falsify the picture but it cannot cater to the material. If each category has its own specific set of requirements pertinent for its particular state and after a breach, there is the return to the right state, but these vary, though the pollution has passed, then to cater to all these factors a threefold blueprint is imperative, in my view. Let us consider death pollution as an example. The period of death pollution varies for each varṇa type since each category belongs to a different existential level, yet given that the pollution period is over, this does not render them equivalent, but simply no longer polluted. At this point in time, each now stands at his particular ontological level. When this is interpreted simply as a return to the "pure" state (even of greater or lesser amounts to use Marglin's conceptualisation) this not only obscures the categoric differences, but cannot accommodate them, for the return to the right state can refer to

1. One may summarise the pattern of avoidances in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Persons:</th>
<th>Sattva</th>
<th>Rajas</th>
<th>Tamas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance:</td>
<td>Taγādhāri</td>
<td>Matwāli</td>
<td>Untouchable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid rajas</td>
<td>avoid and tamas</td>
<td>tamas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
either that where sattva predominates, for the twice-born or where rajas for the Matwåli (Südra), respectively. Srinivas made the same point by referring to a return to the "neutral" state (19--:107). One can see that this approach also diverges from Dumont's posture.

When Dumont says that "impurity is a fall in status" (1972:87) though this is not entirely inaccurate, it is incomplete since a Brahmin, for example, may pursue a rajas type activity which is out of bounds for him, yet it would be strikingly different from the tamas state. Here a fall in "status" may mean a fall to the middle level, or right to the bottom, a distinction which can be seen in the differing effects propelled by eating food cooked by a Matwåli or that cooked by an Untouchable. In the not so old days, the latter led to outcasting enforced by the state, while the former to the loss of caste, which unlike outcasting, is redeemable. Such differences cannot be catered to by the binary frame,"pure" and "impure". Or again to refer to types of food. If the top category takes rajas type foods; and the middle tamas, each "falle" accordingly, shifting from his own particular ontological level, yet here one needs a three-termed frame if the variations are to be made intelligible, variations which are clouded by the simple constant,"impurity". It would seem that not to be "impure" can entail something other than the sattvika which is the right rajas state as well, critical for the middle category, then again, not to be "pure" can entail something other than "impurity" (tamas predominance) which is also rajas, undesirable for the sattvika top category. In a way, the proclivity for binary thinking orients an approach which creates an illusory dualistic picture whereas the actuality, according to my understanding, is far more complex, taking a tripartite format. One point remains to be clarified in case the exposition appears to be inconsistent.

It is sometimes said that meat is not in accord with the sattvika nature of the Brahmin, as noted earlier, yet we also find that in Nepal Brahmins do eat meat, like goat. The difficulty is not one of inconsistency in classification, but-rather the defining of the relevant universe of discourse, which requires laborious collection of data, and cross-comparisons for a full systematic picture to emerge. As well, the fact that calendrical rites are important and can bear down on required practices must also be considered. For example, if the form of the deity is fierce as can happen during DasaY, then sacrifice is offered and the meat is then eaten as prasāda, a practice which is also endorsed by Manu (V, 31 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:174). In circumscribing the relevant universe of discourse, the details concerning the individuals implicated would be pertinent also. The Brahmin type is a loose term and within the category there are the ranges, not only
of caste types, Upādhyāyā, Kumārī and Jaisī Brahmin, but also the grades according to stages of initiation. Specifically these are; firstly the twice-born, next the secret dikṣā ¹; and thirdly, that reached on being an Agnihotra ². Nor is this a kind of distinction ³ restricted to contemporary times but is also noted by Manu who grades three types of Brahmins and differentiates between them in terms of the duration relevant for each, in the case of death pollution. If, according to Brahmin type, time periods vary with least for the highest state, and so forth, then the principle of compatibility is inherent here, even though one has moved from the area of foods to that of time schedules in the context of death pollution, a topic pursued more fully later. Similarly, in accordance with the principle of sambhava, there is the progressive rejection of food items corresponding with each of these three initiation stages, for after the twice-born rite, only goat and chicken can be taken; after dikṣā, only goat; and after becoming an Agnihotra no meat whatsoever is allowed, to cite the outline of one respondent. ⁴ It is this orientation of appropriateness between the kind of food and the individual’s particular stage which is important, despite variations from context to context, which are to be expected. ⁵ What is imperative is the presence of the idea of compatibility ordered along the set of three. At this juncture, I want to

1. Dikṣā refers to the kuldevatā, the family or lineage god.

2. An Agnihotra is the Brahmin who may create the special fire beginning from scratch. Other Brahmins who perform homa must use fire kindled from this form, but cannot make the sacred fire anew.

3. The difference is that the modern Tantric dikṣā does not feature in Manu, though the Agnihotra and twice-born do.

4. Younger men are wont to say that they prefer not to undertake the higher initiations for this would necessitate having to give up their indulgence in meats. It also illustrates the acceptance of the behavioural requirements for the particular states concerned.

5. Furthermore variations in classification are bound to and do occur from speaker to speaker and text to text, since details are likely to be assessed differently for an assortment of reasons and consequently are located accordingly with the guṇa format. This occurs especially with the rajas and tamas categories where either may be taken as the relevant category for the item to be classified. For example, items said to be aphrodisiacs, one speaker may classify them as tamas another as rajas. Sometimes it eventuates that a speaker places one item in both of these categories, as we have seen with meat in general. Nonetheless, even when there are variations in the application, any one speaker’s particular scheme will contain the universe of three terms, and the location of the item will be oriented according to what is perceived as its corresponding guṇa factor in each instance.
turn to general issues.

Assuming that the exposition is valid, then we can extrapolate the critical propositions which constitute the indigenous theoretical framework for articulating ideas about caste and caste phenomena, noticing that whilst each proposition adds to the complex, each at the same time has its particular significance within the overall theoretic framework:

Firstly, at the base is ontology, which refracts into the different ontological states, that we know as castes.

Secondly, that the ontological states other than that of the Untouchable, are characterised by mutability in this life, and hence the requirements of behaviour which are to retain the particular states.

Thirdly, change of states affected on a higher caste person operates according to the rationale of influence (prabhava).

Fourthly, that if a person is to retain his particular ontological state, then he must adhere to the requirements pertinent to it. The rules are then about the actualisation of ontological states (castes) and vary accordingly. Since these vary, so does the required behaviour. In other words, behaviour must be compatible with the particular state of the person concerned – the principle of sambhava anusvare.

Fifthly, what is to be done is to be commensurate with the particular nature of the persons involved, and these natures are differentiated by the guṇa scheme, then the rules, as the behavioural requirements pertinent for each caste, must also fall into a threefold patterning.

If these propositions do constitute the key notions of their theoretical approach, then they should be of value for understanding and analysing caste and related caste phenomena.
CHAPTER 9
SOME CONTROVERSIAL CASTE ISSUES

I have suggested that ideas about ontology lie at the centre of Hindu conceptions and that without keeping this base in mind, the caste order, rules regarding caste specific behaviour, the event of pollution, to name a few, cannot be adequately understood. Therefore it would not be untoward at this juncture to consider how recent accounts in the discipline have approached these issues.

1. Caste Rules as the Expression of Dominance and Privilege?

Writers like Marglin (1977) and Tambiah (1973) have looked at the patterning of some of the rules to show how these reflect ideas about the caste order. Both, though differing slightly in details, maintain that the variation in rules from caste to caste are the "expression" of "hierarchy". It is part of a general thrust against Dumont's thesis that caste and power are separate, for they argue that caste rules articulate privilege and dominance in the "direct order of caste". Thus, if the rules reflect differential access to privilege and power, then Dumont's claims are invalidated, so they contend. One area taken to demonstrate their case is that of pollution, where rules vary for the different castes.

Variation from caste to caste takes the form of differences in duration occurring in the advent of pollution. Where the time spans of the rules follow the direct order of caste, minimal time at the top and maximal time at the bottom of the order, is said by Marglin and Tambiah to demonstrate privilege for the top. What is more problematic are the instances where the pattern is reversed and one of Marglin's tasks is to account for this discrepancy, especially since it appears to contradict the claim of privilege for the top castes. Difficult for her thesis is the fact that the top castes have to undergo a greater duration of pollution, which in her view is an index of disadvantage, yet the top castes should be privileged according to the Tambiah thesis which she is supporting. This is the general issue. To get at this, there is the delineation of what principles they see as underlying the formulation of the rules. and, in so doing, both Tambiah and Marglin automatically incorporate what they understand to be the indices of caste rank. This is also of interest to us because it provides a recent statement on this persistent theoretic issue. Let us consider some of the details of Marglin's exposition which attempts to build on to Tambiah's thesis.

Given that the problem is to understand the reason for the differences in durations where it is greatest for the top castes as in defilement through
"act pollution" (Orenstein's terminology); and where the time span is least for the top, as with birth and death, called "relational pollution" (again using Orenstein's terminology), and since the latter would constitute fewer difficulties for their thesis, it may be useful to start with it.

The nature of this timetable which bears on death pollution, for example, is accounted for by reference to Tambiah's notion of an order of "greater to lesser purity" in "the direct order of castes" for the highest castes are allocated the shortest time, while the lowest the most. Marglin says,

But as Tambiah shows, it is simpler to say that in the case of relational pollution the kinship (sapinda) body of the Brahmin cannot be polluted more than that of a Kshatriya, Vaisy or Sudra since it is purer than they. The same event cannot alter the relatively greater amount of purity of higher varnas (Marglin, 1977:256).

The account is circular since the only support for the claim of greater/lesser amounts of purity in a descending order is based on unfounded assumptions taken as axiomatic in the discipline. While Nepalis may refer to the Brahmin's "pure" state, they do not refer to a Kṣatrya's having "more purity" than the Vaisy, though they do distinguish the Kṣatrya as belonging to a higher caste rank. Since the topic of quantity has been raised, it is worth noting in passing that a Chetri is not said by Nepalis to have "more impurity" than the Brahmin, an example which would fall into the other wing of the Tambiah/Marglin thesis about caste differences where the top castes are said to have lesser "impurity". Since the differences in quantity are deduced from the different timetables, applying down the caste line, and therefore quantitative differences in "purity" and "impurity" cannot then be used to account for those timetables. Hence the claim about differing quantities of "purity" and "impurity" as distinctions of caste rank remains undemonstrated. Therefore, the argument that these caste differences, in amounts of "purity", can account for the differences in duration of pollution, is without a substantive basis. As an alternative, the guṇa scheme not only would distinguish the castes but it would also make sense of the different pollution durations.

The trīguna approach does seem inherent in Manu's stipulations, used as data for the analysis by Tambiah and Marglin for the structuring of the time durations for death pollution, where the first set applying to the twice-born follows a simple mathematical addition, the ten, twelve, and fifteen days for the Brahmin, Kṣatriya and Vaisy; whereas a double dose is required for the Śudra with thirty days, and where a different kind of computation is involved. The pattern appears to present a tripartite structuring for the social universe, where the missing portion for the
Vahya (or Untouchables) is not relevant since they are permanently polluted, a point completely ignored by Marglin and Tambiah in this context, but one that we know is relevant and underlined by the prohibitions about the disposal of the Untouchable’s cremation ashes. If there is any uncertainty about the relevance of the threefold patterning one may refer to another pattern, specifically the subdivision within the Brahmin category, where there are three terms and three periods precisely stipulated by Manu. According to his institutes: the Brahmin who undertakes the fire ritual, and is also learned in the Vedas is only polluted for one day; whereas the Brahmin who knows the Vedas, but is not a fire ritual specialist is polluted for three days; while the ordinary Brahmin for ten days. Curiously this time schedule is quoted by Tambiah from Manu yet its tripartite patterning is overlooked (Tambiah, 1973: 208-12). It is evident, therefore, that Tambiah and Marglin’s quantity differential cannot adequately accommodate to the threefold differentiation inherent in the material from Manu that they are examining. This criticism stands whether reference is made to the varnas in general which must include the Vahyas or the types of Brahmins in particular for both sets fall into a tripartite format which in turn correlates with the sets of three different time spans. In the first there is (a) the twice-born, the duration of ten, twelve and fifteen days; (b) for the Śūdra the thirty days, and (c) for the Vahya no reference, since he is always polluted. The other set of three Brahmin types is straightforward. The triguna format, however, would not provide the full picture since it is simply the blueprint for the patterning, and more important than the variations of time pollution is the reason for the occurrence of pollution itself.

With a concern for the variations in duration from caste to caste (the system of tables) the more substantive question, what is the imposition of a pollution time about, is more or less ignored by Tambiah and Marglin. That is to say, they seem to have missed the more important point, that such phenomena are based on ideas about man’s mutability, both to change negatively and positively; that the phenomenon of pollution presupposes mutability;

1. It is strange that Tambiah (1973) ignores the presence of the Vahya for a central concern of his in this article, "From Varna to Caste through Mixed Unions", is to show how the fāts which include the Vahya, arise from mixed unions of the varna members.

2. Though Marglin (1977:256) does refer to the problem of "normal condition", this is neither questioned, nor developed. Tambiah’s evoking boundary overflows is metaphoric or descriptive, but it is not explanatory (1973: 216-7).
that the event of pollution and the period of "impurity" occurs, all indicate that for the two major castes the twice-born and the Sudras there is the loss of their particular ontological states where the time periods are necessary for the exhaustion of the negative effect before there can be a return to the prior ontological state, despite the variations. Moreover, the point that duration of time is required before the pollution can be exhausted for all except the Untouchable, before there can be a return to the prior states, indicates that the phenomenon is rooted in a processual frame since there is change over time. Given that their concern is with the specifics of the timetable and not with the general ontological issue which attempts to account for the presence of the timetable, their approach suffers as a consequence.

The important issue for Marglin is the context where the time periods are longest for the highest castes and which therefore underline Dumont's point that the higher castes have greater restrictions, a point she would disavow because it goes contrary to Tambiah's general thesis - that the rules illustrate dominance and power in the direct order of castes. Tambiah himself handles the recalcitrant data in two ways. One way is to refer to the periods as following the "inverse order", which is not very satisfactory for it leaves the issue hanging for this situation, an inadequacy that Marglin attempts to rectify. Let us start with the other of Tambiah's approaches to "act pollution".

Tambiah's account of the features of act pollution is strange since he maintains that these protect the "privileges of the higher castes" (Tambiah, 1973: 212-3). In discussing his case, he cites a range of prohibitions like the killing of the Brahmin.¹ However, while accepting the possibility that this kind of rule may have the consequence of protecting the life of the high caste Brahmin, in that such a killing is said to constitute a great sin with grave penalties, it is not so easy to accept his total argument for alongside this kind of rule are others like the prohibition of the drinking of sura juice and eating forbidden foods (ibid:212-3). These surely have little to do with the privileges of the higher castes, and in fact such prohibitions refer to the greater demands imposed on those at the top.² If anything is relevant, it is the point that here specific requirements are necessary if a high caste person's ontological

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¹ As we shall see in a subsequent part of the thesis, where a critical perspective is adopted the protection of the Brahmin has bearings on "power and privilege" but not necessarily as Tambiah describes. Here my concern is to try to present the indigenous system within its own formal terms.

² Consider Manu, sura, indeed, is the dirty refuse (mala) of grain, sin also is called dirt (mala); hence a Brahmin, a Ksatriya, and a Vaisya shall not drink sura (Manu,XI,94 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:1450).
state is to be retained. Simply expressed, such rules are about the 
retention of caste. Though it is not to deny the point that the punishment 
for killing Brahmins could be seen as an example of "protecting" the 
Brahmin, however, one fitting example out of the list is not very persuasive. 
Nor does it constitute an illustration of the fullest range where the "logic 
of the principle of the direct order of castes" is supposed to apply. Less 
pompously, a swallow doesn't make a spring. Nor can the crime of incest, 
another example included in the list, be presented as protecting the 
privileges of the higher castes, if it applies to all castes, regardless, as 
it does. Unfortunately Tambiah's treatment of the rules is sleight of hand. 
Otherwise Tambiah's handling of the material is primarily descriptive, 
rendered as formulae given by the data, as for example the statement that 
the "higher the purity status, the greater the defilement of impurity" 
( ibid:213). It is with this particular correlation that Marglin takes issue 
since, in her view, it goes contrary to Tambiah's own general thesis. That 
it is an unwarranted inference on her part anyhow, we shall see later. As 
for her alternative rendition to account for the longer period pertaining 
to the higher castes, it is selective and the outcome entirely fortuitous.

The proposal "the higher the purity status, the greater the defilement" 
refers to the situation where the higher castes must wait longer before a 
return to their particular ontological states and therefore is of course 
the problematic circumstance for those who are pushing the idea that such 
rules reflect differential power and privilege, since it reveals that 
cumbersome requirements are demanded of the top castes. This quandary is 
unavoidable since Marglin assumes that the pattern of duration which goes in 
the opposite direction with least time for the top, illustrates power and 
privilege in the direct order of castes. Specifically with regard to the 
longer periods demanded of the top castes, the arbitrariness of Marglin's 
case is obscured by the neat patterning evident in the following quotation:

......in the case of act pollution the object - being exterior to the group - has the same amount of pollution whether it is contacted by a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaisya or a Shudra. Therefore what happens as a result of contact will depend on the initial amount of impurity/purity of the individual who interacts with the polluting object. The amount of pollution with which ego interacts being held constant - a requirement if one wants to compare the effect of an interaction between the four varnas - it follows that a member of a higher varna will end up having proportionately more pollution than a member of a lower varna since his initial amount of pollution is smaller (Marglin, 1977:258).

Now in this context of act pollution, Marglin isolates one dimension, "less 
impurity", yet there is no methodological reason why she does not isolate the 
other dimension, "more purity". The particular outcome of her discussion-
might be in the right direction, but it does not follow from her premises since there is no indication why one scale (greater to lesser "purity" from top to bottom) should not be selected in preference to the other scale (to greater "impurity" from top to bottom). If the "purity" scale" were substituted then the opposite pattern would emerge. The subsequent part of the exposition is also contentious. It has two problems, one relates to the idea of "vulnerability", extremely important for our thesis. The second is Marglin's attempt to account for the discrepancy in the timetables of the two kinds of pollution, where in one instance it is greatest for the top, and the other least for the top.

Marglin takes Tambiah to task for suggesting that "pollution attacks the pure more than the impure" (Tambiah, 1973:210). She says of this that

The word 'attack' leaves one with the impression that the Brahmin is vulnerable and not privileged when it comes to matters of pollution (Marglin, 1977:259).

Her deduction does not follow since "vulnerability" does not mean that a person cannot be privileged in other contexts or even in this one, which is only devoid of privilege if you choose to define shorter period as a privilege to begin with. And if you do, it is not very impressive evidence of privilege, anyhow. The fact of the matter is that in the area of "act pollution", the top castes do indeed have to follow a greater range of demands than the lower castes, as has been mentioned earlier with regard to requirements about food avoidances. Instead of the idea of vulnerability, Marglin offers the idea of greater"impurity", to account for this as we have already stated. Yet the point cannot be denied that the Brahmin is more "vulnerable", irrespective of the reason, and that fact Marglin cannot ignore. As it is, her argument is unnecessary because to be more "vulnerable" is not to indicate lack of privilege since they are not mutually exclusive. Marglin continues outlining what I find a highly contrived analysis for she says that the top caste person becomes polluted for longer periods when he contacts an impure item because he is "less impure" while, at the same time she claims that the more bothersome rules that apply to him are based on her proposal that he is also "more pure". So now Marglin resorts to both "less impurity" and "more purity" as relevant for the various aspects of the same phenomenon. Not only is the methodology wanting but the conceptualization is ill-founded.

This is how she argues her case against the significance of vulnerability and for the relevance of quantities.
In fact, this seeming greater 'attack' of pollution on the purer is not evidenced in all forms of pollution; specifically it is not true in the case of relational pollution. Where it seems to be true - namely in the case of act pollution - it is not because of the purer being in some sense more vulnerable to pollution than the less pure but because the higher varna member is to begin with less impure than the lower varna member. When the member of a higher varna contacts a polluted object it makes him have a proportionately greater amount of pollution as a result than is the case for a member of a lower varna contacting the same object. This is expressed in rules requiring the purer one to undergo greater, lengthier purificatory rituals than the impure one. If this were not so the fact that the higher varna members are purer than the lower ones would not be expressed (ibid:259).

So the argument boils down to a few propositions: the less "impure" the more polluted, and therefore the longer period for the top castes in the instances of act pollution. Of their greater vulnerability, what Marglin says in the end is that it cannot be relevant for it would go contrary to her required thesis. Similarly, she argues that more bothersome purification must "express greater purity", otherwise this too would go contrary to her thesis, which is a cosy way of arguing. There are three contentious points here. One, the dismissal of the relevance of "vulnerability"; the other, her suggestion about the differing nature of purificatory rites; and the third, her reasons for the greater pollution periods pertaining to the top castes in the advent of act pollution.

First, as I understand the situation, the rules are the requirements for the exhaustion of the negative effects incurred during act pollution. When an event is not commensurate with a person's particular state and there has been a loss of caste, then a stipulated period of pollution will apply and that period must elapse before the negative effect can be exhausted, to repeat for the sake of comprehensiveness. Consequently, the problematic periods are to be understood as relating to the time taken for the exhaustion of the effects incurred and therefore the significance of a time period (regardless of whether long or short) is about processual development and less about (if at all) the expression of greater and lesser privileges. As the lawmaker, Viṣṇu, says,

Sacred knowledge, religious austerities, fire, holy food (Pañcagavya), earth, the mind, water, smearing (with cow dung), air, the morning and even prayers and other religious acts, the sun, and time (by lapse of ten days of impurity and the like) are purifiers of animate objects (in Tambiah, 1973:217).

1. My emphasis.
Though Tambiah cites the passage the significance of time passing goes entirely unnoticed and instead he proceeds to state that these ideas relate to "a transactional theory of purity and pollution, which is more in accord with McKim Marriott's logic of food transactions between castes" (ibid:217). Neither does Marglin pick up the clue that time develops change in ontological states. However, the exhaustion of time is not everything, for unless the stipulated purification is undertaken, the person's ontological state is not restored according to the procedures which obtain in Nepal. If a person cannot return to the prior state unless the stipulated period of pollution and the appropriate ritual be undertaken, then one is dealing with changes in ontological states and not simply the "expression of greater purity", as Marglin insists. So the next question is why the variations where the greatest time of pollution is imposed on the top castes, which Marglin answers in terms of their "having lesser impurity".

I have suggested that the variations of time for the rank orders of castes depend on the person's location at different ontological levels, where the sattvika requires a longer period to exhaust the effect of pollution because it is the most refined state realized by the most elaborate of the ritual performances. Thus it is most distant from the polluted state where the tamaś factor is pertinent. Taking the case of the Brahmin, the sattvika sub-category of the twice-born general category, he would have reached the ontological level, most remote from the untransformed state of the human condition of phenomenality, and since this is the most remote, then after contact with an "impure substance, itself standing at the tamaś level, then the Brahmin would have moved furthest away from the prior state compared to others who stand at different ontological levels. The longest duration required of him before the exhaustion of the effect of pollution, it would seem, depends on his sattvika level compared to the ontological levels of the other caste persons. It takes him a longer period than the others, those where rajas and tamaś predominate out of the twice-born, the larger sattvika division; and longer still than the Matwālis who stand at the general level. If the Brahmin is most remote from phenomenality, the polluted state, then contact with it means a great change from sattva to tamaś and therefore a longer period of time is necessary before that effect can be exhausted and before measures can be taken to restore the Brahmin to his prior state before the defiling event. And so forth for the other castes.

Now to consider the other controversial matter, Marglin's treatment of the idea of "vulnerability".
Vulnerability, or as I would prefer to label it, malleability, is central to the configuration of factors bearing on the topic. Given that one is talking about changes then to dismiss it, is to dismiss the point of the matter. Unless the general idea of malleability is held centrally, little sense can be made of what is involved, yet this appears not to bother Marglin whose concern is to maintain that Tambiah's reference to the "inverse order of castes" i.e. where greater requirements are imposed on the highest castes, cannot obtain because this would not suit her argument about top caste privilege.

The expression of power and privilege is seen in the instance of hypergamy by Marglin. It would seem that she also wants to apply it in the context of pollution periods. Whether it applies tout court for hypergamy is itself a moot point to be considered elsewhere. However, it is not necessary to deny that in these instances, the top castes are indeed involved in more bothersome requirements, since they demand time and trouble. Had Marglin taken into consideration other data such as food restrictions, which do indeed reveal that greater limitations apply to the highest castes and especially to the Brahmins, for whatever reasons, and do illustrate the idea of greater "vulnerability" to more things than is the case for the lower castes, then she could not have justifiably dismissed the same kind of evidence and its implications in this context of act pollution. In fact one Nepalese pundit provided the special term for the niggardly requirements regarding the rules of avoidances, when discussing the necessity that he keep away from anything touched by a member of the Pāni nachalne jāt. Specifically he said that in "social life matters are difficult (bhevakara)". However, to recognise this particular disadvantage does not automatically imply that the top castes may not be benefitted in other ways in the long run. If it eventuates that way the specific task is to demonstrate what that is and how it happens. In other words it is necessary to show that what is gained through the pollution toil and trouble, is worth having anyhow. This I attempt in the next part of the thesis. Here, we turn to the important point, the omission in this context of the Vahya by Marglin and Tambiah and the implication it has for the validity of their argument.

In Tambiah and Marglin's discussion on caste and pollution, the Untouchables (or Vahya) do not appear in the timetable listings. Since the Untouchables are polluted all the time in this historic life, then the rules would not be relevant for them and I would presume that this is why they do not appear in the lawgiver's accounts which serve as the data for Marglin
and Tambiah's analyses. While the lawgivers need not incorporate them into
the outline of the rules pertaining to each caste as they are irrelevant in
that context, this approach, however, cannot justifiably be adopted by
those giving an account of caste phenomena for then the total universe of
castes must be addressed. But had Marglin and Tambiah included the
Untouchables in their universe of discourse instead of following the lawgivers
and ignoring these people totally in the context of pollution, their case
would have been further compromised. If according to their proposition (that
the person with least "impurity" is polluted longest and the person with most
"impurity" is polluted shortest in the case of "act pollution") then the
shortest would have to apply to the Untouchable which in fact it cannot, for
he is polluted all the time and not for the shortest time. We may see that
if the Untouchable is included in their analysis it would make nonsense of
their thesis. Yet if he is not included, then the thesis does not apply to
the total universe, so in either case, it is inadequate. In contrast, if we
resort to the *triguna* format, the Untouchable's position can be accommodated
for in that scheme he is located at *tamas*, fixed there through exclusion
from the ritual transformations. If he eats stale food (*tamas* predominant)
this does not affect him as he belongs to this existential state anyhow.
Whereas others located at *sattva* and *rajas* are susceptible to the polluted
state (*tamas*) and therefore a change may be engendered through contact with
a polluting item, and the varying time spans are consistent with the varying
extent of the changes involved in each case of pollution. The final issue
related to Marglin's concern with the divergent timetables as occurring with
"act pollution" according to the direct order of castes, in contrast to that
occurring with "relational pollution" going in the reverse order.

For an understanding of the two sets of time periods pertaining in the
different kinds of pollution, I suggest that it might be wiser to start with
the logically prior context, that a person actualises caste, and preserves
his appropriate ontological state by adhering to the behaviour proper to it,
and this varies accordingly. But for both, the Untouchable is permanently
polluted for this life. Such events establish the different ontological
states, or the different castes, except for the Untouchable. In the
requirements, the most numerous restrictions are imposed on the top castes
who should disavow all that is not *sattva*, if they are to retain that
specific ontological level - a refrain that we are familiar with by this
stage. When behaviour is not commensurate with the particular state and
there has been a loss of caste, a stipulated period of pollution obtains
which must be passed through before the negative effect can be exhausted,
which is greatest with the top castes. If the matter is to be finalised then the corresponding purificatory rites must be undertaken for the restoration of the prior state. These factors relate to the context of "act pollution". When it comes to the life-crises contexts, pollution does not eventuate as a result of a breach, though the ontological state is nevertheless affected. That it is so, can be discerned in the avoidances even by members of the same caste and the prohibitions about contact with certain items of sacra during this period, which of course would also apply in the other context, "act pollution". In the advent of death, all close kin are similarly affected in as much as they are "of the same stock" as the dead person through common ancestry. The different periods pertaining to the castes appears to be based on the ontological levels reached, for the time periods vary accordingly, with least at the top and longer at the second level, while at the third level, the Untouchable's pollution is permanent. As Marglin correctly points out, in death, there is no object "exterior" to the caste group concerned and so duration may follow along the rank order. It is here that Marglin makes an important observation and brings into relief the significance of the external object in the case of "act pollution", and its absence in death. When absent as in death, a shorter duration of pollution applies for the top caste and so forth. We can adapt this and accommodate it within the triguna frame: when the corpse belongs to a person whose caste is sattvika, then the pollution time is shorter than when he belongs to a rajas type, and with the Untouchable, it does not apply at all. Thus the ontological changes ritually actualised in life are expressed in the different pollution durations pertaining to the different castes. The correlation of one set of periods with one type of pollution and the other set with the other type, however, does not constitute an explanation, just the identification of the relevant features. When this, then that, and so forth. Nor are the different features to be accounted for by the general proposal offered by Tambiah and Marglin that they are simply the "expression of power and privilege". ¹

Though the Marglin/Tambiah thesis provides a neat set of correlations (specifically, the higher the caste "status", the greater the "purity", and the lesser the time span for relational pollution; and the higher the "status", ¹ A critical interpretation of caste differences is taken up in a later part of the thesis, but here at least one point can be made, specifically that if their suggestion, that the differences of the caste rules are to be understood as articulating the hierarchy of power and privilege, were adopted, then it would cut off from view more significant and interesting political features in the operation of caste.
the less impurity, therefore the greater the time span for act pollution); these cannot do justice to the complexity of Hindu phenomena. Whether the context is the pollution of the life-crizes or that arising through actions, to understand what is going on reference must be made to the positive ritual transformations and modes of living which actualise and maintain the special existential states of which there are two broad types (sattva and rajas). Therefore, underpinning the phenomenon is the idea of mutability, that positive change is possible, and which in turn allows for the possibility of loss. In other words, the occurrence of pollution itself depends on the tenuous nature of the acquired states, and it is this cultural formulation which enables us to understand the variations in the operation of the complex phenomenon. By holding the bases of mutability in mind, we can attempt to understand "why this" and go beyond the correlating approach, "when this, then that.......". It also allows us to glean why no mention is made of the Untouchable in the listing of rules for pollution situations since he is excluded from the series of ritual transformations. Hence, one may discern why it is unwise to dismiss the relevance of the notion "mutability" for it provides the raison d'etre for the complex set of factors. When Marglin wants to treat "vulnerability" as of no consequence to the phenomenon, since it does not tally with her own theoretic assumptions, not only does she minimise Dumont's observation that the top castes are encumbered with a greater range of requirements, but misses its import as well. However, where Dumont says that "the pure is vulnerable to the impure", I would extend this in several aspects, but most importantly I would say that what is acquired through ontological change can be lost through negative ontological influences affecting those changed states.

2. The Caste Order as the outcome of "Givings and Receivings"?

Marriott is relevant in this chapter for he suggests that castes and caste ranks are generated by the "givings and receivings" of food exchanges specifically (1976:112). In so far as the suggestion, that patterns of giving and receiving create the caste order, is a highly provocative claim, it is necessary to consider it even though one is disenchanted with the model in general as a framework for analysing a vast array of Hindu phenomena. Moreover, it would seem that others do not have the same kinds of misgivings, for both Marglin (1977) and Tambiah (1973) cite Marriott with alacrity and commitment.

1. Marriott is an exponent of the approach known as "ethno-sociology", which adopts "symbolic interaction" as its framework. Another exponent is Sahlins whose framework was discussed in the introductory part of the thesis. Since Marriott applies this to Hindu material, he shall be taken as its exemplar. Therefore, if a lot of attention is devoted to Marriott, it is because of his significance for this approach and its relevance for the Hindu material.
This is how Marriott conceptualizes the issue of caste ranking and its basis in transactions:

South Asian cultural understandings of how social differentiation and power rankings arise out of transactions and transformations may be stated in three formulae:

1. In the absence of reciprocation in the same or an inferior medium of substance-code, those who give are to be recognised as differing from and as standing in rank, power, and quality of substance-code above those who take; the takers are thereby recognised as inferior, but are also made partly like the givers.

2. Those who reciprocate in the same medium are regarded as being made much the same as each other and are therefore to be reckoned as equal.

3. Those who do not exchange with each other at all, even indirectly, are considered to be different in substance-code and to be potential antagonists; but since they lack asymmetrical relations, they must be scored as not unequal (Marriott, 1976:112).

Several features are contentious. Firstly, Marriott's proposal that transactions generate castes, a point touched on earlier but warranting amplification; and secondly, the implication of universality of opinion, that the specific receiver of the food "recognises" himself and is recognised by others as "inferior" and similarly with opinions about the "giver" being regarded as the caste "superior". Put differently, there appears to be an unjustifiable leap in the formulations which imply that the ideas disseminated from the logic of the situation, specifically that giving signifies "superiority" will mean that the person who is doing the giving is in fact regarded as the "superior". To perform an action which carries a particular message, does not necessarily mean that the actors accept the message designated by the action. Thirdly, not only are castes said to arise from the transactions but so is "power ranking". One may ask, is it methodologically wise to propose that power rankings are generated by food transfers? Apart from the claim that transactions generate caste differentiation, it may also be discerned from the quotation that Marriott is adopting two further theoretic postures, one is the idea of consensus about caste positionings, and the other, the idea that power grows out of the relations of giving and receiving. First I want to turn to the situation of food exchanges, and in doing so attempt to describe the indigenous
ideas about different ontological states, the kinds of changes possible, and the nature of the entities (persons or things) said to be capable of effecting such changes, in order to assess Marriott's rendition of these. This is important, for Marriott's argument depends on "cultural notions" as we have noticed before. Should it eventuate that his rendition constitutes a "mistranslation", a charge he lays at Dumont, then the same would apply to him, also, but more importantly, it would mean that his contention that food exchanges generate castes (ibid:113-4; 119-20) cannot hold.

(a) Does "social differentiation" arise out of food (or inferior) transactions?

The ranks attributed to the castes are evaluation of their natures according to the donor and recipient relationships in the transactions that are believed to have formed those natures (1976:114).

To assess Marriott's scheme, we will have to examine whether it faithfully renders Hindu cognitions for on these he claims, the model is constructed; to consider whether the reason for selecting this transactional mode of "giving and receiving" is justifiable; and to scrutinise Marriott's application in one context, the four āśramas which have already been analysed according to the triguna format. But first to spell out the transactional scheme's main features with a few details.

As the features of his model, Marriott evolved four types of transactions, or transactors, since according to him action and actor are held to be "aspects of each other" (ibid:123), a highly contentious proposal for it allows Marriott to treat them as interchangeable as encapsulated in his usage of "vice-versa" (ibid: 110, 113). These transactions specifically relate to the types of strategies or codes for action involved in the giving and receiving of exchange, where the "optimal" strategy refers to the person who gives to others below, but does not receive from them and the vātṛa type that he takes to correlate as the actor is the Brahmin. Next there is the "maximal" strategy which refers to both giving to the lower and receiving from the higher caste persons, where the exemplar is the Kṣatriya. Then, the "minimal" type means more or less a general withdrawal from exchanges with the Vaishya as the typical transactor. Finally, the "pessimal" tactic entails receiving from those above, without giving, and here the Śūdra stands as the prototype. This type corresponds to the Untouchable or Harijan of the caste classification (ibid: 114 - 29). Clearly Marriott takes the givings and
receivings as critical and maintains that this exchange relationship yields
the four types (ibid:113-4) yet this implies a dynamic which is not there,
for surely what we have are only four logical possible ways of participating
in a situation of giving and receiving. Moreover, if giving and receiving
holds four possible ways of going about this (giving but not receiving;
receiving but not giving; both giving and receiving; and non-participation),
while these might be called tactics or strategies, can they be termed codes?
A tactic is a way of doing things, whereas a code is a predetermination that
certain things follow accordingly. Or, again, a code is a determination,
limiting what is possible, whereas a tactic is a maximizing, even though
operating within the limitation of the context, so that the tactic is
hamstrung by the features of the code. A code determines while a tactic
actualizes. These niceties are not mere details for such elisions have
bearings on the validity of his formulations as we shall see. The model
itself is evolved in the context of cooked food exchanges, where the item
is what Marriott calls an "inferior" medium, and where the types of
frequencies noted above also figure. As a scheme abstracted from the
transactional frequencies it is not an outline of people's views about each
other's placements in the rank order. Nor can it be an indigenous perspective
for divergent opinions are generally held, which therefore means that a
number of schemes of the rank order are involved.

The Vaisya tactic of non-participation for example can be interpreted
as a refusal to implicate themselves in a situation which could imply their
lower placement. The obverse, however, cannot be presumed, for acceptance
of food from a higher caste person may entail nothing less than lack of
choice and not necessarily acceptance of one's own lower rank. That aside,
the first task is to consider the basic premises of his four-termed scheme
for ordering Hindu phenomena.

Two of his constructs which he isolates as critical are, I think,
contentious. First there is the construct, the "inseparability of actor and
action" where actor and action are rendered as co-terminous with "substance
and code" (ibid: 109-10), and the construct, "the divisibility of the person"
which means to give off particles of substance-code to others, as well as to
receive theirs from them (ibid:109,111). ¹ In that "divisibility of the
person" means that substance-particles are given off and received, thereby
transformations can be said to occur. If this is tenable, it would allow
transactions to become events of consequence, since changes would be taking

¹. At this stage I omit Marriott's other dimension, grades of power
described in his introduction very cursorily (ibid:113) for the discussion
is difficult enough as it stands.
place. The notion of the "inseparability of actor and action", (or "substance" and "code"), is important for Marriott in that it can provide the justification for treating them as merely "aspects of each other" (ibid:114,123) and then to assume equal weighting for both, so that primacy does not have to be accorded to the nature of the actor. In a way, behind it all one notices the old debate between "attributional theory", where the nature of the actor is accorded primacy and Marriott's own kind of "interaction theory", as the alternative for understanding the caste order, which Dumont rejects and opts for attributional theory, revamping it as part of his hierarchical thesis (Dumont, 1972: 130-2). Subsequent to Dumont's critique, Marriott's next foray comes in the article under discussion, in which he states his current position. Marriott says,

This essay proceeds from the axiom that the pervasive indigenous assumptions of any society, such as Indian notions of the identity of actor and action and of the divisibility of the person, provide bases on which an anthropologist may construct his models of cultural behaviour in that society (ibid:109).

In this most recent thrust, Marriott then turns to Hindu cognitions to provide the bases for his transactional (exchange interaction, action) model and in which the two constructs are critical, for with the idea of the identity of the two (actor and action), primacy does not have to be accorded to "actor" and so action can be given value; and with "divisibility of the person" the giving and receiving of particles, he can render transactions generative. In his exposition, actor and action are also rendered co-terminous with "code" and "substance" (Puruṣa and Prakṛti), and with "law and body", (dharma and sarīra) (ibid:109-10). It would seem that here Marriott is attempting to establish bona fide metaphysical credentials for his transactional model, by invoking indigenous concepts. There are then two interrelated questions:

whether primacy must still go to the nature of the actor, and
whether a transactional scheme is apposite for the Hindu context.
To consider these, it is necessary to turn to the bases of his scheme which he says are derived from Hindu conceptions.

Action (karma) is Marriott's starting point. Of karma and its relation with the nature of the actor, he says

Actors' particular natures are thought to be results as well as causes of their particular actions (ibid:109).
At a more general level, one discerns an intentional circularity where an action is presented as both a cause and a result which might well constitute
an attempt to dissolve the debate with Dumont. but, as I follow Marriott's thesis, it is this proposal that actions can be both "results and causes" of an actor's particular nature which shifts his model away from Hindu conceptions, despite the semblance of felicity. Specifically, what is contentious is the proposal that the particular nature of a person results from his particular actions, even though at first sight it appears to be in accord with Hindu thought.

One may spontaneously think of merit and sin, for example, and recall the Hindu tenet that actions relating to these have bearings on the nature of the actor in his transmigratory existence. So here, the nature of the actor appears to be the result of action, where the individual's present circumstances are accounted for by his past activity (karma). One may think of the oft presented propositions - good behaviour generates rebirth in a higher form, and so forth. Nevertheless, Marriott's formulation only seems straightforward if one ignores the complexities of what is involved in a chain of development which, for the sake of brevity may be diagrammatically illustrated as follows:

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Actor -> Action -> Effect
Karta  Karma

Karya (or karmaphala, fruits of an action).
This may or may not be causal for some effects are, and some are not, according to Samkhyan thought.
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What is missing in Marriott's terse statement is the Hindu concept karya, "effect", as a discrete term. He says that the nature of the actor is the result of the actions, which must mean that actions cause the nature of the particular person, and so there are only two terms in the relationship going in this direction ² (namely actor and action). This is contentious for it omits reference to effects and when these are incorporated into the sequence a different kind of picture emerges. The important point is that the particular effects of an action depend on the nature of the actor involved.

2. When the movement is in the opposite direction, that is, the actor causing the action, this is not as problematic, though it has difficulties also, which are to be dealt with later.
For example, it will make all the difference whether a twice-born man sleeps with his wife or with an Untouchable and here the same kind of action will have entirely different kinds of repercussions according to the nature of the actors involved. If the effects of an action vary according to the nature of the actors involved then one cannot agree with Marriott's statement that the nature of the action promotes the nature of the actor. The particular action is secondary here in the sequence of developments, and one cannot repeat too often that primacy must go to the particular nature of the actors for herein lies what possible effects may occur. The case against the difficulties of Marriott's brevity need not be restricted to the transmigratory circuit but everyday instances also bring out the relevant points. Similar complications occur when other situations are scrutinised. Again it might seem that the action of touching a polluting person like a menstruating woman will generate a transformation. So that the nature of the actor has been changed by the nature of the action, even to the point of necessitating purification, so as to revert to the prior state. Yet even here there is an elision which would misrepresent the complexities of the situation. What one is doing is starting the analysis halfway through the phenomenon, for the polluting effect itself is determined by the state of the person involved, and not the action of touching. Had he touched a person not in this state then the activity would have resulted in nothing of consequence. In other words, it is not the action which is generating the effect but the nature of the actors involved in the activity. But if according to Hindu formulations it is not exactly the actions which are causal but actions depend on the nature of the entity (person and thing) concerned to generate effects then the significance of action is questionable, and the easy either/or relationship for actor and action which Marriott proposes is methodologically unsound. Expressed another way, this means that the action (transformation etc.) cannot stand as the framework, the reference point for the construction of the model, for actions are the secondary factors.

Another way of discerning the complexities is to notice that some effects are causal, while others are not. When a man sleeps with his wife, whatever the consequences, since this is part of the conjugal possibilities, it does not then become causal in changing his nature by reducing it to a lower level of being, whereas the effects of sleeping with an Untouchable will bring outcasting in this life, and rebirth in a heinous form as the lawgivers are wont to stress. In philosophic terms, the possibilities are stated clearly, where it is said that some effects may in turn serve as causes and some may not. In which case, it cannot be taken as axiomatic that
actions and effects will then generate the particular natures of the individual. Now Marriott's cursory statement could be misleading for it does not precisely articulate the point that only certain actions performed by a person will have effects which in turn have bearings on his nature. In other words, the difficulty relates to the vagueness of the proposal and the false impression it gives for it suggests that all actions result in the particular nature of the actor. Though often they may, what it omits to do is draw out the point that certain actions are more significant than others in these instances. Some actions have repercussion of magnitude, as such they can drag a person to a state of being an outcaste, while others are inconsequential. When an effect is causal (and it need not be) that effect does not entirely depend on action, but on the nature of the actors. Therefore, when it does happen this way, primacy still comes back to the nature of the particular actor. The other construct, "the divisibility of actor and action", is also problematic, for it too implies interchangeability of, and equal weighting for, both terms.

Not only does Marriott refer to the "identity of actor and action" but he also presents them as having a relationship of "inseparability" (ibid:109-10). While the idea of "inseparability" is not contentious, his extension of this is, for he insists that the actor and action are "aspects of each other" and can be treated in an either/or manner and attributing them with a vice-versa relationship. It is the imputed interchangeability of, and equal weighting for, these problematic terms which is provocative, for primacy does appear to fall with the nature of the actor. I say this because, according to Hindu formulations, it is the nature of the persons involved which orient the kinds of effects that will arise consequent to an activity, as we have attempted to show. If we focus on one type of action performed by different types of persons, we see that in one there can be effects of some substance, whereas in the other, it may amount to what is a non-event. Where earlier we considered the types of outcome in the sequence of events, to demonstrate the claim that what is possible will depend on the nature of the person or thing involved, here the claim can be further supported by reference to indigenous ideas.

What is possible to eventuate will depend on the nature of the person or thing involved for, as Manu proclaims, only barley seeds will grow into a barley plant. Or, to quote a Nepalese pundit, "only humans may attain liberation, witches and animals cannot". He also said, that "women as forms of Prakṛti have her kinds of powers, just as men, as forms of Puruṣa, have the male kinds of powers, though imperfect forms they be in both cases".
And as these forms they make the physiological body. And as we know, only Untouchables all the time, pollute certain things like water. This means that the nature of the particular actor channels what are the possible effects of an activity and therefore the nature of the actor has primacy and not, as Marriott implies, that neither has primacy. That primacy seems to inhere in the nature of the actor is indicated by these indigenous views. When teased out the range of factors involved indicate that the situation is far more complex than Marriott's statements would have us believe. In order to show that the nature of the actor contains a greater complexity than Marriott allows for, it is necessary to indicate that the nature of the actor constitutes the source wherein lie the factors which orient what is possible. First however, let me spell out Marriott's construct regarding the features of the nature of the actor.

Marriott gives a number of descriptions about the nature of the actor as it relates to his actions. One, the inseparability of actor and action is not problematic and can be dispensed with curtly. It is the others which create problems. Marriott's exposition appears to compound a number of interrelated ideas for he equates the pair, "actor and action," with the pair, "substance and code" or "Prakṛti and Puruṣa" (ibid: 109-10). Yet there are more than two terms here, since code for action is not exactly equatable with the particular action which is performed. This is more complex than Marriott's correlations since code is attached to the particular nature of the actor. Furthermore, the action which occurs is determined by what is possible and this lies in the person, for there simultaneously are his potentials for action as well as his materiality. Up to this point, there are then three dimensions, not two and their locus is also different, a complexity that cannot be identified with Marriott's two-termed construct. As I understand Hindu formulations, the nature of the actor entails a complex figuration containing the potential for what type of action and effect is possible and which derives from the male principle, the potency to implement that potential and generate the particular effects, a potency which derives from the female principle of the particular person who is embodied. The action actually done is different again, as is the effect. In summary form, the two versions are given diagramatically:
The ontological Nature of the person Action Effect
(a) Potential for the action the effect
(b) potency for implementing
(c) a person's material form

Marriott's Actor Action
substance of Prakrti, code or Puruṣa, or law
or body (sarira) (dharmā) (ibid:109-110).

Having established that the nature of the actor is complex as well as of primacy in any activity, then any interpretation of a situation would need to take cognizance of these factors, if an event is to be conceptualised in terms of Hindu formulations. A scheme built on these formulations would vary considerably from the account presented by Marriott. Despite the fact that he says his model is based on indigenous "assumptions", Marriott does not precisely indicate the way such assumptions have been incorporated into the model which is evolved in an exchange situation. Furthermore, where assumptions are discussed separately in the introductory part of his article, his rendition of these is found to be inadequate in accommodating to the complexities as we have noted, and is of a kind where the Hindu notions are presented more by way of lists, rather than being systematically interrelated. To illustrate the centrality of ontology in Hindu thought, which is not heeded by Marriott in his concern to render action significant, I set out in summary form below, the features of the nature of the actor and how these relate to action, and the complexities which ensue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ontological nature of the Actor who is embodied</th>
<th>The particular Action</th>
<th>The possible effects</th>
</tr>
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General Proposition:
In the nature of the actor inheres his particular potential for special kinds of actions (male principle), and where the force to bring these about lies in the guna predominance (via the female principle), so that these orient

Example (a):
The nature of the Untouchable is said to pollute water. He touches it. Others drink and they become polluted.

Example (b):
A member of any other caste does not pollute water. He touches it. Nothing is said to happen. Others drink.
It is the nature of the actor which is diacritical, for it (the entity—a material thing) simultaneously contains both the designator of what is possible and the particular potency to effect this, and therefore it is this complex factor which orients what is possible to eventuate in an actual situation. Therefore, when Marriott's rendition of Hindu notions are considered in the light of such complexities, certain points emerge which cast doubt on the precision of that rendition. Specifically we can say that if the nature of the effects of an action vary according to the natures of the actors (designator and power of an entity) then the proposal that action and actor are "simply aspects of the same thing" is misleading, for it omits reference to the relevant dimensions of the complex and it implies equal import and interchangeability of the two. The action is simply the venue, the arena for play. Even though the arena (the transaction) must appear, this is not as significant as what I call the "ontological nature" of the persons concerned. In which case, at a general level, one may query the significance of the transactional model as outlined by Marriott which then would leave Dumont's deliberations on the matter intact at best, and preferable at least.

Now Marriott could argue that my outline of this account is erroneous for the activity is not simply an idiom but entails a genuine transformation where there is the giving off of substance-code to others which would mean a subtraction from them, a loss; and at the other end, there is the receiving of substance-code, an addition, a gain. If this is valid, then it is important for Marriott's thesis for it renders transactions events of significance, where the giving and receiving can be said to produce change. A transaction then would imply a transformation. We come to his construct, "the divisibility of the person" (ibid:111).

According to the descriptions given in the introductory part of his paper, where the Hindu notions are discussed, he says that there are absorbing and giving out of substance-codes (ibid:110-11). Later when building up his model he says that in receiving (the additions) a person gains, by obtaining the donor's "superior substance-code", coming as it does from the higher caste. A case in point here would be the Kṣatriya receiving the substance-code of the Brahmīn; or the Untouchable's receiving substance-codes from any caste higher up. In such instances of receiving, there are alleged gains and so the transactions are depicted positively (ibid: 119-122). With regard to the givings (subtractions) the curious thing is that Marriott presents them both
ways, sometimes positively, and sometimes negatively, for we find that in
the case of the Brahmin's giving of "substance-code", there is no loss, and
according to Marriott, this type retains his "integrity" (ibid:129); yet on
the other hand, in the case of the Kṣatrya, there is a loss of the superior
stuff (ibid:121). One can understand the inconsistency and the necessity to
defy the logic of his own scheme, for otherwise it would go contrary to
Hindu notions. For, as we know, Hindu thought does not impute a loss or a
compromise of the Brahmin's position through the transaction of passing
cooked food. The inconsistency however alerts us to the possibility that
Marriott's interpretation of what is happening in food exchanges might well
present a mistranslation of Hindu ideas. Attention should now be directed to
the general point, relating to Marriott's construct, the "divisibility of
of the person".

The construct,"divisibility of the person", provides for the possibility of change to take place, since it states that substance-codes can be given
and received, to repeat. According to this conceptualization, transactions
then would entail transformations. In fact, Marriott attributes great powers
to these exchanges going so far as to maintain that they generate the castes,
a highly contestable proposal. Where there is no dispute regarding the
negative effect, which Untouchables are said to generate, for example, what
is controversial is Marriott's proposal that the superior stuff can be
transmitted to others and thereby a positive effect results through food
exchanges. In support of his contention Marriott appears to rely on an
analogy only for in the introductory part where the construct is discussed,
the substantiated examples of a non-negative transfer belong to instances like
procreation, and the transmission of mantras (ibid:111). The latter instance
cannot be taken to corroborate the claim that a higher caste person gives out
his "substance-code" in a food exchange when it is recalled that a mantra
would belong to a different type of matter from that of the substance-code
(or "body particles") according to Marriott's own outline of types of matter
(ibid:110). Nor is the former instance of much use. The transmission of
substance-code through procreation is not exactly indicative of the
transmission of "superior substance-code" since the statement does not hold
as a generalisation, if one bears in mind a situation where a Brahmin
procreates with an Untouchable. In fact in this context, the father's
"superior substance-code" would be rendered "inferior" by that kind of union.
Anyhow, procreation does not precisely entail the passing of substance-code
to another person's substance-code so much as the union of both parents'
seeds which provide the foetus, the physiological sheath into which a soul,
devoid of this sheath, enters, complexities which Marriott's rendition does
not heed. Such niceties hardly add weight to Marriott's case that the human's superior substance-codes can be transmitted to other human substance-codes in the context of cooked food. Contrary to his proposals, I would suggest that if the higher caste person's particular existential state has been actualised through a ritual transformation, and is something that has to be retained by adherence to certain rules, then it is highly unlikely that a state as tenuous as this can be given to and received by others. What is well established in the literature is the negative transfer said to occur when cooked food is passed up the rank order in the opposite direction from that of Marriott's context. That a change is said to eventuate in such a flow, is evident in the necessity for purificatory rites to be undertaken by the higher caste person should he accept food from a lower caste person, if there is to be a return to the prior state. That is to say, while there is ethnographic evidence that negative transformations are said to occur when food is passed in the ascending order, there is little or none for Marriott's proposal that positive transformations occur when food goes in the descending order, other than his own assertions. It would seem that Marriott's construct about the divisible person which maintains that superior as well as inferior body substance-codes can be given and received is not entirely accurate, which also means that transformations are not an automatic outcome of exchanges. Since no change would occur in the four types of transactions detailed by Marriott where food is transferred in the descending caste order, then Marriott's claim that the "diversity of castes" is "generated" by these exchanges does not follow either.

The interesting thing is that in his summary, Marriott refers to an array of ideas, the said Hindu preoccupations of "givings and receivings", the Hindu assumptions of the "identity of the actor and action" and of the "divisibility of the person" but in this directory, he omits reference to the basic premise which provides the parameters for the construction of his model. This is the idea that those who give are regarded as the superiors, and those who receive their inferiors (ibid:112). Ironically this is the cornerstone to his construction, yet it is essentially an ontological notion. His scheme then rests on the nature of the actor while it purports to be a transactional model. Though Marriott calls this statement a "formula", the point that it is diagnostic has not been heeded, otherwise he would have modified his stress on transactions.

Marriott wants equal relevance for both actions and actors—this orientation is stated at the outset of his paper when he refers to actions as results and causes (of the nature of actors). The circularity is a feature of his interpretation of Hindu ideas. Obviously he is saying that
actions can be both causes and effects. This is warranted up to a point for, as Sâkhyan thought states, some effects may be causes. However not all "effects" are "causes." Therefore, the question is whether Marriott's rendition for the contexts he considers reflect the indigenous views or mistranslates them. It seems to me that in the food transactions, the actions are simply executed by the actor, but are not in turn a cause of a transformation. The transformation that Marriott imputes as the giving out by the higher castes of substance-code by the receiving of this by the lower castes as well as the events which create the castes (ibid:112, 113-4, 123) is a misconception of the phenomenon, at variance with the underlying Hindu notions, as I understand them. Marriott's contention is patently at variance with the data, for the "superior stuff" (to use his terms) cannot be transmitted since the holders of this kind of stuff are persons who have acquired special states, which are to be retained, rather than have something that can be passed over. What may happen, happens in these contexts because if it were performed otherwise, the higher caste persons would be affected by the particular states of the lower caste person with food moving in the ascending order. As it is played out, food is simply transferred down the caste line, because that way, no negative effects on the higher castes eventuate, and so their ontological levels (castes) can be retained. Therefore, the food exchanges have been misrepresented by Marriott as arenas for the creation of the castes. Rather they take their orientation from avoidances of negative possibilities.

There is a possible charge of inconsistency, for while I have argued against Marriott's approach which does not concede primacy to the nature of actor, but gives equal weighting to actions I have also been stressing the relevance of actions, by indicating that ontological states need to be actualized and retained. It might be interpreted that on the one hand I am not recognizing the importance of action and transformation while on the other hand I am pushing that particular line.

First of all let me say that to recognize the primacy of the natures of the actors is not to deny the relevance of transformations. In the discussion on the caste order where I tried to show the relevance of ritual transformations and other activities, it was imperative to stress the idea that a person's caste has to be actualised and is not simply dependent on birth. None of this means that entities and the nature of entities do not feature critically in these transformations where there are moves to

1. Leaving aside those who refuse to play, the "minimal transactors".
particular ontological states, and in their retention, achieved through adherence to what are called the caste specific rules. The relevance of entities figure not only from this angle, but also in terms of which particular persons are eligible to undertake the transformations for as we know only the offspring of twice-born and Matwali may undergo the critical rites. In fact, as I see it, both the context of actualising caste that I have considered, and the context of food exchanges, may be approached via the same theoretic assumption, for in both, ontological notions are pertinent. Nor is this to say that movement is not relevant; it is, but not as Marriott approaches it. Let us start with the first set of ideas.

With the ritual transformation, caste is being actualised, and in the food exchanges caste is being retained through the avoidances, for, as outlined earlier, it is only this way that no negative effects fall on the higher castes. Now it might be said that even within the parameters of my discussion, action appears to be critical for both rites and the food transfers determine the natures of the actors involved. Yet this does not hold, given that there can be no discussion at all, unless one refers to what is implicated in the transformations themselves. These are not simply actions, but actions propelled by the power of some entity. To become twice-born, specific sacra (entities) are used and it is the potency of these which are relevant. Therefore an action of change presupposes the presence of some entity wherein lies the "cause" or "source" that has generated the change. For example, it is the power of the primal sound and its efficacy for insights which generate a kind of birth which is not of the womb and, if it happens that "additions" and "subtractions" pertain, these are less important than the potency of the thing "added", to bring about the transformations. Similarly, in the retention of caste, through the food exchanges, though one is referring to the import of an event that does not happen because it is being avoided, the ontological nature of the entities (things and persons) feature, for herein lies the capacity to generate the specific effects. In other words, both are about ontological states, in one the actualising of caste and in the other the retention of caste. In one with the ritual work effected through the ritual commodities, and in the other through the avoidances which prevent change and thereby preserve the higher caste's ontological state where the food goes in the direction it does, because that way negative effects cannot occur. Rather than accept the conventional approach that the food exchanges in this direction are about avoidances, Marriott chooses to proffer his own interpretation. To accept the conventional
interpretation would mean however, that a transaction does not necessarily entail a transformation. Instead Marriott chooses to depict the food exchanges as transformational events where the "superior substance particles" are taken from the high by the low who thereby "partake" of the nature of the high (ibid:112). Thus action and interaction can be depicted by Marriott as provoking change. What Marriott fails to identify is the point that change is generated by the power of the gunas. It is these powers which propel the transformations. To account for transformations Marriott turns to "givings and receivings" of "substance-codes", while his perception of power simply relates to what are more often than not, the attributes, like "control over land" for kṣetra, (the Kṣatriya power); like a condition of "servitude" for the Śūdra, and so forth. Otherwise his outline of power is vague.¹ In the end, his account of transformations relies on the idea of giving and receiving, itself based on the construct, the "divisibility of the

1. The different grades of powers in addition to the different "substance-codes", form a "unitary whole" according to Marriott. This occurs by the four tactics mingling "what western analysts see as purity and power" (ibid:123). The precise nature of the interrelation between substance-codes and grades of powers is not clearly spelt out by Marriott, as his use of the word "mingle" indicates. Sometimes, substance-codes and grades of power are presented as correlated. For example, the Brahmin has superior-substance-code and also has the power of "brahman", "totality" which in turn is correlated with the transactor type, "optimal" (ibid:123-35). Some of his ideas regarding the different grades of power are based on Dumezil (ibid:134) bringing that version's inherent weaknesses, though Marriott refers to recent work also (ibid:113). In the main, his depiction is that Hindu thought collapses power and purity and transactional types into some kind of undifferentiated whole, or into an either/or type of relationship, as this quotation indicates:

Transactors and transactions are oriented ultimately neither toward 'purity' nor toward 'power' as usually understood in social science, but toward a unitary Indian concept of superior value – power understood as vital energy, substance-code of subtle, homogeneous quality, and high, consistent transactional status or rank. All of these are regarded as naturally coincidental or synonymous (ibid:137).

I do not share his view that the assortment of notions are treated by Hindu conceptualisations as an undifferentiated "mingle", or as "synonymous".
person". Since this is imprecise, then there is no foundation for his transactional model where the givings and receivings are said to generate "India's fabled diversity". If our suggestions have any validity then we must return to the nature of the entity concerned (person or thing) for herein lies the potency to produce effects (the changes or transformations). The potency of the entity relying on the guṇa factor is critical in propelling transformations. Following from this, it has to be repeated that the nature of the actor has primacy for it is this aspect which determines what kind of effect may or may not ensue consequent to a particular action. Hence one cannot agree with Marriott that an exchange necessarily entails a transformation, as he is describing for the food exchanges, but merely what it is, a transfer of food from the higher castes to the lower, or non-participation for the "minimal transactor". If anything it relates to the avoidance of transformation. Transformations arising from an activity, derive from the set of factors involved in the Puruṣa/Prakṛti unit which constitute a complexity not accommodated by the brevity of Marriott's rendition, "substance-code". It is with the Puruṣa/Prakṛti unit that the factor which orients what can possibly occur lies, with the male principle as designator of what may happen, and the female principle for effecting it (through the rajas, sattva and tamas force) which are located in some form of materiality. Expressed differently, I am not denying that transformations are critical, but I am not convinced that the model characterized by "givings and receivings" is the best way of identifying and understanding these. If "givings and receivings" are simply the mechanics, as I have suggested, then the dynamic factor for transformations lies elsewhere. With regard to the other feature of Marriott's model, specifically the four transactional tactics, what can be said?

Marriott's four tactics (to give only; to receive only; to give and receive copiously; not to participate at all) are the terms which are to be used to classify the array of Hindu phenomena for they are the differentiators. However, as I understand matters, differentiation is based on positionings at various stages of development where each of the guṇa factors is dominant (as with gods, men and animals) or, alternatively, according to their varying natures, (as with the life-force; the mind and its sensibilities; and matter). In turn, these natures also fall into a chain of development where one guṇa predominates in each case. Marriott however depicts differences according to the scheme based on the number of times a person gives and/or receives, cooked food, or abstains from the transactions. Does it ring true that
Untouchable of caste categorisation for Marriott) is distinguished by his polluted state, then to render them comparable, as Marriott does, is to ignore the basic differences between these two types. However, that is how the model works. Marriott's depiction of the householder stage in terms of his transactional model, also presents difficulties, though somewhat different.

Out of all the interpretations arising from the application of the model, the householder stage said to correlate with the Kṣatriya as transactor of the "maximal" kind of exchange, does least violence to one's understanding of Hindu conceptualisations, since there is some degree of accord between the idea of the householder involved in family affairs and the idea of the Kṣatriya involved in worldly matters. Nevertheless, Marriott's suggestion hides one of the most important requirements of that stage, namely the production of sons (Manu, VI 36, 37). Through Marriott's concern with exchange commodities (givings), he stresses the need for provisions for the sons, rather than the prior circumstance, procreation. Perhaps more problematic is that Marriott's rendition manipulates the householder's kinds of activities to fit the maximal type of exchange allocated to this particular transactor. In the general outline of types of exchanges, the "maximal" type is involved in the "givings" to others and the "receiving" from them (see Marriott's diagram, ibid:122). Yet when discussing the life stages in particular, Marriott uses the terms "giving" and "getting", (ibid:132). It is this word, "getting" in the householder context which involves a shift from an exchange arena to that of work, effort or appropriation, because to "get" is to acquire, obtain or appropriate as in the case of a farmer (the example Marriott refers to (ibid:131)). "Getting" is not the same as "receiving", the stipulated feature of the general exchange model. Such elasticity allows Marriott to introduce a whole new dimension which is somewhat extraneous to the idea of exchange, while at the same time it provides a semblance of a fit between the exchange type and the householder stage. The difficulties regarding the next stage are of a different ilk.

Marriott, by locating the Brahmin as the vāyu correlate of the "optimal" type of tactic, presents him in a totally uncharacteristic way. Since the forest-dwelling stage takes the form of the optimal exchange the person must not receive. In Marriott's words,

"...it is marked by an extreme version of the optimal Brahman tactic: the forest-dweller should take nothing produced by others " (ibid:132).

Yet, it is the Brahmin who is the receiver of gifts, par excellence, and any text, whether purāna or smṛti, will admonish the people to give to the Brahmins. Marriott himself in another part of his exposition describes the
Brahmin, the optimal transactor, quite differently:

As the most selective epicurean-like receivers, Brahmans typically accept substance-code only of very perfect form, such as gifts of land, money and whole grain (ibid:128-9).

When this account of the Brahmin as receiver of gifts is brought into relief with the other account which presents him as the typical refuser of gifts, Marriott's portrayal of the forest-dweller cannot hold, for he cannot have it both ways. The Brahmin as "refuser" is derived from Marriott's overconcern with the situation of cooked foods used as the frame for generating the features of his transactional model, and as it eventuates, it is not the wisest context if it means that the non-typical characteristics of a type are taken as the significant. Similar inconsistencies, as well as other difficulties, apply to the final stage, that of the "renouncer" which Marriott locates as the "minimal" type of tactic of which the Vaisya is the exemplar.

The "renouncer" of the fourth stage correlating with the Vaisya is described by Marriott as one "who accepts alms in low ranking media from all persons" so as "to reduce his attachment to any intake" (ibid:132). Yet, in an earlier part of his article, the Vaisya, is described as a "tight-fisted transactor" (ibid:128) which surely reveals a strong kind of attachment. One would expect that the model be applied with some degree of consistency, otherwise it is simply used as a flexible frame accommodating whatever the analyst wants. That aside, perhaps more important is the issue of whether a model facilitates our understanding of Hindu phenomena and brings their significance into relief. With the application of the transactional model all phenomena are hitched to the particular factor, whereas it might in fact be more or less irrelevant. Marriott says,

To the extent that the living renouncer succeeds in minimizing his transactions, especially through developing inner powers of thought, he achieves a subtler, thus more perfect substance-code (ibid:132).

Put differently, Marriott seems to be saying that if a person minimizes his transactions, through developing his inner power he will achieve a more perfect substance-code. There seems to be two incompatible wings and some difficulty of interpretation. From one angle, transactions are secondary, contingent on the "development of inner powers". Yet, as well, he renders minimizing transactions as some kind of force, for it is this aspect that he implies is generating the more perfect substance-code which then render the minimizing tactic central. Moreover, this does not necessarily follow,

1. Though the Brahmans are fastidious in their food requirements, the association of epicurean with the idea of pleasure (almost sybaritic) is misleading in the Brahmin context.
for absence of interaction with others does not necessarily produce *samādhi*, the goal-contemplative state. Unless all that Marriott is saying is that if there are no transactions, then no extraneous stuff is entering from others, then the renouncer's own substance is "more perfect", but in which case, it is not the absence of transactions which is relevant for generating this change. In fact, it is superfluous. In this respect, his discussion is contrived in attempting to make this type of transaction central to this renouncer type, which it is not, as I understand things. The stress on the success in the minimizing tactic is unwarranted for this tactic does not constitute success in *yogic sādhana*, reaching the state of *samādhi* and converting ordinary semen (*subraḥ*) into special *apṛta* (the stuff of immortality). In this context it is the means of *yogic sādhana* and its *mokṣa* goal which are important (Manu VI, 49, 71-3 in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 207, 211), and the minimizing transaction are somewhat irrelevant. Here I want to make a general comment about Marriott's portrayal of the renouncer which follows Dumont's lead, but which I think tends to misrepresent what is involved.

The renouncer, according to Dumont (1970), is the only individual of the Hindu order, who can quit social responsibilities and chase his own particular fancies. Marriott, adopting this orientation and citing Dumont, also ignores the significance of the renouncers' goal which is to discard the individual self and merge with the Supreme Being. If anything, the renouncer is the non-individual, who must dislodge all sense of I-ness (*ahaṁkāra*, *abhināna*) and attachments. If, as I have suggested, the idea of individuality is a mistranslation of what is implicated, so is "autonomy", another characteristic Marriott attributes to the renouncer. The misplaced stress appears to derive from Zimmer who refers to man's craving for "freedom", a craving for "self autonomy" (1961:159), which is perhaps better associated with European preoccupations than with Hindu.\(^1\) The other alternative terms like "release" and "liberation" used for *mokṣa* are preferable to "autonomy" in that they highlight the removal of attachments and the opening and escape which is from his historic self. If the idea "autonomy" has any relevance at all in the life-stages context it would be to the forest-dweller, where a person has no responsibilities to any one other than himself. In fact, the word "himself" figures repeatedly in Manu's account of the forest-dweller. This type tends for his own survival and undertakes special ritual tasks for

\(^1\) If one had to suggest what is the Hindu craving one would perforce offer "peace" (*santa*).
himself, whose purpose appears to be the dissolution of sins, since penances
and the removal of taints are prominent (Manu, VI 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29
in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 202-203), and concomittantly the procuring of merit.
In sharp contrast, the renouncer, if he is to be successful, must give up
even merit, because it, like sin, imposes bondage (Manu, VI, 79 in Buhler(tr.),
1969:212).

With the renouncer, the crucial trait which he is expected to develop
is indifference, beyond attachments and desires (Manu VI 39, 43, 44, 80 in
Buhler (tr.), 1969: 205-6, 212-13)\(^1\), expectations that are not readily
accommodated by ideas like "autonomy" which Marriott employs. Furthermore,
the term "autonomy" mutes the fact that the renouncer is utterly dependent
on others for his survival. To present the renouncer as "independent",
"autonomous" and an "individual", typified as the employer of the "tactic of
minimal transactions" (ibid:132) misses the important point regarding the
nature of his enterprise for the primary goal is moksha, loss of the
historic self, and all rebirths of it.

Marriott's linking the renouncer with the Vaisya through their imputed
commonality in minimal transactions blurs over the significant differences.
As we know, the renouncer is aloof from the world, while the Vaisya (like
other caste members) is fully implicated in it. All the model does is
render equivalence which, rather than facilitate our understanding of such
practices, imposes neat patterns in areas which are not of the utmost
importance, despite the fact that one may find the correlation of Vaisya and
renouncer an appealing paradox.

With regard to the four as a set, Marriott maintains that these are to
be understood as "cumulative" where the last arises out of perfecting the
other three, an interpretation that is not entirely exact. Predictably, in
my view, this would not constitute a series of four stages, but would break
down into two, where the first three can be perceived as entailing a set,
and not cumulative since there are different imperatives in each. These are
summed up by Manu as

having studied the Vedas in accordance with the rule,
having begat sons according to the sacred law, and
having offered sacrifices according to his ability,
he may direct his mind to (the attainment of) final
liberation (Manu, VI 36 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:205)

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1. "When a person characterized by determination, doubt and egotism
(abhimāna ) is full of all desires, he is fettered, in the contrary
state, he is liberated" Vāttrī Upanisad VI, 30 in Basu (ed.), 1926:108.
There is the progression of three, where this set would contrast with the last which stands alone. It stands alone since the person concerned must undergo the death ritual to dissociate the old self, the persons of the three life stages if he is to become a renouncer at all, and only after that ritual death is he on the path of the special fourth (Garuda Purana, Vi, 38; and see footnote in Buhler, 1969:215). In this way, the fourth life-stage is starkly divergent from the other three. Therefore, it would seem that there is the division, with a set of three on the one hand, and the special fourth on the other. If this be the case then Marriott's rendition of Hindu cognitions is misleading. Before leaving this area, a few summarizing remarks can be made.

The four-termed transactional scheme tends to draw out features of a phenomenon which are perhaps the least important aspect and obscure what is significant. Nor does it fulfill Marriott's promise that he is heeding indigenous cognitions (ibid: 109, 137). Just as problematic is that it allows for the equating of types which are better understood as distinct. The Śūdra is hardly comparable to the pure Brāhmaṇa; and though the alignment of the Kṣatriya with the householder has some credence, when it comes to the portrayal of the Brahmin, the exemplary receiver of gifts, then to render him as equivalent to the disclaimer of gifts of the forest-dwelling stage is simply an artifact of the model. Finally Marriott's correlation of Vaiṣya and renouncer as typical minimal transactors is perplexing, given that whilst the Vaiṣya, the merchant who lives by making his profit in an exchange, is strikingly distinct from the renouncer who ideally quits pursuit of profit and all else, except the goal, release. It appears that Marriott presumes that there is a one to one correlation between his four-termed model and the four-termed indigenous list found in numerous contexts, yet this is a false assumption since the numeration four in Hindu conceptions is simply a string of terms rather than a particular structured scheme. When Marriott's four-termed transactional model is imposed on the indigenous list, it produces bizarre results. The list of four can be treated differently. I have suggested that it breaks up into two blocks, the set of three which are associated with time, change and the guṇas on the one hand, and the special "fourth", on the other. That is not the only disturbing aspect. When characteristic Hindu phenomena, like the life-stages, are examined through the imposition of a model, a particular pattern emerges, which is often neat, because that is how a model generally works. But if in so doing

1. There are undoubtedly other important numerations for example, seven, nine, twenty-seven, one hundred and eight. I would expect that these would break down so as to fall into any of the three possible schemes, either belonging to the pair exemplified by Purusa/Prakṛti; or the trīguna format; or the special relation of the trīguna on the one hand, and the transcendental, on the other.
those findings end up by distorting the general orientations of Hindu conceptions, then it is, I think, a misleading analytic exercise, and a dangerous format. One point that remains to be considered given that the life-stages, like some of the other numerations of four, divide into two, what is the nature of the relationship between these two?

The discussion on the list of four, though indicating that movement is inherent with the set of three connected to worldly existence, leaves us with a relation of two — absolute and conditioned, the mokṣa state and that of saṁsāra. In other words, even though the guṇas are relevant in the schemes of four, ironically what remains, is another duality. Not only that, but with this kind of relationship, a whole range of contrasts come to mind, like "without form/with form"); "outside time/in time"); "omnipotent/limited", all pairs which do indeed appear as contraries. However, Hindu thought itself warns against the perception of apparent dualism (dvaita). Though schools vary in their approach, some insisting on absolute non-dualism, and others maintaining that the relation is only that of qualified non-dualism, etc., all advocate the rejection of the idea of outright dualism as appropriate to describe the nature of the relation between the individual in time and the Absolute.

One of the major factors which distances the individual operating in time from realising his true nature is the false sense of self, the I-ness factor, through which he assumes that, since he sees, the capacity to see comes from himself; since he thinks, he believes that this derives from himself also, and so forth. Yet this is erroneous for such capacities ultimately do not depend on the individual, but on forces larger than the historic person. What is central is the "eye behind the eye", as one Nepalese pundit stressed. On realising the relevance of what is hidden and recognising that he has no separate existence from that ultimate entity, Paramātman, he may discard the erroneous sense of self, of separateness, which gives an illusory belief in duality. The "real", which is "true" (and one word "satya" stands for both English words) is what endures throughout the round of time, a point Nepalese pundits stress repeatedly. That is the Absolute, yet that is also the person himself.

1. Zimmer's interpretations as well as his inimical style warrant quoting,

There are two spheres, (that is to say, which are identical: 1. the phënomenal, visible sphere (that of change (jagat), the Heraclitean flux), wherein the manifestations of time appear and perish, and 2. the transcendent, timeless sphere, which is beyond yet one with it (that of imperishable Being). Both of these are symbolized and present in the holy syllable OM.

2. All of this (with a sweeping gesture, pointing to the universe round about) is Brahman. This Self (placing the hand on the heart) also is Brahman.

Here again is the nondual doctrine (1961:372)

2. Nepalis say that this is executed through yogic sādhana.
The individual is conditioned only for as long as he perceives himself as individual and on realising and shedding this false sense of separateness, the person may lose such existential bonds and reach the ultimate state, mokṣa. Backing up the possibility for merging, is the proposition that the individual is a special variant of the Absolute, as jīvātman to Paramātman. If the individual stands intrinsically connected to the Absolute, then the matter of contraries is no longer straightforward because he is also said to partake of the Absolute in some way. It is a relationship of Absolute Self to individual Self which, though trapped in a conditioned existence, the Self, nonetheless, obtains in both kinds of existences. Therefore, even though life in the saṃsāra wheel indicates that the individual is limited, presenting an antithesis vis a vis the Absolute, when the connexion between the two is borne in mind, the relation is more complex. The individual is then both conditioned and Absolute, whereas the Absolute is only Absolute, by definition. Does this now suggest that there is a relation of complementarity, where the higher encompasses the lower, a feature which Dumont outlines for the hierarchical type of relation? Or what then is the important and relevant feature of the relation, individual to Absolute, if Dumont's ideas are not applicable?

In this context the omnipresence of the Absolute is delineated by Hindu speculations but from a somewhat different angle from that of encompassing and one which allows for the distinctness of the Absolute to remain. This is the idea of pervasion.1 As one Nepalese expressed the point, "the Paramātman is in everything, even a speck of dust". With the human, the situation is comparable, in that the imperceptible entity, the Paramātman, resides in the historic person, but that person does not reside in It: the unmanifest lies in the phenomenal.2 The complexities of the composition of the human is to be discussed in more detail in a subsequent part. Here the concern is merely to outline the relation between the human, the jīvātman and the Paramātman. As I understand it, the human is more composited, more complex and conditioned, yet also containing within himself that which is "true", surviving all the changes of time. It is the human, who encloses the Absolute in this context, where the larger entity, the body, is the imperfect form, and most conditioned, because it perishes lasting for one historic life-time only. In all of this, the Absolute alone persists and does not change. Therefore hierarchy is not the appropriate focus to incorporate the ideas of change and infinity for the historic individual on the one hand, and infinity and absence of modifiability for the Ultimate

1. The term, sarvavyapti (all pervasive) is often used in this context.  
on the other. Dumont's conceptual construct of hierarchy encompassing
the contraries would be, I think, too formalistic an abstraction to bring
into prominence the critical distinction between the two, where the human,
on one hand, a late and complex transformation containing the Absolute,
exists in and moves through the transmigratory circuit, whilst the Absolute,
without modifications, does not. Hence, the particularised Absolute, which
is the person who is in time, and the enigmatic Absolute, out of time,
constitutes a special kind of relation which Hindus call non-dualistic
(advaita). As to the character of the relationship, this is how one
Nepalese pundit described the complexities:

In a pot is pure water. It is put on the ground on the
night of the full moon. Put many pots there and one will
see the full moon in one pot and in all the pots. But there
is only one moon. So Brahman (or Puruṣa or Iṣvara) is like
the moon in the sky and our ātman is like the moon within
the pot. That moon within the pot will stay there as long as
the water remains there. When this dries then the moon will
disappear from there. So the vasana is like the water, and
our body is like the pot and our ātman is like the moon within
the pot.

It also renders the idea of the "autonomous individual" said by some to
characterize the mokṣa seeker, a bit off-key.
(b) Whose model, and model of what?

The foregoing critique of Marriott's transactional theory of caste order is warranted, for it is one of the main alternatives to Dumont for anthropologists working on caste. Dumont, it cannot be denied, generally has his finger on the pulse whether he reads it correctly or not, whereas Marriott, I think, is generally off the mark, despite reference to relevant areas like transformations and the ideas of the indigenous worldview. In a way he is in the right area but for the wrong reasons. Underlying his approach is his conceptualisation of Hindu phenomena as characterized by givings and receivings. He perceives them as so significant as to constitute a highly developed "transactional culture" (1976:109). While I would not deny the relevance of change, agreement stops there. What we find underlying so many Hindu phenomena are rules, rules which proclaim what a person should do, what is right for his nature whether this comes in the package of the laws of in the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita. What we find are differential opportunities applying to the castes, and not, as Marriott would have it, differential access to the "mingle of purity and power", an issue to be considered in the next part of the thesis. There is not the ubiquitous "givings and receivings", the imputed basis of the transactional culture, but special instances where only some are to be given to. This is the striking feature. Gifts refer to special persons, to the Brahmins, to the daughter and her offspring. All are specific persons in specific relations and with important powers for the givers. Nor is there any exchange of gifts, a reciprocal giving and receiving (or Marriott's other variants) but a more complex set of relations where the recipients' particular capacities are of value for those who are the donors. Where there is the giving, the beneficiaries are the ones whose powers are critical in realizing certain goals for the givers, since the Brahmin contacts the invisible forces, while the daughter and her offspring, are important in funeral proceedings for the members of her natal family. Such situations where the necessity to give is precisely defined and formalised by Hindu conceptions are not of the same ilk as the food transactions. Not only do food transactions not accord with the cultural area of the gifting, but also the nature of food transactions have been misrepresented within their own parameters by Marriott's rendition of the issue.

1. Marriott himself refers to the Brahmin as the typical recipient of gifts in a later part of his paper (1976:128-9), but it would seem that this fact did not impress him enough to make him reappraise his conceptualisation about the food transfers.
The caste ranking of peoples is not an outcome of variations in food exchanges as Marriott describes, but rather it is the rank order which orient the variations in transactions are better understood in terms of what is acceptable and what has to be avoided if ontological states of those involved are not to be jeopardised. To delineate the affair as a matter of "giving and receiving" is misleading. It is misleading from the ontological aspect, for the complex phenomenon is oriented according to the rationale of appropriateness of acceptance and refusal which are of a different nature from exchanges. Exchanges or givings and receivings incorporate the idea of gaining and losing, getting something, giving something, whereas the idea of acceptances and refusals links back to rules relating to what is commensurate or not commensurate with a person's caste nature. The idea of exchange is an imposition on the ontological situation where "giving" is better rendered as "refusing" since what is critical for the top caste person is that he does not accept cooked food handled by others. That he "gives" is not important, but what is important, is that others may accept from him, without any negative repercussions to their ontological natures. Similarly, Marriott's construct "receiving" is a misnomer for what is relevant is that the accepting does not harm the recipient. If the features of the model were structured according to Hindu orientations, the terms "refusing" and "accepting" would replace Marriott's terms "giving" and "receiving" respectively. Following from this the "givings and receivings" model appears to be artificial for it does not cater to the indigenous orientation, and especially to the principles that behaviour must be commensurate with an actor's ontological nature. That givings and receivings constitute an ill-conceived basis for his conceptual approach can be discerned from another angle.

The significant feature of the patterning of transfers is direction, and direction in the descending order moving to the lower castes, whereas the idea of giving and receiving is more an epiphenomenon which arises through the nature of the caste structure which always has more than two levels and has three at least. Consequently, although with the middle rung, there is both the giving and receiving, this is better understood as an outcome of that positioning where food is only transferred down the caste order, where the rule is that cooked food can be accepted from the higher caste:
Caste Categories

Sattvika
Rajas
Tamas

Hence only the middle receives and gives.

Rendering the situation as exchanges is perplexing for only one out of four types Marriott outlines (1976:119-23) actually constitutes an exchange. If there is not a two-way traffic, then it goes without saying that there cannot be an exchange. Hence only one of Marriott's types, the "maximal", entails exchange, and this type is placed in the middle rungs. Given that this type stands in the middle rung and is the only instance where giving and receiving appear to operate, then clearly this is a function of the type's positioning and not an outcome of exchange. Consequently, what we have is not an arena for exchanges but a situation where food may be transferred in a downward direction where a person can accept food from above without harm to his ontological state. Since he may receive from above and give to below (possible because of middle positioning), he is involved with two other castes, yet it goes in the one direction, a transfer from higher to lower.

If the transactions in the descending order are best understood as situations where food may be accepted since no harm can befall the taker, and action is not incompatible with one's particular nature, as it would be if the transaction went in the opposite direction; then depicting these as "givings" and "receivings" vies away from the nature of the cultural orientation which is concerned that actions which are not commensurate with the actor's ontological nature be avoided. From the ontological aspect, transactions down the line are permitted because they avoid caste change. If they avoid caste change then Marriott's interpretation that food exchanges generate the diversity of castes is unfounded. If it cannot be said that transactions are generating the castes, does another of Marriott's suggestions hold, specifically that the transactions are indices of caste ranking?

People's views of the rank order in their territory can fall into several possibilities. There can be consensus, where the entire population is in total agreement about the allocation to themselves and others to their respective positions in the scheme. That is a logical possibility rather
than a probability in my opinion. Then there can be the state's
categorisation of the people's positions which is the prerogative of the
state. That there is an official line does not preclude the possibility that
there may be countervailing views, most likely to come from the bottom, though
not invariably limited to the people of those ranks. In Nepal, the Newars
slotted into the middle are hardly likely to, and many do not in fact concur
with the official line, which places all of them below the Parbatya twice-
born, as we know. If anything, the Nepalese situation is what one would
expect, for one would presume discrepancy of opinions about something as
intimate and significant as the nature of one's being where, for some, the
definitions are not that apt, while others in comparison are credited with
excelling worth. So, there is the most likely situation, several versions of
the caste order, shifting perspective according to who is the narrator of its
features. Yet, anthropologists seek for a consensus model as if this makes
the caste order a more significant phenomenon. The caste ordering of peoples
does not need a consensus as a prerequisite for its existence, though one
may want to know who is imposing the definitions on the population which
somehow become the "official ones" and how they are able to ensure that
some rules falling on certain categories are followed by the peoples
so categorised. Whatever its support, there will be one
"official line", no doubt, as Srinivas (1966) has stressed and
whose opinion Marriott has not completely succeeded in dismissing with a
"pace" (Marriott, 1976:123). While one can expect several versions of the
placement of peoples, Marriott seems to be implying that there is only one,
and it may be found in the transactional pattern.

If there is any doubt that Marriott is imputing consensus about the
rank ordering of peoples let me cite his own commentary. This occurs in one
section where he says there is agreement in the literature that Hindus do
not disagree about the placements at the extremities, a point that I find
questionable. From there, Marriott proceeds and discusses the possibility
for the middle rungs about which there is some controversy between
anthropologists. He says (1976:117),

A finding of greater disorder and diversity in behaviour at the
middle rather than at the top and bottom would be especially
surprising, since it would be contrary to the usual finding of
greater conformity of behaviour in the middle ranks of any
stratified system (e.g. Homans, 1961:336-358). It would also be
contrary to the finding of sharp consensus on rank throughout
Hindu caste systems (Hiebert 1971:60-6; Freed 1963; Marriott 1968b).
So he imputes consensus pertaining throughout the caste order. With regard to transactional ideas, in his formulation to "give" only means to be "superior" and at the top; to receive only means to be at the bottom; to both "receive and give" places one in the middle rung; and not to transact at all is slotted at the same level as that last. The diagram below is Marriott's which summarises his points.

**Four Tactics in Ranked Transactions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High rank</th>
<th>Low rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>optimal</td>
<td>minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asymmetrical</td>
<td>symmetrical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exchange</td>
<td>non-exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Brahmin)</td>
<td>(Vaisya)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>maximal</td>
<td>maximal</td>
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<tr>
<td>symmetrical</td>
<td>symmetrical</td>
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<tr>
<td>exchange</td>
<td>exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Kṣatrya)</td>
<td>(Śūdra)</td>
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Since Marriott maintains that the pattern of transactions can yield the rank order of peoples in a locality, and since the "formula" for gleaning the rank relation is that the "givers" are superior to the "receivers", he seems to be implying that there is total absence of rejection of the definitions articulated by the rules of the transaction, that those who give regard themselves as superior to those who receive and vice-versa, and where those not involved also agree. Thus Marriott seems to be implying consensus about the positions which appear in an exchange. Marriott's argument may be construed this way: food exchanged exhibits a pattern of rank order, following from the idea that the receiver is lower than the giver (one of Marriott's formulae). This appears to rest on the presumption that people agree with their own and others' locations in the ranking. Since there is consensus then the patterning of the exchanges reveals the patterning of the rank order of peoples. However,

1. See 1976:122. The *varṇas* are said to be exemplars of each transactional type (see ibid:123-129).
I would argue that one cannot presume consensus, and if this is so, then all that would remain of Marriott's rank ordering of peoples is a pattern of the transactions, where the placements do not derive from mutual agreement but from other factors. Types of practices which indicate a ranked scheme cannot be taken as people's versions of the rank, only what it is, a pattern of possible practices involved in food transfers. This alerts us to the methodological dangers in that where one usual danger is not to discern that practices might not tally with the vocalised ideals, another is to presume that practices reflect the ideas that people hold, which need not automatically follow. It is the danger of behaviourism that Marriott espouses. Staying within the terms of Marriott's scheme, one suspects that at least the encumbents of two positions might not agree with the outline of placements. One possibility refers to those at the bottom, who do participate by receiving; and the other to those who withdraw, the "symmetrical non-exchange type" more easily remembered as the "Vaiśyas", the varṇa exemplar of this type.

The fact that "pessimal transactors" at the bottom of the caste ladder typically receive from all other castes does not necessarily mean that they accept their positions at the bottom. More simply, just because they accept food we cannot presume that by this action they endorse their own position of lower caste that comes with the logic of the transaction (receiving means lower positioning). There is some indication that the lowest do cavil about their placement as inherent in the washermen's legend of origin, detailed earlier. Although commentators, like Marriott, are wont to take it for granted that the Untouchable in general accepts his position, there is some suggestion that this might not be the case, for when reforms are mooted, no Untouchable, let alone a vast grouping of them, rises in protest shouting stop, insisting that this must not happen since their polluted state would spoil the Śiva temple; nor that they must reject the newly-found lack of restrictions and refrain from using the tap because their polluting affects might spoil the water for the higher castes. Such capacities are part and parcel of belonging to the lowest rung of humans as defined by the caste ideas and are not to be dismissed as irrelevant. So, when reforms are proclaimed and there is protest it generally comes from those at the upper reaches of the caste order and to my knowledge never from those most intimately concerned. If these people strongly believe in their positioning at the bottom as being rightful, we would expect its expression in some way. Of the lowest, the possibility that they may not agree with the outline of the caste placements is not probed by Marriott. Yet it is such people's

1. In fact the police bar their entry, in Nepal.
postures which are the most likely to render a consensus version of caste ranking untenable. What can be said of the other problematic category, the "minimal transactor" who is involved in what Marriott calls "symmetric non-exchange"?

This type is interesting for he refuses to participate. Now it is with the refusals that choice is being exercised, whereas it is unclear with accepting, for it can be either voluntary or not. While accepting food can be taken to illustrate either the acceptance of rank positioning, or leaves it a blank, the refusal to participate may be interpreted as a challenge to the slot that could be accorded by virtue of the acceptance of the food. Marriott seems to be implying that the latter in fact occurs, specifically that the non-players are seeking higher caste positions. This indicates dissatisfaction with their allocation and a desire for change. Expressly describes them as "actors seeking higher ranks as non-receivers" and their tactics as a "means of rising above or avoiding a fall into the lower ranks of the system" (ibid:121). All of which is curious, given his argument about the certainty in the middle rungs. At least we can say that it indicates that there must be two positional possibilities, that which is "aspired" to which is the "higher" rank, and that which the incumbents are said to occupy, which must have some reference or somebody's imposed reference. If anything, Marriott appears to be arguing against himself for his exposition outlines what initially he set out to disprove, that there is not "disorder" at this level, but order and consensus (ibid:117).¹ In other words, if people are "aspiring" to other reaches, then there is not acceptance of their position, presumably as defined by others. For our purposes what is interesting about the members of this category, if we take one group, the Banias of Carstairs's study, which Marriott refers to as an instance of this type, is that they are merchants. As merchants they would have the wherewithal not to have to participate in food transactions, not to have to "receive" food from others. In a sense one may say post hoc that they can side-step the imposition of "dominance" that Marriott says comes through being fed (ibid:119-121 and see 1968:169-70). Consequently, not only can their non-participation be interpreted as challenging the caste levels, it can also be interpreted as not having to get involved in the alignment that can ensue through their being fed – the gaining of "dominance" by the feast-throwers

¹ For this his mentor is Romans, oddly enough for he takes others, especially Dumont, to task for imposing western concepts in the Hindu context yet here Marriott is taking reference from a whole theory devised for the west which demands that the order exhibit conformity to the norms and particularly at the middle rungs of the stratified system, for no other reason than it appears in, or is said to appear in, other stratified systems (see Marriott, 1976:117).
and the "securing" of "dependence" by the feasters, to use Marriott's terms. Put differently, it is significant that those who do not participate belong to the merchant occupational group thus indicating that where there are economic resources, people may choose to withdraw, while others who do not have this kind of backing may only be participating, accepting food from others because they have little choice in the matter. Let me put it this way: where there is refusal to play, it may be inferred that there is a refusal to accept the definition of the situation, whatever this may mean for those withdrawing, whereas where participation does occur, as with the Untouchable, it cannot be inferred that they are not challenging the situation also, though there is no expression of this. In short, playing the game does not necessarily mean agreeing with one's placement therein.

Thus, there are two dimensions to the food transfer phenomenon. Firstly, the set of ideas around ontological notions about the transfer of influence, and the implementation of those cultural ideas in a system of behaviour by particular people who may or may not agree with their specific allocation in the rank order. Both ideas are indigenous for one is about a system of rules and its own inherent logic, while the other is about people's view of a rank ordering of themselves. If with the latter, there is divergence of opinion, this does not make it any the less cultural but only raises the problem that if there is discrepancy of opinion about particular placements, why is there compliance with rules which indicate acceptance of position? To account for this, one would have to move beyond simple exchange.

In a traditional Hindu state like Nepal, the state allocates the caste positions of the entire population. Whether all the subjects agree with the arrangement is irrelevant. If anything, the outline imposed is likely to be a view shared by those closely associated with the state power, rather than by those who have been subjugated to it. Nevertheless, whether they agree to the patterning does not matter for the laws are promulgated and each person is beholden to comply to the caste requirements pertaining to him (See Sharma, 1975: 278-85). Consensus is not a necessary prerequisite for the operation of caste rank even in a traditional Hindu state, but some kind of power is. Turning to Marriott's discussion, there are both similarities and differences between what pertain in India\(^1\) and the traditional Nepalese kingdom.

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1. Of course, one of the difficulties is to pinpoint what Marriott has in mind, sometimes it is the contemporary Republic of India, sometimes the traditional Hindu state with the "Kṣatriya king" at the helm. Here, presumably he is relying on the ethnographic data for the exchanges.
In both contexts, one can assume that it is the power holders who are forcing their definition on the population concerned. In Nepal it is patent and illustrated in the legal code, while in the Indian community it is less blatant yet most observers in the field point to the "dominant caste" of the locality and it would be its members who would have the resources to induce conformity to the definitions and the associated rules. And one may presume that they have backing either directly or indirectly from the capital, the centre of power. I say "indirect", for non-action has repercussions in that it does not restrain those in power at the local level from implementing their desires and decisions, even when these go contrary to the nation's express policies. Where Marriott takes an antithetical approach claiming that the operation of the caste order does not require state backing, this is far too easy and the dismissal of Srinivas without discussion is unwarranted. What appears to be comparable in both contexts, is that there is the enforcing of a pattern of behaviour which gives off signs of caste position through acceptance of food, but where those who accept it do not have the resources to challenge the system, let alone their caste placement within the rank order of persons. Yet the similarity stops at this point for, with a traditional state, the ruler is a god king whose responsibility is to impose the sacred laws, including the laws of castes, whereas in India, there is the Republic with its laws ostensibly discriminating in the favour of the disadvantaged castes (and tribals).¹ In India, it is the locally powerful, in each context who are in control of the matter, but without scriptural backing and therefore power is naked. So naked that Marriott's givings and receivings appear naive, providing a framework which omits to stress that it is primarily those with an economic base who would become the distributors while the others would have little choice but to become their clients. When we bear in mind Marriott's behaviouristic proposition cited at the outset that "power ranking" arises from "transactions", then surely his focus is ill-advised since he starts mid-way. To even begin to distribute feasts, ownership of economic resources is an imperative first condition. So, we may ask, does "power ranking" derive from the givings and receivings of food, or does power rest on the prior necessity, the economic resources which enable some to become the distributors? All that Marriott's formulation can refer to is the cluster of potential leaders where the following (the eaters) will channel which of these is to become the leader through their supporting one or some of those who have economic power, but it cannot describe the

¹ The complex power relations obtaining in the kingdom of Nepal are detailed later in the thesis.
complete situation at all. It is the position of advantage which determines who is eligible to stand and it is this which is the basis, while the givings and receivings are simply the field, the "contests", as Marriott says. These, I would agree, must be viewed as secondary, for the contest only determines which of the already advantaged will win, and not the range of relations pertaining to the complex. As for those without economic resources, they are in this position before the game begins and afterwards as well and it makes little difference to their condition, whether landlord X or Y wins, for, whoever wins, the eaters are still without the economic resources of the distributors. This has bearings on Marriott's other proposal, specifically that the transactions generate caste ranking.

Within this perspective it is not so much a matter of castes being endorsed, but more a matter of making a following for a faction leader, and that it might appear to be caste formulations only arises through the nature of Hindu ideas about accepting food. Had the pay-off been articulated in any other idiom then there would be no doubt as to the nature of the transaction. What is sociologically interesting is that the pay-off can revolve around something which is immediately consumable (and perishable) as cooked food. The fact that with this idiom there are associated ideas about influence from the giver to the receiver renders the outcome of an economic relationship, one that assumes the definitions of an ontological kind, rather than reveal the situation for what it might be. It renders the transaction of a caste nature, the playing of caste games according to the rules giving the impression that players agree with all its allocations. If some, however, are being forced to play, then it is acquiescence to a particular power relationship and not a situation of mutual ranking. If Marriott means, and he seems to, that exchanges are undertaken voluntarily because they want to participate, and that the participants, with a knowledge of its implications through transacting, are generating caste differences then he is simplifying a situation where the lower caste person's choice could well be a forced one, for there may be no other alternatives but to play, a suggestion that is likely, given that some in the universe (for example Marriott's "non-exchange" type) do withdraw from transactions. If a person is in fact acquiescing, then it is not a matter of neat interdependence derived from mutual needs that Marriott appears to be implying, a point especially stressed in his earlier statement, that

Gaining dominance over others through feeding them or securing dependence on others through being fed by them appear to be comprehensive goals of actors in the system of transactions (Marriott, 1968:169).
but also embedded in his later article (1976:112, 120-1, 125-6). If
behaviour does not necessarily tally with a person's ideas since behaviour
can be induced by coercion, then the possibility that the situation entails
one of caste endorsement is not satisfactorily demonstrated. To render such
instances as mutual ranking would simplify and thereby falsify what is
involved in the complexities of a phenomenon dealing with cooked food. If
for some the food is welcomed, and there are few if any alternative ways of
securing it, then they are forced to accept the total package including the
label for in this context food does not come without its accompanying
designation. Therefore, in this context, what is ostensibly caste
significations might be more the outcome of having to accept the economic
situation, warts and all. Marriott's contention regarding the "generating"
of castes through food transactions or the ranking of peoples though the
pattern only follows if people are participating voluntarily, and with choices,
otherwise it is an unfortunate but unavoidable accompaniment of this kind of
phenomenon dealing with food. If my suggestions are valid, then those who
are acquiescing in the situation will not have a view of the caste locations
in accord with the outline Marriott is offering. Moreover, if food acceptance
is to be taken as an index to their positioning, and if they have no
alternative but to accept then their particular positioning is more accurately
being pushed by the situation, but hardly the comfortable-sounding "arising
from". Nor can one agree, even with the modification, that here there is the
endorsement of positions, for this too would only apply when all transactors
are willingly playing the game according to the rules and agreeing on all
the players' allocations to their respective positions. We have seen that
those who can avoid having to play, do so. But what does their
non-participation mean for Marriott's model of the caste rank? If there is
a scheme where positioning depends on what a person does, but some choose to
do nothing, then it creates problems. They cannot really be slotted in
anywhere. Marriott's bizarre terminology for this type, transactor of the
"symmetrical non-exchange", hints at the bind he is in, without having to
confess to it. That this type cannot be readily located is to be detected
in Marriott's recourse to other references, as well as his fluctuations in
placing this type.

In the end Marriott is either forced to become arbitrary, cloaked by
systems phraseology for there are no relations of giving and receiving which
constitute the indices of positioning; or, on the other hand, he is forced to
rely on opinion, since it is not exactly clear what he is talking about:
An actor whose overall strategy resembles that of a sociometric isolate. This actor is evidently self-sufficient and unchanging in substance-code, since the total flow of transactions is minimized to no output and no input, for a perfect total of zero transactions. Yet an actor following such a strategy in the South Asian scheme enjoys a net transactional rank at the median point (zero) — halfway up and halfway down (ibid:119).

If this is meant to be derived from the formulations of the transactional code, it is arbitrary for a person who does not participate, since the indices of that scheme require giving and receiving for a rank placement. If he is referring to his other proposal that "persons trying to decide about rank tend....to rely primarily on the evidence provided by current or recent transactions" (ibid:114), then regarding the non-players one must ask whose knowledge is being resorted to? Theirs, others in the society, or the dominant caste? Nor is his treatment of the non-transactor very informative, for on the diagram he is placed at the same level as the Kṣatriya the exemplars of the "maximal type", yet later when referring to the "caste genera" of the classical formulations, he specifically calls the minimal transactor the "Vaiśya", which must mean that he would be ranked below the Kṣatriya. And sometimes he even treats the Vaiśya, the "minimal type" as if he stands outside the system likening him to the saṁnyāsi, as we have seen earlier. The plain fact of the matter is that if a scheme is founded on differences in types of actions, then when people do not indulge, one cannot locate their placement according to inaction. If otherslocate them somewhere but they themselves disagree then the resultant outline of the caste rankings cannot be one based on consensus, as implicit in Marriott's approach.

If there are some who choose not to participate then at least one point can be inferred from the fact that they are typically merchants which is that they probably do not have to rely on the subsistence food distributed by the upper castes. The Nepalese data indicate this also, since the top Buddhist castes can remain aloof from Parbatya twice-born. What is especially important is that they reject the definition of their caste position as imposed by the Gorkali rulers who place them in the middle rungs (as Matwāli). Nevertheless, even if they deny the caste outline, it makes no difference, for the state enforces its laws according to caste categorisation on those people and behaviour commensurate with that placement is made a legal imperative. All this has theoretic implications. What the Nepalese evidence reveals is that there is absence of consensus and the presence of power in the operation of caste positionings, whereas Marriott implies the opposite, that there is consensus and the absence of power. To take it as axiomatic,
as Marriott appears to be doing, that the caste system will exhibit "order" without entertaining the possibility that it is likely to be somebody's version of what the order ought to entail, which they can force others to accept, places, I think, too much faith in the illuminating qualities of transactions. The point comes out with the use of one word, for Marriott talks of "dominance" rather than domination. In that Marriott's approach does not allow for "cultural variations" in opinion (leaving aside his problematic shifting treatment of the non-participating Vaiśya,) nor for the operation of power which distils one official scheme, then the transactional model of the rank order of peoples, is found wanting in this context. In the end, we may still ask the question of Marriott, "whose model, and a model of what?"
3. The Caste Order as Hierarchy of Power?

As we know, Dumont's thesis maintains that high caste "status" is discrete from power where power refers to "political power" and where "status" then depends on a religious value. Even though there are clearly other significant differences between Dumont and my general approach to caste and caste phenomena, on this particular issue I would not strongly disagree since caste, in terms of the cultural formulation relates to ontological differentiation.¹ One of the most provocative antitheses to Dumont's specific proposal is made by Marglin (1977). Of her own argument Marglin says that it entails a "re-examination of the theory of varṇa in terms of power" (ibid:249). Otherwise one's curiosity is aroused by the proposition that,

Power is not seen as an undifferentiable entity that one category possess or does not possess - but as a differentiable entity present in various forms in different varṇas (1977:249).

Yet when Marglin does become more definite, power is then depicted in numerous ways, sometimes belonging to one set of ideas and other times to another. Reflecting on the assortment, one is not entirely convinced that her analytic epithet "power" has been illustrated by her exposition.

One of her concerns is to show the presence of the "hierarchy of power" in the context of the "hierarchy of varṇas". As well, Marglin's account of the caste system appears to be largely directed against Dumont's thesis that hierarchy is independent of power as a general formulation, and especially that the Brahmin's caste position ("status") at the pinnacle of the rank order must be understood as pertaining to power and is not discrete from it (ibid:255). There are then two major interrelated issues, the case for the relevance of power as an antithesis to Dumont, and perhaps more importantly her contribution regarding the nature and structuring of power as it pertains to the varṇas. This is presented as a new approach for she titles her work, "Power, Purity and Pollution: aspects of the caste system reconsidered". Let us begin with her case for the relevance of power for "caste status".

1. How this is imposed on historical peoples is definitely political if we take the Nepalese case, but this is a different problem. It remains that the castes when considered within the framework of Hindu ideas rest on assumptions about ontological natures and not upon those of power, whether political or economic. This does not deny the possibility that some in the culture may see their caste position as politically defined, or unjustified and so on.
If Marglin can show that "power", other than political power, is relevant and important, though this itself is interesting in introducing new data and perspectives if it eventuates that way, nevertheless, it would not negate Dumont's central position for when he uses the concept "power", he is specifically referring to political power. The problem then is to consider the three major points Marglin makes as her case against Dumont, about the relevance of power for the idea of "caste status".

All the varṇas, according to Marglin, have some kind of power (1977:249-50). Specifically the Brahmin's power is "mystic or cosmological power". With this suggestion however Dumont's general approach would not be in disaccord since he uses power in a very restricted sense, political power through the legitimate use of force (Dumont, 1972:197), and to that extent, Marglin's is a non-argument. Her second point appears to move closer to the issues of the debate in that she maintains that mystic power entails "control over things", bringing political advantages into the discussion, and she substantiates her point by referring to the Brahmin's dominion over men and cattle and ultimately proclaims that the Brahmin is "dependent on no one" (ibid:251). Thus according to Marglin, the Brahmin has power in a domain other than the mystical for he need rely on nobody in the social order. The issue is not as clear-cut as Marglin suggests for there is also material indicating an alliance of powers between Brahmin and Kṣatriya. In no unambiguous terms, Manu declares that the Kṣatriya and the Brahmin are interdependent:

Kṣatriyas prosper not without Brahmanas; Brahmanas prosper not without Kṣatriyas; Brahmanas and Kṣatriyas, being closely united, prosper in this (world) and in the next (IX 322, in Buhler (tr.), 1959:399).

Where the matter is more straightforward, the evidence Marglin offers is not very impressive for it refers to imputed advantages in the direct order of castes occurring during emergency situations. These moreover are presented as overlapping powers where the higher caste person controls his own sphere or "function" as well as that of the others below, where Marglin evokes the metaphor of "concentric circles" to illustrate the nature of the relationships. Thus for her third point, regarding the relations between the caste order and power, not only is power said to be relevant but also

1. It should be noted here that Marglin perceives caste and varṇa as interrelated (see footnote 12, ibid: 24-5) and not separate systems.
2. Though Marglin ignores this verse, it is preceded by one she actually cites (see Marglin, 1977:252) to argue the case for the "impotence" of the Kṣatriya's power, vis-a-vis the Brahmin's.
its-distribution is arranged as a scheme entailing a number of concentric circles, where the highest varṇa person has his own power and encompasses the powers of the next and the next, and similarly for the other castes (ibid:252).  

Specifically, Marglin argues that the higher castes are permitted under abnormal circumstances to act in a manner which is usually prohibited to them, and to adopt the occupations of the lower castes, but where such relaxations do not apply in the "inverse" order. It is only a one-way advantage. Surely, if such a significant matter as hierarchical encompassing of power is at issue, then one would expect something more substantial than what extraordinary situations may provide when rules can be waived. What is interesting is that even though the upper castes may follow the tasks usually allotted to those of the lower ranks during emergency, there are some deviations which are just not countenanced at all. On this topic, Manu's exposition (X,74-122 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:419-29) initially outlines what is to be done and avoided by the different castes, and proceeds after that to detail what may happen in times of distress, as Marglin notes, but the remissions only go to a certain extent and prohibitions are still applied. For example, even when agriculture is permitted to the upper caste person, nonetheless they must refrain from using the plough to "avoid injury" (X, 82-4).  

Similarly, when trade is permitted during the periods of crises, some commodities must not be sold and are totally out of bounds, and on this score Manu is particularly vocal about the consequences that would befall a high caste person who diverges from the requirements within the exceptional allowances. If taken up, this would render a Brahmin an "outcast" or a "Śūdra" according to the commodity concerned (X 92, in Buhler (tr.), 1969:422) or he would be reborn as a worm (X, 91, in Buhler (tr.), 1969:422). Then there are some actions like acquiring property in a reprehensible way, which demand that if the individual is to restore his position, he must first of all return the gift and then perform astringent meditation, ṭapasya (X, III, or in Buhler (tr.), 1969:425). What all this amounts to is that by not heeding the complexities, Marglin presents an oversimplified account. To be sure emergency exits are available but that there are limits also cannot be ignored and these indicate that the retention of caste level through appropriate behaviour still applies, despite the acceptance of breaches in some instances. Therefore the "encompassing" thesis is, I think, somewhat compromised and suggests that Marglin's conceptualisation is not keyed into indigenous ideas.

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1. This structuring Marglin also applies to the range of powers said to characterize the varṇa (ibid:251).
2. Though the translator adds "living thing" in brackets, as we know, the Earth is regarded as a goddess and this is probably the relevant feature for the prohibition.
This is important because Marglin seems to be concerned with depicting caste ideas from the indigenous point of view, for she takes Dumont to task for injecting a western approach.

All in all, the three aspects of the argument proferred to illustrate the idea that (high) "status" is not, as Dumont maintains, independent of power, but inextricably connected with it, has not moved very far, since first of all, the Brahmin's particular power is religious as Dumont insists even though Marglin calls it "mythical or cosmological". Secondly, following Manu we can say that if the Brahmin, the incumbents of the highest "status" is not independent as Marglin insists, but is especially bound up with the Ksatriya and will only "prosper" if they stay together, then the matter is not as straightforward as Marglin would have us believe. Thirdly, if it is primarily the exceptions to caste mores which reveal comprehensive powers and privileges, according to the scheme of hierarchical encompassing, then this does not constitute a persuasive argument for the presence of hierarchical power pertaining to the "hierarchy of varṇas". Now let us turn to the second problem that power is seen "as a differentiable entity present in various forms in different varṇas," and is structured hierarchically.

What is this "differentiable entity"? It can refer to many things. First of all Marglin relates it to the varṇa powers, specifically "mystic power", "power of arms", "power of production" and the "duty of serving the higher varṇas" (ibid:249). Yet one would like to know why these are designated "powers" rather than functions, especially since later Marglin herself refers to them as functions. They only become a power by injecting the English word before the relevant function or capacity. Then one also notices that all the terms of the stipulated range do not necessarily illustrate that power constitutes the leit-motif of that range, for there is problematic capacity of the Śudra, "servitude", which is hardly a power but a political relation of subordination at worst, or at best a position in life, and which is referred to by Marglin herself as a non-power (ibid:249). Presumably since it holds the possibility of opposition as for example "non-power" as to "power", it can be of use to Marglin, for her concern is also with opposition. So we come to the second aspect of her thesis, that these different sorts of powers are related as oppositions. But then, out of nowhere, there appears another range of powers which can be more aptly described as types of control.

So one finds a shift in ground, where power now refers to areas of authority and responsibility, for which Marglin cites Manu, where different domains are entrusted to the different varṇa types, specifically cattle to
the Vaishyas, and all created beings to the Brahmans and to the Kshatriya (ibid:250). The changeover is extensive for now the plane of discourse moves to control over external things, cattle and all created things, unlike Marglin's initial proposal that power is seen as a differentiable entity present in various forms in the varnas. This differentiable entity, power, first of all, is subjected to the structural treatment of oppositions, where the twice-born castes are opposed to the Sudra, as the powerful to the powerless (ibid:250-1). Later the powers of the two top castes associated with the newly imposed dimensions, control, are linked together as having power over all created things and are opposed to the Vaiśya's power over cattle. However, with this there are difficulties in procedure for opposition is entirely arbitrary since there is no idea of a contrary here in the spheres of "cattle" and "all created beings", simply different spheres of responsibility of greater and lesser magnitude. The move in procedure does not alarm Marglin, but in fact suits her purpose, allowing her to introduce the idea of overlapping powers, right alongside that of the structuring of powers in opposition. To compound the problems, there is the cavalier treatment of the data in equating all Kṣatriyas with the king.

Slipping in all the Kṣatriyas with the king, provides the required category for the Kṣatriyas' location alongside the Brahmans who together are said to have extensive control, in opposition to (or of greater magnitude than) the Vaiśya's limited control. Yet, this is not what the text Marglin cites (ibid:250) actually says,

For when the Lord of creatures (Pragâpati) created cattle, he made them over to the Vaiśya; to the Brahmana and to the king he entrusted all created beings (in Buhler (tr.), 1969 : 400).

So with this new area, spheres of control, there is only one encumbent for the Kṣatriya category, the king. Though bereft of Kṣatriyas, Marglin proceeds as if they were there to come to the final opposition, that obtaining between the Kṣatriya and the Brahmans, which becomes particularly interesting for she would disavow the opposition of the religious and political, or sacred and profane and any of the other contraries (ibid:246-7, 255). How does she handle this "opposition between the Brahmans and the Kṣatriyas"?

Imputing an oppositional relation between the Brahmin and the Kṣatriya could present a difficulty for Marglin since, as we have already noted, she rejects Dumont's formulation of a distinction between such oppositions, yet, having taken such a step she is without a ready-made rationale for distinguishing oppositions here. So what does she do? Marglin simply insists
that the relation is oppositional, refers to the Brahmīns's mystic power contrasting it with the Kṣatriya's power of dominion, as presumably to be gleaned in the terms "brahmin (neut.) and kṣatriya ", repeats the myth of origin of the varṇas from the different body parts of Puruṣa and then proceeds to chastise Dumont for wanting to make all power relate to force (ibid:250-1). Her comment is an irrelevant distraction while her own argument is left unsubstantiated, if opposition is to pertain. Having opted for presenting a case of oppositions and encompassings, this necessitates a demonstration of such structuring arrangements of terms, and it is not sufficient for Marglin to offer what are simply differences and assert that these stand in an oppositional relationship. If her account of opposition entails a mismanagement in procedures and a warping of the data, similar problems occur in the handling of the other dimension of hierarchy, the "encompassing".

Marglin outlines "encompassing" as a situation where the Brahmīns' powers are said to encompass all others; next comes the Kṣatriya's which only go to his own and those below....and so forth (ibid:251). The argument is heavy-handed, for, though there is data to show that the Brahmīns as ritual specialists have access to the gods, there is nothing in the texts cited by Marglin to indicate that the "Brahmins have power over this whole ordered cosmos through knowledge of the revealed word and the sacrifice" (ibid:251). Her claim so maximizes the power of the Brahmīn that it falsifies the nature of knowledge and ritual which are better understood as means to tap the forces of the cosmos, not to supplant them, which is what Marglin's point would mean. However this depiction is imperative otherwise she has no support for the suggestion that the Brahmīn's power is the all-encompassing and in turn no basis for her structuring of relations in terms of the concentric circles idea. To be sure, according to Hindu thought, Brahmīns have special powers to get at the forces of the cosmos, but they do not have "power over" it. Therefore, it would seem that the case for the encompassing of powers in a hierarchical order is an artifact of the .analysis where the data is adjusted to fit the model, in this instance. Moreover, from the formal point of view, Marglin changes from the frame of oppositional hierarchy to that of differential hierarchy, where now greater and lesser powers are said to pertain. It would seem however that there is no lynch pin which can reconcile Marglin's two frames for differentiation, the alleged opposition and encompassing between the terms, and the concentric encompassing via differences in magnitude. Let me spell this out.
At one point, with regard to functions (power of twice-born to powerlessness of Śūdra) differentiation is determined by alleged opposition, later on it is via quantification according to greater or lesser units of control (over all created, over cattle etc.). However, if in one context, differentiation between the terms is based on opposition (either/or) subsequently can it be based on differentiation in terms of "greater/lesser"? Can one have it both ways? Then there is the inconsistency in one context, control over cattle is said to be an opposition to control over all created things, whereas half a page further on, this is depicted as a differentiation based on greater and lesser degrees of power (ibid:250). That is one problem relating to the frames, which has repercussions for the validity of application. Can one say that in a system of degrees of power down the scale, that the system incorporates the Śūdras, the bearers of non-power? If it is non-power then it cannot belong to a hierarchy of power in a scale of power because it is outside the sphere of discourse (in fact it stands as the contrary of power). It would seem that Marglin's allocation of terms to the model is somewhat arbitrary, for the relevance of non-power only holds in the oppositional frame but it cannot be imposed in the context of the differential magnitude frame. Expressed differently, one can say that this relation of greater and lesser powers does not entail opposition, nor can it be developed from opposition. Marglin, can either have the hierarchy of opposites, power and non-power, or the differential where the greater encompasses the lesser, and the lesser the least etc., but not both. This means that, on the one hand, if Marglin opts for the differential encompassing scheme, the powerless Śūdra is left out, in which case, power is not an entity inherent in all the varṇas, as Marglin would have it; or, on the other hand, if she opts for the hierarchy of opposites, those who are powerless can be included, but then there is little advance beyond Dumont. If the structuring of the complex differentiation of power is inadequate from the formal point of view, what of Marglin's conceptualisation of the "totality"?

When it comes to Marglin's account of the totality for the hierarchical encompassing of powers, one is utterly perplexed, for it rests on an alleged "harmonious whole" which arises in times of distress when the higher varṇas can take on the jobs of the lower castes. Presenting her case in this way, Marglin says,

Lingat points out that it is precisely hierarchy which transforms the specialization of functions from 'a fragmentation of autonomous groups, mutually isolated' (Lingat 1973:38) into a harmonious whole (ibid:252).
If one thinks about it, what does it mean and does it make sense? Does it mean that the long-standing merchant welcomes the Brahmin's newly legitimated hustling into the market as another practitioner? And similarly with the other varṇas? Nor is the point unimportant, for Marglin repeats it again later in her exposition, when she says, that,

All these rules express the hierarchical principle which underlies not a fragmentary society where separate specialized groups co-exist but a whole where the higher groups encompass the lower groups in terms of power (ibid:264).

If there are problems regarding the formal terms of the structuring model, there are also problems regarding the significance of her concepts regarding varṇa differentiation.

On the one hand, there are the different sorts of powers which Marglin says are present in the varṇas, and which range, it will be recalled, from "mystic" to "power of production" (leaving aside the complications that servitude provokes) so presumably the point Marglin is making is that power in different forms is present in the varṇa person. Here, power, since it is a differentiable entity, takes various forms, so there are the various "sorts of powers". Yet, there is the complication for Marglin also depicts power as a sphere of control of greater and lesser magnitude and not just different sorts of powers. So there is the additional idea that the varṇas are distinguished by differential degrees of power from greater to lesser in her formulations which relate to varying degrees of control over external things. Not only are there two versions of power (the different sorts of power; and the varying extent of control) but there is also a shift of locus where one refers to a power present in the caste person, and the other to a caste person's control over external things. The two together present a dubious mix for in one context, power inheres in the person (mystic power etc.) and relates to different sorts of power: yet in the other power relates to the varying degrees of control over domains of greater and lesser magnitude which is outside the person. Where the varying degrees of control, the "overlapping of powers", part of her description would pertain, it would have to apply to externalities (the spheres of control), but where the idea of the "presence of power" in the individual pertains, it would have to apply to externalities (the spheres of control), but where the idea of the "presence of power" in the individual pertains, it would have to refer to the other context, the inherent capacities like "mystic power" etc. But if this is so, then what is alleged to be the "overlapping" entity cannot be found in the person, for it is external to him. In other words, Marglin's own contribution, regarding the nature of differences between the varṇas
as entailing a relationship structured in hierarchical encompassing, like that of concentric overlaps, only applies to externalities controlled by different varṇas, and not in the varṇa person. So the exciting possibility of her thesis that power is inherent in the individual and takes a particular hierarchical form is not realized. The odd thing is that the one type of person, the Untouchable (or Vāhya) who has a specific power is left entirely out of the discussion. If he had been incorporated then perhaps a different orientation would have been necessitated, and with this an entirely different outcome might have ensued, for with the Untouchable especially one is forced to tackle the possibility that caste relates to the ontological nature of being. This means that distinctions relate to inherent differences and not to be viewed as distinctions simply based on a relationship (oppositional and encompassing). Though Marglin comes close to this idea of differentiation in her suggestion that different sorts of powers are "present in the varṇas" she gets side-tracked by her concern with hierarchical structuring of relations and the material is manipulated accordingly. If one takes it for granted that there is a hierarchy of varṇas and one goes looking for a hierarchy of powers, then it is unlikely that one will be able to identify the latter convincingly for the former is simply an anthropologist's construct of the caste order, which does not tally with the indigenous approach to classification of humans which is firstly differentiation and secondly evaluation of those differences.
CHAPTER 10

THE NATURE OF CASTE DIFFERENTIATION

Marriott's rendition of the caste order which is said to be neither oppositional nor hierarchical is important if for no other reason than it provides an alternative version to Dumont, unlike Marglin's which remains committed to the general Dumontian line, despite the variation through introducing the significance of "power". Additionally, since it could be presumed from Marriott's title, "Hindu Transactions: Diversity without Dualism", that he is adopting an approach which is comparable to that of this thesis, it warrants some comments, despite the shortcomings of the transactional approach in general, in order to bring out the differences between his approach and mine. Marriott's approach is not only entirely different from the one I have been attempting to formulate, but what he offers is ultimately dualistic.

Marriott presents a variety of factors pertinent to the caste order, for he says that castes constitute a series of grades of power (from Brahman to kṣetra - "totality" to "servitude") and also that castes relate to a range of differently constituted substances (sometimes from homogenous to heterogeneous, other times, from subtle to gross) and though he often talks of the powers and the substances as if they were discrete, he also insists that together they form a unitary concept (1976:137). Then castes can also mean four possible tactics for he regards actor and action as merely aspects of each other as mentioned before. He also makes the same point in different words when referring to substance-codes, castes, rank and tactics, asserting that "All of these are regarded as naturally coincidental or synonymous" (ibid:137). Thus caste diversity is bound up with all of these, but where "purity" (or "impurity") is conspicuously absent. It would seem that Marriott is attempting to turn Dumont's thesis completely on its head: instead of "caste status" being accorded centrality, it is transaction (the old debate continues); instead of Dumont's construct, "the vulnerability of the pure to the impure", for Marriott it is caste interaction, where the transfer entails the transmission of "superior substance particles". Instead of Dumont's proposal that caste "status" is discrete from power manipulation, for Marriott they are intertwined; and instead of the portrayal of the universe as the hierarchical encompassing of one inferior term by its superior opposite, Marriott presents "diversity". Now though Marriott would

1. Which presumably are to stand for "impure" and "pure" of the discipline's usual terminology (ibid:123).
avow "diversity" as a characteristic of Hindu phenomena, in the end, he proffers two sets of oppositions, despite his disclaiming of dualities (ibid:109, 113,137). What is of concern then is Marriott's rendition of the caste order, as a system of transactions or transactors, and his case for the relevance of "diversity" as against the charge that his version of the caste order is actually structured around two pairs of oppositions.

Since different kinds of powers and substance-codes are the relevant factors involved in his rendition of castes (or types of transactors), then an easy way to illustrate what Marriott has in mind is to bring some of his major points together in a summary chart, using his own words (see ibid:123-9).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Transactors</th>
<th>Powers &amp; Substance-codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximal (Kṣatriya)</td>
<td>&quot;The control of land and labour is a common power of all these dominant, maximizing groups&quot; (ibid:115). ....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The high turnover in all these gross and varied media is designed to extract more essences, to achieve the greatest quality and potency in subsistence, action and group substance-code&quot; (ibid:125).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal (Vaiśya)</td>
<td>&quot;In transactional terms, the power of these groups is felt to be conserved in the self-contained integrity of their substance-code, and in their power thereby to generate wealth (e.g. Carstairs 1957: 119-123)&quot; (ibid:127).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>....&quot;those with productive power (vīśa) grow grain, rear cattle, trade, supply their betters and pay taxes&quot; (ibid:128).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimal (Śūdra)</td>
<td>&quot;Intakes in such low media have their values, especially coming as they do from superior castes and so does the cooked food taken in payments. But relative rank and power are surrendered in return for these valuable receipts&quot; (ibid:128).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The bodily substance-codes of these low castes are necessarily expected to become the most unselectively heterogeneous, their powers diluted and restricted, their temperaments gross and animal-like....the lowest among them are masters of negative transformation - of destruction by contrast with the Brahman's creation&quot; (ibid:128).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimal (Brahmin)</td>
<td>....the most selective, epicurean-like receivers, Brahmans typically accept substance-code only of the very perfect form (ibid:128). As possessors of the greatest power (śakti) to make transformations between grosser and subtler substance-codes&quot; (ibid:128).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Brahmans take the highest place through their own divinity, through their exclusive pessimal exchanges with still higher more generous gods&quot; (ibid:129).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Brahmans earn, through refusal, or controlled acceptance, the minimal transactor's gain of non-mixture of integrity for their own substance-code&quot; (ibid:129).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before turning specifically to the dualistic pairs, it is necessary to indicate how the account is not entirely impressive for, in many instances, points appear to be made on an arbitrary basis, but nevertheless made, for that is how the model works. For example, is there any reason why "essence" would be implicated only with the Kṣatriya transactor and not elsewhere? Yet it is attributed only to this type, for it fits Marriott's rendition of this caste type. Similarly there is the unfortunate engineering of data to fit the model in the case of the Vaiśya transactor, also. Drawing on data from Carstairs' study (1957), Marriott describes the Vaiśya as those people conserving their self-contained integrity of their 'substance-code', yet this finds little support from Carstairs' data, for he distinctly says,

Whereas Brahmins in Deoli were vegetarians, Banias would profess to be still more scrupulous, fore-swear all tuberous vegetables, and all fruits with numerous pips, in case they were guilty of taking the life of a single seed (Carstairs, 1957:119).

To be sure Carstairs depicts the Vaiśya as "scrupulous" in avoiding things with pips and seeds, (and which is better understood as relating to their Jain values), but how this tallies with Marriott's rendition is difficult to see. Reference has already been made to the difficulty arising from his optimistic bias which chooses not to entertain the possibility of a difference between compliance and forced acquiescence. There is also the unsubstantiated claim that those at the bottom receive superior substances from the higher castes, when Marriott says of the Śūdras, the pessimal transactors, that their "relative rank and power are 'surrendered' in return for these valuable receipts" which are particles coming from the "superior castes" (ibid:128). Does this rendition of the persons at the lowest caste level make sense, or does it just simply fit the pessimal features of the model? Further, with the Brahmin's type of transaction, since he is only giving and not receiving, it is perplexing that Marriott presents this as a "gain" of non-mixture. A person may retain something if there has been no action, retention itself can hardly constitute a gain through the transaction. However, if this caste type is to be depicted as "optimal", then there has to be a pay-off somewhere, regardless of whether it makes sense or not. Then Marriott, also describes the Brahmin as having a "pessimal" type of transaction with the gods (ibid:129). Now pessimal, you will probably recall, refers to receiving rather than giving (ibid:128), so in the Brahmin's case it would mean that he receives from the gods but does not give. The description is puzzling and makes one wonder what he understands by rituals where there is the constant offering to the gods, by Brahmins, like others. Unless Marriott is referring to the more esoteric
performances of transubstantiation rendering items sacralised through ritual technology. But if this is the case, then the transactional jargon of giving and receiving would be entirely irrelevant. Such points are raised to indicate that models bring an ever-present risk of moulding the data to fit the format, and when that format is not indigenous, it distorts the indigenous material, in this instance that of caste types as well as associated Hindu phenomena. The mishandling of the data is minor, however, compared to the major difficulty of his general theoretic thrust, the claim for "diversity".

Though Marriott rejects dualities, taking Dumont to task for injecting a western mode into Hindu cognitions, in the end Marriott offers the same kind of fare, but twice, as it must eventuate if the model has two pairs of oppositions built into it as its basic features (optimal/pessimal; maximal/minimal). The complaint could be put this way: if "diversity" is promised yet the model yields a string of dualistic pairs, then his version of "diversity" is dualistic. Let me elaborate on the assortment of dualisms that Marriott presents.

Reference to the points outlined in the summary chart show that there is the contrast of "high turnover" for the maximal Kṣatriya transactor compared to what is "conserved" by the minimal Vaiṣya type, a matter of circulation versus withdrewal, which make one illustration of an oppositional pair. Then there is also the opposition of the "unselectively heterogeneous" substance-codes of the pessimal Śūdra, as against that of the "most selective" stuff of "non-mixture", gained by the Brahmin, the optimal transactor - another opposition. Still within the framework of opposition, the Kṣatriya, the maximal transactor stands as the "controllers of land and labour", the type belonging to the "ruling groups", on the one hand, contrasting with the "producers" (viśa) on the other. In the same vein, Marriott presents the Brahmin as having "the power" of "creation", while its opposition is found in the pessimal transactor, the Śūdra, who is said to have "destructive" power. The Brahmins are described as "divine" while those at the bottom are "animal-like". It would seem that Dumont's shadow lingers,¹ for Marriott's diversity appears to be reconstituted oppositions. Of course, it might be said that two sets of dualities can be taken to signify diversity, according to Hindu cognitions, but if this were the case, then one would expect the idea to be present in some Hindu formulation about the castes, given the

1. Or, perhaps, the lapse into dualistic categorising is probably due to the entrenchment of the binary way of thinking which is difficult for westerners to dislodge.
breadth of coverage of Hindu thought. Yet the only place where this kind of structuring occurs, is in Marriott's own inferences about the nature of transactions, the particular situation that he uses to construct his model which serves as the paradigm for the caste order. Not only does the outcome of the application of his model to the caste order, appear to be unsatisfactory since the analysis rather than readily flow from the data is oriented by the model, but also the caste diversity which is promised boils down to nothing more than two pairs of oppositions, which it must do for the material is ordered by a twofold oppositional framework.

While Marriott presumes that the material can be accommodated by the transactional model, the material itself indicates otherwise. When one looks at the ethnographic data slotted into the transactional categories, what is interesting is that a *triguna* format orders some of the caste characteristics more satisfactorily, I think, than Marriott's own scheme. Let us consider the *Śūdra* first.

Working from Marriott's description, the material would refer to the Vahyas or Untouchables rather than the *Śūdras*, given that for example these people are referred to as having gross natures, and as being "masters of destruction". In which case, however, there are no referents for *Śūdras*. Otherwise it would seem, although it is not at all clear, that Marriott has collapsed both the Untouchable and the *Śūdra* into the one category, "Śūdra". What is important is that these people are described by Marriott as the masters of destruction etc., which can hardly arise from their transactional role as "receivers" nor from the "power" epithet, "people of servitude", for their destructive capacity relates simply to their *tamas* nature, as does their "animal" nature, and other attributes. What of Marriott's description of the Brahmin?

Where Marriott describes the Brahmin as divine and belonging to the optimal strategy type, he therefore stands in the "highest place" (ibid:129), rather we would say that having become twice-born, a Brahmin's ontological nature is transformed to reach the *sattvika* of the general *sattva* level, hence he stands at the pinnacle of the caste order of differentiated humans. This version also indicates that Marriott's imputed opposition, between the Brahmin and those at the bottom of the rank order, entailing a relation of divinity/animality or that of master of creation/master of destruction, cannot hold when the *guna* framework (or even more simply the terms of the cycle of creation, maintenance and destruction) is applied for we see that differentiation involves three ideas, and it is this which makes for diversity,
itself. In addition, the Brahmin is described as the type who accepts "substance-code only of the very perfect form": this too cannot be inferred from the terms of the transactional model at all since it features the Brahmin as a giver only and not a receiver. If we forget transactions entirely we can see that the characteristic of the type can be understood in terms of the *guna* framework, for Brahmins are required to restrict their intake to *sattvika* type items compatible with their nature which is of this kind. Again, what Marriott calls the "potency of the Ksatriya's "substance-code", we would argue, is related to their *rajas* nature and because of this, it is proper that they partake of the *rajas* stuff compared to the Brahmins' concentration on the *sattvika* (within the general category of *sattvika* items). The point can be briefly illustrated by reference to some perplexing vegetables.

Garlic and onions are prohibited by Manu for the twice-born, (Manu,V,19, in Buhler (tr.), 1969:172). It is the Brahmins in Nepal who reject these along with the tomato. In fact people are wont to render the matter as a refrain, "Brahmins do not eat onions, garlic and tomatoes". Of onion and garlic Srimivas (1976:180) points to their potent olfactory impact, which is perhaps less relevant than the effect that such commodities would generate on the eater, for it is this which probably links the two smelly items with the seemingly nondescript tomato and renders them a specific cluster which is to be avoided by Brahmins. Since the problematic tomato would be categorised as a *rajas* type in that red signifies *rajas*, an inciter of passions, therefore this item would not be compatible with the disposition required of a Brahmin, whose proper state is one characterised by "a mind which is peaceful", it will be recalled. Similarly, since garlic and onion are also categorised as *rajas* (aphrodisiacs) with the capacity to initiate the same consequences as does the tomato, they too are to be avoided by Brahmins. In contrast, such items as garlic, onions and tomatoes are not out of bounds for the other twice-born, for these are not incompatible with their specific natures. What is important here is the analytic point that what is to be rejected by Brahmins, need not automatically belong to the *tamas* category, but to *rajas*, the other term of the *triguna* blueprint. When Marriott describes the Ksatriya's diet as "hot" opposed to the Vaishya's "cool" foods (ibid:125,127), this is very much an outcome of the imposition of

1. While the introduction of *rajas* highlights the relevance of the triple scheme, it should not be forgotten that pairs are also important, e.g. a mandarin and banana are given as auspicious items to anybody embarking on a journey, where the banana refers to the male principle and the reddish liquidy mandarin (*suntala*) to the female, but in such instances, the universe contains two terms only.
the model, for the Banias are following the predilections of Jain values rather than Vaisya formal requirements, and the Ksatriya's hot diet is not in opposition to another term, but would belong to the rajas sub-division (within the general sattvika category). Marriott's approach seems to be inadequate when the indigenous orientation towards diets is considered. A commentary from one informant brings this orientation into relief as well as integrating the ideas with some other notions. The following account from a Nepalese Brahmin illustrates several points. Firstly, that the guna scheme lies at the centre of food classifications. Secondly, the specific requirements pertaining to the different castes depend on the notion of what is "appropriate" in each instance. Thirdly, that though the application of the rules may be difficult, as for example, his utilisation of the compound "rajas and tamas", and moreover can vary from speaker to speaker, since his categorizations do not invariably tally with others", nevertheless there is the recognition of a system, and one which is based on certain principles:

In our tradition our forefathers established the idea that an individual is affected by what he eats, he takes on that kind of maya, formation. Therefore they divided food into three kinds, in terms of the effect. If a person were to use his intelligence and achieve high thought then he had to take certain kinds of food. If he takes others, like wine and meat, he will take within himself the limitations, since these things divert him. If a Brahmin is to give ideas to society, then he cannot have mental diversions. Wine and meat are both rajasî (Nep.) and tamasî (Nep.) and will make him aggressive. Vegetables are generally sattvika but with certain exceptions - the tomato is rajasî. Water is also sattvika, a natural, uninterfered thing. What is the basic idea behind the division of food? Why do we need the government to keep law and order? Why do we need the government to refer to food?

The previous Aryans and Manus made provisions for the government also, how the king would behave. So making these rules they also included a description of foods. Food is one cause for society. The Manusmṛti states this. Manu himself also divided food into three kinds. We need milk, alcohol and everything. If only milk is allowed, some people will go on strike. Manu does not say that this is good and this is bad but that according to what the person does, it is appropriate. If a Brahmin gets meat and wine, his mind will be diverted and his discipline broken. As a scholar he must be pure in his discipline and be kept within these limitations.

According to Manu, a person who is born in this country, Āryavarta and born a Brahmin should be learned and disciplined and should spread these ideas, that is, Manu recognised the whole world. 1 Whatever we eat we become. If we eat sattvika things we will be harmonious but if we take tamasî or rajasî things the mind will be diverted. A Brahmin must be disciplined in sex and with meat and alcohol he will lose his wisdom and will not be able to control his sexual desires.

Not that a Brahmin is pavitra (pure) by birth. Not

that idea. Manu says that when a child is born from the mother's womb (gārba) he is just a Śūdra since he has not undertaken the sāṃskāras. All children when born are equal. Afterwards there are changes. The lowest do not need these rituals. Other castes since they do different work do not take the same foods. Meat is generally prohibited for the top castes but some meats are permitted, like goat and wild boar. Some vegetables (chilli, garlic and onions) are tāmasī and rajasī even though vegetables in general are satīvikā.

Marriott's attempt at elucidating the nature of castes and caste behaviour is inadequate for it fails to identify the threefold base and instead it utilizes a universe of four terms structured along two oppositional lines.

Moving to the next problem, we find that, unlike the Brahmīns, the situation of the Vaiśyas is somewhat more complex in that it involves an additional perspective.

The Vaiśyas can be approached a number of ways depending on whether the terms of the formal scheme, or their own orientation, are being considered. To attempt to fit their behaviour into the formal scheme according to what is possible for that type is ill-advised, since in certain instances, these people are able to react against the definitions imposed on them, the phenomenon known as "Sanskritisation", which involves the adoption of mores appropriate for the members of higher castes. Furthermore, when the persons so located belong to a sect, as the Banias do, they too do not necessarily accept the designation and behavioural possibilities defined by others, whether Sanskritisation is involved or not does not matter. If anything, Sanskritisation could be irrelevant for they are likely to be pursuing the requirements as outlined by their own dogma. If this is the case, then they have their own peculiar food practices which are best understood, I think, by reference to the fact that they are Jains. Given that in both possibilities (a caste or sect located at a particular caste level), the people concerned are not complying with the definition of themselves, then behaviour will not necessarily tally with the terms of the formal scheme. Despite the brevity of the comments, we can draw out some implications.

Marriott's description is not unlike Manu's in that it offers a truncated universe, for five terms of the social order should be borne in mind, and which are structured in terms of the threefold differentiation. There is first, the polluting Untouchable (or Vahya), the type regarded as the masters of negative transformation, located at the lowest rung of the caste order. The next, the Śūdra, cannot be elaborated on since the material has been omitted or collapsed with that pertinent to the Untouchable.
Next would come those people classified as Vaisyas who cannot be accommodated into the frame regarding formal behaviour compatible with their nature, since they do not necessarily accept the definitions of that nature and can behave accordingly. This renders them difficult to understand in a scheme which attempts to correlate actual behaviour and caste requirements. Expressed differently, when people can refrain from conforming to the requirements of their particular level but can imitate the mores of others, or implement their own, then that behaviour would not tally with the features of the formal scheme. What distinguishes them from the Untouchable who may also reject the designations applied to him, as that the Untouchable is generally forced to comply with the strictures pertaining to his caste position and therefore the case of the Untouchable's positioning at the bottom of the formal system does not constitute the same kind of analytic difficulty as with the Vaisya. With the two top castes, the Brahmin and Kshatriya, the matter is more straightforward in that their characteristic behaviour appears to accord with the definitions of the situation. Important for the discussion is that their position and the requirements fitting to that position can be identified as typically sattva and rajas (of the general sattvika category) for the Brahmin and Kshatriya, respectively.

While the discussion has considered what people are doing (for example, keeping within the strictures of sattvika requirements) as well as described how they are formally classified (for example, the type who pollutes others) it raises the differences between a formal scheme of designations with corresponding rules, as against people's fulfilment of the rules, for some may not accept the classifications imposed on them. In which case their behaviour cannot be fitted into the parameters of caste ideas and requirements. It is such intricacies, I think, which have bedevilled analyses, like Marriott's. What is important to establish at the outset are the terms of the formal system which, as I see them, are based on ontology where differences are distinguished by guna relevance. This can also be discussed in the moves around pollution and purification.

If the rules that govern practices are the playing out of behaviour commensurate with one's particular existential state (one's particular caste) and the most excellent of these is that of the Brahmin, then, as noted before, we can understand why he is the type conspicuously preoccupied with fulfilling these rules. Nevertheless, this should not prompt erroneous inferences. When commentators talk of the Brahmin's concern with "purity", it can be misleading, for other castes are also concerned with ridding
themselves of "impurity" and redeeming their loss of caste. A Kṣatriya can move from an impure state to a non-impure state, but still not become the equivalent of the Brahmin, which goes without saying. What would more precisely apply to the Brahmin is less the idea of "purity", (śuddha ) but rather his special sattvika state, which is the right one for this type. For his part the Kṣatriya, having left the polluted state returns to his caste, at the right level, the rajas of the twice-born category, a state which is also not "impure". And so forth. In the Nepalese context, it would be inept to refer to the differences between Brahmin and Kṣatriya for example, in terms of greater quantities of "purity" (śuddha or śauca ), and lesser quantities of "impurity" (aśuddha or aśauca ), let alone Marriott's distinction, where the Brahmin's "non-mixture of integrity for their own substance-code" is contrasted with the Kṣatriya's "essences" of "greatest quality and potency in substance-code", for the simple reason that nobody talks that way. Ordinary people stress differences in terms of different castes, while the experts refer to the idea of one guṇa predominance with the other two submerged, as the relevant feature for characterising one type of entity and distinguishing it from another in which a different guṇa predominates, provided both items fall into the same universe of discourse, all points that have been detailed before. Hence, we can say, staying with the twice-born category, that after each type becomes polluted, with purification he reverts to the prior state either with sattva, rajas or tamas relevant, as the factors involved in the internal subdivisions of the general sattvika twice-born category. Similarly for the Matwāli, after pollution, he would return to the right state for him, where the rajas is dominant, according to the logic of these formulations. In the case of the Untouchable, the general tamas category, as the state where phenomenality is entrenched since no ritual transformations can occur, the right state for him is tamas , the factor which underlies his polluting and polluted character. This laborious spelling out of details makes one significant point: if purifications are the means of restoring caste (Hodgson, 1834:48), what is "pure" is the right state for the caste concerned (except for the Untouchable). But if that is the case, given that castes are not of the same level, then the term "pure" could be misleading by giving an impression of equivalence where equivalence mainly lies in what is absent, pollution. The non-polluted state of different castes does not entail equivalence, as we know, but simply location in the proper existential state for each. Coming in at the other tack, confusion can arise when the Brahmin as a caste type is described as "pure", for others may also become purified, even though they
do not reach the same level as the Brahmin. Therefore we see that not only are there ontological variations caste to caste, where the variations are distinguished by the guṇa format. If the guṇa framework does constitute the open sesame for ontological differentiation of any Hindu universe which is characterised by diversity, as distinct from a universe based on pairs where the key idea for differentiation relies on the nature of the relationship obtaining between the male and female principles, then it should also make intelligible the internal sub-divisions of the Nepalese caste order. Let us now turn to that unfinished business.

To repeat for the sake of comprehensiveness: the Nepalese caste order appears to be based on the trīguṇa format, where the twice-born, (the Tāgādhāri) belong to the sattva category, the Matwāli to the rajas, and the Untouchables (Pāni nachable jāt) to the tāmas. Now I want to detail how the scheme applies in the internal differentiation of the twice-born. Not only does the trīguṇa appear to underlie the categorisation of the sub-divisions of the twice-born, but the idea of malleability also impinges in the formulations about these caste categories, for it is through changes that the sub-divisions are said to have emerged. The Newar caste distinctions, it will be recalled, are ignored by the state reducing them all to one category, Matwāli, in the overall scheme. These will not be considered here, nevertheless, although I have not researched the Newar internal subdivisions, I suspect that the same principle for the ordering holds for the internal Newar structure, given its historic past as a Hindu kingdom. With the Untouchables one can go a step further and discern the threefold formation with the Muslims standing at the sattvika level, separate from Hindu Untouchables; at the bottom are those with whom sheer contact demands aspersion, would belong to the tāmas level of this lowest

1. On this score, it should be mentioned in passing that Greenwold (1978) notices that caste is actualised through rituals, though he does not expand on this point, but instead, committed to the Dumontian paradigm, pursued that line.
general category; and in the middle, those other Untouchables would belong at the *rajas* level\(^1\). The description of the Muslims as somewhat apart from the system would be in keeping with their positioning at *sāttva* of the wider *tamas* grouping, (see Gaborieau, 1972). It would also apply to the foreigners who are accorded the same kind of treatment as the Muslims, since neither is officially regarded as being in the right existential state to enter the important temples, nor to handle water for the orthodox castes, despite the other kinds of treatment that is meted to them.\(^2\) However, I cannot take the discussion further because I do not have enough data to indicate the reasons which account for why the particular peoples are allocated as they are, within the Pāñi nachaline jāt. Nevertheless, in that the scheme appears to apply with the sub-divisions of the twice-born, there is every reason to suppose that it will hold with the others also. The simplest way to make the points regarding a system of classification for twice-born castes is with a summary chart.

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1. All these caste categories are listed in Sharma's scholarly outline which draws on the Nepalese legal code (1975:285-292), though the arrangement is different from the one I outline here. For other accounts of the Nepalese caste order, see Bista, 1972:18-30; and Hitchcock, 1978:110-120.

Sharma provides ethnographic data on the Matwāli Chetris (1971:43-60) and further ideas about the caste order (1978:1-14);

For an extremely perceptive account of some Newar ideas about castes, see Greenwold (1978:483-504);

Bouillier deals with the special funeral rites of the Saññyāsī caste, (1976:36-45);

Gaborieau touches on the caste order in a paper devoted to the Muslim lineage system (1978(b):155-72);

The Regmi Institute Series details features of the Untouchable's classification, (see Regmi(ed), 1970);

For some speculations on the origin of the Parbatya castes see Hodgson, 1972. Pt.II:37-44;

Toffin gives an ethnographic account of the Newar peasant castes, (1978:461-81).

2. Like visiting. When the foreigner is entertained by a pukka Brahmin for example, he will be feasted, but there will be no interdining, and the host takes his meal separately at a different time.
TWICE-BORN (The Sattvika General Category)

BRAHMIN:

UPADHYAYA Brahmin  - (S) - The most excellent.

KUMAR Brahmin    - (R) - One of their members traditionally eats the ash and frontal bone of the body of the dead King. He takes into himself the stuff of another person's body.

JAI SI Brahmin    - (T) - The descendants of an ordinary Brahmin who married a widow.

CHETRIS:

THAKURI Chetri    - (S) - Rajputs are members of a heavenly dynasty.

CHETRIS Ordinary - (R) - Ordinary Chetris.

MATWALI Chetri   - (T) - A curious group who drink alcohol, eat meat and perform the twice-born rite but often do not wear the thread.

SAHYASI

Descendants of a Sādhu
who turned his back on renunciation and married. This category applies to a number of groups, each with its own forebear. - ?

1. All these caste categories are listed in Sharma's (1975) account of the legal code, though his arrangement is different.
One would expect that subdivision would rely on the same principle of ontological differentiation applicable elsewhere. The generation of subdivisions however does not appear to depend on hypergamous marriages as detailed by Tambiah in his "From Varma to Castes through Mixed Unions" (1973), for not only is hypergamy acceptable, but the offspring of a twice-born man also take the caste of their fathers, except in the case of the Brahmin where the son becomes a Chetri, and though mixed stock is recognised in each instance, after three generations this is exhausted. Thus, if a person is a son of a Thakuri Chetri, he becomes a Thakuri Chetri though not exactly identical to his father, but with the progeny, in three generations the effect of the mix is worked through and the descendants revert to the initial position of the ancestor (Sharma, 1975: 287-8; Hodgson, 1972:38). The same principle of time's working through an effect is to be discerned from the marriage prohibitions (the incest rules) where only after the required number of generations have been exhausted, are these rescinded and the descendants' families of the original bride and groom may indulge in a marital union. Thus, generational time brings matter back to par. In Nepal, then, mixed stock does not generate sub-caste, as Tambiah depicts for India. While hypergamy allows for the flow of women to the higher caste groups, it does not change the formal structure of the caste order, simply swells the Chetri ranks, in the case of offspring of Brahmin men united hypergamously, and retains them in the case of Chetri married hypergamously (Sharma, 1975:286). Such Nepalese practices are said to be somewhat anomalous, their laxity contrasting with the rigour of neighbouring Indian states, a point of view proposed by the Rajput courts of earlier times (see Hodgson, 1972:38) and taken up also by anthropologists (see Sharma, 1978:10). It is difficult to understand why Nepal is treated as the deviation in allowing cross-caste marriages where the offspring remain in the twice-born category and eventually the descendants (after several generations) acquire the initial caste of the ancestor, for this is bona fide and endorsed by Manu(X, 64,65 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:416-7) though, in the past, seven generations were required. In the light of that authority, it is the Indian custom of the formation of endogamous groups, born of hypergamous unions which seems to be peculiar, for there is no scriptural base which determines that this ought to be the case. That aside, the question is whether differentiation of the Nepalese people hinges on ontological notions and whether the gupsa factors

1. Hypergamy traditionally entails only the non-polluting castes. Any intercourse between an Untouchable of either sex with a non-Untouchable was prohibited and harshly punished by the state in the past.

2. Writing on the rules of the last century, Hodgson says "from the father seven steps, from the mother, five grades are forbidden" (1836:130).

3. See also Hitchcock who attempts to explain the different practices (1978:116-7).
are relevant.

The chart indicates that the general patterning of the twice-born contains three major blocks as occurs in the overall scheme detailed earlier. The subdivisions of this general twice-born category then reflect the breakdown of the overall scheme, so that within any universe, the three constitute the basic components, with one difference. That difference applies to the lowest of the total scheme, who have not moved through ritual transformations in the other direction which is formally possible for the persons belonging to other castes. Therefore, the lowest *tamas* in the entire social order, which, in Nepal, is the Pāñi nāchālne jāt, is different from the *tamas* of the other categories. We may also discern that with most subdivisions, the information comes with the additional categories, so that with the *sattvika* general category, data appears for the *rajas* and *tamas* subdivisions of Brahmins. Similarly, with the *rajas* general Chetri category, information comes for the *sattva* and *tamas* type of Chetri. In other words, it is with the variations of the subdivisions that there is additional information, while the reference for the subdivision is the relevant *guna* which distinguishes that subdivision, with the *sattva* Brahmins out of the possible three, and the *rajas* Chetri out of the possible three. With regard to the third twice-born category, the Saññyāsi, the material I have is not adequate enough to make any comparable comments. Nevertheless, the positioning of these people at the third level can be understood within the general framework, as we shall see, just as the internal subdivisions of the other two categories, Brahmins and Chetri, also appear to depend on ontological differences.

Take the Jaisi, the third sub-category of the Brahmins whose position is explained by Parbatya in terms of widow remarriage where a maternal forebear, an Upādhyāya Brahmin widow married an Upādhyāya Brahmin. It would seem that as widow she leaves an effect on her husband which is *tamas*. In this instance, instead of the traditional practice where a virgin comes as a gift from the Upādhyāya Brahmin father, this woman comes as a wife of another man who is dead and who is her half and entails that kind of relationship which never be revoked. Yet this injunction is overridden and the woman joins with the second husband. As a widow, she is *tamas* in two aspects, as the dead man's wife and as a person who has broken a vow, sinned. Not only that, but since a wife is held culpable for a man's early death and is branded post hoc as non-virtuous, she is also an ignominious (*tamas*) kind of person. Descendants from this kind of union, then would be ontologically different from those of other Brahmins where the marriage is
a union de nouveau, the bride arrives as a single girl, traditionally premenstrual and virginal, a form of the goddess and therefore epitomises a sattvika form. The fact that the caste of Jaisi Brahmīns are descendants of this kind of pair can perhaps be understood in terms of the ontological effect through the blood this female forebear has on all her progeny, while the fact that the father provides Brahmīn stock in the bone-line orients the retention of membership within the overall Brahmīn category. The second level, Brahmīn, the Kumai, are different again.

To understand what is involved, it is necessary to bear in mind that in certain instances what happens to one member of a group may apply likewise to others. For example, Hodgson, elaborating on the details about breaking caste rules, tells how in traditional times, a breach by one individual may necessitate that all persons of his caste require purification also (1836:131). In the cases cited these are grave sexual transgressions. Significantly, they constitute situations where an ontological change occurs through the intercaste union, where not only the higher caste individual becomes polluted but so do the other members of his caste. Therefore there is a general idea that in extreme cases repercussions affect not only the person directly implicated but others as well which also means that the idea would not be peculiar to the Kumai case. The same principle seems to apply in the situation of the Kumai caste, if the factor of one Kumai's eating the ash and remnants of the frontal bone of the dead king's body, the feature that I have isolated as relevant, is in point of fact so. It is plausible to presume this because bone-eating is the only distinctive feature of these Brahmīns, providing the only clue to unravel their particular position which is distinguished from the top Brahmīns, the Upādhyāya. If the Kumai takes the remains of another's body into himself then he is transformed in some fundamental way, a transformation which recurs with every generation. Given that what is involved is a Thakuri Chetri's body, different from that of Brahmīns, then this would have its effect on the Brahmīn who partakes of it. Therefore, such alterations would distinguish the Kumai from the Upādhyāya who stand at the pinnacle of the Brahmīn category and the entire Nepalese caste order. Now given that it is a Thakuri Chetri's body which belongs to the rajas category of the twice-born block, then the sattvika Brahmīn takes in rajas effects through consuming this stuff. Presumably in that the

1. There can be further subdivisions of Jaisi, according to the variations of widowhood, authentic widow or "grass" widow and which in turn fall into three categories; good, middle and lowest (see Sharma, 1975:283).

2. Sharma also observes that the legal code states that breach of commensal rules can implicate caste brethren (1975:280).
body derives from the general rajas category of twice-born, the ontological nature of this man (and others of his caste) would be compromised by taking it into himself, and therefore the placement in the middle, the rajas level of the Brahmin rank, takes reference from this. Though at first sight the matter may appear unusual and introduces the complexities associated with a god's incarnation in a human corporeal frame, the practice of Brahmin's acting as surrogates for the dead is actually general and commonplace. At any death, a Brahmin of the right age and sex to correspond with the dead person, acts as a surrogate and is given a range of goods which are said to facilitate the dead person's journey in the after-life. Specifically in the case of the death of the god-king, the Brahmin is said to take into himself the sins committed by this historic incarnation and for which the material gains are enormous for the Brahmin. Consequently, from whatever angle, the phenomenon is viewed, it would seem that the ash-eater is ontologically changed through his intimate connexion with the dead person. If these suggestions are valid it would seem then that the location of these Kumai Brahmins at the rajas level of the Brahmin general sattvika category can be understood in terms of the ontological difference between them and the top Brahmins, for there are the changes rendered by partaking of the body of a dead king which distinguishes them as a category.

With the block of Chetris, the rajas of the twice-born, the interesting sub-categories are those at the top and bottom where sattva and

1. That Kumai Brahmin loses caste.
2. Except for the Untouchable.
3. It is a connexion, moreover, which he shares with the new king, though the linkage arises differently with the Kumari, and with this there is a possibility of a contender for a kingly position. Perhaps because of this, the eater of the old king's ash is traditionally expelled from the kingdom.
tamas would be relevant, if the scheme holds.  

The internal variation does appear to depend on the idea of existential differentiation as designated by the predominance of sattva, since the Thakuris of the Chetri level claim a Rajput background and an origin from a heavenly dynasty. As Sharma describes, they take great pride in "their high descent" (1975:282). They are the offspring and descendants of a god incarnated in human form, though merely princely stock for the god-king only incarnates in the first-born son. Moreover, this body is transformed by the elaborate rituals of purification and sacralisation during the coronation. Consequently, the body of the god-king is divergent from that of other Chetris. The ontological variation would also be passed on through the bone line to all his descendants, the princely stock known as Thakuris. 1 At the other end of this block, are the Matwâli Chetris, who are not at all eminent like these distinguished Thakuris. While in the case of the Thakuris the issue may be dispensed with easily for there can be little controversy over divine sattvika descent, some discussion is necessary with the Matwâli Chetris, whose name gives the first hint of their complexity.

1. Sharma is not clear and sometimes speaks as if there are only two Chetri sub-categories (Sharma, 1975:281). Nevertheless, from his exposition, one can distinguish three sub-categories. The reason why I distinguish three Chetri groups rather than simply two is that Sharma refers to the Thakuri (the Rajputs) and to the Matwâli Chetri (1971:43-5; 1975:285-91) and also to the fact that Ranas could not acquire Rajput recognition and remain "ordinary Chetri" (ibid:289-90). Since the Ranas could hardly be classified as Matwâli Chetris they would belong to the ordinary Chetri group, and therefore a universe of three pertains.

Furthermore, the Tâgâdhâri Chetris would have to include a middle level for the progeny of Brahmin fathers and women from lower castes who cannot be labelled Thakuris since this is limited to the princely stock, nor can they be labelled Matwâli Chetris for these are distinct and named people characterised by alcohol-drinking and chicken eating, as a normal practice, and are found concentrated in Western Nepal (see Sharma's diagram, 1975:286). The threefold division of the Chetri is also implicit in this statement from Sharma:

The Tâgâdhâri Chetris make a tall claim to their descent from the Brahman or Kâshtriya ancestors in the distant past and are strict adherents of Brahmical rituals...... The Matwâli Chetris......offer some striking contrasts in social living from their superior counterparts which is in clear violation of the rules enjoined on the Chetris of Nepal (1971:45).

2. None of this is to say that past political events were not critical forces in bringing particular peoples to power and to their caste position, but that is another story and is not to deny the possibility of isolating the principle involved in the formal scheme of locating people at their respective caste positions.
The Matwāli Chetris are concentrated in Western Nepal and see themselves and are perceived by others as bona fide Hindus belonging to their particular caste (see Sharma, 1971:43). In fact they belong to the general Khasa speaking peoples whose language is known as Nepali and the carriers are now distinguished as Parbatya.\footnote{See Hitchcock's excellent summary of the historical literature on this complex topic (1978:112-3 footnote).} There are two accounts of their positioning in the caste order. Among the Matwāli Chetri themselves, there is the theory that a forebear in the remote past deviated from the required Chetri behaviour indulging in chicken and alcohol and so the ruler of the time demoted him to the Matwāli Chetri rank (Sharma, 1971:45) a rank which then devolved on the progeny. Others deny this, claiming a "purity of descent" and a long antiquity for their caste. This complicates matters for the denial threatens the explanation which accounts for their special position quite separate from other Chetris. All that the disclaimers can maintain is that this is their tradition. Sharma follows suit and also attempts to discredit the myth, though for the reason that it cannot account for the vast numbers of Matwāli Chetris (1971:45). In its place he proffers an interpretive account to which we will return, but first of all it is necessary to consider whether the myth can be dismissed so readily.

To discredit the myth which explains why these people are positioned at the third level is somewhat peremptory, for its importance is its existence. Sharma's contention, that the myth should be discredited since it cannot account for the fact that Matwāli Chetris constitute a large number, is somewhat irrelevant since the large numbers could be explained by other factors, for example, that several ancestors and not just one deviated from the norms and were degraded and the progeny in each instance then were born into the ranks of this Matwāli Chetri caste. Secondly, it is odd to approach a myth in terms of its veracity for its function is to explain and whether the specific event actually occurred or not, does not negate its presence and authenticity as an explanation. Other myths of origin are not usually tested for proof, and it would be strange indeed if feasibility of the numerical argument were used in the case of Jaisis or Sannyāsis for whom there are also myths regarding their caste placements. While the myth provides the knowledge which is to explain the difference between the Matwāli Chetri and other Chetris, the denial by some of the people does not grapple with the question of why they are not classified along with the other Chetris, but instead have a separate location and indulge in practices different from the others. It leaves blank their positioning and their mores, and all that they can say is that it is their
tradition, which explains nothing whereas the myth does proffer an explanation. Sharma by also attempting to discredit the myth is forced to go to remote times and posit that these people are the relics of a Hinduised tribal stock which in turn opens up as many questions as it answers.

That the Matwali Chetri bear Chetri names is taken to indicate that these people belong to a Sanskritised tribal stock (Sharma, 1978:8). Nevertheless this is ambiguous for it could refer to those ancestors who were demoted by the state yet kept the same name, as much as to the possibility that tribals assumed authentic Chetri names. Similarly, the argument about physiogony is inconclusive: the fact that many Matwali Chetri display tribal characteristics (Sharma, 1978:8) is ambiguous for this could be accounted for by hypergamy, where the men of this Matwali Chetri caste took tribal women as wives. Many high caste Chetris also reveal tribal characteristics, which is also understandable in the context of hypergamy. Perhaps more important, is that the Sanskritisation thesis raises as many problems as it attempts to solve. The argument claims that these tribal peoples became Hinduised and adopt Hindu ways, so that with the Matwali Chetris, the process is to be gleaned in their performance of the twice-born initiation, and their utilisation of a Brahmin purohita for certain rituals like homa (Sharma, 1971:50-51). Yet typically they do not wear the sacred-thread. This is where the diffulty begins for one wonders why they stop halfway, the rite but no thread. At this juncture, the half-measures are explained by the fact that the people are only marginally Sanskritised tribals (1978:8,11). Yet this is what constitutes the problem for what is curious about the practices is that they are half-measures, have a "marginally Sanskritised" nature. If what constitutes the problem are the curious practices, which are the half-measures, of a marginally Sanskritised nature, then to account for these by reference to the people's being marginally Sanskritised to a certain extent, presents as the solution what is in fact the problem, but rephrased. Nor could this approach account for the specific caste placement of these peoples. In this respect, Sharma turns to the practices. His exposition regarding their location in the third level of Chetris, has two wings. He says that these are the stock of marginally Sanskritised tribals and this has bearings on their "quaint" practices; and because of these practices, they are classed as degraded Kshatriyas (1971:58; 1978: 8,11). We shall return to this, but first to finalise the problem around their imputed background. Given that one finds both the incorporation of tribals as caste persons into a polity, as the present Nepalese situation indicates where for example Gurungs and others are located in the middle rung of the caste order; but also given that the
state can be intensely concerned with caste law in the operation of the traditional Hindu kingdom (see Hodgson, 1834: 47,8), a point also made by Sharma who underlines that the Nepalese Hindu state enforced caste specific behaviour (Sharma, 1975: 284-5) and punished those who deviated, then either background is possible for these people. But given that the Sanskritisation thesis is inadequate in accounting for the practices which are imputed to provide the rationale for caste positioning, we cannot utilise this approach if we are to understand these people's location as Matwēli Chetris. So the problem remains - what is the rationale for their placement at the third level of the Chetri category? Since the people themselves have a theory to account for their own positioning, it must perforce be relevant, otherwise they would not have it.

When people have a myth of this kind, then in all probability it is relevant especially since it is unlikely that anyone would want to concoct a story which contains nothing of self-grandeur. If anything it is the rejection which is to be queried since the story distils negative points about their ancestry and it is perhaps because of this negative aspect that some of them would want to challenge the idea of an infamous ancestor, though by this they do not reject their traditional positioning. All that such persons do is deny the veracity of the story without offering any alternatives. The myth is comparable to those associated with the Jaisi and Saññyāsi where some misdemeanour is said to have been committed by an ancestor and which entailed an ontological change and thereby renders intelligible the caste placement of the descendents concerned. It is from this point of view that we should be able to understand their particular location within the order of Nepalese peoples. However, before turning to that, there is the matter of their quaint practices which must be clarified, first.

With regard to the problem of understanding these people's positioning within the rank order, Sharma says that a long time ago their forebears were a Hinduised tribe but were classed among the degraded Ksatriyas "probably because of their quaint and unorthodox habits" (1971:58), a point that he repeats again (see 1978: 8,11) and in both contexts refers to Manu. It might be unwise to say that they are classed as degraded Chetris because of their quaint practices for this could be taken to imply that caste is generated through practices. Let us put it this way: if these people did behave differently, and followed the requirements of other Chetris, would they be classed differently? It would seem not to be so, for even if they adopted the rules falling on Thakuris, for example, they would not become
Thakuris. Various practices entail a range of different kinds of effects, for with the ritual transformation there is the actualisation of caste; with adherence to caste requirements there is the retention; and with the breach, the dissolution of caste, which may be temporary or permanent. If temporary, there is the purification and the restoration. And of course, what is possible will also relate to a person's parentage, since the Untouchables, as we know, do perform the twice-born rite but this is not regarded as bona fide by the other castes, nor according to the sacred law. Our specific problem here is to understand how practices bear on caste. What appears to be the peculiar practices of the Matwāli Chetris are merely those commensurate with that particular level and therefore these practices are best understood as indices of their particular caste level, not the generation of it, an interpretation that might be inferred from Sharma's statement, though admittedly it is not clear. In case there is misunderstanding let us refer to the Manu passages cited by Sharma (1978:11).

$\bar{X}$, 43: But in consequence of the omission of the sacred rites, and of their not consulting Brāhmans, the following tribes of Kṣatriyas have gradually sunk in this world to the condition of Sūdras;

44: (Viz.) the Paundrakas, the Kōdas, the Dravidas, the Kāmboagas, the Yavanas, the Sakas, the Pāradas, the Pahlavas, the Kīnas, the Kirātas and the Daradas (in Buhler (tr.), 1969:412).

Where Sharma gives the impression the Sanskritised tribals are classed as degraded Kṣatriyas because of their unorthodox (non-twice-born) practices, Manu says that when Kṣatriyas do not fulfil the requirements enjoined on them, they lose caste. Manu then proceeds to give instances of this, referring to certain historic tribals. It is from this point, where tribal names figure, that Sharma seems to have misconstrued the passages. Clearly, Manu is talking about the caste debasement of certain Hindus (Kṣatriyas) and not about the process of Hinduization of tribals. The distinction is important, because it brings out the point that it is through a breach by the ancestors that there is an ontological change, which would then devolve on the progeny who also would then belong to the degraded caste level. This is not to deny the possibility that in very remote times the forebears of such people might have been tribals incorporated (or subjugated) by Hindu overlords, but it is to say that this historic background is neither

1. The idea of practices demands caution for there is the destination between those practices which involve adherence to rules compatible with caste position, and those practices which deviate, either through remissions or through adopting mores of the higher castes. When the practices are in fact the specific caste rules, then through the implication, the person concerned is maintaining his particular ontological level, his caste.
relevant nor useful for identifying the principle for their location in the caste order. As Manu says, when degradation is concerned it is a matter of a caste person committing some breach whereby there is loss of caste, and the concomitant placement. Similarly, with the Matwāli Chetri's myth. We can now turn to the central issue, the rationale for the allocation of these peoples to the third level of the Chetri rank.

Given that the initiated person is supposed to adopt certain practices which retain his ontological state, then the legendary Chetris not fulfilling the requirement brings a fall. Before a person's initiation he may eat such things as "chicken" whereas subsequently these are regarded as polluting, inimical to his transformed state. As an offence, however, it is not heinous, as is intercourse with an Untouchable, which in traditional times meant utter degradation and permanent outcasting. Obviously, the violation of this kind of rule is of lesser magnitude. Whether factual or not, the ideas are in accord with known possibilities, for under traditional regimes, the state was concerned with the adherence to caste requirements and penalised those who deviated. The general idea is also stated in Manu who says that where a twice-born deviates from certain requirements the person is demoted and his progeny bear that effect and are classified accordingly. With the Brahmīn's breach through widow marriage, there is the fall to the lowest Brahmīn level; with the Matwāli Chetri similarly. But in both there is an ontological change generated through the breaking of rules. The demoting only goes so far, a degrading to the lowest level of the category, presumably because the offence is not inordinately radical, for it simply revolves around prohibited food. Now in so far as the remissness brings about a polluted state for the rajās type Chetri, then the fall is to the tamas level. The descendants then bear the effect, for the ontological change can only be transmitted to offspring and their offspring, since it is ontological.

The members of the Saṁnyāsī caste comprise those people who are the descendants of a renouncer, but who reneged on renunciation and married. A myth of one group tells how the ancestor instead of pursuing the required path, "crossed the river and came back to society". Now, a person who

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1. Later in the thesis, the issue is considered from a critical angle which I do not introduce here where the major concern is to understand the principles of indigenous classification of a formal system of ideas.

2. When it is rice cooked by an Untouchable then it constituted a serious crime (Sharma 1975:280).
renounces not only takes a vow to displace social life entirely, but also undergoes a death ritual which terminates the individuality of that person. Where the twice-born change through the second birth, the Saññyāsi changes through death, and ends up with two "deaths". It is this ontological change which is critical, in my view, for with entry into the renouncer's state the change has occurred and is a fait accompli, so that when there is the return to social life and procreation, the effect of the ritual death cannot be erased. Moreover, this change would then be passed on through the bone-line to the descendants. That there has been an ontological change and that this is perpetuated in the progeny can also be gleaning from the nature of the Saññyāsi caste's own death ritual and their omission of the twice-born initiation. The descendants, the members of the Saññyāsi caste, do not undertake the sacred thread ceremony, despite their membership in the twice-born category, though this non-performance does not rest on the same reason that, say, a tribal Matwālī may not, but because a "forebear was a Saññyāsi" as informants explain. This also suggests that the effects of the renouncers' ritual death lingers in their being, an idea which is plausible for they are composed of the same physiological components through descent as the person who had. If there has been a death, and since this is an ultimate act, then there cannot be a reverting back to a prior state once the transformation has occurred. It is with the actual death rites of these caste peoples that the connexion with the past is both retained and vividly portrayed, for the Saññyāsi caste members do not cremate but bury their dead (see Boulliher, 1976:35,37). This, it would seem that the effect of the forebear's ritual death and the existential change it engendered is irrevocable and continues in the bone-line, given the nature of their current death rituals as well as the absence of a twice-born ritual. As descendants of a holy person their placement in the general sattvika twice-born category is warranted, but as descendants of a person who has dislodged his historic self through the renouncer's death ritual, then this background of tamaś type actions would correlate with their location in

1. Stevenson describes the vow uttered during one of the ceremonies, He has given away everything, that he no longer belongs to the world, or to any family, and has no attachment to any person, and that he will never desire any one or anything. Once he has made this declaration, he has once and for all broken with caste. So at this point he himself takes off his sacred thread - that most cherished of all caste marks - and throws it away (1971:423). She also describes how some return and marry, and from the offspring new castes emerge (Ibid:378).

2. It might appear that this supports Marriott's portrait of the pessimal Vaiśyas as ascetics. This is definitely not my intention. It is not that these Nepalese are ascetic-like, withdrawn and non-participant, but that they, as descendants of an ascetic, are not ascetics at all, for they live in society, reproduce, and are fully participant in worldly life.
the third slot of the twice-born.\(^1\) Or perhaps their position could be interpreted according to the sins incurred through breaking a vow, the destruction of the Saṅnyāsi life, through the return to worldly life and procreation. Either way seems to indicate destruction of something which renders an ontological difference between them and the members of the other twice-born castes whose forebears simply wed and reproduced.

If these suggestions regarding the positioning of certain people in the sub-categories, and category (Saṅnyāsi), are valid, then it would seem that the factor of ontological differentiation is crucial. In most instances (the Saṅnyāsi caste, the Jaisi sub-category of the Brahmins, the Matwāli Chetri sub-category of the Chetris) there are the legendary accounts of how a forebear diverged in some way which changed the nature of his person and the effect is then transmitted through descent to the progeny. With the Kumai, it would appear that this is dissipated through the caste, where the alteration is rendered on one living Kumai through his consuming the remains of the king's body, a transformation which occurs periodically at each generation. The idea of sin also figures in these myths of caste origin, where sin, however, can be viewed as behaviour which is not commensurate with the ontological nature of the caste person, and not only as the more obvious idea, what we would call "moralistic" like the breaking of a vow, for example. However, with the Kumai, he takes the sins of another into himself, yet by this he gains worldly goods and thereby comprises his spiritual excellence, as well as transforming his ontological being through eating the stuff of a divine Thakuri's body.\(^2\) Nevertheless, the Kumai's action appears to be less extreme than that of the Jaisi, presumably because this man undertakes the ritual requirements relating to the dead king in accord with the Brahmin's priestly function. Where the members of the Kumai caste are located at the second level, the descendants in the Jaisi instance are placed at the bottom level of the Brahmins. When it is a matter of location at the sattva level of the rajas category, the Chetri caste, not surprisingly, deviant behaviour does not seem to apply, but rather here the ontological difference between these Thakuris (placed at the top of the sub-category) and the others, is their heavenly origin. Whether one is referring to the sub-categories of the Brahmin and Chetri divisions, or whether to the Saṅnyāsi category of the

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1. Sharma cites that the legal code places these people below that of the Chetri (1975:282 footnote).
2. Which is the only one of its kind in the kingdom, let it be remembered.
twice-born block in general, the ontological nature of these people in each instance is distinguished, for there are: those princely Thakuris with their heavenly origin; the Kumai where one of them eats the bone and ash of the body of a divine king incarnate; the descendants of a man who married a widow in the case of the Jaïsi; the descendants of the breaker of caste rules with the Matwali Chetri and; the progeny of the renouncing renouncer of the Saïnyäsi. Each appears to have a distinctively different ontological nature and which thereby makes intelligible their respective positions in the rank order of humans.
CHAPTER 11

STATUS OR ONTOLOGY?

I want to go over some old ground, so as to build up a feel for the issue. For most Nepalese Hindus, caste is not just a label but something that involves behaviour, in that it has to be actualised, and from this point of view, therefore, caste entails an existential dimension. The point is clearly made with the requirements of caste retention, since these constitute existential kinds of rules (what to eat, with whom to have intercourse, to name two which are critical), and where breach of the most grave provokes a situation not only of ostracism, expulsion from the city and from interaction with others, but a specific act of being outcast (vratya), where caste is irrevocably lost. It would seem that caste is not simply social position, though this is one dimension, but something else as well. Belonging to a specific caste means existing in a particular way, quite distinct from others, where the important feature is not merely a matter of differences, but that what is involved are the different ways of existing. When the nature of the kinds of caste requirements, especially the prohibitions, are born in mind, one may detect that these indicate that the concern is with what will have effect on the self, a malleable self, ever at the mercy of becoming something, either in terms of internal changes (as we saw in pollution) or external influences (as with contact with impure things and persons), to cite two examples. What people do, how they live, or more precisely how they exist, orients for the most part what kind of persons they are, at that moment in time, while not forgetting the complications which occur in the case of Untouchables. You become what you do, where what you do takes its reference from what you are. For example, if a person is an Untouchable and performs mock rites then this is viewed as sinful and will bring consequences quite different from those whose caste is twice-born. The long-winded statement is necessary to avoid any possibility of a lapse into Marriott's kind of approach with the notion of "interchangability" of the two, and his suggestion that Untouchables can move towards a pure state and bring about change in this life. Nevertheless in no way am I implying that actions are unimportant. In that caste refers to the particular natures of persons as being vis-à-vis each other, therefore caste has an ontological base. Various procedures, influences, or the mere process of being alive, are said to have an effect on the person, but of these, the life-crisis are prominent because they generate the specific ontological levels of existence, something much broader and more basic than a particular condition, or a social standing. As we know, what is possible depends on parent's caste, so that only offspring of twice-born may be transformed into twice-born themselves - and so forth,
As we shall see in the next part, to be born in a particular caste family is also something that has to be actualized and is not an act of "chance". Even there, of relevance is the idea that a person's ontological state is something that has to be actualized. Though the word has an aura of pomposity, for the only way that caste can be described, while at the same time heeding these dimensions, is in terms of ontology, therefore one is forced to adopt it.  

As I see it, the caste order is a system of differentiation of the population in terms of ontology, where the people are positioned at three major levels. The caste rules are what individuals are expected to do, if they are to retain that particular state, so that permissible activities are those which are commensurate with the nature of one's being. Where it demands that members of other castes are to be avoided, this also belongs to the same set of ideas. Inherent in all of this, is the idea of mutability of existential being for the individual can be affected by what he does, and in many instances for the upper castes, the effect is immediate. For the present, the Untouchable is lodged at the tāmas phase, and it is only in another birth that change can come, but even here there is absence of fixity over time. With the others, especially the twice-born, and of them, the Brahmin, if conformity to the rules is directed at the retention of a high existential level (sattva predominance), then their particular preoccupation with the rules makes sense. In the cluster of features which all bear down on the idea of caste, and castes, what is perhaps most striking for the outside observer, is the idea of the possibility of change for humans, operating in two directions, either the acquisition of caste or its loss. Given the idea of malleable being (bhāva), this allows for the possibility of making men different - making them into different species. The variety of different jāts, the different categories, species (or varṇas) can then be understood as different ontological beings brought to this point through ritual transformations.

If there are any doubts about the ontological nature of caste, then the facts of outcasting should help dispel them. The nature of crimes which traditionally promote outcasting according to the old Nepalese legal code, is vividly related to the ontological dimension for these are activities.

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1. At least the term "ontology" has some kind of philosophic counterpart in the idea of tattva, which Zimmer translates as "thatnesses", the "categories" or "principles" (1961:326). What is significant about the mahātattva is that these entities are those evolving in the first movement or manifestation and provide the basic distinctions for all that follows, with mahāt (the capacity to exist in time/space akāśkāra (the I-maker or consciousness) and the pañcatattva (the potential for materiality).
like intercourse with an Untouchable person, or incest, or taking the life of
a woman, a form of Prakṛti, and eating "dhal bhat" touched by the hands of an
Untouchable. Such instances propelled a move to the irredeemable state and
a fallen member thereby lost his caste forever. With this he/she also
severed the right existential state for connubium and commensality with
members of his prior caste. The social aspect is only one dimension for the
order of the phenomenon involved does not simply refer to a violation of mores,
not just diminution of social standing in the community, but degradation of
being, which can be discerned in the mode of outcasting that used to be
carried out in the recent past.

An eye-witness described an instance of the outcasting of a twice-born.
That man was forced to parade naked through the streets. His top-knot had
been shaved off, something that never happens to a twice-born even at death
where the corpse continues to wear this tuft of hair, but not so for the
outcast. Adding to it all, a pig was thrust around the back of his neck and
shoulders. Though humiliation figures strikingly, it is not the only important
feature, since the man is denuded of those items of sacra which otherwise
render him a special kind of being. Instead of the sacred thread which links
him through the cosmic forces back to the Supreme, he bears a pig. In addition,
the top-knot sited in the vicinity of the thousand petalled lotus, also an
ultimate station, is erased from his body. His nakedness is not to be
mistaken for an untrammled state (digambara ) like that of the ascetics,
but sheer phenomenality, like the pig. If there is an ontological drop from
the top to the lowest possible level of existence for a human, then this is
much more than a loss of status, surely a change of being.

Since for most, caste is actualised through certain kinds of behaviour
then in such instances it refers to different existential states; since for
the upper castes it means moving away from the phenomenal level and attaining
a state which must be retained through certain practices, which can be lost
and redeemed, but sometimes irrevocably lost, then malleability of being is
incorporated within the complex of ideas; nor is the Untouchable entirely
outside this influence, for regression to an animal state or contrariwise to
a better one in a future rebirth are possible and therefore change applies
also, if his position is viewed within a vast span of time; and if castes
are mutable existential states, then the construct "status", in the sense of
social standing, is too narrow if it is to bring out all these critical
aspects. In short, given this configuration of ideas all interlocked in the
idea of caste, then the construct status is not the most apposite to depict
caste. Nor could the construct accommodate to the point that ideas about
Caste belong to a world view whose ambit is wider than society to which status relates with an essentially social connotation. Is any purpose served by querying the validity of the construct?

We are dealing with a different order of phenomenon, whose terms of reference do not exactly gel with what is generally understood by the discipline's construct "status," an elusive concept anyhow. An important feature is that caste requirements take reference from a gauge, what is proper, excellent for that particular caste type. In this context, what is proper for that man who is a Brahmin is not a relation whose reference are others in the community, as can be the case with status, but relates to possibilities for himself vis-a-vis the caste self, or the particular gauge. It should be made clear that one is talking about a particular state. The fact that the implementation of this may require the presence of others, for example, the members of some other castes to plough the earth for the Brahmin, does not deny the general point - that caste takes reference from its particular gauge of what is proper for those concerned. At first sight it might appear that the pragmatics of the situation would of necessity challenge the thesis I am propounding, yet this is not the case, for the rules stipulate that certain activities are proper for each caste type, as we saw earlier. As a commentary there is the expression,"it's alright for them," it will also be recalled. In any situation, where cross-caste relations appear, the reference does not alter, for again it relies on the notion of what is appropriate for each caste type.¹ This is, of course, the principle of commensurateness, which expresses what is proper for the caste involved. Thus caste has an autonomy separate from the positionings of the rank order. Status, on the other hand, is primarily relational, taking its value from reference to what others think of you, how you are evaluated in the scheme of things and makes intelligible why Dumont introduced the relational dimension to caste stratification, since he sees caste as status, following Weber. It should be made clear, that I do not want to deny the complexities of this construct as developed for sociological accounts of industrial societies. With Hindu society, however, it is used profusely but examined rarely. In my view, status is inadequate, for with castes, there is the particular ideal, as stipulated by the sacred texts, against which the individual measures, so that the reference point is not one's standing in relation to others, let alone public opinion guided by criteria such as life-styles, but this ideal, when people are operating within this kind of cognitive mode. The preferability of the notion, "ontological state" over

¹. Needless to say, a critical account would interpret the issue differently.
that of "status" to signify caste, can be further supported by elaborating on some points noted earlier.

Up to a point, the construct "status" places weight on a person's standing vis-a-vis others, and to be sure this is important and relevant, but it does tend to deflect attention from what I think is the more important point, what caste itself means. That castes are ranked is another and intrinsic part, but what is it which is ranked is the problematic and on that rock the ranks are built. The earlier observers (for example, Hodgson) unhampered by entrenched paradigms talk of caste and loss of caste and leave it at that, finding no need to extend it further and refer to status. From the opposite tack, the old school of anthropologists which talked of "ritual status" and the Victorian observers who used the epithet "ceremonial" had a point in that the qualifiers at least bring out the fact that the term status is inadequate by itself. When Dumont pushes the qualifier 'ritual' aside, he ignores the central role that transformations in general and especially ritual transformations play in the configuration of ideas and practices. The assortment of castes are not just positions in a series, but different species, different categories of persons. Given the nature of the Hindu system of differentiation where one thing varies from another according to its stage in a movement of development, then castes are also beings standing at different existential stages. One can make the same point by coming in at a different angle.

If one were to simply think about the Nepalese labels, then one would discern that "status" does not quite come to grips with what these imply. The lowest caste persons are specified as those from whom "water is not to be taken", and should it be, then one must undertake purification. In the next category are those who are specified as "the alcohol indulgers". At the top are those specified as the "wearers of the thread", where the thread is a link to the cosmic. Even the varna terms entail the idea of different types, where each evolves, not from the same part, but from different parts of the primal ancestor. Though the line depends on their derivation from the common source, it is the matter of differentiation which features: with those people, the Brahmins, who signify speech, coming from the mouth; those who are specified by the strength of the arms the Ksatriyas; with the Vaiśya, evolved from the thighs or loins, specifying perhaps the ones who produce the numbers; the last, the Śūdras are merely the people from the

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1. When Dumont adds "religious" (1972:300) it is not to underline the idea of ritual change or any kind of change but to delineate "caste status" as a religious notion and values, discrete from the political.
feet. The term "status" somehow misses the mark. By persisting in adopting Weber's construct, more or less unexamined, Dumont appears to be arguing against himself, to a certain extent.

Using the same term "status" in the two contexts, caste society and western society, tends to orient an equivalence (even though one is said to be characterised by "equality" and the other by "inequality"), that Dumont would disavow. At least, the same construct does not highlight the distinctions. Given that one of the main objectives of his thesis is to distinguish caste from western society, it is surprising that he stays with the one construct for both, despite the religious base given to caste. On the distinction Dumont is adamant to the point of insisting that for caste society a special theory is required. In case there is misunderstanding in my suggestion that "status" is not apt for caste, it should be made clear that I am not thereby endorsing Dumont's proposal that a special theory of society is required to understand caste society, (with its system of "inequalities" as opposed to western society, with its egalitarian value), for one is looking at the indigenous ideas and values. From this point of view with neither society would one be imposing a "theory", simply data collecting where the indigenous ideas are the ones which provide the propositions which make up their theory of society. Dumont's proposal of the need for a special theory for an understanding of caste society is misleading since it puts the onus on the analyst, as if it were constructed by him, whereas the analyst identifies the people's own theory about the nature of their social relations. All that the analyst does, is to try to identify its key features, systematise them, but it is an arrangement of the formulations of the people's theory. One does not need to formulate a different theory for caste, or any other society, for one expects the theories of society to be available from culture to culture. One must also bear in mind, as outlined elsewhere, that not everyone need concur with the definitions of the cultural theory which predominates. They might or might not. Moreover, in both western and Hindu studies, and any other, if one's interest goes further and one intends to scrutinise the system of advantage

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1. Curiously enough, I think that if ever a system of ideas, up to a point could be interpreted as racist, caste ideas would, for each caste type constitutes a particular category, a species of human. However, if the indigenous ideas are born in mind then "racism" would not be exact if it were to accommodate to the sweep of their world view for all things are differentiated in this way, not just people, but kinds of food, types of pūranaś, etc. Out of the range of beings, Hindus are special because they have the capacity to reach mokṣa. Our ideas of racism fit into the other general theories — like Darwinian evolution, so that a designation of racial differences has a different slant from that of castes within its particular intellectual milieu. None of this is to deny that ideas about caste do not have an ideological component, an issue to be taken up later.
and disadvantage, then the supplement, a critical approach, will have to be employed. If one intends to bring out the peculiarities of caste notions, then constructs developed primarily in other contexts are better treated gingerly. Given Dumont's concern to highlight what he sees as the idiosyncratic nature of caste, it is surprising that he employs such standard sociological constructs, like "status".

Finally, as we have tried to show, the idea of caste has a significance, separate from the rank order since caste refers to ontological differentiation. The fact that these are also evaluated does not alter the point. However, when castes are depicted as statuses this presupposes a backdrop of stratification, whether in form of hierarchy or any other mode does not matter, and which also means that statuses cannot be treated separately from the rank system in which they are built. If it is recognised that caste has meaning and significance separate from the rank order (the rank of statuses) then, in this respect, caste and status cannot be equated theoretically. The various approaches to the analysis of this area are generally oriented in terms of statuses, variations on the theme of stratification, whether this is Dumont's "oppositional hierarchy"; or Marriott's double-barrelled scheme of "transactional" positionings (maximal/minimal; optimal/pessimal), or Marglin's "hierarchy of power"; or Tambiah's positionings in terms of "differential access to privileges and dominance". Approached via the pathway of statuses with its inherent positional aspect, the basic theoretic issue of what is caste, as distinct from caste positioning, cannot be squarely confronted, and so the independent theoretic viability of the concept, caste, is undermined, an eventuality which goes contrary to the methodological prescription that indigenous notions be faithfully rendered. Nevertheless, anthropologists, at some point in their exposition, seem to be indicating their awareness that caste entails something more than mere social positioning in a rank order, whether the point is expressly stated or not. For example, Marglin says that castes "have power" which suggests that more is involved in "caste status", even though not explicitly recognising the point that castes "are" rather than "have" something. More generally, we can say that even though the various authors identify the rank system differently, each presents ranking as some kind of variation of the same thing, and none identifies the point that the rank order of castes is a system where ranking takes the fundamental differences of types and evaluates these. Instead, they use, as we know, one idea, the idea of "purity" said to be superior to its contrary (Dumont); or the different kinds of "powers"

1. In which case the analyst can adopt whatever theory he thinks fits.
where the greater power is said to be superior to the lesser and can encompass it (Marglin); and though Marriott introduces two, the "substance-codes" and the "powers" these are referred to as a mix and two remain more by default, so even here there is one idea where the ranking follows the different grades. If their respective views of the caste order is about ranking around one theme, then they will miss the significant point that the Hindu approach is one which evaluates different things according to its system of preferences.

What we have is a ranking system based on the assessment of different types rather than a scale. While it could be said that assessment can only rigorously be made in terms of differences in the same general entity, like a range of bananas, of different weight or degrees of purity, otherwise ranking is impossible, yet in fact many of the pressing choices which confront people are not simply a choice between 'more' or 'less' of something but a choice between disparate things where what is available has to be evaluated. However, with the *guna* base, not only is the assessment not rendered around differences of quantity (greater or lesser), nor is it one which has to be made around difficult choices, but is a scheme where the nature of the entity itself signals its value. Essentially the caste order rests on the differences between god-like; human-like; and animal-like. Otherwise, it is more explicitly couched in the processual mode where the idea of the integrated, the sustained state gets top priority, that which activates next, and disintegrates last.
PART C

GETTING TO WHERE THE REAL POWER LIES
CHAPTER 12

RESPONSE TO PHENOMENALITY

In one context, an individual's ontological state may be depicted in terms of its relation with the existential nature of other humans, a phenomenon that is referred to as the caste order, while in other contexts, an ontological state is a person's relationship vis-a-vis his ideal self (the topic that we call purity and pollution). For example, when a Brahmin dies, his family become polluted and no one outside the family accepts food from them, yet from this we cannot assume that they are no longer classed as Brahmans in the caste order. Hence pollution and purification are a complex applicable to a universe wider than rank position in the social order. In fact, pollution and the pragmatic requirements to handle it played out in everyday life contain basic Hindu ideas regarding the nature of man and his place in the cosmos. Details will be taken up as the exposition continues but at least one point can be raised here since we have come across it before: pollution is about the inevitable processes of decay which are natural and necessary in the dynamic cycles of existence, but are not necessarily desirable since at the day-to-day level, it articulates the idea of the human's mere animal-like subjection to his bodily processes, and at the wider level to the ultimate perishability of his historic self in the current life-form. Even so, the fact that as Hindu, a person should handle such states, introduces other notions about humans.

If the pollution phenomenon with its universal applicability expresses Hindu ideas about the human condition, then so would ideas about the removal of that state. Though the individual is subject to his own phenomenality, he is beholden at some stage to undergo countervailing procedures which stipulate other ideas about that condition. So man, though subject to such processes, is not entirely subjugated under them. Though the elaborations in the procedure may vary from context to context yet all come back to the same point, the necessity for purification at the appropriate time. Impurity belongs to a time zone that one can pass through and is only one dimension of the cyclic progression. More important for this part of the discussion is that it would seem that rules and practice assert that man is more than his phenomenality.

Even though all persons, male and female alike, are involved in such bodily cycles which bind them to the phenomenal world yet the fact that they must resort to ritual technology illustrates that each is imputed to have other components to his being. While the phenomenon of impurity and
pollution refers to their conceptions about the human condition, the necessity for purification refers to another, that humans unlike other animals can instigate certain procedures to counteract the negative effects. Consequently, with the human, the "must do" presumes the "can do" and the "knowledge of what to do". Expressing this in Hindu terms we can say that the human, as a special kind of being, has "will" ( icha ) and "knowledge" ( jñāna ) as well as the "capacity to act" ( kriyā ). Even if we phrase the commentary in less technical jargon, the fact that the human moves from what he takes as a negative to a positive state by recourse to ritual purification, he plays out in concrete form the same set of principles. He knows that he can override the lowly state, and when out of it, he is fit to confront the superior beings, the gods.

The gods are definitely not perceived as aloof and remote from humans, despite their grandeur and inordinate powers, for Hindus expect that they will come when called and help when requested, where the mode for contacting them is through knowledge and ritual technology. Since knowledge and ritual technology are involved in getting at these cosmic forces, and since these can be withheld from some people, then there is the likelihood of closures. Closures pertain especially to the Untouchable, as we know, and what we have said in general about Hindu ideas regarding the human condition only applies to them within a perspective of vaster time spans.

Although they would, like others, have the opportunity to move from the polluted state this would not occur during the current life, a point that needs repeating to avoid inconsistency with the earlier discussion. Later, as we shall see, other kinds of closures to certain cosmic forms in the current life impinge also, but not only on the Untouchable.

In this part, a number of issues will be taken up, from Hindu ideas about the nature of humans, what they are seen to be capable of, ritual technology and closures, and the topic of purification which, for good reasons, is taken as characteristically Hindu. Moreover, if any issue is likely to dint the idea of a basic tripartite format it could be purification, where a person is said to move from a negative to a positive state.
CHAPTER 13

POLLUTION, PURIFICATION AND CYCLES

If purification entails a transition, then it would entail two steps, and so it would seem that the thesis, arguing for a tripartite base, wilts in the context of purification. Again, when the focus is upon the avoidance set, where the polluted person is kept at bay by those not in a comparable state, there appears to be dyadic relation of pure and polluted. Since the discussion in the main will take up the issue regarding transition, let me quickly make a comment on avoidance.

To be sure an avoidance relation entails two terms, yet it also entails two possibilities, and therefore three terms, for the situation constitutes a relation between the impure and the not impure. With just a shift from the usual wording which uses "impure and pure" and instead employing "impure and non-impure", the difference carries the magnitude of a difference in theoretical perspective. To recall the avoidances mentioned earlier, a sattvika person should reject the rajas foods, as much as those located at tamas since the rajas food would affect the sattva state, just as much as tamas food. A set with impure/non-impure, since it allows for three possibilities, is quite distinct from the theoretical approach which would insist on the opposition of pure/impure.

Similarly, a focus on adjacent phases of an event which only include the critical phase (say of a woman who is not to be touched when menstruating) and its subsequent phase, will yield a binary structure. But we cannot isolate the crises times (the polluted when baneful influences are to be avoided) and presume that the rest is the opposite and this then constitutes the totality, a neat leit-motif of "impure/pure". Take yet another interminable list of requirements contingent on the adult female and one which has not been discussed.

Although on the fourth solar day, a menstruating woman has undertaken purification, and can now cook for others, touch food and approach men, the woman cannot, however, come in contact with the gods and worship. Yet, if we stopped the analysis short at the point in time after menstruation, it could appear that a bipartite situation is involved where the woman moves from the impure to the pure state. While undoubtedly she is no longer polluted, yet she cannot exactly be labelled pure, if she is prevented access to the gods. This is only permitted after the seventh solar day. At least one point emerges, if the requirements expected of the woman are arranged
according to the relevant time intervals, for we see that a definite tripartite patterning is involved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permitted:</strong> (a) Cooking, touching men and drinking milk is permitted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prohibited:</strong> (a) She is prohibited from cooking, touching men and drinking milk etc.,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) She can worship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) She can cook, touch men and drink milk etc.,</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) She is prohibited from worshipping.</td>
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Though a purificatory action takes place on the fourth solar day and the woman is therefore no longer impure (no longer śudha, or no longer aćhuta (Nep.), a focus on the change of states which only incorporates the polluted and the next, would misrepresent the total sequences of events, when the different imperatives over time are born in mind. Though there are only two terms "polluted" and "pure", they cannot cover the universe of possibilities, and appear to be a short-hand way for referring to the complexities. What we tend to find in everyday matters is utilization of the term polluted ( aćhuta ), the menstrual stage for example, and no comment on the subsequent phases. Nonetheless, differentiation is imperative when the varying requirements are borne in mind and the format which can accommodate to that is tripartite. Even with two terms it is logically possible that it contains three terms for there would be the polluted, the pure and that which is neither. Srinivas highlights a threefold phase of development for which he uses the notions "ritual impurity", "normal ritual status" and "ritual purity" (1965:107). What he calls "normal ritual status" would refer to the state of a caste person who is not an Untouchable, for the Untouchable's "normal state" is polluted. With persons of other castes an event like death renders him polluted. With time passing that effect is exhausted, which would correlate with Srinivas' "normal ritual status"; and with the required ritual activity would reach the purified state, Srinivas' "ritual purity". What is significant is the tripartite movement within the individual's stages of development vis-a-vis self.¹

¹. When members from two different castes are compared say, a Brahmın and a Kṣatriya, their purified states (Srinivas' "ritual purity") are not identical (ibid:109).
It would seem then that the gunḍa set is applicable because it distinguishes three phases, and especially allows for the differentiation between the second and third phase which the binary set does not. The binary set merely differentiates two states, the impure and the pure, and thereby is left with the problem of accounting for the restriction on the woman's worship when she is imputed to be "pure". Rather, according to our thesis, she is no longer impure, no longer polluted, but not yet "pure", otherwise she would be allowed to worship. Though my suggestion of applying the three gunḍas for identifying the three phases overcomes this particular difficulty it in turn raises queries about the nature of the purificatory activity but will be put aside for the moment since I want to pursue this general area of ontological stages and the inadequacy of a simple binary framework.

It could be said that at the time the female is designated impure, she stands at the disintegrating phase of a cycle where the tamas factor would predominate, taking cognisance of the basic paradigm. Since the behaviour required of the female falls into a tripartite pattern then it is plausible to assume that the gunḍa scheme is inherent and applies to the rest of the sequences. At the time of menstruation, the tamas factor predominates since this is the force which breaks down, disintegrates and in an instance produces the particular waste, the menstrual blood, of the kūṭa which are the biological entities treated as impure, as discussed previously. After the required lapse of time, she is no longer impure since she is permitted to cook etc., but since she is prohibited from worshipping until after the seventh, it is only then that she could be labelled "pure" in a rigorous sense. This final phase would correspond with the sattvika stage, since it is the time when the sustaining processes are operative. In the middle phase then, rajas would be applicable for this is the time when the woman may go about her duties as a human involved in worldly affairs but not as yet having reached the required state appropriate for worship when she is to confront the gods. This scenario holds two implications, important for the discussion.

The first is so obvious that it hardly warrants comment, except that it incorporates the significance of the one factor which must be stressed. The range of practical rules, changing as they do over time, delineate a progression in the woman's ontological nature. In no way can her person be perceived as static but moves in a process of constant becoming according to the three consecutive phases. In fact, the necessity for time to pass if change is to occur, highlights the idea of process, because processes can only occur in the context of time passing. Though in the literature there has been a lot of
attention directed at purification and impurity, the significance of the
time factor seems to have gone unnoticed for a person remains impure for a
stipulated duration and no amount of premature purification would shift the
individual from this state if the required span had not been enjoyed. "It
is time that makes the individual pure, time and the ritual both " to repeat
the pundit's commentary on this matter, which is relevant for his insistence
that a duration of time elapse in order for changes to occur, does not merely
bring out the processual nature of the individual's situation, but also
echoes one of the thesis' general themes, the mutability of the human.

Let me anticipate a possible objection: that in having isolated the
set of rules and practices pertaining to the woman, and which have reference
to her. monthly cycle, then the argument has been rigged, for the stages may
not apply to others but specifically relate only to the female. There are
several reasons why, I think, the charge cannot be sustained. There are
comparable tripartite developments where the actor is not a woman, and if
we take the case of funeral procedures it is imperative in fact, that the
ritualist be a male, the son of the deceased. Though the death series will
be discussed later, let me just refer to one situation where it would seem
that the tripartite pattern is present, for in The Garuda Purana there
are two statements which taken together either pose a contradiction, or
otherwise can be resolved simply by viewing it from a triguna perspective.
In one part it is stated that for all castes after births and deaths, ten
days must elapse for purification, yet it also says that "without the
sapinda rite impurity does not depart" and the sapinda rite is always held
later than the tenth, generally on the twelfth. Obviously, both propositions
cannot hold simultaneously unless one disentangles the different states into
the sequence of impure/not-impure/pure. Furthermore, as the reader will
recall, that for the female there is in addition the specifically reproductive
cycle, where the precise powers of this female function can be detected in the
list of effects she is said to propel during the phases of the menstrual
cycle. Though the two cycles show the same tripartite format, diverging only

2. See The Garuda Purana , Ch. XIII Verses 3 to 5, in Basu (ed.),
1911 : 114.
3. Sapinda is a ritual where the son makes a surrogate body for the dead
parent's soul.
in numeration, they appear to relate to her from two different perspectives. Now, with the specifically feminine cycle, discussed earlier, it is the feminine powers that are especially involved, for as you will recall during the first tama phase the woman is alleged to spoil vegetation and impair the lives of men, while subsequent to that in the next, the rajas, stage she is not only potent for procreation, but is also said to be capable of regenerating ailing vegetation and the third ( sattva ) where neither of these capacities pertain. In so far as such supranormal powers ( apart from the procreative ) do not apply to the tama category of persons, the Untouchable male, or any other caste male when polluted in this instance, then this must mean that the female is implicated in two cycles, one which relates to her femininity, and the other to the general condition of her being human. The exclusiveness for the female in the area of specifically feminine powers, albeit of a supranormal order, is further evidenced in the

1. Though dates only coincide in one phase of both cycles: the destructive phase of the reproductive feminine cycle and the polluted phase of the ontological cycle.

There is an idea associated with the woman’s menstruation, namely that this relates to the murder of a Brahmin and is sometimes referred to, however, it belongs to a wider context which is important for it changes the slant of the attribution. Though the myth appears in various texts, I give Kane’s version. He begins by citing some authors who refer to the boon conferred on women by Indra according to a legend narrated in the Tai. S. II 5.1. When Indra killed Visvarupa, son of Tvastr, he incurred the sins of 'brahmahana', and he went about the universe in search of sharers in his sin, of which one-third was taken by the earth ( which secured the boon that when a pit is dug it becomes filled up in a year), one-third by trees ( that got the boon that even when pruned they would grow again and the exudation from trees is the part of brahamahatya comes out of trees and the red resins exuded are therefore not to be eaten), one-third by women, who got the boon that they would conceive only during their period of ( sixteen days ) after the recurring occurrence of menses and that they might indulge in intercourse till the time of delivery and in the case of whom the murder is manifested every month ( Kane, Vol. II, Pt. II, 1974: 801-2).

The important point is that the three productive forces, the earth, vegetation and women, take on the sin of Indra's crime so as to lessen his burden, and as reward the boons for continuity are obtained.

2. The idea that a woman can affect a man's physiological well-being is not restricted to the Nepalese context, for it also appears in Manu. There it is said that a man "loses vitality" if he approaches a menstruating woman ( Manu, IV, 41, in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 135).

3. When quizzed about the extent of the Untouchable's negative powers informants were emphatic that the "untouchable does not have the same kind of powers as women". Though this is not to deny their fittenedness as agents of destruction for some (Pore) served as executioners in the past, others (the Kasai) are the state's killers of the sacrifice, for example.
fact that it is only women who are witches, this being an inevitable wing
to the feminine capacity to procreate and sustain as mother, even though
those eligible fall into a special category of women. The fact that the
woman appears to be involved in two cycles, rather than cast doubt on the
scheme, merely highlights, I think, the significance of the female as
procreator. Yet, though a woman, she is also human as well, notwithstanding
that her femininity complicates her humanness. So it should be, for it
is the females who are the human forms of Prakṛti, through whom and in whom
life is produced and sustained. That she is said also to impair life and
curtail the husband's life-span is in accord with the general proposals
relating to her nature. Since this introduces the two important negative
powers, the power to pollute and the power to cause sickness, it affords an
opportunity to say something about impurity compared to sickness.

Although both the menstruating woman and the witch have supranormal
powers to harm and both types can be seen to stand at tāmas, this similarity
cannot lead to a confounding of witchcraft effects and impurity in general
since the latter, as is well known is not restricted to women but all humans
with regard to the bodily substances and at death, their bodily frame. The
first difference about impurity and the illness provoked by witchcraft is
that it applies to the self, whereas witch powers are projected onto others
and cause them harm. Illness in such circumstances is believed to have been
propelled by forces outside the individual, whereas the substances expended
from the body are inherent in the individual's own biological processes.
Where witchcraft makes the individual sick (birami Nep.) and the substances
make impure (achut Nep.) so the treatments differ accordingly. The sick
person goes to the exorcist, (dhami or gubaju Nep.) who generally removes
something alien from the body, while the impure person resorts to
purification (sodhnu ). The responses in each situation are also distinctly
different: the other significant feature about sickness with its non-
committal effect of pain is that it is not something the individual learns to
experience, for its occurrence need not be culture bound, though the
explanation of its cause will invariably be so. Whereas in contrast to all
this, the response to impurity is not pain so much as a sense of unease. 1
The appearance of the substance in question makes the individual automatically
move to a feeling of extreme discomfort in the orthodox and a substantial
degree of disquiet even in the modernist, judging from their comments on the
matter. This demarcates the two phenomena. On the one hand, waste is
essential for the continuity in the cycle of progression as would obtain for
the body, whereas illness is not. But this in turn introduces another

1. In both kinds of instances where impurity arises from oneself; or has
been transferred from another polluting person.
question. If waste is essential in the proper functioning of the body, why all the negativity in response to it? This negative orientation may be gleaned in the insistence that it is removed through purification at some point in time.

Impurity is tied in to a system of ideas about the human condition, which must relate to their conceptions of man and his place in the universe. Since this is the Hindu world view, it will refer to beliefs about man's circuit of rebirths, and man's position vis-a-vis the other beings in the Hindu environment and the composition of the human, all interrelated topics in Hindu formulations. Specifically the polluted state is a stage of inevitable development, part and parcel of the human condition and an index of his limitation compared with the superior beings, the gods, and the most perfect of all Beings - the Paramātman. To come before them demands certain requirements. This brings us to the other implication of the discussion, the rule of "fitness", which in turn is related to that of appropriateness. When the important aspect is the nature of the actor then what he does should be commensurate with his nature, otherwise it can be jeopardised. In this instance the relevant term is "sambhava anuvarte" (according to his nature). Whereas when the focus is on the activity which the person must perform, then there is the requirement that the person is fit for the task. Here the relevant term is adikari (fitting for, or competent for).\(^1\) Specifically, the patterning of prohibitions illustrate the requirement of a corresponding state of propriety between that of the actor and the type of activity he undertakes, for it can be detected in the scheme of closures operating according to the actor's changing states. It is not fortuitous that when a woman is at a stage of development where the disintegrative force is uppermost, that she is not permitted to touch others, nor the food that will be taken into her person let alone approach the gods, or any holy thing. In the next phase, though permitted to cook for other humans, the necessity to distance herself from the gods still holds, while she stands at the rajas state. It is not until the third phase can the female worship and become involved with spiritual concerns. To approach and worship the gods, who are by definition sattvika, the human must reach the level comparable for herself as human so that there will be compatibility between worshipper and worshipped. Is this an instance where Dumont's formulation, that the pure are vulnerable to the impure, pertains?

We can see that the relation between the different states and range of

\(^1\) Dumont draws attention to the importance of the concept,
prohibitions in the executing of certain pursuits, exhibits the pattern, where:

| The full range of prohibitions applies, when the individual stands at Ṭamas, | Only some apply when the individual stands at Rajaḥ, | None of the restrictions apply when the individual stands at Sattva. |

Since the woman is no longer impure, polluting, yet may not approach the gods, Dumont's statement cannot be utilised to account for the rules of this context. This means that Dumont's proposal, that the "pure is always vulnerable to the impure", would have to be modified because as it stands it cannot cover the entire range of possibilities. The range entails three states, a pattern which Srinivas also identifies for his material. Furthermore, if we heed Hindu tenets that the gods are always Sattvika, then they, as gods, cannot be vulnerable to impurity. Rather it is those things that have been purified and brought to a special state (like the twice-born, or the idol or whatever object is to be used for the deity's receptable) which are vulnerable to pollution. Where vulnerability is relevant, it is for those items and persons who have reached a Sattvika stage through ritual transformations and stand in a process of development, so though like the gods are located at Sattva within their own particular cycle, but unlike the gods this is acquired and tenuous. Rather than evoke the idea that the pure is vulnerable to the impure, in this context, what appears to be the rationale underlying the prohibition regarding worship, is that the individual should be in the proper state to do so, a requirement which applies to all. For example, during the death rites, members of the family cannot worship and the twice-born men may not utter their Gayatri Mantra, nor the sacred syllable "Om".

What are the implications of the discussion so far? We have seen that the pollution and purification complex is not only anchored to aspects about the self which has its intrinsic value, but is also tied up to possibilities for action in relation to others, persons, things, and especially gods. If it is not fitting that a person comes before the gods when in an impure state then the phenomenon is linked to goals other than his own existential nature. From a different angle, the idea of fitness also introduces the possibility of exclusions, for when a person is not in the right state, important areas like access to the gods are utterly prohibited. Clearly the implications need to be explored in subsequent chapters, but there are still some loose ends pertaining to the theme of purification which demand immediate attention.
CHAPTER 14

THE PURIFIERS AND PURIFICATION

Sometimes one might get the impression that purification pertains only to those activities specifically directed at the polluted bodily substances. Such an impression is understandable since not only are those activities conspicuous to any observer, but also, they tend to be stressed by the local people, for this kind of purification is a prerequisite for other events. For these subsequent events, purification of polluted bodily substances is but "the first step towards the sacred", in the words of one Nepali. Nevertheless the term to purify (śodhu ; chokinu Nep.) or pure (Uuddha ; pavitra ; cokho Nep.) is applied by people to a variety of situations and not only those dealing with the body. Even within the one major event many different kinds of activities are described as entailing purification. For example, Campbell, an ethnographer of the Nepalese scene, details several activities that occur in a particular sequence in the "naming ceremony" of the child, as involving purification; there is the cow's urine with "great purificatory powers" which is taken by the father at one point in the ceremony; much later, after the gods have been worshipped, the Brahmin gives pañcāmṛta, also having "great purificatory powers"; an intermediate event, godāna, the gift of the cow to the Brahmin, is also performed during this significant occasion for the family, and it too is described as involving purification. In its turn, the baby is passed over the fire during the ritual sequence of homa which is also delineated by Campbell as "serving to purify it" (1975: 32-3). Thus in this situation, there is the taking of the cow's product, the gift of the cow to the Brahmin, the ritual of homa, and the taking of pañcāmṛta, and though all are different, all are presented as purifying activities. The picture of course, is not inaccurate though it is analytically problematic. What is especially relevant for our purposes is that once purification following from bodily defilement (that is, after āsauca, or jutho (Nep.) or sutaka, all used for the polluted states)¹ has been executed, that is not the end of the matter. If this kind of purification is merely the beginning, what are these other activities, which are also called purificatory? Not only are there different activities but there is a vast range of ingredients used. From the list cited, we note that different items of sacra are utilised in the purificatory events. They are the specific ingredients (milk, curd, ghee, honey, candy-sugar) of pañcāmṛta which make up the immortality-giving nectar;

¹. Āsauca is the Sanskrit term for impurity or pollution in general. Under the heading "Suddhi", purification, Kane devotes sixty-eight pages to the topic of impurity (āsauca), see Vol. 4, 1973: 267-333.

Jutho is used by Nepalis to refer to mouth pollution and death pollution. Sutaka is the Sanskrit term for birth and death pollution.
the fire; the cow; and the cow's urine. What is missing of course is the water for bathing, which is also described as purificatory, and is the initial activity for coping with pollution.

If we have some idea of the components of the individual and how these interrelate then at least we can know what components are possibly being attended to. So we will turn to outline these aspects of the human as I understand Hindu formulations.

1. Man and Gods:

People know that they are involved in three kinds of cycles, the bodily cycle which is inevitably tied to food, the individualistic cycle of saṃsāra and the wider cosmic cycle of gods, demons and planets belonging to great expanses of time, known as the yugas, of which this is the kālī yuga.

As far as the individual is concerned, it is the saṃsāra cycle that most interests him and is most relevant for the present set of relationships. During the time of stability, unlike that of creation, man is the instigator of his particular world though this might be within the wider order of things and time. He has a sense of self, but this historic form, his physiological sheath is to be shed at death. It is the body which confronts him as the epitome of phenomenality something that needs to be cleaned up before he can contact the sacred. The sacred comprise the gods which are perceived by a Hindu not as remote and aloof but entities which will interfere in his life. They are perceived as the forces which sustain him and help him in his specific individuality. Belief in deities does not entail any half-baked vague orientation. A successful bureaucrat's utterance, which is not an isolated event but is made every morning to his own favourite god, illustrates the point: "Give me the strength to make the right decisions not to be confused by all the information that comes to my desk so that I may retain my own level of competence...."

These forces are the high gods who, in metaphysical terms, constitute the primal forms from which the later manifest world is produced through the series of transformations which produce other transformations and so on.

The deities are perceived as the invisible ultimate powers on which the rest lies, for they provide the base from which everything else arises. The world ultimately depends on them, but they do not depend on the world. Unlike humans they are not concrete and are not bound by the corporeal frame. That they are ayonijā, not womb-born, is iconographically expressed by the
lotus base which supports Nepalese images. The lotus, as described by a Nepalese scholar, is an object which though it may reach down into the mud is itself above the mud and unaffected by it; also when the stalk is cut it reveals five channels relating to the five kinds of matter. Unlike humans, who exist in the world of saṁśāra and are forever creating consequences whose effects keep them in the repetition of rebirths but which can never be totally destroyed in that the traces linger and so the round continues, the gods are outside this kind of circuit. It is only with human embodiment that saṁśāra is possible, in fact the diagnostic term for this particular cycle of births and rebirths means "with" (saṁ ) body ( sāra ). From the metaphysical point of view we can perhaps understand what is happening here. Once the deities evolve out of the union of Puruṣa/Prakṛti they do not take other forms but merely produce products which produce in the series of transformations. From man's point of view the gods are halted at a sattvika level of existence since unlike him they retain an incorporeal form and do not evolve past this point. This of course makes sense in that if these are to be the forms that generate other forms then they must not be subject to destruction and modifiability otherwise they would disappear as forces. This is the requirement of a cause. If it is to cause a particular effect then it should not undergo change in so doing. Hence according to Saṁkhyan formulations, during the process of creation, the deities are the primal forces which generate the subsequent transformations, though they themselves do not change. During the time of stability even though they act as the basis for the ongoing process of man and the universe, in providing the substratum for the existence of everything, once evolved, again they do not change in form. Nor are these "eternal particles", as Manu calls them, destroyed during pralaya, but are reabsorbed into the Supreme. Man in contrast, at least body-wise, is the product of his parents and the fluids of his mother's body. From man's point of view, he himself is the instigator of his actions and must bear the fruits and therefore, as instigator, he is the rajas type of being, with proclivities and sensibilities associated with the thinking ( manas - mind - human) component. Yet without the deities as the primal forces he would not even exist and therefore they provide the source for his placement in time/space.

It is man's corporeal embodiment and transmigratory fate that leaves him open to the forces of mutability, change and ephemerality. Trapped in his sheath the human, as an ontological entity, exists for one historic life-time only. If anything signifies his ephemerality, it is his waste and finally the body. Though the individual as the transmigrating soul persists
through its movement in the saṃsāra cycle of deaths and rebirths, entering a new historic body at each rebirth,¹ this is man's limitation, since he does not continue his historic person even forgetting his own past at birth through Viṣṇu's power to veil (maya). Thus from the ontological point of view, the deities, as against the particular historical person, constitute different kinds of beings distinguishable especially by their locus at different stages of cosmic production and thereby each is implicated in different stages. This also provides the basis for their differentiation in terms of durability of being, for the more evolved and complex forms are involved in continuous cycles whereas the primal forms are not. The deities, after all, are the powerful, superior, eminent forms which endure and reside in the heavens, the various divine lokaś, like Viṣṇu Vaikuntha. So how are humans and high gods distinguished?

Gods can be differentiated from humans in three dimensions: in terms of location in the cosmos, the gods are primal forms, appearing at the incipient stage, in terms of composition of their form for it is unevolved; and in terms of duration, for they retain their autonomy even though they provide the substratum of powers for the later transformation and even during the time of dissolution since they are not destroyed but are dissolved into the Absolute, so they are eternal. In contrast to this, man is both compositied and complex. He is a perishable entity through his body, and a modifiable being through the nature of his individuality. This may be tentatively summarized in diagram form with the proviso that without initiation into the secrets, any account is likely to be deficient.

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## Tentative Diagram Showing Differences between High Gods and Humans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration (time)</th>
<th>Deities</th>
<th>Humans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>endure</td>
<td>indestructible body.</td>
<td>corporeal frame of the individual temporary for one life-time only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location (place)</th>
<th>Deities</th>
<th>Humans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>heavens and esoterically speaking inside the human also.</td>
<td>life in this world heavens and hells of afterlife, life in the womb and birth in this world again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the primal stage in the &quot;stadia&quot; of creation. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Deities</th>
<th>Humans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>incorporeal, composed of the eternal particles of the primal stage.</td>
<td>a composite of fleshy body, individualistic self compounded by lingering effects of one's past deeds, plus life-source (the divine forces). A late transformation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Deities</th>
<th>Humans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cosmic in extent, especially the guna forces to destroy, create and sustain.</td>
<td>limited to this world and creating effects for future condition of each historical self.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Dasgupta (1932) uses the term "stadia" which brings together a "realm" or "plane" and its related stage of development.
In the *Lakṣmi Tantra*, the composition of the human is likened to the parts of the wheel. The image nicely evokes the Hindu metaphysical ideas for the rim (the *bhautika sarīra* or physiological component made by the parents in the womb, and sustained by food outside) wears out and is replaced, more often than not; the nature of the spokes (the *Linga sarīra*, the specificity of the individual associated with his own mind and sensibilities and "vasana") orient the conditions of the ride; and the hub (the *daiviška sarīra*, the divine body or life force or source body) is the support and, as in human existence, without the hub sustaining the different components the whole thing collapses and cannot function just as it happens with a historic person when the great *prāṇa* (the life force or *daiviška sarīra*) exits the body. The unseen power which gives direction and momentum to the central hub and which is affixed to it is the axle, that is the remote Ultimate, the Paramātman. The immediate high point of the construction would be the hub, the primal forms, called by the Nepalese, "the children of God".

It would seem that each component of the individual has its corresponding cosmic force for the different parts are associated with different deities, points stressed especially in *yogic sāthana*. This would mean that the same deities exist in two realms, outer space, the "astral regions" as one Tantric put it, and also inside the body. Exactly what is the relation between the two realms I do not know but I do not think that the idea often preferred that of macrocosm and microcosm is useful for it would not distinguish the totality from the particular. It also obscures the differences between the two kinds of space involved. What is also especially difficult is how the astrological forces, which we know are definitely relevant, fit into the scheme. Since these astrological forces have bearings on the specificity of the individual, and since for this the mind aspect which is the sphere of operation is pertinent, then we might infer that these are so linked. As we shall see later, "mind purification" generally not only entails contact with some item of sacra so that there is the ontological fortification (the purification), but it is also concerned with wresting "auspiciousness" cancelling out "mistakes" and "defects" of the worshipper and so ensures success in the undertaking. This would also have future repercussions, for rites have consequences to be reaped at some future point in time, a point which has been repeated so often. Now the astrological forces are pertinent in the immediacy of things, however at the time of creation and presumably persisting there are the cosmic forces which are responsible for the possibility of human cognition. Whether these

two sets are the same and only labelled differently, I do not know.

Despite the uncertainty of the details, some points are clear: that
divine forces are associated with the different components of the individual
and especially important are the high gods; that the individual through
his complex nature and composition is forever being subjected to change with
the breaking down processes of the body, and the whirling of the mind.
Both are seen as negative and both are attended to in the purifications.
Along with the individual's mind component, which in effect manifests his
specificity, are influences derived from his own acts which in terms of one
formulation are likely to link with the planetary influences, and in terms
of another would relate to his particular āśā or, the lingering traces
remaining as a consequence of his actions and which have bearings on the
conditions of his existence. So much for the background of ideas which, let
me stress, are tentative and stand to be corrected for there is always the
possibility that some secret fact which I do not know could render my
interpretation inadequate.

2. Some Purificatory Activities:

If nothing else, the outline of the human components should provide
some kind of reference against which one may relate the direction of the
purificatory activities. The first in view is the outer casing, the body
(bhautika sarira).

In an outline given by a Nepalese pundit for one particular
purificatory bath, that prescribed for the son after he has burnt his
parent's body, I quote what the Brahmin said,

He must take off all leather. Then the barber shaves him,
but he must keep his śūkhā (the top-knot). But after
shaving he must take a bath - a deep bath. For this the
water must be natural, i.e. river or pond. With kuśa grass
representing the powers of Viṣṇu, sesame seeds representing
those of Śiva and barley of Brahmā, in his hands, he bathes
with these things. His mind is cleaned by the mantra he
chants and his body by the combination of the three things.

1. That objects utilized in the ritual procedure be natural (prakṛti)
was repeatedly stressed by the pundit, for example, natural material,
like "wool", and "grass seats". "Natural water" in this context means
water in its natural environment.
Then the Brahmin must chant the *sankalpa* or he should do it himself. Since the affair is not prearranged we have to act accordingly. Then he must get clean clothes (*dhoti* and *tangoti* Nep.). Change his sacred thread.

According to this rendition, purification is directed at two components of the individual (body and mind), though the critical aspect appears to be the purification of the body through the deep immersion in the water, while at the same time being influenced by those entities which link to the powers of the three great gods. However, regarding the *mantra* in general, others describe it as the necessary transforming power which renders the specific object sacred by connecting the particular with a cosmic correlate, through the utterance of the particular *mantra*. Had the pundit disclosed the specific wording of the *mantra* we would have been able to be more precise here. But at least there is evidence in other contexts where the *mantra* is specifically linked to the concrete item so that they form a composite tool. For example, when the cow's five products are being blended into the entity called *pāncagavya*, each item has its corresponding *mantra* which specially connects it to one of the five types of materiality. Taking the first few as illustration: with urine, the Gayatri is said; with dung, lines referring to "smell", the property of the "earth element", is intoned; with the milk, reference is made to the "element water"; and so forth (see Kane Vol.II , Part II, 1974:774). In this way the discernible objects of this world are transmuted, by associating them with non-empirical forms. In the case of the cow it seems appropriate for the cow itself is a form of the goddess.\(^1\)

Alternatively, the event may be interpreted somewhat differently: that the relevant cosmic power is invoked or re-invoked into the cow's products itself is also a possibility, given that these derive from a form of the goddess anyhow. Either way, the *mantra* is to be seen as having a correspondence with the specific object. These renditions then would diverge from the one given by the pundit where he said that the tangible objects relate to the body, while the *mantra*, related to another human component, the mind. However, whatever way these activities are conceptualized, they are seen as involving transformations where different kinds of entities constitute the transforming potencies when applied to the actor. Moreover, we also see the obvious but important point that the purificatory bath is a necessary prelude for other events (in this instance, the *sankalpa*). Kane's observations raise the same issues when he outlines the details of the purificatory bath (*snāna*) for he says,

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1. Or again, to take a different context, that of solitary meditation, where the two entities (*mantra* and gesture) interlock, for a ritualist will state the *mantra* which is the sound form of the deity as he touches the limbs and other parts of his body and thereby infuses these parts of himself with the power of the relevant deities in a sequence called "*nyāsa"."
All the varnas have to bathe in or with water everyday the whole body together with the head also and dvijatis have to do it with Vedic mantras. This is nitya (compulsory). This is required to be done because a man who has not bathed is not entitled to perform homa, japa and other rites. The body is dirty and from it ooze various exudations day and night and a bath in the morning cleanses and purifies the body. In this way snana has seen and unseen (i.e. spiritual) results (Kane, 1974, Vol. II Pt. 1: 658).

The quotation sums up the various dimensions. Purification is not simply dephenomalization but also involves a move from phenomenality to other planes and as well is a precondition for the other rituals of the set. One of these is the preparation of the "work-pot" (the karma pātra) undertaken at the outset of worship.

This is a translation given by a Nepalese scholar of the first two pages of the ritual procedure for the Dasa series, though the method is standard;

Preparing Karnapatra

First sitting on a seat and rinsing the mouth with water, set up karnapatra by reciting the following three

"Om Yadebra ...........": etc.
(Oh gods! we, who have sinned by disbelieving you, be made free from the sin by fire).

"Om Yadi dibā yadi Nakta manena ....": etc.
(If we have done any sin either by day or by night let me be made free from it by the wind).

"Om Yadi jagradyadi ....": etc.
(If we have done any sin either in awakening or dreaming let me be made free from it by the sun).

After this put paviṭra and kusa etc. into it by reciting this mantra.

"Om pabītreshyo baisnabyo ....": etc.
(Om all-purifying paviṭra, you are for an oblation, and I, with your help, by the incentive of the sun, and with the help of non-porous wind and the sun's rays, purify this oblation by scattering water about, Om water (in Rana, 1975: 1-2).

At the outset, there is the necessary mouth purification, even though a bath would have been performed earlier and again bringing into relief the idea of constant subjection to bodily processes. Then follows purification of sins by the relating of the mantras which evoke the elements and it also introduces the three important states of consciousness, the waking, dream and deep sleep, during any of which sins may have been committed. So there is

1. Kane's observations also hint at exclusion in that only the twice-born men (dvijatis) have access to the Vedic mantras.
2. Karnapatra - a small pot into which holy water, holy grass (kusa), barley, sesame seeds, etc., are put in performing religious rites.
the idea of alteration and a progression from purification of body-part, first of all, then to the other type which relates to the individuality of the worshipper, in this case, his sins. Once purified he then directs attention to the work-pot which is also brought to the right condition. The three kinds of things associated with the three gods are themselves purified first by the mantra evoking the power of the sun, the non-porous wind (vāyu ) and the rays (tejas ) with a sprinkling of water. What one sees is a series of successive moves going from one item which is purified, which in turn will also be used as an agent in subsequent transformations. One of those is the sequence called godāna.

In so far as godāna appears not only in the naming ceremony mentioned in the introductory remarks, but in all other life-crises, and is also a compulsory rite to be undertaken when a Hindu returns from abroad, it is important enough to be used as the focus for discussion of another kind of purificatory rite.

Though the function of godāna is referred to as purificatory (making the individual pavitra), this kind of transformation diverges somewhat from that entailing dephenomenalization in so far as godāna appears to take up various dimensions, and especially relates to the individual's personality, which can be discerned in the nature of the activity itself as we shall indicate shortly as well as in the prelude, sankalpa, the declaration of intent.

Sankalpa is especially important, for not only is it a declaration of the actor's intent but, amongst other things, locates the particular event and the participant in a hook-up with cosmic space, time and his rṣi connexion, where the rṣi is his primordial ancestor. Therefore it is an event which relates to the person specifically - who he is, who is his cosmic forebear, and where he stands in place and time.

This is one Nepalese pundits' description, given in the context of death rites but as he himself remarks the procedure is standard:

The system of godāna is the same whether for āhoma, or as in this case the monthly śrāddha, or anything else. Pūjā (of the monthly śrāddha) cannot begin without godāna first. For śrāddha the actor has to be so pure, so pavitra. He would have committed some mistakes willingly, and some unwillingly. Therefore when the godāna is being performed such mistakes should perish. And he says "so I offer cow to you" (he gives either a cow or money wetted by water on a leaf plate and this is considered as a cow). But first he would present flowers, water and give a tikā to the receiver of godāna, the Brahmin.

1. It also figures in occasional rites for well-being.
If a real cow is used, then the kartabya (actor) will give water, flowers, and a cloth with one rupee, and place the cloth on the back of the cow and do pūjā to the cow. He also offers tilā to the Brahmin. Then comes sankalpa, a long one this time. Since it is the first time, the priest will have to detail all aspects, this is a mahāsankalpa. The actor holds a piece of kuśa grass, sesame and barley seeds wetted with water in his hand along with the tail of the cow while the sankalpa is being said by the Brahmin.

Then after finishing this, the tail is given to the Brahmin's hand by the jājmān, and also the kuśa etc., which must be kept in the Brahmin's hand for the rest of the time. The kartabya says "cow must be my feet aide, my right, my back. In essence, I'd like to be in cow". He addresses the cow, "I am in you, within you, so bless me". It takes one minute.

There are three important dānas, (gifts) godāna; land, bhumi dāna; and gold dāna. The cow donation is big and therefore he must give abundant bhuyasi daksina (remuneration) to the Brahmin. There is small chanting while the money is given into the hand of the Brahmin. The Brahmin puts the tail in the water, (or he puts the substitute, the wetted money) into the water and then sprinkles the water on the jājmān's head and the other family members also. This water is taken from a bowl (the kārma pātra) with kuśa, sesami, and barley seeds and water, and is called tilpani and is used for pūjā and for abhiseka... This is one kind of abhiseka. At the end of pūjā, another abhiseka is performed but the water is taken from the kalāsa (pot) and that is a different abhiseka.

For any big event, pitrikārya (results for pitris) or devakārya (results for gods) we will have to perform godāna. "Abhiseka" is regarded as good. "Give me blessings" and "give me abhiseka" are often asked for.

The karta (actor) is pure (pavitra).

So what is happening? First, after the declaration of intent, there is the actor's entry "inside" the cow while the priest is holding the cow's tail. After that, the cow is given to the priest. Then using the cow's tail, the priest sprinkles the actor with water from the pot containing the material associated with the three great gods.

It appears that with the actor's entry "inside the cow" there is either birth from, or death into, this form of the goddess, for in Hindu formulations a birth, as an entry into another locus, also means a death in the prior one. Birth means death of the womb existence, death in this world is entry to the after-life. Hence, in this sequence of godāna some kind of change in the actor is effected, presumably, an ontological change for it entails the actor's entry into the cow. The aspersions or blessings come at the end of the godāna sequence. Since blessings involve the auspicious, favourable "good" as the pundit said, these appear to relate to the securing of success

for the performance, that it proceeds without hitches, something that is always of great concern, since people regard the possibility of misadventure in a ritual as likely.\footnote{One of the worst things that can happen in blood sacrifice is that after the head has been decapitated, the animal weeps.} If these suggestions have validity we can say that the actor is purified of his mistakes (or sins) and the venture is blessed at this juncture. As for the gift, the Brahmin gets the cow for he is the link with the cosmic forces and the wielder of the stuff which brings them to the place.\footnote{The priest evokes the sankalpa; the priest is holding the cow's tail while the actor moves inside the cow; the Brahmin's sprinkling the grace-giving water from the work-pot (containing the articles associated with the great gods) using the cow's tail. The tail is used for crossing to other realms in other rites and figures in myths also.} \textit{Dakṣiṇa} is another gift which follows the gift of the cow, so the compounding of gifts requires some comment.

One way of approaching the matter, though this is tentative, is to work from analogy, taking reference from the myth of Dakṣa's sacrifice. According to that often repeated story, Dakṣa gave his daughter Satī to Śiva, and in ordinary marriages, this is called the gift of the virgin (\textit{kanyādāna}). Now whenever a gift is given, it must always be followed by \textit{dakṣiṇa} to the receiver. As one respondent expressed the matter, "no dana is complete without dakṣiṇa". In the myth, the receiver of the gift, Śiva, at one time was angered by Dakṣa and so it eventuated that he spoiled Dakṣa's sacrifice. Is it possible that the \textit{dakṣiṇa} to the receiver after presenting the gift, is to avoid such eventualities? Is it to ensure the success of the performance, through the Brahmin's invoking blessings on the actor, rather than spoil the affair which as chief agent he controls the technology to do so? Yet there is another way of tackling \textit{dakṣiṇa}.

If the positioning of \textit{dakṣiṇa} is relevant then the need to reimburse the beneficiary of the gift would relate to the gift itself. Now, while a donor of gifts is said to gain merit, then the Brahmin, the recipient, might not in the long run, for by gaining materially, he would be compromised through such indulgence. Yet, only through the cow-gift can the donor's requirements
be fulfilled. If, as is said in injunction after injunction, that the Brahmin is the connexion to the other world and through him offerings reach the deities and so they are pleased and will show favour to the donor, then within that framework the Brahmin provides a service to his client. Thus, through receiving the gift and effecting the pleasure of the gods on the donor, the Brahmin must also be given the daksīna payment. Needless to add, both of the above suggestions regarding daksīna, which also occurs in other contexts, would require a more substantive inquiry than what has been outlined here, if we are to arrive at a faithful rendition of the phenomenon. The puzzling aspect aside, we notice that the commentator on the godāna sequence stressed that it is a necessary prelude to homa, another so-called purificatory rite.

Homa, the ritual to the fire, is extremely complex and no details other than a chant are given here. This will suffice for our purposes, for it also throws into relief the necessity that the actor is brought to the right ontological state, and the desire that all will proceed favourably. Though it makes the same point, what it also reveals is a progression backwards which is in keeping with the process of destruction which occurs with fire where things are reduced to their essence, ash in this case. The particular quotation comes from a text published in Nepal for the performances of Dasaī. The homa occurs as a sequence of the proceedings:

Om. Fire as the ashes. Om. Water as the ashes.
Ashes as dried ground. Om. The wind as ashes. Om.
Space as ashes along with the ten sense organs as ashes.
Om. Salutations unto that which is totally enduring. Om.
Salutations unto the Lord (Isan). Salutations unto the Sage Vamadeva. Om. Salutations unto that which is effulgent. Om.
Let there be salutations unto Brai, Brai, Brai (Bhu, Bhuvā, Svāva) with Isvara as the limbs, the ashes which are the limbs.
May we worship the three-eyed one. Om. Salutations unto Śiva.
One is bathed in the great ashes representing everything. One is purified from drinks which should not have been drunk. One is purified from food which should not have been eaten. One is purified from a place which should not have been gone to.

1. See Manu Ch. 1:
94. For the self-existent (svayambhū), having performed austerities, produced him first from his own mouth, in order that the offerings might be conveyed to the gods and manes and that this universe might be preserved.

95. What created being can surpass him, through whose mouth the gods continually consume the sacrificial viands and the manes the offerings to the dead?

96. Of created beings the most excellent are said to be those which are animated; of the animated, which subsist by intelligence; of the intelligent, mankind; and of men, the Brahmānas (in Buhler (tr,), 1969:25).

2. Some, like Kane, taking a critical posture explain such events as due to Brahmin rapacity.
Om. Let there be auspiciousness. There should not be any defect whatsoever for the sacrificer. May you protect me, let there be protection immediately for me through the grace of the gods and goddesses.

Om. For the lord of mantras (in Rana, 1975:67).

It might not be untoward to take stock of the discussion to this point.

We began with the observation, though seemingly unimpressive nonetheless important, that a range of different kinds of activities are referred to as purificatory. Though all are referred to as purificatory they can be distinguished according to what aspect of the human they are directed at. Sometimes it is the body substances. Other times an event is said to relate to mind purification, and sometimes one event may combine the two elements. It was also suggested that the Brahmin seems to be especially involved in matters relating to the humanness of the individual, his specificity, his sins and mistakes in attempts at gaining god's favours. Given that godāna is necessary for the performance of homa and homa in turn features in all life-crisis transformations, as well as occasional rites like that required before returning from abroad and both (godāna and homa) are said to be purificatory, then the Brahmin emerges as the central agent in this milieu. In the action he utilises special items of sacra, associated with unseen forces and for this he is especially fitted given his ontological excellence. While in certain rites, like the life-crisis and the occasional rites for well-being, the Brahmin's services are imperative, though this is not to deny other circumstances where the individual undertakes his own ritual activities and is also the handler of items of sacra.

Generally speaking, the items of sacra utilised are various, and we have specifically come across the use of the river or pond (natural water) three kinds of seeds, the mantra. There is also the cow, and the Brahmin's aspersion of water from a pot containing the grains and grass. Elsewhere, we have seen others like the gold in the water used by women after menstruation. So we return to the problem posed at the outset: can we make any sense of the difference and the sameness of the items used? Since the sacra are crucial as the transforming objects, it is necessary to understand why these particular objects are taken as relevant.
3. The Purifiers:

There appears to be some kind of logical idea in the selection of entities of the empirical world to be used as purifiers (themselves also subjected to developmental changes which render them as such), for the selections are not arbitrary.

In any purificatory event the person concerned is brought into contact with certain things referred to as pure (śuddha pavitra or cokho Nep.) and which we have called the purifiers. Scrutiny of these indicate that they are special types of objects which stand outside the kind of development which the human individual is caught in. A mantra for example apart from being a sacred formula is sound (śabda) which is the property of space, a basic element. It would seem that because of its unevolved nature lacking stolidity, a sound may constitute the form of deities and also thereby a deity's particular powers expressed through the particular syllables of the sound corresponding to that deity. The relevant point here especially is that it does not deteriorate. In fact mantras are said to be indestructible (aṅkāra). Similarly with the hard and tangible object gold for it, too, is not subject to decay and is placed in a container of water with which a woman for example sprinkles and purifies herself after menstruation. Taking another entity also used in rituals, kuśa grass, let us cite a Brahmin's commentary on this type:

It is always pure and can be used in ritual after ritual, for it does not deteriorate. The grass is made into mats (āśan Nep.); strands knotted in a particular way are worn on the actor's finger during the ritual performance. 1

The Brahmin's commentary indicates that the item of sacra is not involved in a process of modification therefore it serves as a fitting purifier. It would seem that the purifiers constitute those kinds of entities which differ from the components of the human where the body deteriorates and perishes; and the mind (that aspect of the person which renders him a specific individual) is also seen as modifiable, through transmigration as well as being subject to the changing emotions and proclivities which are associated with mind, points noted before. Less cumbersomely we can say that the individual changes through the operation of his body and mind whereas, within the time span involved, the purifiers, in contrast, are stable entities.

1. In such instances the roots are removed. When a rite is directed at the dead ancestors kuśa is used, but then the roots are not cut off. It would seem that in this instance continuity in life development is not only relevant but important.
Thus far we can discern that the purifiers appear to belong to two major types. There is the kusa which is taken out of the developmental process and can be, for when dried it does not deteriorate, and similarly with cow dung. Seeds also will not germinate unless subjected to a new cycle by planting in the soil and watering. With ash, not only is it lifted from this, but reduced to essence which makes impossible any further change. Secondly, there is the other type like gold (or sound) which apparently by its properties is not mutable. The important feature about these purifiers which ordinary people bring to light, is the idea of preserved, specifically with the item ghee, when they insist that it does not go off like western butter but lasts a very long time. More technically we can say that they do not operate in the vikrti cycle. All appear to be stalled as sattva in their relevant cycles though in what exact cycle is often difficult to fathom. What can be inferred is that they appear to belong to prior forms, less complex than the composited human and forms that have been pushed in a backward movement away from phenomenality, where each is associated with its particular cosmic force, or less metaphysically its god-power. Though sometimes this is not widely broadcast, other times it is strikingly patent. Two instances are the river Gaṅgā and the cow, where each is a form of the goddess and each is a renowned purifier. The Gaṅgā, as the texts tell, is no ordinary stretch of water but one which has come direct from the heavens, en route being intercepted by Śiva’s hair and is defined as a form of the goddess. The cow’s products (pañcagavya) or another form of Devī deserve special attention for this set is conspicuous in the purificatory context.

Before anything else one point about pañcagavya has to be cleared up. The ingredients are to a certain extent problematic since the concoction does include waste, the dung and urine conspicuously ejected substances which are otherwise regarded as impure when they come from other beings, yet are designated purifiers in the case of the cow. Dung as we have mentioned is dried and thereby taken out of the cycle of deterioration. There appears to be another more significant factor in this complex which relates to the cow’s metabolism. As a life-form, waste of food is made but this is exuded at the mouth, which is in fact regarded as impure by Hindus, for anything touched by the cow’s mouth or even smelt by the cow is treated as polluting. It is oriented in the opposite way to humans for its mouth is impure while with the human it is the place for the expressing of mantras; and its tail is a high point which is used for aspersions. The cow is not only regarded as a form of the goddess, a form of Lakṣmī, but is also treated
as such, being worshipped during the complex known as Dewali (the festival of lights) otherwise known as Lakṣmi Pūjā. Even the disposal of its carcass is special for it may be immersed in the Gāṅgā or a holy spot (themselves also forms of the goddess) without being reduced to ashes first as is required of humans. Its products are our specific concern here, because together as one entity they constitute the great purifier, pañcagavya.

In the manufacture of this concoction the ingredients are combined in special proportions the significance of which I am ignorant, unfortunately. However, since specific mantras are uttered by the maker during the procedure when each item is dropped into the vessel and each mantra evokes one of the specific elements (earth, water, fire, air and space), each of the cow's products has the corresponding cosmic potency infused into it. Judging from what Nepalese pundits have said in other contexts, it would seem that the fact that all five are brought together into one undifferentiated entity, "a totality", is significant for it would represent a stage before development and differentiation, yet holds within itself the potential for subsequent transformations which develop into the separate material items, but at this point are not discrete. Whether it now corresponds to the great primal essences, the pañca mahātattva, so close to the Paramātman, or not, is difficult to determine, yet I think not for there is another concoction which appears to be more pertinent, since that concoction of five is referred to as "immortal" (pañcamṛta). Unlike the cow's five it is taken by the worshippers at the end of pūjā, whereas the full five cow's products are taken at the beginning.

Parbatya say that the cow's five purifies the body and mind, and so after the Brahmin has poured it into a person's hand, in one quick sequence it is both drunk and then sprinkled over the head. With this the person is then purified and therefore in the right state for the subsequent performance. This central idea is explicit in the earlier commentators who talk of "ceremonial purity". Stevenson's rendition of the Hindu orientation, for example, underscores the point for she says that a person is now "ceremonially pure" and "so is free to perform the religious rites" (1971:166 & 167). To have become purified then means to have come in contact with these kinds of special forms, forms which belong to different cycles of existence from that of the humans. In this the mantra is critical.

1. Except the sādhu.
The mantra appears to be a critical piece of sacra since it is this which transforms the entities by associating them with each element, as we saw with the cow's products and other sets. When a mantra is Vedic, as we know, its employment is restricted to the twice-born men. Apparently men of other castes and women may utilize the Tantric mantras. One further point needs to be made.

While the discussion has tried to indicate that the relevance of these items of sacra as purifiers appears to be in their ontological locus, objects not involved in the vikrti cycle, where the change occurs through influence, often directly like consuming it, or by contact of some kind. There is yet another important detail.

One would surely be surprised if nowhere specific reference to male and female principles appeared, given that the multitude of things begins with this first form of differentiation. Though some items are ambiguously female like the cow and the river, one would also expect a set where the two conjoined. The work-pot seems to provide an example since it contains seeds and grass signifying the powers of the three gods, in this context. Some people say that as a type the mantra is male and the gesture or shaping (mudrā) is female, thus echoing the idea of the pair "name and form", alluded to in an earlier chapter.

It is clear, I hope, that none of this is to be taken to a simple opposition of the purified to the impure, for we see that the purifiers themselves belong to different cycles, though, as a type (purifier), they contrast with the human, the object of purification. Purification is an umbrella word which applies to a vast range of activities which occur at different times. For example, there is the purificatory bath at one point in time, the ritual aspersion after godāna at another and at the end of the entire affair the blessing (abiṣeka). In which case, there is some kind of progression. This also introduces one of the issues arising from the discussion for if there is progression one would like to know, more precisely to what? We can arrive at the same question from a different tack.

What is interesting is that the items of sacra chosen are appropriate and show a concern with the properties of things and underlines the point that the Hindu approach is a metaphysical one, whether the attention is on the objects of the immediate world or on the operation of

1. Since Untouchables make up their own mantras it appears that they are excluded from this type also.
the far-flung cosmic system. That there is a concern with principles not only characterises this cognitive approach, but also constitutes the basis for action. So we return to our particular question, purificatory moves to what end?
CHAPTER 15

SACRALIZATION

If becoming polluted is part of the process of humans caught in the outward (pravṛtti) movement, then becoming "purified" entails one movement in the reverse progression, getting away from phenomenal realms and stepping onto the route to the divine ones. Shorn of esoteric complication, the procedure is worship of various kinds and through it Hindus attempt to close the gap. Even though Hinduism imputes the existence of a gulf between man and gods, it also proffers the possibility of breaching this, of merging with these exalted forms, especially if a person has access to the right technology, and utilizes it. ¹ What exactly is to be done varies, depending on the particular state of the worshipper, the nature of the ritual procedure, and the kind of god who is central. Yet despite the various procedures, they all appear to bring about some kind of merger. One basic type is pūjā. ² It is a core ritual which occurs in a range of different rites, and can also be performed as an isolated self-contained procedure. It can appear in any series, whether this be an elaborate life-crisis event, or in the complex devotions performed daily by twice-born. ³ It also features in the series devoted to the temple gods, or just in simple worship. Given its omnipresence, it is not surprising that the term is used

1. A dramatic example is the bhajan group, "mesmerised" through the chanting of the same refrain, repeating it continuously so that awareness is of nothing else but this. In so far as the song elaborates a description of the deity concerned, it is said that by this state, the singer is immersed in the nature of the deity. Another type is esoteric ūdāhana, which is more complex in as much as it begins with the premise that the deities are all within the individual and that elaborate skills are required to actualise them. It means moving to different levels of consciousness, amongst other things. If successful, the adept is believed to merge with the prior forms and reach the special "fourth state".


3. The following are outlines given by two people regarding the components of daily worship. The first is that from a Parbatya Brahmin, and the second from a Tantric Chetri (Parbatya)

**Brahmin:**
- bath
- jap (recitation of the mantra)
- tarpana (pouring water in a linkage between gods, ēsā, ancestors and self)
- homa
- pūjā of the five gods

**Chetri:**
- bath
- pūjā
- jap path reading a sacred text, like 'The Chandi'.
- homa
- tarpana
- mahājāna (sprinkling)

**Rudri** (i.e. performed for his istadevata. This entails the "bathing of the Śiva lingam. It stands on the design of the nine planets).
generically to cover rituals in general.¹

Invariably one will come across a pūjā simply by walking around Kathmandu, whether narrowly avoiding stumbling upon the set-up by the side of the road, or catching a glimpse through a doorway of a spread of heads, and in a clearing spot the priest, or priests, the client, his kin and friends, and before and around them masses of things. A metallic pot, a large coconut among other fruits, flowers picked that day, an assortment of grains, a speck of light coming from a tiny pottery bowl, smoke from somewhere and the human hand darting back and forth so quickly. One only detects a rhythm, rather than rhyme or reason. At least in the temple, the affair is simplified and if we follow one woman's activities, we see this kind of sequence:

The woman stopped before the idol, rested her tray, sat on her haunches and draped the sari around her knees in the dextrous way that all Nepali women manage. Then she began to do all kinds of things to it. First she poured water over the idol, then placed markings (tīkā) on its forehead. Next, she threw the grains, sesame and barley, and then rice, coloured with red powder and mixed with a little water. While other people came in behind her, she remained totally lost in her work, oblivious to their presence. Next she threw flowers at the god. Back and forth the hand dipped into the stuff on the tray and then directed them to the deity. This time it was an incense lamp, its rising smoke wafted the strong smell all around, even though it was placed before the idol. Then with the right hand holding a burning lamp, and the left pelting a bell, she waved that lamp around the deity leaving an after image of a stream of light. She had done so much yet only a few seconds had passed. Then she stopped. She took up a sweet and slowly but firmly pressed it into the idol's mouth so hard that the friable pieces fell and only the bits embedded in the grooves of the metal lips remained. But they stayed stuck, nonetheless. Then she dipped into the pūjā tray, took a copper coin and threw it at the deity. Finally, as low as she could get, she put her head on the deity's feet. A lull, though so brief, was hardly noticeable. And then, she began taking things back to herself.

From the container,² used previously for the deity, she took some water and in one movement of the hand sprinkled a bit into her mouth and the rest over her head.³ Next, from the marking on the idol she took the stuff and

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¹ Woodroffe makes the same observation: "This word (pūjā) is the common term for worship of which there are numerous synonyms in the Sanskrit language" (1969:97).
² This is not a kalasha but a different kind of container called the work pot.
³ For those of us who cannot even grasp water in one hand, the movement, typical of Nepalis, is impressive.
made a marking on her own forehead. Then the red-coloured rice. As always, the actions were speedy, easy and business-like, darting from image to image. After that, her hand lifted a few flower-petals clinging to the image, placed them on her head where they stuck in the black shining hair. Terminating the event by again taking what was previously an offering of food to the deity, she picked up the sweets and fruits, which now constituted the final item of this prasāda cluster, what the worshipper obtains from the deity, at the end.\footnote{If one asks a Nepali to describe it, he or she generally gives a list of the material things offered to the deity and the sequence followed. The pūjā items, (the pūjāsārdam, Nep.) outlined by one person comprise water; sandalwood paste; red powder; sesame and barley; coloured rice, i.e. hand husked rice which is unbroken plus red powder and a little water; flowers; incense; lamp; the ringing of the bell, fruit, the naivedya (fruit, sweets (etc.) and a copper coin). As Bista says, Pūjāsārdam: ensemble d'objets variés que l'on offre aux divinités. La variété en est infinie. (1972:119). All the items of the classical list he provides are included in this woman's.}

This looks rather like a dyadic confrontation, between worshipper and the deity, with little of the esoteric implications of the more sophisticated practices. An expert of yogic sādhana, described pūjā, as simply a stepping stone:

We do pūjā to purify ourselves so that we may do meditation. We worship the murti (idols) and then after that we realise them. Lack of material things is the criterion for sādhana and meditation. Whereas with pūjā there is the use of external objects. And in pūjā concern is with worldly things. There, one performs kāmya karma (work for desires).

Nonetheless if worship of idols does entail "purification" then it raises the question of what is involved here, whether this applies to the adept who will continue further, or a person who stops short and does not undertake the complex yogic practices.

Pūjā in my view includes one critical feature, the taking of prasāda without which the whole enterprise is regarded as unfinished and through which the "merger" occurs. Secondly, these items of sacra offered to the deity at the beginning are, I think, more significant as the "takings". Thirdly, such objects, constitute stuff altered by contact with the divine

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\footnote{1. If one asks a Nepali to describe it, he or she generally gives a list of the material things offered to the deity and the sequence followed. The pūjā items, (the pūjāsārdam, Nep.) outlined by one person comprise water; sandalwood paste; red powder; sesame and barley; coloured rice, i.e. hand husked rice which is unbroken plus red powder and a little water; flowers; incense; lamp; the ringing of the bell, fruit, the naivedya (fruit, sweets (etc.) and a copper coin). As Bista says, Pūjāsārdam: ensemble d'objets variés que l'on offre aux divinités. La variété en est infinie. (1972:119). All the items of the classical list he provides are included in this woman's. This is how the same woman summarised her movements: We cannot sit on the floor, but on a wooden plank. At home, we must worship Ganeśa first. Then on the god or goddess I pour the water, then the sandalwood paste, and the red powder on the forehead of the god. Then throw the sesame and barley, and the red coloured wet rice, and the flowers. After that I take up the incense, and then show the light and while moving this, we ring the bell with the other hand. Then we offer the fruit (and the money). Then bowing, you are getting a vision (darśan) of god.}
forms and thereby are ritually altered into what may be viewed as the essence particles. To couch this in terms of the general discussion, it means that with the taking of prasāda, the individual obtains "purification" of some significance, in fact, he becomes "divinized".

The acquisition of prasāda is not to be confused with the specific goals, the "fruit". With this, sometimes the realization can be immediate, if the goal itself is to confront the deities in an attitude of piety; sometimes the goal is to be realised remotely through the actualisation of the "fruit" at some future point in time, as for example with that of Dasaī, "good luck for the coming year", as one respondent put it, or "the proliferation of sons and crops", or "success in defeating enemies". Sometimes, as in that case, the goal has specific advantages for worldly life, advantages which are bona fide since promulgated as such and with general applicability, regardless of the differences between the performers. In other contexts an individual may perform a rite with a purely idiosyncratic goal, depending of course on both the type of rite and the actor's intentions. In addition, generally speaking, for any ritual, apart from the concern to show reverence, there is also the possible goal of fulfilling the requirements of dharma and thereby gaining merit to one's advantage in the future. Prasāda however may be viewed as a different kind of goal, because it is an intrinsic part of the proceedings and it is what the worshipper gets at the end, there and then. As well, it crosses all the specific types. Unlike almost all of the other kinds of goals, it is immediate and concrete, since it is what the ritualist obtains from the deities before he leaves the shrine room. Surprisingly, even though it constitutes an intrinsic part of the procedure, its presence and import tend to go unnoticed by outside commentators, and if noted its meaning is hardly enhanced by the label, "food leavings" (uçchista Sk. or jutho Nep.) sometimes employed for one type of the prasāda cluster. My concern is not with the specific goals, varying as they do from context to context, but with the general and immediate terminisation to the affair, the getting of prasāda. Without it in the pūjā, as one informant insisted, "worship would not be complete".

At the end, the worshipper (either as actor or jayman) acquires certain items as an inevitable finale to the performance. Specifically, there is the great "abhiṣeka", the sprinkling of water from out of the pot, known as the pūrṇa kālaśa, variously translated as the "full kālaśa",
the pot of "perfection", or "the cosmic pot".¹ People also get the bits and pieces of flowers and greenery referred to as prasāda: the naivedya, food items of various kinds, and tīkā the marking made by paste which also varies according to the nature of the central deity worshipped. If this is Pāśupati, a form of Śiva, the tīkā will be a pale yellow; if, as in the case of Dasaį, it is the saguna tīkā comprising white rice, and red powder held together by curd, as we have seen. It is with such variations that the specific power of the particular deity obrudes. Apart from the sprinkling, this last cluster of entities may be loosely referred to as the prasāda ² even though they also constitute the items offered to the deities. The deities worshipped in the critical part of daily worship are the great five, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devi, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, for the Parbatya twice-born follow the practice of what one pundit described as "sanātana" (eternal). To cite another pundit, "We worship all five and do not discriminate by excluding any. The only difference that is made is that a person puts his own istadevata in the centre".

On what basis do I depict this omnipresent feature - the worshipper's taking from the deity something that was previously offered and without which the event is seen as unfinished, as an instance of some kind of merger? At its simplest level, in pūjā the ritualist offers certain objects to the deity which in formal pūjā comprise a basic set of five kinds of things (pañcapacara), though the number can be extended. Although these are initially given, the later acquisition of prasāda should not be viewed as a return in an exchange:

> We do not believe that the idols are mere stone, but that the presence of the devatā has come there. Nor do we believe that the things we take are the same offerings that we gave earlier. These have come from the devatā for us especially. We then place the flowers in our hair, the tīkā on our forehead and afterwards eat the naivedya.

Although this outline comes from a Chetri woman, what the expert had to say does not diverge fundamentally. The term used for the "takings" indicates their provenance from the gods, for prasāda means god's grace, or god's favour. However, if it is not regarded as the stuff given, then how is it to be delineated at this terminal stage of the proceedings?

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1. In Dasaį this pot also featured, but in addition, there was the special Daisaiiko pot which figures centrally in the proceedings.

2. Prasāda is used generically to cover all items, even the tīkā marking.
Though their import lies in the taking, these items unlike many others which appear in the elaborations not detailed here, are only given to the deities and therefore they are the "offerings", or the placings "upacāra". In that the items are offered to the gods, they are also placed on them. When the items are presented to the deities, contact would involve an alteration of state through the principle of transfer through contact. Such objects no longer constitute objects of this world but the pañcatattva, the special kind of materiality associated with the primal forms, the high gods. It would seem then, that in the procedure, the five kinds of commodities by being brought into contact with the deity, and through ritual technology, are transformed into the eternal particles: according to one expert, "these items are the pañcatattva, though most people are unaware of this significance". For the five (pañcapacara), certain concrete objects are used. In the listing I also attempt to interpret their significance;

(a) gandhā, the fragrant sandalwood paste that will end up as tīkā. In so far as it comes from one kind of earth which is ground and has some water added to make it a paste, and also smells, which is the characteristic of this element, it would correlate with the earth, the most evolved of the five;

(b) Puṣpā, flowers. This is problematic, like the last, yet one may infer that it relates to water (apa), since the flower contains the sap of life.¹ Water provides the field for the faculty of rasa, passion, at its most intense manifestation, taste, at a more mundane level;

(c) light (dīpa) sitting in a small plate with a wick burning ghee. Illumination provides the field for the operation of the human sense of vision, the perception of forms and colours;

(d) dhūpa, a kind of incense, which is a smoke-maker and therefore would correlate with air or vāyu, affording the operation of the sensibility of touch. Another characteristic often referred to is that it is the carrier of fragrances;

¹ The close association of water and flowers is delineated in a popular ikon relating to one creation myth which portrays Viṣṇu, floating on the waters, with a lotus stemming from his navel and seated in that lotus, are Devi and Brahmā.
(e) *naivedya* (food). This will vary depending on the nature of the gods concerned. The rationale for the correlation of this with ether could perhaps relate to the fact that food sustains, just as ether is the support of the universe, since it constitutes the all-pervasive space.\(^1\)

If the set of five items correlate with the five essences, which in turn are associated with the basic elements as well as the individual's potentials for discrimination,\(^2\) then through the incorporation of these into himself, technically the ritualist is ontologically transformed through acquiring commodities touched by the high gods. Even though not all the items can be taken away as the transportable *prasāda*, I think it reasonable to assume that the entities like "air" and "light" are incorporated with those that are. Even so during the worship, the actor would have contacted these.

Though different texts will provide different sets of correlations, or even leave the matter undisclosed except for those who read Sanskrit, or render it "wilfully disordered", the principle that each ritual entity stands for a cosmic essence and its corresponding power seems to hold. The five offerings (*pañcabacara*) as a set, at least exhibit a correlation with the five essences, even though less precise is the exact correspondence of each item to referent, for while the correlates of *gandhā*, light and smoke can be immediately identified, it is not so easy for flowers (water) and food (ether). Nevertheless, I do not think that there is ambiguity regarding the possibility of correlation between the set of five concrete ritual commodities and the five eternal particles and that is the point.\(^3\)

If the *mahātattva* constitute the particular kind of materiality associated with the primal forms (the high gods), then when the worshipper takes them onto and into his person, he would thereby partake of their nature and their powers to some extent also. Thus he becomes divinized. It would

\(^1\) As well, there is the idea of compounding in a movement towards greater complexity, though this does not deny the particular faculty and property associated with each kind of materiality. That version states that ether has the property of sound; cosmic air of sound and touch; fire of sound, touch and form; water of sound, touch, form and taste; and earth of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. For further details see *The Sri Mad Devi Bhagavatam*, 1921-3709.

\(^2\) Which in turn are connected with human organs, cognitive and conative (see Montier-Williams, 1878:196).

\(^3\) In more elaborate pūjās sixteen items for example are used but whatever the number and variety, the core five are essential.
seem then that the odd-looking scraps that bedeck people's hair, and lumps of colour that jut out from their foreheads are not to be viewed at their face-value, unprepossessing bits and pieces, but are to be understood as the stuff from and of the deity, and therefore highly prized and greatly potent. Although the taking of prasāḍa might appear as a simple transposition, from a negative to a positive, this would not only belie the series of movements involved, but more importantly leave opaque the significance of it all, for becoming "purified", at this point in the series, is no non-descript state taking reference from an inferior "impure" but does appear to entail the acquisition of something quite specific, god-stuff.

Since people identify prasāḍa's provenance, as that of the superior beings who are the forces of the universe and stand beyond the limitations that bedevil the human condition by implication, they indicate that it is exceedingly strong and potent and so to absorb stuff associated with them is to partake of this also in some way. People do not vocalise exactly what this might be, except to stress that "it comes from the gods", but by the act of stating, given the beliefs about the nature of gods as superior and powerful beings, they circuitously direct attention to this dimension. If there is any doubt regarding people's attitude that prasāḍa is worthwhile and has some kind of efficacy then to witness just one heavy crush of people scrambling to get even a shred of a petal at the end of a public festival would, I think, dispel the query. That Parbatya appear to regard prasāḍa as having potency which can travel is indicated by the practice of posting some of these bits and pieces to kin and friends residing in foreign lands. Further, in so far as the rule insists that prasāḍa must not be allowed to fall into an impure (aśuddha) environment, it is regarded not only as a holy item of sacra, but its particular state is seen to survive outside the shrine room or temple or wherever it was manufactured. This means of course that prasāḍa is viewed not only as having value outside the ritual situation but also applying for a subsequent period of time. If it does have relevance outside the ritual situation then it must have some kind of pragmatic advantage, afterwards. The particular timing, that it is to be obtained at the end before quitting the place, also indicates that it is regarded as having relevance for the worshipper afterwards. Despite some people's lack of knowledge of technicalities, but acting through eating the food and making the pieces part of himself, he acquires something touched by the high god's presence, and thereby becomes ontologically fortified as a being. This would apply to prasāḍa in general. The elaborations are detailed because I have
always found the idea of "pure", especially elusive. With "impure" one at least has a reference through association with ideas about defilement and there are the concrete entities associated with the phenomenon, like the body waste, whereas with "pure" within our kind of conceptualisation one is reduced to such features as unadulterated. And though this connotation is not inapplicable since it may correspond with the idea of unmodified forms, however if left at unadulterated, it would not exactly facilitate one's understanding of what is meant. Further, even if one merely referred to the entities as divine-like, that too would not be satisfactory unless the background to what divinity entails were also introduced.

As to the particular power of a prasāda set, this can vary according to which deity is concerned. One informant explained differentiation between the deities, in terms of a "division of labour" therefore, in so far as Ganeśa is the god who helps the individual achieve success in his endeavours then the prasāda from this deity, I think, would be seen to relate to this particular kind of potency. The orientation may be discerned more easily in the context of rites with specific goals, like Lakṣmi pūjā where, amongst other things a person aims at acquiring an abundance of good things, and if the goddess has this potency then the worshipper obtains a comparable potential through contact with that particular prasāda. Whatever else is involved we cannot but observe that in such contexts there is a concern with acquiring special material things, since it is not just enough to worship and leave it at that, but before quitting the ritual precincts it is imperative that the worshipper bedecks himself with god-stuff which will remain with him while he is embroiled in other affairs of everyday life.

"Purification" in this context, then, is not merely absence of a negative or unwanted condition, but acquisition of something positive, desirable, potent and of pragmatic value. At this point, the individual is no longer just impure(no longer aśuddha or no longer standing at the level where tamaś predominates) but has obtained something extra. With receiving prasāda, the worshipper arrives at the high point of the "purification series" because through this, the ritualist, even though only temporarily, gets at the essences, the pañcamaññatattva, matter which endures. Moreover, given that the set appears to comprise the special materiality of the primal forces, then for the time being at least, his person is infused with the same kind of materiality associated with those
cosmic forces which impel the process of the universe, including mankind along with all the rest. Thus, this kind of purification is not only holy (of the gods) but also potent (since it is from the gods) and therefore, the event can be viewed as a transition to the divine-like state, albeit non-empirical. But according to Hindu speculations that is where the real power lies. One pundit made the point nicely:

In our system of thought, rivers are devas, stones, caves etc. are devas. By this way gods are in all kinds of things...the sun isn't burning by itself but by Isvara. In the centre is Isvara and his light lights the sun. When we worship the sun as God it is because we think that in the centre our God is living.

When answering Arjuna's questions, Kṛṣṇa said that 'the wind blows by my breath...the sun gives heat by the heat coming from me...'. In this way, all things that we get are influenced by God, and are possible by the force of God.

Central to their formulations is the recognition of the divine force behind things, and in worship there is the approach to contact these. Though on the one hand one would not deny what could perhaps be called the more religious endeavours, the concern with spirituality or piety, since these are omnipresent and vividly conspicuous in Kathmandu, on the other hand, one cannot ignore the pragmatic advantages that the ritual situation generates. For there the worshipper may procure divine-like strength, and which is relevant for the ritualist's state afterwards, even if it does not last. In the complex the five kinds of matter are crucial.

It is curious that the presence of the five entities (pañcatattva) tend to be highlighted in situations of left-handed Tantra, where they are known as the "pañcamahāna", despite the fact that they appear in numerous Hindu contexts. Perhaps this is due to the infamy of the alleged iconoclastic technology, especially sexual union of humans. Regardless of the complications in that area, even that idea is not unique to Tantra for it appears with the union of Puruṣa and Prakṛti and the subsequent evolution of the five kinds of matter. The pāñcatattva appear repeatedly in all kinds of ritual endeavours, like yogic sādhana and also in the worship of the Śiva lingam where each of the various forms of this great god is associated with its corresponding eternal particle, as well as in ordinary formal worship performed daily by Parbatya devoted to the five great gods, Ganeśa, Sūrya, Śiva, Devi and Viṣṇu. As a set of five, these deities are also associated with the five essences though the precise correlations may vary from school to school or person to person. The concern with the five things is not some idiosyncratic feature behind the acquisition of prasāda, but appears in numerous contexts, and it is hardly surprising that as a set they lie at the centre of Hindu endeavours given the
formulation about their nature, as the core range for all types of materiality, and their association with each of the presiding deities, the cosmic forces which comprise the great gods of Hinduism. If the metaphysical ideas about the five great essences help us understand the significance of the prasāda items, then what can be said of abhiṣeka

Abhiṣeka, the water sprinkling, precedes the acquisition of prasāda, and perhaps appropriately since here the sprinkling appears to signify the primordial sap or cosmic breath and which would be more pristine than the essences, holding them as potentials. There are a number of features which allow us to make this inference. Since several relevant ideas are brought together in Lākṣmi Tantra, let us refer to it:

The existence of all the worlds and of all living beings is based on water and both are comprised of it (XXXVI, 86 in Gupta (tr.), 1972:220).

In the pitcher, or in the temple, or in the image form, (or) wherever the holder of the holder performs the worship, should (first) meditate on the (maṇḍala of) nine lotuses, which contains the whole world and represents the exalted home of all the gods, which encompasses all (other) loci and is the paramount abode. He should then (worship) by offering arghya etc., uttering (each time) the sounds of the name of Tārikā together with namaḥ (XXXVII, 24-5, in Gupta (tr.), 1972:232).

The water here appears to relate to the primordial water, or life-sap, or life-force, from which creation subsequentially evolves and therefore even earlier than water as one of the elements, the later evolve of the set of five. This is highly likely for the liquid can also be referred to as Varuṇa, the Vedic term for the primordial waters and which has its correlate in the puranic myth about the churning of the primordial ocean which contains the elixir of life (amṛta). Different names for the same referent keep cropping up in Hinduism making the matter more complex than perhaps it is. What appears to be happening is that there is the same range of cosmic forces differently labelled according to school or locus in the development of Hinduism where the old names are not discarded but retained, for what is important is the force itself. We see this in the subsequent actions that the adept is to undertake in the outline given in Lākṣmi Tantra.

1. Details of the lists of five are given in a Nepalese crib on the subject (see Pujadanādī Samagrī Pradhāsika, Upadhyya (collector) 1963(?):3-5). It also contains diagrams (rekti; Nep. cakras, or yantras) for the various rites.
2. See also the translator's footnote on the matter.
3. In which case water has two major referents; the elements of different stages; and this aspect of Prakṛti herself, in whom and through whom things are created once her potency is stirred (see Lākṣmi Tantra, V, 19-21 in Gupta (tr.), 1972:28,29).
Going back to the text, as the procedure continues, where earlier the Goddess Tarika is named, later the adept is to visualise the deities of Vedic origin, Agni and Soma (which in this context is likely to relate to the male and the female principle as with fire or sun as male and Soma or moon as female). However, what is especially relevant is the idea of "Undivided" which is used here for this would refer to the form before differentiation begins and gives the clue to the nature of the substance involved. After that, the adept is instructed to turn to Agni and "burn the offerings" and with the "cool rays of the full moon" (Soma) extinguish the fire and then "fill it with the waves of the nectar-ocean of Brahman's bliss" (Lakṣmī Tantra XXXVII: 32-5 in Gupta (tr.), 1972:233). This aspect, the generating of the nectar potion, the stuff of immortality, is unambiguous whatever the difficulties of the complex esoteric technology and it allows us to glean that here the matter manufactured is of a type more pristine than the five essences, which is matter now differentiated (divided), but at that point it is matter that has touched Brahman. If this is so then it would correspond to cosmic sap, or cosmic breath¹ but however it is labelled it would be stuff standing at the beginning of time, and which is said to arise from the male and female principles inherent in the Absolute.

The two principles seem to be relevant not only by heeding the details of the metaphysical formulations but also by the treatment of the pot in such contexts for it is ordinarily bedecked with a white sash and a red thread.² The presence of the male and female principle appears more straightforwardly in another version for the treatment of the cosmic pot where two precise sets of entities are involved. Along with the water, the pot contains two sets of five objects which could correspond to dimensions relating to the male and female principles. One is a set of gems, the other a set of leaves.³ Since the principle of allocating one set of objects to the male

1. Some schools like the Śaivite take rasa (sap), others like The Prasna Upaniṣad take cosmic breath, as the primal unit.
2. Except in rites to the disembodied soul where red is totally prohibited and where the son is the main actor.
3. List of gems:
   gold
   silver
   coral
   yellowstone
   pearl

List of leaves:
   banyan (Nep.)
   lokpip (Nep.)
   mango (Nep.)
   dumri (Nep.)
   pakhari (Nep.)
and the other to the female powers, occurs frequently for human
delineations and since these are said to parallel the cosmic, then one may
consider the ideas relating to the human and work backwards, for information
is generally more forthcoming from this quarter. It also serves an
opportunity to detail Hindu ideas about humans.

The constituents of the human body are classified according to sexual
divisions attributing the predominantly soft and fleshy components to the
female principle and the hard and stable to the male. That the general
idea is widely known is to be detected in the popular saying which subsumes
the details, that a child gets "its bones from its father, and blood from
its mother". The same principle of differentiation is suggested for the
cosmic level by the pictorial depiction of two strange figures painted on
archways into the grounds of those temples where the goddess is located,
for on one side there is a skeleton, and on the other a blob of flesh
whose human figure is just recognisable. If the inferences are sound, then
the gems and leaves refer to the two cosmic principles, male and female,
held together in the water which as one entity, constitutes the first
product arising from the union of Purusa and Prajakti even before
differentiation and therefore stuff close to what is called the fourth
state, that touched by Brahman.

If the other critical thing about abhisheka is the "sprinkling", the
action itself, then the same entity breaks up and scatters, bringing about
a proliferation in the beam of droplets of liquid whose source is the
 cosmic pot. With the liquid, the idea of the one to the many is expressed
just as it often is with the saying that many flames can be lit from the
same lamp thus referring back to the concept of the cause of, or source
for, the proliferation of things. It is a dense image, for it also contains
the idea of vibration in the movement the beam of water droplets and the
idea of cosmic space (the egg(s) through the globules of water).

The great sprinkling entails a union of the material entity and
worshipper. The water is untouched by human hands since it is sprinkled
via the use of flowers. Given that the water seems to constitute the

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1 I quote a Nepalese pundit who has drawn his information from the
relevant texts:
The hairs of the head and body, beard and moustaches, bones,
nails, teeth, veins, nerves, arteries, semen and all the steady
and hard substances (in the organism of a child) are contributed
by the paternal element in the conception of pitrija; whereas flesh,
blood, fat, marrow, heart, umbilical cord, liver, spleen,
intestines, anus and all other soft matters in the body owe their
origin to the maternal element (matrija).
The application shows that the criteria are not without overlap.
primal sap quivering at the point where things are about to begin, the point potent for expansion, then, _abhiṣeka_ is the closest man can get in _pūjā_ to this cosmic power. Where pollution may be seen as a development along the downward path into time's processual hold, the "purity" as an ascent, then _abhiṣeka_ is the "purification" par excellence since it is no longer ordinary water brought to the ritual precincts but that kind of entity which is created at the beginning of time. And which persists through time, orienting the processual movements of the entire cosmos. If that is its nature, and if contact with such potencies entail transformations, then the ontological change here would be a profound one. When _abhiṣeka_ was described by the pundit as blessings, and as "good", rather than simply purification he underlines its special nature - an entity so new that as yet it is undifferentiated into the essence particles. If that is the case, then this would be the closest humans get to the "fourth state" in concrete _pūjā_. The great sprinklings are generally made by the _purohita_ for his clients or by the twice-born in their daily worship and hints at the complications that arise with a formal and general interpretation of the mechanics, since these are always the complications regarding who is eligible to undertake a particular venture and/or receive its benefits. The point cannot be left at that and will be considered shortly.

A few threads can be brought together here. At the beginning of this part of the thesis, attention was drawn to the Hindu depiction of man as highly malleable, open to change and deterioration through forces over which he has little control, if any at all.¹ But at the same time there was the further proposal that man's knowledge and ritual technology can convert the deteriorated state to a more desirable one. In either case, the general theme is one of modifiability. Nonetheless there is a difference. The impure state is due to the processual changes that bog him in phenomenality. Purity, on the other hand, is the result of ritual work since it has to be effected through purposive action. It is not the natural state for man, any man. This diverges from Dumont's orientation, which depicts "purity" as vulnerable to "impurity" which no doubt it is, but which fails to draw to attention that it itself is an acquired state; I would add by processes essentially based on the same principle, although the movement is in the reverse direction towards the primal forms. Consequently, one could perhaps say that what is significant here is the

¹. Unless the person can manage to get out of the human state.
basic process of modifiability in either direction, leaving aside the complication that the level ritually acquired by those at the top is not open for those lower down. The concern here is to understand the phenomenon in terms of the twice-born ideas and practices. Now if the central idea is modifiability, then the idea of the susceptibility of the "pure to the impure" is far too narrow a formulation to incorporate the complexities of the situation in terms of the nature of the changes involved and the range of the possible movements referred to by one term, purification.

Where body purification dephenomenalises the individual, moving him onto the cosmic route, and mind purification, or perhaps more precisely the individual's specificity, allows him to move from the lesser self of human weakness, both are prerequisites for the encounter between man and the high gods through which man becomes divinized. In a full worship series, by the end, the ritualist acquires the sattvika materiality belonging to the great cosmic forces in the form of the complex known as prasāda, etc. For the sake of rigour, only transitions at the end of worship should be described as "pure" (śuddha) or "holy" (sattva) since the state results from the grasp at entities least evolved, least modified and most lasting of things; and, to boot, there is the sprinkling, the possibility of stuff at the fourth state, or close to it. To demarcate this kind of transformation, and bring out its import, "divinizing", or "sacralizing" could be used to distinguish this high point.

If the culmination is what is important, and if purification of the body is the first step towards the sacred, and mind purification etc., renders the actor ready for subsequent sequences, and the culmination is a confrontation with the high gods from whom things touched by them is taken by the worshipper, then the series of purifications may be understood as a movement away from the limitation of things in the here and now and a contacting of sacra at other levels in the movement backwards to the great forces of the universe. If this is the case, then what is happening is that the worshipper's being is ritually reconstituted through the pūjā progression and in its concrete way is comparable to though not identical with, a more elaborate, esoteric, experiential yogic śādhanā. There is a further point.

1. See Das (1976) for a different approach to the phenomenon.
This complex phenomenon concerning pollution and purifications with its rules and regulations governing behaviour in terms of 'does and don'ts', and 'now this, then that', is rendered coherent as a system because of the underlying postulate of stages, which takes reference from the cosmic course, at least as I understand it. In so far as differentiation is based on an entity's location at different stages of development, which in man's case both distances him and distinguishes him from the primal forms, then breaching that gap entails movement also, but in the reverse direction. If becoming polluted is a result of processual development, then becoming holy will also entail a movement to the stages where these forms are located.

While the pollution/purification phenomenon posits that the individual is subject to the inevitable process of decay which at one level focuses on the animality of man as mere process, and at the wider level on ultimate perishability of the historical person in his current life-form, it also proposes that for some this lowliness can be countenanced — a situation of "yes, but". Not only is it posited that the individual can get away from this phenomenality and attempt to cancel the effects of his sins but even move to acquire the potency of the divine through the ritual enterprise. Since what is acquired comes from the primal forms which are not ephemeral, nor subject to time's control like the evolved material world of which man is a part, but are the forms which endure, then to obtain objects from this level of existence would mean to gain something of its nature. In this, the alteration is no different from the principle involved in the mechanics of mutability but in this instance positive, though complications arise with eligibility, as defined by the Parbatya twice-born.

While the focus has been in terms of the general, namely the acquisition of matter of divine nature, the specific benefits for the actor seem to flow from the particular god concerned and its specific powers (to bring rain, destroy the enemy etc.) and concomitant with this, there will also be some variations in the ritual performance. These in turn are tied up with the particular consequence (phala) of a performance. Nevertheless, regardless of the specific benefits, anything that comes from the gods (the primal forces) relates to their nature as gods, and therefore the significance of this kind of materiality, (prasāda), is viewed as being infused with its own kind of potency, an approach to matter which is also discernible at the other end of the scale where the substances exuding from the body are also imputed to have their particular kind of potency. Both are accommodated within the same system of ideas. One expert comments on Hindu attitudes towards the ritually manufactured material and also brings out other dimensions relevant
to the discussion.

Giving an exposition on the intricacies of an elaborate pūjā, performed during Daśāy, the expert remarked:

You must think our concern with materiality strange, but it is the level we take it to which is important. During the ritual to Devi with secret mantras and mudras I convert the liquid (wine or blood) into the tūrya (fourth) state which is beyond sriṣṭi, stithi and samhara. Tūrya means collapsed into a whole, a point, samasthī. Later I sprinkle this tūrya material on the other family members.

This is obviously no longer ordinary material but transformed through the infusion of the deities (via the avenue, especially of the mantra technique). It is then potent and fits into the scheme of things as outlined earlier. In addition, his comments also point to the importance of technology and its secrecy, and that he has access to ritual power of a non-empirical kind, which thereby also gives him not only access to the gods but the technique for the manufacture of a special commodity. It is of interest in that it echoes another sequence.

The detailing is reminiscent of the special water of the great abhisēka which occurs in daily worship where the primordial sap of existence features. It is also reminiscent of the culmination of yogic sādhana. In that exercise, there is a re-routing, and since change comes through different locations in a path of development where an entity at one stage is liquid semen, but when redirected upwards through the body and out of the head in the progression, to a prior stage and by then becomes the elixir of unconditioned existence. With such correspondences between the Tantric's esoteric endeavour, yogic sādhana and pūjā, we find that pūjā elaborates processes not usually associated with it but with the more sophisticated procedures. Yet, as I see it, the concrete placements and the taking of commodities from the gods in ordinary worship is comparable, even though not regarded as identical with these prized techniques. There are differences of course.

Where in the case of pūjā, transformation operates at the simpler level, ridding the individual of the impurities of the body and sins of the mind so as to be in the right condition to obtain matter touched by the high gods and thereby become transformed; whereas, on the other hand, through yogic sādhana, the adept intricately re-routes the workings of the composited person, dissolves the body sheath and individuality so as to actualise the divine forms within himself. Where sādhana works internally on the person himself, the comparable altering process occurring in pūjā
is one where the ritualist acts on the external objects like the pot, or the idol. And though yogic sādhana is extolled as a superior path for adepts what we also find is that the same principles are applied even in the comparatively "lower" types of performances. Both entail the re-routing backwards away from the here and now, and both reach at the higher stages of creation, where the body would not be at the mercy of deterioration and the mind would not be subject to the limitations of humans, where there is ontological excellence, for by definition it is divine. Most important, it would seem that pūjā, when officiated by the Brahmin priest as in the esoteric attempts, there is the version of getting to the special "fourth" state, though in this context, concretized in the "blessings", the sprinklings. If the interpretation is valid then the ritual transformation is significant.

When the series of changes is referred to as "purifications", this labelling would not bring to the fore the import of what is involved, for to become "purified", is not simply a case where the actor is denuded of "impurities" but of his arriving at an ontological state, a state pertaining characteristically to divine forms. In so doing he acquires great ontological benefits, a point which goes without saying. There are a number of implications as well as complications.

First of all, regardless of caste, people appear to regard prasāda as worth while thus indicating a concern to defuse the limited human aspects and instead enhance these with god-stuff. This is important, I think, because it indicates a general orientation that the unmodified human state is not the best, as well as indicating the possibility for changes through contact with divine forms. We must now confront the complications. If some castes are restricted from the full or partial range of purifications culminating in the twice-born transformation, then they are excluded from the benefits of that range. Yet these people may also perform their version of such transformations. Further, given that, for example, Untouchables do pūjā, worship the gods and take prasāda, something that can entail sacralisation, yet they are said to remain Untouchables and therefore polluted, and the idea takes effect through their prohibition from entering certain temples. We may ask why are their actions not regarded as transformative, like those of the Parbatya twice-born? Similarly with the Newars, taking, for example, the Buddhists who, though they also have their range of practices are viewed as Matwāli by the Parbatya, despite what the Buddhists do in their rituals. Whatever the other castes think about
themselves and about the Parbatya twice-born castes, the point remains that as far as the top-caste peoples are concerned, the ways of other castes are not recognised as producing results like their own. The discussion on the high purifications has generated difficulties. Firstly, given that anyone can worship the gods, by putting up a poster or an idol and making offerings and at the end take prasada and tika etc., therefore one might expect that Parbatya would recognise ontological alterations in such instances. But according to Hindu doctrinal notions, these Untouchable castes cannot leave their deteriorated state, in this life. Similarly, with the Newar Matwali, for regardless of what they do in the shrine room, none of this is viewed by the Parbatya, as superseding the caste definition which designates them as lowlier to themselves. Now, it might be said that according to the twice-born orientation, the members of castes are mistaken about their own practices, and the retention of caste definitions is simply a matter of power. This is not to say that power is irrelevant here. Yet, to consider only power would only indicate how the twice-born definition of the situation can prevail (itself problematic, let me say in parenthesis), but it would not indicate what aspect they might have in mind in assuming that the lower castes are mistaken. To point only to power, in other words, would be to side-step an attempt to make the twice-born notions intelligible and instead fall back on the too easy answer, power.
CHAPTER 16

EXCLUSIONS

With the twice-born the purifications are seen as a series of movements culminating in the finale of worship. Now other castes also perform worship and acquire pūrasāda, yet this does not appear to bring them to a level equivalent to that of the Parbatya twice-born, for the other caste-specific ontological designations remain. In other words, whatever rites these other castes undertake, as far as the twice-born are concerned, they seem to view these as inconsequential since caste allocations are unaltered despite the fact that others "sacralise" themselves ritually. To invoke the power aspect would indicate how the upper caste's definitions can prevail in this context, and though undoubtedly relevant, it would not indicate why the twice-born perceive their own rites as effective in generating substantive changes, while other people's are not so viewed. The specific problem arises in this instance, because twice-born like others in Hindu society recognise the potency of rituals, and since the area of behaviour is one where invisible forces are involved, there is a possibility that a transformation might be seen to occur, given the nature of their beliefs about this kind of situation. Against that background, there is a possibility that other ways might also be efficacious, yet this is not how the twice-born regard the matter. This is not to say that in the configuration of factors that power is irrelevant but to evoke this would be relevant for other, though related, issues.

It would help understand why only some particular people are to be deemed worthy of the knowledge to generate ontological transformations but not indicate why their own knowledge and technology are in fact regarded as worthwhile and efficacious by the twice-born. Parbatya do appear to regard their techniques as highly valued because they are held in great secrecy and not disclosed to others. Secondly, there does appear to be an acceptance of ontological differences, for caste rules around food and marriage are observed to a large extent by the twice-born even though the state no longer oversees adherence to the rules. It might be said that of course the others cannot reach the same level for they have not undergone the twice-born rite but this is only to rephrase the problem, since we want to know specifically what it is about their knowledge and technology which would allow for a presumption, even a certitude, that their way is supreme and effective in transformations. If daily worship is performed by a twice-born according to his special and secret practices and through this,
the state of the worshipper is sacralised, but when somebody else also
performs his worship but does not resort to an identical procedure then
the whole affair could not be the same, that is self-evident. So the issue
hinges on what is it about the twice-born approach which allows its results
to be perceived as superior and the others lesser? After all, to be
different does not necessarily mean ineffective or lesser, for though the
route might be different, the destination could well be the same in this
realm of unseen forces. Nor can the idea that the lower castes are
worshipping "false gods" be invoked to account for the differences, since
it does not apply in Hinduism; nor can it be said that some castes are
approaching minor forms, for neither does this hold. So our task is to
identify features about the Parbatya twice-born knowledge and technology
which would render it worthwhile, superior and efficacious in generating
transformations of significance in their eyes.

1. The all-embracing extent of the Hindu cosmos:

An interesting aspect about Hindu ideas regarding the gods, or the
invisible forces of the cosmos, is that different people cannot have
"other" gods for this is an impossibility within the Hindu system where
other gods are simply variations, some version or other of the Hindu
formulation. Nor can there be believers in false gods since these would
simply fall as deities also, though differently labelled by other systems.
The Christian is not debarred from temples because he believes in a
different and therefore false god, (an impossibility within the Hindu scheme
of things) but because he is polluted. From the Hindu perspective, there
are no false gods, only other men's versions of the forces in the cosmos.\(^1\)
This has its locus in the nature of their kind of world-view.

If with the basic metaphysical ideas, it all begins with the Absolute,
next moves to the actions of Purusa and Prakrti and after that to the
great three (or five) and from which all other modifications are evolved,
so that the entire far-flung cosmos is entailed, then what are presented
as "other" gods would be automatically incorporated within their formulations.
The Hindu universe of discourse, so to speak, is total and therefore all
versions are or can be included within it at any point in time. The idea
of infinite incorporation is expressed in the saying that there are three
gods, or thirty-three, or thirty-three crore. More poetically to quote

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\(^1\) A point which is lost when Hinduism is referred to as tolerant for
this implies the possible designation of other gods towards which there is
no hostility from the Hindu quarter. Whereas the Hindu approach is simply
that there are other labels.
one Brahmin, "In Hinduism we say, over the hill, we will always find more new gods". This approach is also used by Parbatya to indicate the tolerant orientation of Hinduism. So much for the general, what of the specific problem regarding the Hindu view of the Buddhists?

As with the general so with the particular orientation: the Buddhist forms would not constitute other gods, competing with those of the Hindu pantheon, for it is all embracive. If there can be no rival "gods" which would challenge the supremacy of Hindu delineations, and no false gods that can be dismissed as irrelevant and misguided, then the significant question is where do these Buddhist gods fit? Let us consider a few but important Buddhist figures. The historic personage, Gautama Buddha, is allocated to the position of a Hindu incarnation of Viṣṇu, the second last before Kalkī, the destroyer of this age. Specifically with regard to Kathmandu valley, the Buddhist account tells of the culture hero, Manjusri, who cleft the mountain with his sword so as to make a great runway (Chorbhar Gorge) from which the water of the area could drain away and so reveal the valley. This creation myth of the place is also told by the Parbatya, but with one difference in that in this instance, the hero is not Manjusri but Viṣṇu. The Buddhist figure, Avalokitesvara, is also allocated to a place in the Hindu pantheon as the form which belongs to the southern face of Śiva.¹ If the Buddhist gods are only versions of the different cosmic forces and are not seen as separate then they constitute neither irrelevant, nor superior, nor rival forms. In fact not only are the Buddhist gods recognised but they are allocated a position within the Hindu scheme of things. As far as the central concern goes, this means that we cannot evoke the idea of separate pantheons, and focus on the differences so as to indicate how the Hindu formulations could be taken as superior to that of the Buddhist. In a way we are back with the initial question. While the Hindu approach attempts to get at the great cosmic forces, the high gods, and therefore their method which provides the possibility for efficacy to this end has great value, yet given that what the Buddhist sees as Buddhist gods but which according to Hindu formulations are figures in the Hindu scheme of things, then would not the Buddhist technology be as effective as the Hindu in approaching these forces (whatever be the label)? In fact, if one particular Buddhist figure is seen as an aspect of the complex encapsulated in the Śivalinga, it is not an inferior deity at all. Given that the

¹. With the regard to the esoteric outline of the Śivalinga, the sixth position, that of the base is allocated to Kālagni and Tārā who are "worshipped by the Vajracarya" to quote the Parbatya expert.
Buddhists also have their techniques then they might have methods just as good and effective as those of the Parbatya twice-born? This does not appear to be the case for while the Buddhist gods are recognised by the Parbatya Hindus, the efforts of the Buddhists are not regarded as comparable to their own. The least that can be said is that the idea of recourse to different pantheons does not provide the solution for the Nepalese situation. A similar difficulty arises if the idea of different forms of deities is preferred to understand the Parbatya orientations towards the behaviour of the Untouchables.

The differences between, say, the Untouchables and the Parbatya twice-born cannot be accounted for simply by reference to different deities, where the high caste evoke the high and the low castes the low forms of Hinduism, since the great gods are popular with all and sundry. Gaṇeśa is particularly important for some Untouchables but in no way can Gaṇeśa be relegated to the position of a minor god since this form belongs to the great five. Rather what happens is that the Untouchables are restricted direct access to those specific manifestations of the major deities in the great temples since they are not in the right condition to enter the place of their presence. Nevertheless, in the privacy of their homes they can do what they like and can worship and take praśāda. This is to no avail as far as the twice-born Parbatya are concerned, and the other castes as well, for they all treat the Untouchable circumspectly.

If the Parbatya twice-born procedures are seen as effective in generating authentic and superior transformations and there are closures at certain points regarding access to the knowledge and technology utilised for the procedures, then it is likely that such areas will indicate how the twice-born way can be viewed as superior. Closures are effected at two points, Sanskrit (the language, the written form and the literature) and with the guru.

2. The Closures:

If there is any doubt about such exclusions and the heavy secrecy demanded, let it be recalled that it was only during British imperialism in India that the Bhagavat Gītā, the basic philosophical text, was made available to castes other than the twice-born through publication available to the populace at large. With regard to the vast body of works known as the Vedas and including the commentary on them, according to sacred law such text should only be accessible to the twice-born. It was in the last century that Rammohun Roy took the radical step of disseminating these to
some of the peoples of India. Of the matter, Roy says,

The whole body of the Hindoo Theology, Law, and Literature, is contained in the Vedas, which are affirmed to be coeval with the creation! These works are extremely voluminous; and being written in the most elevated and metaphorical style, are, as may be well supposed, in many passages seemingly confused and contradictory. Upwards of two thousand years ago, the great Byas, reflecting on the perpetual difficulty arising from these sources, composed with great discrimination a complete and compendious abstract of the whole; and also reconciled those texts which appeared to stand at variance. This work he termed The Vedānta, which compounded of two Sungscrit words, signifies The Resolution of all the Vedas. It has continued to be most highly revered by all the Hindoos; and in place of the more diffuse arguments of the Vedas, is always referred to as equal authority. But from its being concealed within the dark curtain of the Sungscrit language, and the Brahmins permitting themselves alone to interpret, or even to touch any book of the kind, the Vedant, although perpetually quoted, is little known to the public (in Stein (ed.), 1967: 3-4).

Although Roy's commentary raises certain issues which will be attended to later, his main point is clear enough, specifically that the tradition as encapsulated in the set of Vedas and the Vedānta as well as the Sanskrit language in which these texts are written, were accessible only to certain castes. In Nepal, access was limited to the twice-born. Now if we can identify the import of the language then we may perhaps fathom what it is that is of value for the twice-born and ultimately how this bears on the general question, that according to the twice-born perspective their own ritual efforts are perceived as effective while the attempts of other castes at transformations are not taken seriously at all, especially as far as the Untouchables are concerned, and while the efforts of the Buddhists are recognised to some extent they are not viewed as of inordinate excellence.

Sanskrit is the idiom of ritual endeavours, the language which contains a body of knowledge which gives information about the operation of the universe and the kinds of forces behind things. Usually one finds in the metaphysical texts, the Upaniṣads,1 information about the nature of the ultimate source, the Absolute, the processes working in time, the forces of the cosmos and especially how these relate to humans (see, for example, The Praśna Upaniṣada). This kind of information provides the background that it is possible for a person to become sacralised, and why it is possible by indicating the relationship between humans and the cosmic forces.

1. These are part of the Vedānta.
(as well as indicating that the ultimate goal is absorption with the Supreme). How this is to be done through rituals like worship, the yogic śādhana is elaborated in Sanskrit texts also. Those who are adepts see the value of their technology in that it bears on man's being and links it to the cosmic forces.¹ It is such ideas which are missing in the information which is freely available. While it is generally known that according to Hindu formulations the powers of gods underlie all things, what is missing is the extensive information about the deity as a complex cosmic force² and the precise correlation between that set of ideas and that part of the person to which it relates. This means that the precise knowledge and technology to effect particular transformations on one's person is restricted information. We will come back to this but first to continue with the import of Sanskrit.

Sanskrit is no ordinary language, but is said to be the original one from which all others evolved. Nor is it just a language but those vibrations which burst forth at the creation, the manifestation of the Absolute in that form (śabdha). Its fifty letters are condensable into

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1. The general principle is outlined in this man's commentary:

   **Mantra** is an invocation, the first syllable of the name of the deity, or the name itself. Sound is energy according to science and a **mantra** is a powerful nucleus of energy. By creating resonance in space (ether, ākāśa) when correctly uttered we believe that the god will be perceived. We can say that the utterance of the mantra in the mind, when uttered inside, ... when uttered in the mind (at this point he placed his hand on his heart).

2. The complexity of a divine figure can be discerned in the number of components that are incorporated during a formal ritual. Associated with the specific deity is the metre of the hymn which also includes how many letters to each line; then there is the energy or specific power (kālī) associated with each deity; and what is called the seed (bija) which means the major feature or basic feature associated with that deity. Also the force will be connected with one of the five essences of materiality (tattva). As well there is also an associated form which can refer to any of the Vedas which also have different colours. Together these comprise what is called the viniyoga, the means of yoking to the particular force (or deity).
the great mantra Om, while the Gayatri; the mantra bestowed on the
twice-born initiate and "not told to anyone else" is significant, for "its
twenty-four letters express the discrete qualities of the Paramatman", to
quote one pundit. Thus Sanskrit letters are both illuminating as well as
special. Moreover, if the language itself constitutes the primordial sounds,
then they are also cosmic forces. It would seem that the more remote the
Sanskrit, the more potent it is since the oldest texts, the mantra are
regarded with the greatest reverence even though the exact meaning of the
discourse cannot always be understood, because, as one pundit stressed,
"the grammar has changed since then". The texts are important for the lines
are invocations as are other mantras evolved subsequently, but are also
constituted of the Sanskritic pramaeval sounds.

This is the key to their value, for as primal forms they are the
closest to the Absolute, a feature that we see again and again. When the
great Hindu deities are described as the "children of God, the absolute
Paramatman", their positioning in the scheme of things is surely clear. They
constitute the first productions and as we know therein lies the source for
all subsequent forms. The importance of being the first emanation comes
out again and again, underscoring the same point for not only are there
these first productions, the source forms, and the first language, Sanskrit;
the first sounds; but there is also the first age; the first-born
the Brahmin; the first place on Earth, Bhārata or Aryadesa connected
directly to the heavens; all significant since they are close to that which
is perfect. Put differently, what is first is important not because it is
first but because it is nearest to the perfect Absolute, for after that
things begin to change, modifications occur and finally things run down. In
other words, since Sanskrit and its body of knowledge are regarded not only
as the first language but the first manifestations then they are primal

1. This is how a Pañcarātra text (Lakṣmi Tantra) describes the features
of the Gayatri, the one known publicly:
Sāvitrī, who is the mother of the Vedas, evolves (into sound).
She has the three-lettered pranava as her substratum; bhūḥ, bhuvah
and svah, (i.e. vyāhṛtis) as her three (yogic) ducts; the
words tad etc. (tad savitum vareya etc. of the Gayatri-mantra)
as her (vital) air, and her head is decorated with the Śirah
(-mantra); her body consisting of manifestation and bliss (contains)
the letters from kṣiṭi (ka) to puruṣa (ma). She arises from
Brahman and reverts back to Brahman. The same mother of the Vedas
is (also) the absolute mother of the letters (sounds) (XXIX, 27-29
in Gupta (tr.), 1972:157).

Here a Śakta perspective is adopted. According to the outline of one
pundit, all this means is that a Śakta places Devi as the manifestation
of the Absolute. Another places Viṣṇu, and another Śiva. All are the
same in that all recognise the Paramatman as the supreme, and all have
mokṣa as the highest goal, and each will refer to both the male and
female principles. This is the difference between the various schools.
cosmic forms, knowledge of which can only but entail the possibility of ritual efficacy for sacralisation. To contact them is to contact the pristine. Other languages in turn can only but be lesser. When the Untouchable makes up his own mantras in the vernacular language, then in the eyes of the twice-born this can hardly be viewed as effectual. But what of Vajrayana texts employed by the Buddhists located in the middle rung of the caste order?

Though the Vajrayana texts utilise Sanskrit to some degree it could not readily be perceived as fully authentic since the Buddhist Tantras are a composited language using an old Newari script and not the pristine Sanskrit lettering, "corrupt" Sanskrit terms, a "defective metre" and an "intrusion of the vernacular" (Dasgupta, 1974:ix). This means that without the proper Sanskrit, other castes do not have access to what the members of the twice-born tradition stipulate to be the pristine sacra. Of course, since the language is a divine form (or forms) this is the reason given for closures.

The closures, from the āstic perspective, make sense, for those excluded are not regarded as types whose natures stand at the appropriate level to contact such exalted forms and to disclose the mantras to the unworthy is said to constitute a sin.¹ The idea of ontological compatibility is inherent in Roy's outline though he does not elaborate on it, since he refers to the prohibition on not touching the texts. Despite the fact that he translated the works into indigenous Indian languages as well as English, none of these would be the same, although this is not to say that knowledge of the workings of the cosmos are not important, for they are, but what is critical are the sounds themselves since these are the mantras and thereby technological invocations. And as forms of cosmic forces any contact whether hearing the words or touching the texts is prohibited to those deemed unfit. In fact to hear any sacred work, even a purāṇa, according to the traditional approach, it was necessary that the person be rendered fit (dīksita: in this context) by having the relevant mantra first. Within the Hindu framework, texts then are sacra of inordinate excellence and because of this prohibitions against the unfit are applied, conforming to the same principle which operates in other situations like access to the great temple gods.

¹ That the general attitude persists is to be inferred from public opinion about the madness of a great Nepalese guru who is said to have divulged the secrets of Tantra in this instance to some foreign anthropologists. The point is not whether the account is factual or not, but that it indicates that disclosure of secrets is regarded as serious enough to prompt madness. With disclosure one hands over the technology to others who are not eligible according to Hindu beliefs about ontology.
Where the most guarded of all knowledge occurs it is significant, though perhaps not surprising, that the closure eventuates around just those points where knowledge automatically incorporates the possibility of efficacy, given the nature of the secret entity, as defined by Hindu metaphysics.

So we come to the most important aspect of closures, the initiation, important because it is this which is the base-line since it brings about the critical ontological change, and because only after this can a person learn the technology; and also on the wider scene it constitutes the only exclusion which remains since nowadays Sanskrit may be learnt by anybody and the texts are freely available. Since an individual must be diksita, rendered fit through the twice-born mantra, before he can undertake daily worship which sacralises his person, and which also gives him access to measures necessary to undertake such transformation, and; as far as the Parbatya twice-born are concerned the non-initiated others would not have access to the potentials for generating the same kind of transformations as themselves, then it would be in this area of initiation that the import of the twice-born ways are to be identified. It would seem that it is the mode of transmission which makes all the difference. Transmission comes with initiation and initiation can only be acquired through a guru. It is just at this critical point that we find vehement closure. We turn to the significance of such men.

There is an unswerving belief in the potentiality of men to be able to realize extraordinary feats which can be discerned in the conception that a man can entirely reorient the workings of his body as in the highly complex yogic techniques, or the sheer willpower to concentrate "one-pointedly" on a flame and thereby by just staring induce a trance state. It is there in its ultimate formulation that man holds the Absolute within himself. Specifically relevant for our argument, is the belief that some men have the capacity to ken the imponderables and these are the ṛṣis, the sages whose knowledge is then taken as authentic. The significance of the ṛṣi as well as other related points can be discerned in this Nepalese expert's commentary on the matter:
The Vedic hymn by which Mahākāli is prayed to, for example, is spoken by Brahmā. He is the rṣi of the hymn. The rṣi is the person who got darśan, got revelation.

Vedas were not written by one person and in primaeval times they were not written. Therefore the Vedas are śrutī - they are heard. Then they became known as śrutī, "not written". Another sense is meant also. The Vedas are not told by one person. There are different mantras of different persons, and whichever mantra is told first by which person, then he becomes the rṣi of this mantra.

At first, when the Vedas were told by the rṣis, they didn't want to tell the Veda, but by chance the mantras came out in their voice and which mantra came from which person, he became the rṣi of that mantra. Rṣi is the person who sees by his internal sight. The Vedas were within Iṣvara, then by the desire of Iṣvara, rṣis saw these mantras and they uttered it and seeing these mantras they became rṣis.

The contemporary guru who will impart the mantra and officiate in the initiation stands in direct line of transmission from the rṣi who first intuited the knowledge. It would follow that the transmitter is in a direct line since the ruling stipulates that only a person who has himself been initiated can impart it.

Therefore, going backwards one will arrive at the initial seers. This applies for any initiation like that into the family (and lineage deity) the kuldevatā; and for the deity of one's choice (istadevatā) but with the twice-born rite the preceptor must be a Brahmin. The ruling also implies that the preceptor must be someone who himself has been initiated, reached the required ontological state and acquired the esoteric insights. At best, the guru is one who has gleaned the significance of the knowledge and actualised whatever it is that must be actualised, but, at least, he is a person who is in line of direct transmission having obtained the secret from one who got it from another, and so forth, back to the original intuiting or revelation. Out of the stock of knowledge, the crucial component is the mantra. Its transmission from guru to disciple is oral and must be oral.

Since a mantra is an utterance, for exactitude in replication, it can only but be transmitted orally from speaker to hearer. And exactitude is relevant for there are special ways of articulating the sound and special
rhythms which, if wrongly said, render the mantra void. Then, as well, there is the requirement of correct prānayama, (breathing, suppression and exhaling) to be performed before the utterance as is the case with the twice-born mantra. It is not enough to know the words but to know how to say them properly, for the form lies there and this can only be learnt from someone who has learnt it from someone, to the original innovator or articulator. So, with transmission in this way, one obtains it in its exact and proper manifestation. When the mode of mantra acquisition is correct, coming from the guru, then the disciple would be acquiring effective, esoteric technology, given the nature of the mantra. However, since only Brahmans can be preceptors there is a line of Brahmin gurus separate from the series of mantra acquisition since the other twice-born are not gurus. Thus the guru stands in a line of direct descent from the rṣi and in addition as a person of the first-born varṇa has ontological excellence.

1. In the twice-born rite when the Parbatya Brahmin is imparting the mantra to the initiate, they are both covered in a blanket so there is no possibility at all with this sound-proofing system of others nearby hearing the twice-born mantra. Whether the mantra used by Parbatya is the one widely broadcast in the literature on Hinduism is a moot point. If it is, then one would suspect that there is more to the matter than is revealed in these books. What the Brahmin said, it will be recalled, is that the Gāyatrī describes the qualities of God (Paramātman). Another, a Brahmin temple priest, said that the three goddesses are worshipped as part of the Gāyatrī, which of course is not necessarily incompatible with what the other expert said.

With regard to the public Gāyatrī, it is difficult to tell whether the full range of aspects detailed earlier apply here or not. What I do know is that it has its specific deity, Sūrya, its specific metre, the Gāyatrī, which in fact gives name to the mantra, and its rṣi according to book knowledge (see Danilou, 1964: 345; Monier-Williams, 1878:61). What is interesting in terms of the trīguna theme is the recurrence of sets of three for there are first of all the three aspects of breathing (inhaling, retention, exhaling); the three measures of the Gāyatrī metre, the three realms, earth, sky and outer space referred to before the mantra proper; and of course the triliteral ŌM with which the whole affair begins; and which is to be performed thrice daily transitional to dawn, noon and dusk.
As well there are the requirements bearing on that particular person in maintaining his specific level. All of which is relevant to the situation where he is chief agent in rendering a person twice-born, for if he is to officiate where exalted forms are used then his own ontological state must be commensurate with the task. That a guru must be authentic and fitted for the task constitutes the final point of closure since it implies that even if a person has the exact knowledge of the mantras etc., the metaphysical understanding of the relationship between self and the cosmic forces, and the ritual procedure to effect this, unless the transformatory rite has been performed by an authentic guru, the whole affair would be ineffectual. Not only is giving a mantra to an unfit person said to be a sin, and so exclusion operates from that angle also, but to receive a mantra etc. from an unfit person is seen as useless. Just as a disciple is rendered fit (dūṣita, adhikāri) to undertake the sophisticated daily worship, so must the guru be fitted to the task of performing the initiation rite in the first place. We have isolated a cluster of features.

To recapitulate: one of the areas of exclusion are the texts which spell out the metaphysical accounts of the workings of the world which ultimately has bearings on the nature of the enterprise, for if the adept is aware of the details he is also aware of the magnitude of the possibilities of the ritual transformation. \(^1\) In a way there is a difference in orientation which however is more one of degree rather than kind since what the adept knows are the details, the rationale behind the ritual changes, whereas the less informed only knows that things from the gods have a potency. With the performances the differences seem to be comparable again where those with esoteric knowledge have a more embracive range of procedures while others have a limited one. Considering the Hindu daily ritual as performed by the twice-born, this can entail a highly elaborated series for reaching the indivisible forces whether one is referring to the formal sequence of pūjā, or homa or the yogic sādhana, or the saying of, and the meditating on, the import of the mantra. All of these may be executed during the proceedings. Given that in such highly technical procedures, a deity not only has a name and a function which are known to all and sundry but a range of qualities, so that when a person has knowledge of the correct configuration, then that person contacts the particular form in an intense and extensive way. It is this kind of information which is not freely available nor how it relates to the human's different components. In other words, what is not common knowledge are the critical

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1. For a discussion on Hindu ideas about man's divinising himself, see Aurobindo, 1959:166-7, 169, 177).
mantras, the knowledge of the deity's elemental essence, and its significance as a cosmic force, as well as how these factors correlate with the individual and by which sacralisation of inordinate magnitude can be effected. Secondly, in the configuration of secrecy, there is Sanskrit, the significance of whose sounds lies in the positioning of its origin, coeval with creation itself and therefore high powers, in fact cosmic forms. Thirdly, there are the set of features associated with the mode of transmission of the critical mantra(s) where exactitude in replication is necessary for the possibility of efficacy and which necessitates that the agent stands in a line of gurus who hear the precise sound form. In addition there is the requirement that only those persons who stand at the ontologically correct level can transmit the potency of the critical sounds, and are ritually competent to act as agents in the ritual which transforms a person to the twice-born state and transports him the required level to undertake the twice-born daily worship whereby he may reach an excellent sacralised state ontologically worth the while. If the twice-born technology's efficacy lies in these features, we can understand their dismissal of other people's attempts as lesser.

Given that an Untouchable, for example, does not have the esoteric knowledge and especially the mantras, then he does not have the means of reaching the primal forms, and, even if he did have the mantra, it would be regarded as ineffective since the Untouchable is said to be entrenched in a lowly ontological state for the duration of his life. Since he is not fit to receive the mantra, then efficacy cannot pertain here. Even though the Buddhist operates with a more sophisticated set of practices, especially if he is initiated, this too is regarded as lesser.\(^1\) If a person of this caste has access to comparable techniques, then one might wonder about his ritual capability to sacralise himself just like the Parbatya twice-born.

Even if the procedure of non-twice-born is somewhat different, one may ask why it cannot be seen to have the same result. Or even, why is it not seen as a more effective procedure given that the realm involves invisible forces which Hindu thought does not disavow. Yet such practices are perceived by Parbatya as not altering the ontological state allocated to the Buddhists, who are classed as Matwali, lesser beings to the twice-born. Their practices can be regarded as inconsequential, for according to the twice-born view, they do not have the proper gurus, their language is not of the pristine Sanskrit form and even if these things did obtain, any

\(^1\) In daily worship, a Buddhist Vajracarya may do his version of what the twice-born perform like saying the mantra (japa), executing a form of the fire worship, and invoking the five great deities (the five celestial Buddhas of Vajrayana) and perform yogaic sadhana with his chosen deity (istadevata), also.
initiation by a pukka Brahmin would be rendered null and void for this is only successful with those who are fit to receive it. Since the state determines what stock of peoples are to be classified as members of specific castes, it is at this point that state power obtrudes. Nevertheless, the other features are relevant since they indicate the area of efficacy which in turn is also the area of closure, which can be effected by twice-born without direct state intervention. Today the state does not patrol such things yet the closures remain. Mantras are not given freely nor are initiations bestowed indiscriminately by the twice-born. With their own exclusive practices cut off from others, the latter's transformatory performances can be dismissed as of little consequence since they lack the crucial components that apply to themselves, the twice-born. Obviously the most problematic of all are the Newar twice-born Hindus who have access to the same knowledge, the same Sanskrit texts, what seems to be the lot.

Despite the fact that the Newar Hindus have access to the same set of sacred texts as descendants of the twice-born of an earlier Hindu regime, they are not ceded equivalence with the Parbatya twice-born. In Parbatya

1. Though as we shall see later, there is a connexion.

2. The Newar Brahmins are however regarded as relevant when it comes to the specific forces of place and serve as priests of the city's Hindu temples. Nonetheless, the high priests of the great temples are not Newars. At Paśupati, the paramount priests are the Bhatta Brahmins originally derived from South India. At Taleju, and Guneswari the high priests are Parbatya Brahmins. The connexion between the Newars and the locality is also heeded and utilised by the Parbatya twice-born who will employ Buddhist Newars as exorcists of a house disturbed by local malevolent forces. In short, the twice-born are not reluctant to resort to Newar expertise, when they think it relevant, in the same way that the Untouchables are employed to serve as caretakers at the fierce goddesses' temples. It is comparable to the incorporating orientation to the deities, where yet another god will be added as these become pertinent. The twice-born, the core category of Hindus, over the years amalgamate additions and therefore Hinduism is constantly growing. The important point, as I see it, is that with this process of aggregation, which is essentially an absorption of other people's ways by those belonging to the higher category, their basic Sanskritic practices are not made available to the others, whether the others want this or not. The phenomenon of change over time is of course complex and all I can do is proffer tentative suggestions, though I think they have credence. For a contrary approach to the Nepalese material see Aryal, 1972.
eyes all Newars are Mārvāli, indulgers of intoxicants and worse still, eaters of buffalo and who have their own community priests (the Newar Vajracarya and the Newar Brahmin); and as for the Newar Brahmins, the problem is overridden by treating them as nothing more than "priests of the community" at that caste level. "Just as we have our priests, they have theirs", to cite one informant. This kind of perception gives the clue to the extent to which a Parbatya Brahmin would serve as priest to those people and the extent of the transformations he makes available. Those Parbatya Brahmins who adhere to the sacred laws as adumbrated by authorities like Manu, laws which maintain that only offspring of twice-born and no Śūdra obtain the Vedic mantras would not initiate Newar Hindus, since their parents are not regarded as twice-born (Tāgādhāri). Their eligibility, moreover, is seen to be compromised by their allegedly unorthodox practices, and to transmit the mantra to those unworthy to receive it constitutes a sin on the part of the imparter. The fact that Newar Hindus perform their own initiations and would have access to the same set of general Hindu texts is not necessarily taken as equivalent to those of the Parbatya, for the initiator, the guru, is simply another Newar, whose ontological state is compromised by the practice of eating buffalo and drinking alcohol, applying to Newar priest as much as his client. Further, since it is said that the mantra when given to the wrong person, loses its efficacy, then even though somebody may have the mantra and its particular manner of utterance and all the other aspects required, it would not be of any use, according to the doctrinal stipulations. Thus from the angle of guru as transmitter, and of disciple as receiver, these Newar Hindus would not be ontologically adequate (dikṣita) in the twice-born transmogratory situation. Yet they, along with other Newars, may utilize the services of a Parbatya Brahmin for the occasional rites who then distributes prasāda etc. at the end of the proceedings.

When Parbatya Brahmins deploy their services in such rites as expiatory homa to the Matwāli, (Newars and tribals alike), then the priest must perforce utilise his own technology. However, the outcome will depend on

1. See Allen (1973) and Greenwold (1978) for accounts of the Newar Buddhist priest.
2. The fact that orthodox Newars dedicate such food to the gods and refer to Devi's instruction that buffalo may be eaten, the precedent for the Newar practices is ignored by Parbatya, as we have noted before.
3. The Bhatta Brahmins are not regarded nor regard themselves as Newars. As one man described his position, "Though we speak Newari, we are not Newars". Nor do they indulge in typical Newar practices, like eating buffalo and drinking alcohol.
what extent of elaboration the Brahmin utilises in such contexts, and since the sacred texts insist on the withholding of Vedic *mantras* from the non-twine-born then one may presume that the instruction is followed. Given that the employment of such *mantras* for such people is said to constitute a sin also, then it is highly likely that when the Brahmin officiates for Matwâli what he provides will be a mitigated version of the rite. I suspect that the designs (*yantras, rechi* Nep.) would be simplified or, if not, after having been made would then be covered and hidden from view. Such procedures occur with the Buddhist Vajracarya who use two sets, one which is deployed only for the initiates of Vajrayana, and the other a mitigated version for the lesser clients. In this way, they withhold the esoteric version from their lower caste Newar clients and only employ a fully-fledged version for the initiated Newar Buddhists. Unfortunately, though I have not been able to determine whether the Parbatya Brahmins behave in the same way, in these other aspects, the matter of prohibition on the *mantras* is unambiguous. In which case, the kind of ritual achievements rendered for the Matwâli in general by the Parbatya Brahmins would not be of comparable intensity as they are for the twice-born. What is withheld in these contexts however, is less impressive than the outcome of the exclusion from the Parbatya twice-born rite, for this gives the person access to a technology and the possibility for further initiations which affords that person himself to perform in his own shrine-room, ritual work for contacting the high gods of Hinduism. This is the critical closure since it relates to a person's ontological nature and is inextricably tied to the system of castes.

Thus in a traditional system there is a series of closures, where the top castes undertake authentic twice-born initiations and have direct access to Sanskrit and all that this entails. ¹ Though the Matwâli may not resort to the same kind of twice-born initiations as the Parbatya, Brahmin priests may officiate for them (withholding the Vedic *mantras*) and they may worship at all public shrines. Whatever the other practices, they are viewed as simply other ways of approaching the gods and not regarded as inauthentic. Yet when considered from the *śātric* perspective can only but be lesser, regardless of Matwâli opinions. The Pâni nachalne jât are excluded tout court from most practices that the other castes can indulge in, for a Parbatya Brahmin will not perform the twice-born rite for them, nor would

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¹ I have intentionally avoided the complications regarding the women, and especially the twice-born women who are not allowed to touch the Sanskrit texts, nor acquire Vedic *mantras*. What this would imply vis-a-vis what she gains, like acquisition of caste at marriage, acquisition of special *mantras* plus the fact that she is said to be half of her husband requires an intricate analysis that would take us far afield.
he act as *purohita* for any occasional rite, as he does for the Parbatya twice-born and the members of the Matwāli castes. Whatever they do is up to them, but none of this has significance since they are ontologically polluted according to the official view, and a view which is also shared by Matwālis like the Buddhists. Though all may perform daily *pūjā* should they so choose, the outcome, from the Parbatya perspective, is decidedly different, since they, the Parbatya, are the ones whose technology may reach the pristine forces in all their ramifications. Thus, in their view, sacralisation through ritual merger is of the highest order. From the other tack, closures are effected at just those points where there is the possibility of technological efficacy in reaching what are perceived as the great cosmic forces with which the adept may merge and thereby become ontologically excellent.

3. The Untouchable and the question of a "deep framework of cultural unity":

Where I have attempted to identify the closures wrought by the twice-born and indicate the resultant patterning of differences in the ritual practices between castes, Moffatt takes an antithetical approach, insisting with specific regard to the Untouchables, that their "religious system" replicates that of the other castes. Therefore, it must be examined. Moffatt argues that,

In the religion of the Harijans of Endavur, in fact, we find very little that is distinctive and much that is pervasively and deeply shared with those higher in the system (1979:245).

Yet, according to Hindu tradition, such people are not allowed to touch a cow, a form of the goddess; wear gold, a sacred metal; throw the ash of their dead into rivers; enter the temples of the great high gods, let alone obtain the twice-born initiation and hear the Sanskritic *mantras* or obtain the Brahmin priest's officiation at the death rites of their members as he does for the other castes; and for religious reasons, the Untouchables are said to pollute water; while marriage with them is traditionally prohibited and seen to be so vile that a person of either sex who indulges is outcasted. So it is hard to reconcile these points about the Untouchable's experiences with Moffatt's claim of a "pervasively deeply shared" system. It is on the basis of the allegedly shared system of religious practices that Moffatt rests his case that the Untouchables' "collective consciousness" about their position indicates no change from that of the others as Mencher
and Berreman have argued.  

If religion is conceptualised anthropologically as a statement and an enactment of the core definitions and values of a given group, then to the extent that Harijans and other village Untouchables are religiously orthodox, so too must they be in basic cultural consensus with those above them in caste (ibid:245).

If his case against Mencher and Berreman rests on this then it is tenuous for it does not necessarily follow that because the Untouchables indulge in the same general practices, for example, like worshipping the same range of gods, which is one of the things Moffatt has in mind by religious orthodoxy (ibid:257) that from this, one may infer a shared belief in all features, the imputed "cultural consensus", and, within this, the alleged agreement with others about their own position in the caste system. Moffatt's grounds to support his claim that, the view from the bottom shows an "identity" with that of other levels, are flimsy. When behaviour more pertinent to the expression of "consciousness" about caste positions is considered, then one indeed finds divergence. For example, the works of Manu for the twice-born are sacred and a guide to right behaviour while, in vivid contrast, for the Untouchable they may be assessed entirely differently:

The Manusmrti is execrated by the lower castes, who regard it virtually as a blueprint of Brahminic domination...which they make a point of publicly burning at their processions (Walker, 1968: Vol. II, 29),

at least for some parts of India, according to the commentator. This attitude of denial would seem to apply to Moffatt's field of study also, even if not expressed with the same emotive intensity, for Moffatt's own data appear to go contrary to his thesis.

If the Untouchables of his village have to go off to other places and pretend to belong to the higher castes in order to gain entry into those kinds of temples from which they are, as Moffatt describes, debarred in the home village (ibid: 251-2), then surely such journeys express a rejection of the definitions of themselves as Untouchables and the concomitant requirements demanded of them. It hardly indicates "consensus", for the wider view from above stipulates that their nature is such that they are to be debarred from the precincts of these grand shrines. Rather than interpret

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1. In Moffatt's words, Joan Mencher and Gerald Berreman in particular have argued the disjunctive case, claiming that there is a distinctive "view from the bottom" in caste, one that is prima facie evidence for a simple conflict model of the Indian caste system - in which shared belief has no important role.

This paper supports a different model of caste and culture and a different reading of "difference at the bottom" (ibid:245).
this as material contrary to the "consensus" thesis, the Untouchables' dissembling is treated by Moffatt as an illustration that they can overcome exclusions and therefore the religious values and practices are comparable to those of other castes (ibid: 245-252). All of which is curious, for this kind of commonality in practices (value of attention to the same gods) is given as evidence of his case for consensus among all castes, yet the subterfuge elsewhere is the only means the Untouchables have to make their practices comparable to that of the other castes, but practices from which they are excluded when performed by the other castes in the temples at home. The same conceptual difficulty arises with his handling of other so-called "replicatory' activities.

Of the Untouchables' exclusions from certain village processions, Moffatt says that they then overcome the problem and "replicate among themselves that from which they are excluded" (ibid:252). Now, at the general level, Moffatt presents uniformity in religious practices to signify "consensus" in caste values or, as Moffatt also otherwise puts it, to "tacitly express their commitment to the human hierarchy" (ibid:257), as we have already noticed, yet here they are forced to "replicate among themselves" what the other castes exclude them from. Therefore, even though there might in the end be some semblance of a uniformity of practice (or an imitation), the manner by which this eventuates shows, if anything, lack of consensus since the high castes prohibit them "access to particular forms of divinity". What the Untouchables' behaviour indicates, as I see it, is a desire to have access to those forces from which they are excluded by other castes and, most important, it also shows that they deny the validity of the prohibitions and so end up by doing it their way. But then it is hardly "replication" since it cannot be, while the top castes impose exclusivity. Therefore it is simply modelled on and imitative of the high caste practices. This is not a quibble but lies at the heart of the argument. If the Sanskrit mantras etc. are as important for the twice-born as I have suggested, then what the Untouchable does, cannot in any way replicate the upper caste practices for without these twice-born procedures, the endeavour would be devoid of the kind of potency these bring to the situation, according to the twice-born view of the matter, and it is their view and procedures which is important if the Untouchables are imitating them.
Moffatt, rather than recognise and heed the significance of the exclusions, says that the Untouchables find ways around it, by replicating the practices of the higher castes. The Untouchables, as I understand the phenomenon, can imitate or perform curtailed versions, but they cannot replicate the twice-born practices for they do not have the relevant mantras and though Moffatt does detail this point, even stating that in this the Untouchables are "truly cut off from religious resources" (ibid:254), its import seems to be lost. So much so that in the introductory part of his paper where he is evolving his theoretical framework, Moffatt dismisses authors like Cohn (1955) and Berreman (1971) who adopt exactly the line that, "Untouchables are simply cut off from knowledge by higher castes because of their social exclusion" (ibid:244). Not heeding the significance, leads to the contentious claim that there is an identity of beliefs and practices between the castes, and a shared "consensus".

If the important ritual enterprises of the top castes, like the twice-born ritual transformation, the utilisation of special mantras and the resource of Sanskritic literature, are withheld from the Untouchables, there cannot be an identity of practices, it cannot be so since they, the Untouchables, do not use the same ritual technology in toto. If the Untouchables are indeed "cut off" from the mantras which are an important motif-force of the operation according to Hindu tenets, then how can the "discontinuities" be "small ones" as Moffatt maintains? These might be small in Moffatt's eyes but being "cut off" constitutes the distinctive feature of the Untouchable's situation as Cohn and Berreman rightly stress. The "small" discontinuities moreover chop at Moffatt's version of the pattern of religious practices, interpreted as having the same identity, since the various practices cannot be identical if part is missing and that part is the heart of the matter, from the twice-born perspective, as well as the doctrinal. To understand village practices it is methodologically necessary to view the affair not only from "the bottom" as Moffatt suggests (even though we disagree with his interpretation) but also to view it from the top, which also means incorporating the tenets of Hindu law as articulated by its proponents and implementers.

That the Untouchables have what Moffatt calls their own "Brahmins" who perform the "life-cycle rituals that a Brahmin performs for the high castes" (ibid:253), does not render these valid transformations according to Hindu dogma and in the opinion of the members of the higher castes, but
merely imitation without the precise ritual technology. If it were not so, they would be allowed temple entry and other accessibilities at present withheld from them. Where Moffatt would insist that "the village religious systems remain fundamental in maintaining and reproducing this consensus" (ibid:257), what we see instead is a group of people striving for what they cannot get, by imitation. Sadly, flying a kite is not the same as flying a Garuda.

As I said at the outset of the thesis, when an Untouchable imitates the Brahmins, he cannot be endorsing his own position in the caste system since what this reveals is his rejection of that position and a desire for excellence, so we find in operation that there are no willing takers for the bottom. To express this from the perspective of Moffatt's data: when the Untouchables imitate the ways of the higher castes the same orientation is to be inferred, otherwise the Harijans of his village would accept the exclusions finding no need to resort to subterfuge or to imitate twice-born rituals. Moreover, the fact that Moffatt finds a mini-caste order within the Untouchable arrangement cannot be taken to imply that the Untouchables necessarily accept their position within the total caste order;¹ or that within the mini-caste order those at the bottom accept that lowest placement for themselves.² Though this is not to say that Untouchables have an egalitarian outlook, it is to say that they do not necessarily abide by the definitions as these are implemented by others and devolve on themselves, which is always the most problematic aspect of ranking and brings one back to the basic question: whose scheme of the arrangement of people are we taking as the official one? And with it, the dimension of power to coerce obtrudes.

Moffatt recognises this to some extent for he says that "power also enters into the operation of caste, particularly to keep the Untouchables in their lowermost positions in the system" (ibid:257). Yet he also states, and this is his main argument, that consensus keeps the religious systems

1. As Moffatt says, "In their maintenance of ranked human relations in a significant ritual context, the Harijans mark their basic adherence to hierarchical principles" (ibid: 254). What is problematic here is Moffatt's usage of "their", since one will invariably find that it is "some", not all, who are allocating caste placements, while those adversely classified, whether in a larger or smaller universe, can often do little about the matter.
2. Moffatt's material appears to reveal that no Untouchable wants to assume a lowly position since there are no takers for the drumming within their own circle of performances, yet this is treated cavalierly by Moffatt and is not incorporated into his thesis. If these people will not "perform down", as he says, then this surely indicates that no one in the Untouchable community will adopt the role that Untouchables fulfil within the wider community (ibid:254). To me this spells lack of consensus.
going, and the religious systems remain "fundamental in maintaining and reproducing this consensus at all levels of the caste system" (ibid: 257). However, the case for religious consensus (whether persuasive or not), cannot be conclusive evidence for the assumption of consensus regarding positionings in the caste order, since this does not necessarily follow. Moreover, if, as Moffatt rightly says, "power also enters..." then how can he talk at the same time of the "deep framework of cultural unity" and as well also insist that there is no change in collective consciousness at the bottom of the system" (ibid:244)? It makes one wonder not only about the relevance of power in imposing the imputed caste acceptance on the lowermost but the relevance of power in the other dimension, in the setting up of bulwarks in the operation of their religious systems. Is it not power which propels the doctrinal line restricting their entry into temples and forcing these people to go elsewhere so as to have access to the same deities that the other castes have at home and which presents the picture of "uniformity" of the religious systems that Moffatt is stressing? Uniformity in access to the same temple gods etc. arises by default and not because the upper castes want it that way.

Since some Untouchables serve as temple caretakers in the ring of temples surrounding Kathmandu, this could be taken as supporting Moffatt's approach. However, if the Untouchables are the caretakers in those shrines sited in the heart of Untouchable territory which surrounds the traditional city limits and their particular task is to do the killing of the animals for blood sacrifice, then it is perhaps better understood in this light, where there is a commensurateness between the state of the actor (tamas) and the nature of the task he has to perform. These deities are simply emanations of the central form, Taleju, into whose temple the Untouchables cannot enter, when it is opened once a year. They, like the foreigner (the mlechhas), are debarred and policemen see to it that neither slips in unnoticed.

On the whole, Moffatt approaches the topic in a series of compartmentalised ideas - for example, one group does this, and another that.

1. The fact that the butchers, members of the Newar Kasais, do the killing at Taleju only means that. Similarly butchers may be employed privately, but they would not be allowed into the household shrine. Further, one notices the nail-cutters at certain rites, but that too is not to be taken as indicating mitigation of their exclusion, just note where they sit - beyond the precinct of the purified area, and not where the action takes place. In fact, they are being utilised for the performance of impure tasks and nothing more.
so he deduces the replications as a system of seeming patterning of uniformities. Yet what is interesting is the relations of exclusion.

Regarding the arrangement of people into castes, Moffatt presents a diagram said to show replication, (ibid:254) where he details the entire caste order in one column and that of Harijans in the other as correlations linking each with corresponding religious roles, but this can hardly follow, for one view incorporates the total universe and the other only a portion. A foot cannot replicate the entire person, nor can the ankle part of the micro system (the foot) correspond with the head of the entire body. Since there is an official version, which incorporates the total universe and does not recognise the authenticity of Brahmins and twice-born within the lowest category, then the difference between the micro-version and the macro is one of power and a matter of whose definitions of the situation will prevail. In Moffatt's village as much as in the Nepalese context, the significant feature about the Untouchables' "religion" is the relation of exclusion. In response, the Nepalese Untouchables too go to other parts, especially Benares, and pretend to be Nepalese Brahmins, according to local reports. I have not been able to substantiate the subterfuge, but since the stories come from Parbatya twice-born, this indicates that they perceive the Untouchables as people who reject the definitions imposed on them and the requirements demanded. The view from the top imposes a prohibition on the Untouchables sharing the same range of practices (the technologies), otherwise they would not debar the Untouchables from the required knowledge, the performances, and temple entry. Commenting on this issue, this is what a Nepalese twice-born said, specifically regarding the fact that Brahmins would not officiate at the death rites: "since the Śūdras (the Pāṇi nachalne jāt) are mean and bad, they do not need these rituals". Otherwise the twice-born, and Matwālī as well, refer to their polluted state to explain the exclusions. Either way, the Untouchable's exclusion is accounted for in terms of a negative state. It would seem that the same orientation on the part of the higher castes applies in South India, since the Untouchables are treated in the same way. That in their turn they also reject the definition, as do the Untouchables in Nepal, can be seen in the common practice of pretending to be what others say they are not.
4. Commonality and Closure:

None of this is to deny Moffatt's point that the same gods are worshipped by lower castes as the other castes, but it is to query the inference that this therefore illustrates a "deep framework of cultural unity". Again, though one would not deny some kind of commonality, Moffatt's rendition of it as it stands is far too narrow and ultimately, in its inadequacy, misleading. However, can one come up with an alternative which does accommodate to the complexities?

In a Hindu society like Nepal what we find is a common orientation that the world operates through invisible forces (the gods) and that these can be brought to the presence of the worshipper and that ritual work has the possibility of efficacy in bringing about certain results. Whatever the name of the force (Vajrasattva or Rudra) does not matter and in this the Buddhist stance is no different from that of the Parbatya or Newar Hindus. Thus, the first important point is how the world around is understood and how it is to be handled. Then there is the concern with obtaining an ontological state which is divine-like. However, since it is also posited that variations can occur, here there are the closures around technology, and with it the possibility of disagreement over definitions. With the presence of closures and distinctions one sees a characteristic feature of Hinduism, and to ignore it would distort the nature of its operation. The closures are so obvious and the exclusive practices of the twice-born so vivid, that the commentators of earlier times referred to a religion called Brahmanism. With closures come differentiation and the mode for making the distinctions. This, we have attempted to argue, is based on a processual format with three stages. As an entity advances in progress, the entity changes; and similarly with retreat. But according to Hindu formulations, nothing is said to arise arbitrarily for always there is some underlying cause. The specific doctrine of karma phala belongs to the general tenet.

The idea of karma and the transmigration notions according to Moffatt do not play "a large role" in Hindu religion but what "is religiously central in Indian village culture is god and the appropriate worship of god" (1979: 258). He also says that the karma complex is not as relevant as a "legitimization" of caste, as Weber suggested (ibid: 258). I am not  

1. I have not sufficiently researched the specific beliefs and practices of the tribals and Muslims but from what I do know the general orientation to unseen forces is not starkly divergent from that of the others.
convinced that the theory's importance to Hinduism\(^1\) can be dismissed so easily, for it is not at all irrelevant, at least as far as the Nepalese material goes. There are two facets of his proposal, one the relationship between *karmaphala* and caste "legitimization"; and the other, that between *karmaphala* and Hindu "religion".

The construct "legitimization", as one well knows, is difficult for it introduces the query about who is doing the "legitimization", where often what is said to be legitimate are the ideas of those people who can render their view predominant, for some reason or other. What is one person's legitimacy, may be that person's power to enforce, according to another view, to put it crudely. With regard to caste placements of specific peoples, one of the first questions that one has to ask is who is using the theory to account for caste placement? As Moffatt rightly says, in this particular instance, there are often alternative views being propounded (ibid: 258). But he does not detect that this could imply a lack of consensus, rather than the irrelevance of *karmaphala* as he imputes. The Nepalese material indicates that, more often than not, it is the twice-born who are accounting for the Untouchable's position, while Untouchables themselves may cite an alternative version to account for their particular caste placement.

What is interesting about explanation of the Untouchable's position is that the notion of *karmaphala* is used by others, especially by the upper castes, since it is these people especially who are wont to say that "Untouchables must have committed some terrible sin in a past life to be now reborn as an Untouchable". Whereas, the Untouchables do not necessarily invoke that notion, but instead may proffer a different version to explain present circumstances, as for example with the washermen who refer to the unjust ousting of their forebear by the conniving Brahmin brother, the familial history mentioned at the beginning of the thesis. This brings us to the difficulty with the sociological construct, "legitimization", since as generally used, it presupposes "consensus" which in fact need not necessarily follow as the washermen's divergence of opinion of the matter shows. In this instance the idea of *karmaphala* as a "legitimization", explaining why something is right and proper, only has validity for the overlords, but not necessarily with the people directly involved, for their alternative version to account for their position at

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1. The Buddhist's approach is interesting; where the rank and file espouse transmigration, the Vajracarya deny it for themselves and instead account for their life on earth differently, for they claim that they are manifestations of the celestial Buddha, Vajrasattva, who descended to earth for the good of humanity.
the bottom implies a rejection of the *karmaphala* "legitimization", in this context. Though this is not to say that Untouchables do not refer to the theory in other contexts, for they do, but in my experience it is generally with regard to the future. We will come back to this shortly. The Untouchables' approach does not mean that the notion of *karmaphala* is unimportant to caste definitions at all, as Moffatt seems to be suggesting, but that their alternative version is a response to the idea itself, which challenges its validity through offering their own account. We shall see the same thing when we turn to consider the notion in the context of ritual practices. The theory can hardly be dismissed as entirely inconsequential since it is based on a fundamental tenet, that consequences are produced by causes, and which has relevance not only for the present when oriented by past actions, but also for future goals directed by present activities.

With the Untouchables, even though in certain contexts the *karmaphala* and transmigration notions are overridden by others, this does not necessarily entail a rejection of the theory altogether, for to reject it in one context does not mean that it is totally denied, especially since it ramifies in so many directions, not only as an idea which explains present circumstances by reference to the past but also has relevance for the possibilities of the future. It is particularly in this direction that the disadvantaged project their ideas, since it offers hope, that matters will not always be the same. On the other hand, it can be accepted in toto by some people, like Brahmins, (but definitely not restricted to that caste), not only as a general theory but also when applying specifically to a person's present conditions when these are extremely favourable. One Newar Hindu, for example, related his present personal advantages to the background of past lives. As for caste positioning, generally the top castes do not voice an alternative version to account for this as do the washermen, but it seems to be taken for granted. It would appear advantage does not constitute a problematic, and more often than not, the issue does not arise as a topic for discussion, in this context. With the upper castes, when there is individual misfortune of a high-caste person, the notion is then aired in the endeavour to account for this. Nor would it be forgotten that the idea is particularly important as it bears on the future.

It would be extremely unwise to dismiss *karmaphala* as irrelevant.
because it is the particular version of the general idea of cause and effect which is a central tenet whether in the processes of everyday life, metaphysics, the conditions of transmigratory life and even worship, for here too, the ritual is performed with a projected result which conforms to the basic idea, when an effect occurs then it has a cause. Its impact lies in its general plausibility for if one sows a seed then a plant results, if there is ash then it can be inferred that something was burnt. Nothing is seen as arising arbitrarily. If a deity is seen to be involved in a person's life then there is some reason why this has eventuated. In other words, given that the rationale underlying karmaphala belongs to a broader notion which is a basic tenet in accounting for change, differences, and how things come to be and how things will eventuate, and given that karmaphala specifically relates to the particular conditions of a person's existence, then it is unlikely to be irrelevant. While karmaphala can be used to account for the conditions of the present even though not all people may adopt this theory and utilise it in this way, it is also relevant for the future since it operates in all time zones, continuously. Most important, its operation can be counteracted. That is what a lot of rituals are about.

Moffatt says that the idea of karma and transmigration are not religiously central in Indian culture but what is, is worship (ibid:258). To be sure worship is critical, but is it a matter of either/or, for the centrality of worship need not imply the irrelevance of karmaphala? Karmaphala can hardly be unimportant especially since so many rites are undertaken precisely to counteract the effects of karma, as far as Nepalese behaviour is concerned. From this point of view, the two are in fact interconnected. If, in such contexts, worship is a response to its operation then the significance of karmaphala in Hindu thought is undeniable. Here, simply to lay the ghost to the suggestion of the unimportance of karmaphala, let me remind the reader that every orthodox Hindu eldest son whose father or mother is dead is always undertaking certain rites until he himself dies; then his son will do, as he did. Such rites, among other things are executed to counteract the effect of karma. And to relate this back to the general theme of this chapter, let it be recalled, that no Brahmin will officiate at an Untouchable's death, because the dogma advocates that this must not be so and that such persons are seen as "vile" because of some actions they are imputed to have performed in the past. Further, if we relate what was said earlier and
consider this in the light of Moffatt's thesis, then there are difficulties. Contingent to initiation a whole vista is opened to the initiand; for there is the body of knowledge tied up in Sanskrit (the Vedas and especially the commentaries, the Upanisads) which outline the operation of the cosmos, a picture of everything in the immediate and far-flung existence, the ideas which explain process and change, as well as outline the details of the relevant forces which bear down on the individual and most importantly also provides the opportunity for learning the relevant technologies for calling the forces to one's presence; as well as the right state to perform the Hindu twice-born death rites for one's parents which are regarded not only as valid but profound. When these are withheld from the other castes to a varying extent, then to talk of "cultural unity" seems misguided, whatever else is constant.

One last point: since the twice-born are in the main the people who effect the closures, and are the ones who predominantly utilise the notion to account for caste placements, they have at hand a ready-made theory to explain the "vileness" of the Untouchable, who, therefore, has to be treated accordingly. The twice-born, let it be said in anticipation, of a later chapter, are extremely important in the operation of the Hindu system.
CHAPTER 17

FRUITS FROM THE GODS

Undeniably for Nepalese, the real powers are the gods. They are real because they are the forces behind the operation of things, as one informant stressed, "if they weren't powerful we wouldn't be doing pūjā to them". If you go to Kathmandu, you will easily tell that these forces are in no way ignored, whether you see the throngs queuing around the Gaṇeśa temple in the heart of the city near the old palace; or the crush of people quickly but reverentially bowing to the grain goddess, Annapūrṇā, just discernible behind locked gates, to the left of the bags of rice, of various grades and to the right of the vegetable stalls; even the pelting of bells coming from private houses during the morning prayers; or there is the tell-tale tika (Nep.) marking and scraps of vegetation bedecking a variety of peoples, the spoils of somebody's pūjā, which give sacred potency to receivers. While the sacralisation component (and all its stages) are important there is more to such practices than purifications and it would be foolhardy to ignore man's relationship with the gods and his ritual efforts directed at these powers so as to gain his goals. The technical term, phala, the fruits, exemplifies the point, for ritual work has its projected consequences and in this the divine forms are central.

1. Ritual Fruits:

If required ritual work has its goal then the actor attempts to channel future conditions which are to his liking. Yet there is another idea about the individual's responsibility in realizing conditions that pertain to him. This is karmaphala which operates in the time route of samsāra. If there is any hesitation about the relevance of karmaphala and rebirth theory for Hindus, this man's observations, a boatman at Banaras, well situated to make his comments, should allay this:

They come in millions, doing pūjā at the temples, bathing in the Gaṅgā, setting afloat plates of offering and lamps. What for? To stock merit. It is only cupboard love.

While the boatman is critical of their motives, the desires to acquire merit and a good after-life etc., and he might be right about the nature of their love, but one cannot exactly accuse the pilgrims of behaving in an untoward manner, for Hinduism does not posit only the excellent motives in orientating one's behaviour so as to propel good eventualities. What he
sees as activity directed at stocking of merit for better conditions after death, is not to be dismissed for this is legitimate behaviour and the popular way. Hinduism does not posit motiveless behaviour or lack of attachment, as far as the processes of the samsāra cycle are concerned. In fact if anything, intentions to secure a better future are an intrinsic part of the phenomenon and are labelled the goal of desires (kamya). The actor is expected to do the right thing for the expressed purpose of future gains in other realms of existence.\(^1\) So the pilgrimages especially in late life provide an additional method for merit-gaining to that more arduously obtained through adherence to other kinds of duties. The more arduous route is by conformity to duty. Virtuous behaviour is said by people to lead to a good life and a better rebirth and they can have in mind such activities as honouring parents, not stealing, telling the truth and so forth. This is straightforward conformity to one's particular duty (dharma) which has the effect of creating merit (punya). Worship is also seen as virtuous and merit gaining, and consequently, especially with the aged, there is a flurry of activity involving pilgrimages, and great attention to ritual performances in the specific hope of gaining a good after-life, where the projected goal is through worship and worship is said to be dharmic and therefore merit-getting. In such activities the actor seeks to effect favourable conditions at some future point in time. In short, to fix the future nicely for himself.

The karmaphala complex which also operates over time, means that the cause is somewhat fixed, oriented by the nature of acts committed in prior existences, a point expressed at the birth of every child when a deity comes to write the baby's fate shortly after birth with the saying that "what is written cannot be unwritten". So, on the one hand, there is the idea that the present and continuous conditions of a person's current existence are determined by the nature of past actions, while, on the other, there are possibilities, measures that can be taken to counteract this. So, there is the harsh law that a person reaps what he sows, harsh because humans are undeniably imperfect, yet countervailing this, is the idea and the possible measures where, in the present, the actor may circumvent the effects of past actions that would have been realized had the ritual interruption not occurred. Therefore, the idea that behaviour orientes the conditions of one's existence is not overriding since an individual may also resort to countervailing methods like worship and getting the gods on side,

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1. Non-attachment however is important for quitting of samsāra through mokṣa.
This does not mean that behaviour and the route of karmaphala are irrelevant since such ritual endeavours, by countervailing the operation of this complex, in fact underpin the relevance of the karma complex. What it means is that a Hindu is not limited to pulling himself up by his own bootstraps of virtuous behaviour (śvadharma) since he can resort to other measures. Since the problematic area is that of the effects of sin, for virtue is said to propel favourable consequences, it would be in that area that the actions will be conspicuous.

Even though sins may have been committed, the matter is not left at that, where all a person has to do is await the punishment of existing in the awful hells so as to exhaust the sin, but Hindu policy stipulates that action can be taken now. A yearly instance, known as Teej Pāñcami, when women, through this ritual complex, atone for sins committed during the previous year, nicely illustrates this orientation. Again, it would appear that there is another alternative to the operation of the relentless laws of karmaphala if the transformations generated by the son in the death rites are borne in mind, where by simulating cosmic processes he orients the course of the dead parent’s journey in the after-life. One expert’s comments, that the son does not entertain the possibility that his efforts will not work or that the parent might tread the hellish path on this particular event, voice the general position that there is another mode which can replace the workings of karmaphala, a point also stressed by Ghurye (1965:185). The important role of the Brahmin as surrogate of the dead where there is the assumption that if the Brahmin (the surrogate) is well tended, so will be the dead person, regardless of his particular stock of pap (sin); also, in a way, the mopping-up operations generally performed by the purohita, like godāna, expiatory homa (prāyaścitta homa) which remove blemishes, cancel mistakes and expiate sins, can all be understood as means for circumventing the consequences of karmaphala.

If expiation is possible, this means that you do not have to reap with exactitude what you have sown, but that something else may supersede it. Obviously, sins expiated are sins whose effects do not have to be exhausted by living through unpleasant but deserved conditions, the central idea of the karmaphala complex. However, with some of these there are closures, like homa which will not be performed by a Brahmin for the Untouchable castes. This might also be seen to apply in other instances where the ritualist attempts to direct the future according to his liking, so let us consider

1. Pundits distinguish between the exhaustion of sin and demerit after death and the lingering effects that stay with the individual and which influence his present conditions. Ordinarily people do not go into such niceties. The important point about generating consequences that have bearings on one’s own conditions, however, is constant.
such situations.

Looking at the topic from a broader perspective where the pantheon is involved and where different gods are relevant at different points in time, there are all the rites performed by each householder aiming to generate the required phala (fruit). Though as we have said, ritual work is not failure-proof, its goals are perceived as possible and the ritualist aims to bring about the desirable results. Such rites are always performed at a stipulated time, when a particular force is relevant and only at the time as determined by the astrological movements. Without the astrological text, one is lost, for a performance at the wrong time is pointless. This would mean that at certain precise moments of the year there is the possibility of realising a specific eventuality, the phala of the rite. Given that it is only a possibility, in effect what appears to be happening is that each householder is attempting to hone in and link up with the relevant cosmic force around at that time which has certain capabilities. A positive example is the time of Lakṣmi pūjā which holds the promise of largesse. When the influence is designated negative, to counteract the effect one method is the pacification of astrological inauspiciousness through one type of homa (sanigraha, "make the planets calm"). In this way there is the human attempt to render what is a possibility into a desirable eventuality through ritual work. In the operation the orientation that the gods are approachable and open to human supplication also, is an intrinsic part. A number of issues are raised, one relates to the relevance of the idea of closures and the other to the significance of the time factor.

Taking what is known about forces affecting the individual, it might throw light on the phenomenon of the yearly rituals where astrological forces are also pertinent. Now if according to Hindu formulations the traces of karma linger and influence the conditions of a person's existence; and if, again, according to Hindu formulations the astrological movements also affect the individual, then the individual karmic traces are tied into the powers of the astrological movements. Less cumbersomely, if the individual's traces linger and affect the conditions of a person's existence, this is probably operating through astrological influences since it is these forces which are said to affect a person either negatively, positively or indifferently. The inference is appealing since it ties in the various ends of the complex and identifies how karmaphala works. If this is so, then the individual's involvement with astrology may be understood as another dimension in the operation of karmaphala which affects him specifically,
and in addition it is likely that there are the wider forces which apply in general in transmigratory life.

It is likely that what could perhaps be called a general karmaphala pertaining to all persons as humans, is relevant in such contexts and that in the yearly calendars there is a convergence of three areas, the astrological influences, the people’s susceptibility to them arising by virtue of their existence in time which generates causes and effects, and the ritual measures to handle the influences. If events are only to be undertaken at specific times when the planets and the constellations especially stand in a particular relationship and no other, this indicates that these are the forces which are determining what is the possible eventuality for all people. Since all are in human form all are with the effects of their general lives and had these been eradicated entirely they would have moved out of the saṃsāra circuit. Now given that effects are assorted, then the possibilities are diverse and not just negative, and therefore the nature of the rites will also be correspondingly diverse even though the import of planetary influences is most vivid in inauspicious demeanour. Nonetheless, the auspicious is also a possible influence. What would apply in general to humans would then be confronted commonly in the rituals of the annual cycle, while what applies idiosyncratically is gauged according to the particular configuration of the celestial bodies at the time of a person’s birth and attention to the negative influences especially, though not limited to this, are his own particular concern. ¹ At the wider level of the annual cycle, whether the speculations are valid or not, at least one sees that where it is said that at certain times specific forces are relevant, like the presence of Lakṣmi to distribute largesse and cornucopia the matter is not left at that, but each household attempts to grasp at the potentiality through ritual attention directed at that specific force. This raises the point mentioned before: can the endeavours be understood as entailing closures?

Where it is not difficult to identify and understand the operation of closures is when sacrilisation is in focus, since here the pristine forms are implicated and these are closest to the Absolute, and in reaching such forms a person reaches the sattvika excellence, and even though anyone can

1. From the personal point of view astrological influences are critical in obtaining a compatible marriage partner.
perform a ritual, unless he has this kind of technology and is in the right state to put it into operation, then he cannot merge with these forms and reach the identical ontological level; with rituals where the goal is good fortune as in Lakṣmi pūjā, or where sons, crops and victory over the enemy are sought as in Dasaṅ, the matter is not so straightforward. Regarding Dasaṅ, one man commented that those who do not have the "dikṣā mantra will not be able to perform a 'real' pūjā". Yet there is another facet which appears to cross-cut ritual expertise and is inherent in the same man's comments,

We are pulling the power of the goddess into that ghasta. But in this age we cannot see Devi, though in former yugas we could actually see and meet her. But now she gives her power into the ghasta and this is representative of Devi's power. If we drink the water of the pot, then our wishes will be fulfilled.

Not only is technology relevant in the ritualist's ability to bring the Devi to the pot, but so is the Devi's orientation to humans, for he states that She "gives" and that through this "our wishes are fulfilled". Thus another dimension appears even if only incipiently in this comment, but it hints at the importance of the orientation that deities respond to man's endeavours and through this a person's wishes can be fulfilled. That the deities are open to supplication from all and sundry and that closures do not occur in terms of caste lines, is the point of this Nepalese myth: Some Brahmins about to go on a pilgrimage were asked by an Untouchable woman to take her offerings and present them to the deity. They arrived at the famous shrine, worshipped and were about to quit the place when the deity appeared before them asking why they had not presented the offerings sent by the Untouchable. Her offerings were so important that the deity manifested before their eyes (giving them darśan) and rebuked them for their laxity.

2. Fruits Through Favours:

There is another approach where humans attempt to orient the future in ways other than what befalls them as their due, and again the avenue is the gods. Though the idiom is ritual in such contexts, the rationale seems to lie in an orientation towards the deity, one which presumes that the deity is susceptible to human supplication and will respond kindly, rather than one where the metaphysical ideas are square to the forefront. Phrases like "I do this to please you", "be pleased with me", "bless me" recur. So that the

1. Though this is not to say that seeking to please a deity and beseeching its favours is absent, but rather, that the esoteric expertise is fully fledged and critical.
onus is very much on the deity's response to the supplicant. That a
type of prayer is open to fertilise (anugrah) which, less technically, from the
worshipper's orientation, is expressed in the typical plea, "be kind"
(daya gara Nep.). That it is believed possible can be seen in this prayer
by a young Chetri to his favourite Gaṇeśa:

Dear Gaṇeśa, Give me Success. Help me avoid errors and do
my job properly. Help me accomplish my responsibilities with
success and distinction. Give me Success, Gaṇeśa.

Gods then are not seen as remote nor ethereally unreal, but close to humans
and available to hear and interfere in man's endeavours. They are seen as
accessible to man's supplication. This person's approach is not exceptional
but represents the characteristic behaviour in a religious society. In
this kind of orientation, though there is a ritual encounter, nonetheless the
firetong power for the realisation of the goal is the deity who is
approached to shower favours on the supplicant, which it may, for deities
are depicted as "merciful". With the expectation of divine interference,
there is an entirely different orientation to future possibilities from
those stipulated by the operation of karmaphala, where one's life-fate is
a consequence of one's own acts where a person receives what is deserved.

Given that the relevant functions of a god are to "create, sustain and
destroy" (apart from maya or tirobhava, to "veil", which is not relevant
here) they have the power to act as causes in generating the particular
effect. The major difference between the operation of divine intervention
and karmaphala is that the onus of responsibility shifts from humans to
gods, and of course the expectation that it will be advantageous for humans.

Even though it offers an alternative to the merciless law of deserts, yet

1. One expert commented that "others have to wait for the deity's grace"
whereas with his own divine-like methods (divya) he did not.
2. He is a high-ranking bureaucrat with a degree in political science who
has studied abroad and has great administrative ability. The biographical
detail is introduced to indicate that modernity does not necessarily cancel
out traditional orientations.
3. In a sense there is a shift in stress from a system of physics where the
forces are pertinent and where it is up to the ritualist to grasp these
and execute the procedure in exactly the correct way whereas with the other
there is an orientation of supplication. Though some texts say one approach
can be understood as the "way of the monkey", which stays with the mother
by grabbing and hanging on, whereas in contrast, the "way of the kitten"
is to relax and leave it all to the mother cat, I do not think that the
breakdowns would occur with the Nepalese for most people, whether experts
or not, regard the deities as powerful forces and if so then the human is
puny in comparison and at the deity's mercy. As far as I can tell the
difference between people's orientation is a matter of degree. Moreover
there are two areas, ritual procedure which entails some effort on the
part of the actor which is constant, and an orientation towards the deities
which is constant, also.
4. Where Moffatt says that worship plays a central role, I would definitely
not disagree but do not draw the inferences he draws. Nor do I see karma
as unimportant.
it is not at variance with Hindu concepts, for there are two major areas of causation, human behaviour (sin and merit) on the one hand, and ultimately divine power on the other. That humans expect deities to intervene and that they can intervene is not problematic given what godhood entails, but what is, I think, is why should they respond by being kind etc.?

Apart from the doctrinal stipulation that one of the five functions is anugraha, favouring, the idea is well established as possible behaviour of gods for there are numerous myths where a god comes to the rescue when called. One was related earlier, when the gods got themselves into a mess which was largely of their own making, called Devi, who took up their cause and killed their enemy. This divine function also appears in the notion avatāra, with Rāma and Krṣṇa as exemplars. That, at least establishes precedence. There is one additional factor in the configuration which seems to be significant.

One also finds that special relationships are forged between a deity and the supplicant in certain situations. Those deities from whom the individual expects special treatment in critical instances are special deities for him. It would seem that they are expected to be personally involved in the individual's affairs and grant grace because of the particular relation obtaining between them, which is that of family deity (the kuldevatā Nep.) as well, there are the pītris, the forebears of the worshipper though not precisely gods, they are still seen as forces, and there is the īstadevatā, the chosen deity, generally obtained via initiation from a guru, but even younger members of the family who have not undertaken the formal requirements select out a personal deity for special attention, who is described as "the one I like" (malaṁ manparne Nep.). In any ritual they all figure repeatedly in a host of situations, whatever the nature of the worship. Flowing out of these kinds of relationships, the individual beseeches indulgences, favours from the particular deity just because of the connexion involved in each case. Not that a worshipper would restrict his efforts to these, or just one of them and ignore the others, nevertheless they are the important constants.

The pītris are important for giving the "blessings of generation". We beseech them for "continuity of the line" to quote one informant. The kuldevatā (Nep.) is the particular god that a forebear "realised" and became his devotee and the descendants follow suit since that form was and is likely to remain a benefactor to them. The īstadevatā is referred to in Nepali as "rakṣak " which, as one informant insisted, is not adequately
translated by the English term "protector" as often happens, for what is important is the idea, "protagonist".\(^1\) In a way all are expected to be the individual's protagonist though the function is exemplified with the "chosen favourite". A protagonist may be approached for many things even help in acquiring \(mokṣā\)\(^2\), and frequently for the fulfilment of worldly desires (\(kāmya\)) and especially to become the individual's champion against obstruction, in whatever way this is perceived by the supplicant. When necessary, a protagonist can be fierce (\(krodha\)). This divine attribute is sometimes interpreted as signifying malevolence (see, for example, Babb, 1975). A fierce deity is not necessarily malevolent, but in fact holds the requirements of a powerful defender as one sees in the myths of "The Chandi" where the goddess is called to fight the gods' enemies and do battle against the demons (\(aśura\)). Babb refers to people's saying that Devi likes the "taste of blood" (1975:225), a saying which is also to be heard in Nepal, yet from this, I do not think, that we must only deduce, as Babb does, that the Goddess is viewed as malevolent. As we know deities are given certain kinds of offerings according to their natures; when a deity is "gentle", it gets "gentle" offerings, when fierce, blood, and so forth. Therefore, blood is appropriate for this particular form. "She likes blood", because she is the destroyer type, not because she is malevolent, if we stay within the parameters of their formulations. As I understand blood sacrifice, it is an event where, if you want to get to Kālī, you must kill for her.\(^3\) If Kālī is the goddess of destruction and Kālī (or Durgā also a warrior-protector) likes the taste of blood, as people say, then to please Her "we offer what She likes", which is what is appropriate for that form. Ferocity need not be negative, but positive, especially in those contexts where she is the protagonist against the enemy. To be sure, this kind of form is "dangerous" as Babb says, but this is exactly what is required when directed at the obstructions which prevent the realisation of one's goals. The interesting thing is that, despite all the signs of ferocity, like the sword dripping blood, the fierce form often displays two significant gestures, with her main hands. These express "fear not!", and the "fulfilment of desires" (the boon giving gesture). That is Devi's orientation to the worshippers; on their part the key orientation is that of "pleasing" which is not limited to this context, which seems so peculiar but only seemingly so, because of the content of "blood". Elsewhere the supplicant gives different items, but the rationale is the same, to

1. Some people have one, a family devatā (\(kul\)) which is also a person's \(istadevata\), as one Chetri explained, "It is better to stay with what is known, than what is unknown".
2. One expert elaborated that he was not overly worried about \(mokṣā\) and when it would happen, but he knew that it would, sooner or later, "through Devi's grace".
3. The Bengali saying, "give a goat to Kālī" meant "kill an Englishman" during the days of the resistance.
"please". And if the deity is pleased then presumably it is favourably disposed towards the supplicant. Since the exemplary protagonist is Durgā, who is critical during Dasaī, at that time a worshipper places his own particular īstadevata (his protagonist) on the central kalaśa so that the specific merges with the exemplar. In the configuration of features we find that where there is establishment of a bond, there is constant attention to those deities and with this the recurrent seeking of favours and protection. What this implies is significant for there is the idea that favours are to be obtained through the connexion, those deities who are one's own.

At the general level, there is the idea that a deity is merciful (anugraha) but which appears to be played out in terms of special connexions between the individual and the deity. Specifically, the individual seeks favours from his own (though of course not limited to this) for it is these forms which are attended to all the time. It could be inferred that according to this orientation what is important for results is the link between the deity and the worshipper. A favourable response from the gods concerned is expected to be forthcoming just because of the connexion, as with the īstadevata, the kulaṇivātā, and the pīthra. The acquisition of favours here would not be based on deserts or even ontological excellence but on the connexion of devotee and deity. Nor is the possibility of obtaining divine favours at variance with the central laws of cause and effect, for if gods are the entities which constitute the causes (creation, maintenance and destruction and keeping the individual in saṁsāra), then by approaching those forces the worshipper goes where the power lies. And the deities can interfere for they themselves are outside saṁsāra, do not go to hells or heavens (naraka and svarga), nor transmigrate like humans but live in their own celestial regions (lokas). They have the capabilities by virtue of their nature as gods. If the findings are valid, they are significant for they indicate a general orientation that to expedite results what is important is a personal connexion between the beseecher, the devotee and those forces

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1. That this is not an unwarranted inference on my part I quote one expert's comment which, in explaining why his īstadevata is Devi, underlines the idea that deities can be pleased and implies that a person can expect a divine response. "I worship Devi rather than a male god, because it is easier to please a mother than a father".

2. The fourth function "to veil", "create illusions" (tīrthāhava or maya) is expressed in the idea that at birth the individual's knowledge of previous existences is wiped away by Visnu's maya power.

3. Texts outline the six qualities of deity as knowledge (jñāna); lordship or sovereignty (īsvarya); and power (jñāna), as the first three. This is a list which is reminiscent of the three notions, I know, (jñāna), I can (kriya) and I do (briya) which we have seen before. Then come, strength (bala) courage (vijaya) or undauntingly, if one keeps within a physiological frame or more metaphysically, the capability of expansion or extension; and with the last, there is tejas, determination, concentration or the fire of the inner eye which sees and can also destroy.
that control particular areas, an orientation that is well established for Hindu behaviour outside the shrine room and recognised in the anthropological literature. Outside, it could be referred to as a characteristic political style.

I want to reiterate a point: the expectation of favours is clearly not a ritual method, but an orientation which most people appear to adopt to a greater or lesser degree. The two come together in the pūjā procedure where the deity is welcomed, showered with things which are pleasing etc. A metaphysical understanding does not preclude the possibility of supplication as well, since all that is happening is a recognition of forces larger than oneself and which are viewed as accessible to one's entreaties.

Now if the deities, on such occasions, are called to help bring about some desired result, then this is an attempt to reach at powers which can yield consequences for the individual at some future point in time, when the fruits of the rite are realised. It would seem that to obtain nice eventualities, the individual does not restrict behaviour to the other method, the conformity of duty which is said to have good future consequences for the individual as operative through the laws of karma, but attempts to implicate the deities directly in his own particular life-fate, especially those forms which he has abrogated as his own, (though by no means limited to those) and comprise his own idiosyncratic set. Hinduism presents these two major alternative operations for determining the nature of the future as it may affect the individual. There is a relentless system of retribution which, of necessity, must be merciless, in that it is said to enforce an exactitude in the harvesting of subsequent results according to the nature of the activity. Given the obvious, that humans are not perfect, then it stands as a formidable system. As a counterbalance to this, there is the operation of contacting powerful but merciful forces, generally through the idiom of pūjā so as to wrest their involvement in human destiny. Frequently, a worshipper approaches the deity not with the phrase "be just" but rather beseeches it with the plea, "be kind" (daya gara Nep.), as we have noted. Mercy, anugraha, is an important notion in Hinduism because it is this which can present the possibility for the interference with the inexorable law of effects, since mercy-giving means that a deity may intercept the development and bestow grace upon a particular individual. To this end, a lot of pūjā is directed. People pray for and believe that it is possible to achieve the deity's grace, favours and help. Its significance lies in the belief that one may orient the future towards one's liking by getting the deity on side.

1. Despite what one commentator said about the divya way.
CHAPTER 18

KING, SADHU AND BRAHMIN: special types and special powers

Up to this stage there has been some description of Hindu ideas about the nature of humans, their limitations and their capacities, and attention has also been directed at the Hindu approach which seems unswervingly to perceive real power as belonging to the gods. Yet there are certain types of persons who are said to have extraordinary powers. They are worth attention as characteristically significant Hindu types: they are the divine and absolute king; the Brahmins who belong to the pre-eminent category in the caste order; and renouncers. Since each is extolled, then the particular features of each type should indicate what, amongst other things, is regarded as of value, according to this world view. But before that can be reached, it is necessary to consider other problematic aspects associated with these types.

The significance of and the relationship between the king, Brahmins and renouncers has been handled variously in the literature. Dumont (1970 & 1972), setting up the types as a topic for theoretic discussion, depicts the Brahmin as the supreme kind of human and superior to the king within the social realm. Outside society is the renouncer who is said to parallel the importance of the Brahmin within. Burghart (1978) approaches the topic differently.

Burghart takes issue with both Dumont and Bailey who, according to him, perceive "unity in Hindu society". Instead, Burghart claims to have identified three hierarchies competing for supremacy where each specifically relates to one of the three types, and these hierarchies, in turn "are regulated" by three types. This is how he puts it:

F.G. Bailey's theory of closed social stratification and Louis Dumont's theory of hierarchy both assume the unity of Hindu society and are considered by their authors to be particularly useful in understanding the traditional Hindu social system. Documentary materials of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries from the Kingdom of Nepal belie, however, such simplified models of Hindu society and reveal instead that the Brahman, ascetic, and the king each presented a hierarchical model of Hindu society and that each person claimed the supreme rank according to his own hierarchical model of social relations. In this article I describe these three hierarchical models and examine the complex interrelations between the Brahmans, ascetics and the king in order to understand how they regulated their conflicting claims of superiority. By analysing social relations in terms of three hierarchical models instead of one, the unity of the traditional social system becomes not an assumption in analysis but rather an observation to be analysed (1978:519).

As I read the historical material of the period, it shows that the Gorkha kings subjugated a diversity of peoples and imposed Hindu laws and a caste scheme upon them, regardless of what they thought. Although in caste society one undoubtedly finds "competing" notions about placements I am not sure that the three allegedly competing hierarchies are the best place to locate this issue. Had Burghart instead focused on the caste order where there is an explicit ranking scheme imposed on different peoples, he would indeed have identified disagreement. He is right, of course, to query the proposal of "unity of society" and be sceptical about the proposition that people adopt a consensus view, yet though his question is extremely important and the theoretical orientation valid, as I understand matters, he seeks to demonstrate this in the wrong area. When discrepancy in orientation to a caste placement does occur, this happens in postures opposed to the official line by those disadvantaged by the categorisation. There was the fact of Gorkha power and the accompanying official Hindu laws, its promulgations and values, as well as dissent from those who did not agree with conquest and its attendant impositions. But it is unlikely, I think, that their ideas would be incorporated into the doctrinal formulations, as the position of the Newar Brahmins (and others) indicate. If dissent were expressed, it would be verbally and privately. In other words, while I would agree that a system of relations is not necessarily unified through consent and commitment to the system, I would insist that it was effected through force, and that competing notions like these which probably did arise, are not part and parcel of official doctrine. Specifically the argument with Burghart rests on his identification of the presence of three "competing hierarchical codes" for as I hope to indicate, these three special types each fit into a special niche of the official set of ideas where competition between all incumbents need not necessarily follow. If it is doctrine which is extolling them all, is it likely that doctrine will formulate competing bids for hierarchical supremacy? Put differently, if the excellence of each derives from the doctrinal area of ideas, then it is unlikely that each would constitute a bid for "superiority" over the other. At least one can say, that all three do belong to bona fide Hindu tradition whatever the origin of the renouncer. The renouncer and his particular goal, mokṣa, are squarely doctrinal and no Nepalese to my knowledge disputes this.

According to Burghart each of the three "hierarchies" are incongruent, though each is exhaustive, exclusive and intersects with the others.
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Specifically, the code for the Brahmins, he says, is that of the "sacrificial body of Brahma"; for the renouncers that of the "hierarchy according to the cycle of confused wandering"; and for the king, that of a "tenurial hierarchy which was derived from his lordship over the land" (ibid: 520-1). He argues that each "code" indicates competition for supremacy between the three types and a subsequent regulating of these by the incumbents responding to the other models by incorporating features of theirs, which initially the code did not hold for they are not congruent with each other (ibid: 524, 533). It is an ingenious and intricate argument but, in my view, unwisely conceptualised, while the material is awkwardly handled. Burghart suggests that Manu is the source for the Brahmins' hierarchical code but Manu was a basic judicial reference for the administration of Hindu laws and defined the responsibility of the king (see Hodgson, 1834:45). Hence Burghart's isolation of Manu as the basis for the Brahmins' model in their bids for supremacy is contentious.

Similarly, Burghart's allocation of the "cycle of confused wandering" as the base for the "ascetic taxonomy" (ibid: 522) misrepresents the Hindu approach since the samsara circuit is accepted by all and sundry, and the moksha pursuit, as the highest of all goals, is not denied by the people in general, in my experience. Thirdly, the isolation of the king's hierarchical model as that of tenurial supremacy is not quite precise (although I would not couch the relationship between the king and the land in this way), for the man who is king accounts for this primarily by reference to divine incarnation, and from this other facets follow like the relationship with the land. This is not couch in tenurial, but mystical terms. Even though Burghart mentions divine kingship, this is treated as the response to the Brahmins' claims to hierarchical superiority over him, the king. It raises the conceptual inadequacy of his approach, for the king is absolute and therefore one needs to take a different tack, to understand the complexities. There are the doctrinal formulations and the power to enforce them. Furthermore, by imputing the existence of a core "code" with a subsequent response to other's codes, Burghart teases out facets as if they were separate yet according to doctrine are part and parcel of the same set of ideas. These issues will be taken up later. Here just to mention another query. Given that the sacred texts like Manu were the basic references used by the Kingdom's law courts, and given that where
iconoclastic texts appeared in the past and have since been expurgated and the only remaining indication of their past existence are references to them in other bona fide Hindu texts, given all this, is it likely that these law books, used by absolute rulers, would contain accounts that challenge the position of the divine-king?

I want to make a final point about Burghart - Manu is the basis for the Brahmins' hierarchical code for supremacy, and if according to Burghart in response to Brahmanical claims the king regulates matter and "deifies" himself, but, as we know, it is Manu who boldly proclaims the king's divinity, which is in Burghart's eyes the Brahmins' source for their hierarchical supremacy, then his case is somewhat inadequate. Moreover, if in Burghart's approach the criterion for Brahmins' supremacy is "purity" (ibid: 524) and their hierarchical model's source is Manu, yet Manu says that the king is "never impure", while chapter after chapter is devoted to how Brahmins are to handle pollution, Burghart's conceptualization of the problem is in a spot of bother. To turn to his proposal, that each of the types presents his own hierarchical model of Hindu society, and each makes a bid for superiority vis-a-vis the others.

There are two contentious wings in his handling of the Nepalese material - one relates to the idea of "competing codes", and the other to his rendition of the nature of the codes. One must ask does the co-existence of three outstanding types automatically entail competition

1. In one text, like Manu, all three types are included in what can only be called the one "code". Two entire chapters are devoted to the king, and his special nature and duties are delineated (see VII, VIII in Buhler, 1969: 216-251, 253-327). Burghart cites Manu's reference to the Brahmins' "hierarchical code", himself. Although in Manu, renunciation refers to the Sannyasi, the fourth stage of life, what applies there (see Manu, VI, 41-3, 49, 61-5, 72, 81-2 in Buhler, 1969:206, 207, 209-10, 211, 213) is seen by Nepalis to apply to the renouncer, whether he adopts this earlier or later, whereas Manu stresses the necessity for the proper fulfilment of the great debts first (VI, 39 in Buhler, 1969: 205). Nonetheless, the goal of the cessation of mundane existence (moksha) is delineated as the supreme bliss (Manu, XII, 88 in Buhler, 1969:502-3) and this is regarded by Nepalis as the renouncers' goal, par excellence. Surely, the relevant point is how Nepalis interpret Manu, and not as Burghart suggests that Manu, (? how long ago) "denied the separate existence of ascetic sects" (ibid: 525).
between them? Does it gel with what we know about Hindu values? While I have heard people complain about śādhus who are charlatans, but at the same time extol the great ones, and have heard Brahmans emphasising that mokṣa is the highest goal, generally, however the idea of stratification vis-a-vis themselves and the renouncer does not generally arise. If a renouncer, on his part claimed that he sought the highest goal, mokṣa, I do not think orthodox Brahmans would challenge that, and if the renouncer began talking in terms of stratification theory, the renouncer would be going contrary to his own ideals of "desirelessness", an ideal that Burghart notes that renouncers proclaim in one part of his discussion, while maintaining that the Hindu system shows that the renouncer has a hierarchical model of society, and to boot, the renouncer's goal is to quit society. There appear to be complications here. If the renouncer's goal is to quit society, and be "desireless", as Burghart delineates, can he also maintain without further accommodation, that the renouncer is competing with people for a place in Hindu society? There is some confusion surely. With these difficulties I am not entirely persuaded that all three codes do in fact reveal competition. Now to Burghart's rendition that the hierarchies are "exhaustive", representing a model of Hindu society.

First of all the Brahmin's hierarchy is not a model of society since the varna order excludes the king, who is a divine incarnation, according to Nepalese formulations, and not simply a Kṣatriya; in addition it does not incorporate the renouncer for what distinguishes this type is renunciation of all things social. Burghart's rendition of the renouncer's model of society is therefore also suspect, for the renouncer's sphere of relevance is not a model of society, since it is precisely this which he quits, details of which will be elaborated later. If the renouncer's goal is to achieve mokṣa and leave the circuits of rebirth (the confused wandering) it means that it is precisely this realm which is irrelevant to the type. Expressed differently where Burghart would present the "renouncer's model of Hindu society" as that of the "confused wandering" this misrepresents the material, and when it is rectified, we find that the renouncer's sphere of relevance is outside society, and outside "confused wanderings", The only "model of Hindu society" whose terms of reference would include the others, would be the king's for it would

1. In one Brahmin household every renouncer who came begging was given food spontaneously and was treated with reverence. Whatever the origin of the ascetic tradition it stands as a central Hindu value and it is this which is relevant.
2. There could well be a contradiction between espoused ideals and practices but then the "practices" would be deviations and not the "code" of the renouncers.
incorporate not only himself, but the subjects as well, and even then the renouncer stands gingerly. Therefore the suggestion that each presents a model of society is dubious, for as we see they reveal cut-off points. Therefore from this angle, Burghart's contention that the models reveal competition is difficult, since there is no basis for comparison through these. Consequently, the claim that all intersect is also questionable. Rather there are three disparate types with different terms of reference. Nonetheless, even though the "codes" may not indicate competition this in itself does not necessarily deny the possibility of verbal and private claims "to superiority" coming from an expected quarter, the Brahmins.

To be sure Nepalese Brahmins will quote the phrase, made memorable for us by Dumont, that 'the Brahmin precedes the king", however as soon as the issue of the king's divinity and the idea of divine descent is raised in reply, the topic is immediately dropped. It cannot be pursued, I think, for it would bring down other instances of divine descent (like Rāma) to which Brahmins (and others) are committed, and would also query the validity of general theory of incarnation which relates to themselves and everybody else, and which ultimately provides the framework for their own excellence among men. It would also mean challenging the authority of authors like Manu. Nor can they introduce the idea of undemonstrability, in the case of the king, since the tenuousness of their own position would then be brought into relief as much as the king's, for the system contains an interlocking of crucial ideas that bear on all and sundry. From the pragmatics of power, they could well be charged with uttering treasonable ideas, also. Our concern at the moment, however, is with the official formulations.

The first task is to isolate a context for comparability before anything else can be done, for as the ideas stand, the king, Brahmins and renouncers are three disparate types, each exalted in the Hindu scheme of things. But if comparisons are to be made, it is necessary to bring them together where some common factor will reveal differences and the nature of the relationships obtaining. This can be done in one dimension, the corpse. Therefore we shall take the different ways that the corpse of each type is handled to discern the ideas associated with each type and to indicate the kind of relationship which obtains, and so move to a consideration of their different kinds of powers. Hopefully this will advance the discussion of the thesis, while at the same time catering to the problems raised by Burghart, and also Dumont. Moreover,
since each type is exalted, then the particular characteristics and capabilities of each should indicate what, according to the doctrinal view, is presented as valuable.

1. The various characteristics of the three types:

If the king, renouncers and the Brahmins are different, and belong to different universes, then one should be able to identify not only the diverse ontological characteristics, but also isolate the different powers which would derive from the ontological characteristics of each type. Moreover, if they are different in their natures, then one would expect varying treatment of each in one common factor, at least. This, as I said, is to be found in the distinctive ways that the corpse of each type is handled according to Hindu tradition. Before attending to that, it is necessary to establish certain characteristics about the king, which has to be attended to separately since only one man in the kingdom is a king, at any one point in time.

There is no doubt that in Nepal the king is divine, said to be nothing less than an incarnation of Viṣṇu in human form. That is the first incontrovertible fact. The king, therefore, belongs to a unique category, with a membership of one. Within the ideological framework, all else is an elaboration of these two basic features about his ontological nature.

Even if we go to Manu's proclamations, the king is no mere Kṣatriya whose prototype was born from the shoulders of Brahmā but a God-king created by 'the Lord' for the protection of the people. According to Manu he is not mortal but rather is made of the eternal particles and is a special being comprising all the gods. Just scrutinize Manu's declarations,

VII, 3. For, when these creatures, being without a king through fear dispersed in all directions, the Lord created a king for the protection of this whole (creation).

4. Taking (for that purpose) eternal particles of Indra, of the Wind of Yama, of the Sun, of Fire, of Varuṇa, of the Moon, and of the Lord of wealth (Kubera).

5. Because a king has been formed of particles of those lords of the gods, he therefore surpasses all created beings in lustre; (In Buhler (tr.), 1969:216-7).
Therefore, according to this text, within his kingdom the god-king can only but belong to an idiosyncratic category comprising a membership of one, because no one else has been so construed. And to confound him with other Kṣatriyas is to ignore this textual depiction.

In Nepal, the king is not presented as a mere human Chetri, but is Śrīpanch Mahāraja Dhiraj" where the first term "Śrīpanch" ordinarily speaking, means five times blessed, but metaphysically refers to the five eternal essences locating his particular origin at the primal stage of evolution as a god. His every-day cap shows the two interlacing triangles of the male and female principles which is the yantra form of the first beginnings. It covers the centre of his forehead where one of the important cakras is said to be sited. During the coronation with the investiture of what is called the "golden plate" which is marked by five deities, this forehead area is presumably altered since the plate brings it in contact with the five powers.¹ The king's consort, who in Nepal is regarded as a form of Lakṣmi, the goddess of plenty and sustenance, is treated similarly, and sits on the king's left side. As to the king's present state he is proclaimed to be the incarnation of Viṣṇu descended to this earth, as his publication illustrates:

For the Nepalese people, true to the tradition born of the rich heritage of the Hindu polity, regard their king as the incarnation of Viṣṇu, one of the Hindu Trinity (Rising Nepal, Feb. 24, 1975).

The article was published as part of the "Coronation Special" and therefore the formulations would have received state approval. To liken him to some ordinary Chetri is to confound the human body and mind and the human limitations, with the particular being that therein enters. It is to these human dimensions that certain portions of the coronation ceremony are directed. The commentary given as part of the "Coronation Special" bring out this point:

1. To cite one commentary:
As for the crowning ceremony, gurupurohits tie around the forehead of the king a special band which is marked with the idols of Viṣṇu (the Goć of Sustenance), Ganes (God of Good Auspices), Kumar (Child God of Success), elephant (animal representing good omen), and a Bel tree (sign of growth and development). The crown itself is placed on top of the band that adorns the king's head. The gurupurohits themselves pay their respects to the king following the completion of this important ceremony (Sharma, 1975:98).
Snana (the bathing) is a religious act designed to remove the external and internal impurities. Abhiseka is one of the most important events of the crowning ceremony. This ritual is not only aimed at driving away evil spirits but is also designed to institute auspicious qualities with a view to divinize the king. Its real significance may be judged by the kind of elaborate preparations that are made in advance for making this a spectacularly successful event.

A human body born of a woman's womb is brought up with food and water of the place of birth. Identification with the caste, creed and colour of one's birth is considered to be an obstacle. Besides, the sensory organs, mind and intellect normally operate along the limited lines of identification with the characteristics of one's family of birth. It is to remove internal impurities of this sort that the Snana is in effect instituted. This particular ritual is hence not only aimed at sanctifying the king's person but is also designed to convert the limited human frame into a much broader personality of national dimension.

Abhiseka (the sprinkling ceremony) is designed to institute the divine essence of all the elements of existence in the national personality of the king, a subject of much importance as far as the scriptures are concerned. Five elements namely earth, water, light, air and ether along with nourishing substance of any value find their refuge in the newly evolved person of the king.

The act of sprinkling holy water is a ritual that in effect underscores the completion of progressive efforts to divinise the king (Sharma, 1975:97-98).

Judging from the commentary what is important about the coronation is the ritual transformation of the particular human components that are automatically implicated through divine descent into a human form. The human dimension of the king then is to be understood in the traditional Hindu way as that of divine incarnation, whose validity finds a precedence in the human exploits of Rama (sometimes called Râmchandra)², another god-king of legendary times who came to earth for the people's protection.

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1. Bearing in mind what the author said above, we would have to add "the external", also.
2. The following quotation taken from a hand-out circulated by governmental offices entitled "Coronation - its rituals according to Hindu scriptures", makes this point:

According to our cultural tradition, not only the rule of Ramchandra but also other ideal kingdoms that come into being are called Ramrajya, in our definition of the phrase. The country where people take delight in living is called Ramrajya and it is hoped that with the correct performance of the Vedic rituals Ramrajya will be a reality for us.
and well-being. While this material comes from comments on rituals and the proclamations of official doctrine, can one indicate the reaction of the Nepalese to the idea of divine monarch?

Although to the outsider, and at least to my mind, the idea of divine monarch is one of the most difficult ideas to comprehend and with this the people's credence, yet it is hardly at variance with general Hindu notions. The idea of divinity is not anomalous but fits into the general scheme of things for there is the stipulation that ordinary men and women are imperfect forms of the original Purusā and Prakṛti. Further, little girls are worshipped as being comparable to the Devi in their lack of development and innocence. Both of which are particular instances of the possibility of human extraordinariness. As well, there is the conception that a person from a prior existence enters the embryo of a new life in the transmigration process, which means that a specific being enters a physiological component which then becomes the historic personage. Given these kinds of formulations, then the idea of divine kingship, where a god is said to enter a human body, is not so inordinately different. In this way there is an assortment of interlocking ideas into which that of divine kingship also fits. In addition the present dynasty links up with an instance of undisputed divine descent in the personage of Rāma, another instance of divine descent, by tracing a biological pedigree to that line. Although some subjects indicate their scepticism about the present king's divinity, these are rare exceptions and I was surprised to find that many more Nepalese citizens, appear to accept this man as such.1

The voicing of acceptance of the idea of divine incarnation arises in an unexpected context, in questions about the Rana's treatment of the kings over the century while they, the Ranas held power. The Ranas, usurpers to a hereditary prime ministership who behaved ruthlessly in almost all threatening situations cutting away opposition, except in the case of the kings and permitted the Shaha dynasty to survive. For over one hundred years the successive kings were kept under virtual house arrest whereas a simpler method would have been regicide, especially since the king constituted the biggest internal threat to their sovereignty. Now Parbatya generally account for the Rana restraint in terms of divine sanctity. In response to the question, one Brahmin, in

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1. Vajrayāna Buddhism posits that incarnation is applicable to kings and also to the priests, the Vajracarya. Though one might expect a rejection of the Gorkha king from them, this does not appear to be the case. In fact the king is important for them. Where they are hostile, it is towards the Parbatya twice-born in general and to the Brahmins in particular.
shock uttered "But the king is a god". Even where some sceptics refer to the Rana motive as that of expedience, this in turn seems to relate to the entrenchment of the divinity notion, for an action like assassination was anticipated as capable of provoking the populace to rebel against the perpetrators of the crime. Given that the indigenous view of kingship starts within an ontological conceptualisation, then Dumont's rendition of the phenomenon would be inapplicable, for his approach is to deflect attention from it by focusing on job specialisation, otherwise when he does raise the matter of divinity at all, he seems to handle this in a way which trivialises kingship and so ends up by demoting the king, rendering him inferior to Brahmins.

Dumont states his case regarding the secularisation of the king's function and thereby his inferior position in relation to the Brahmin, thus:

... the king depends on the priests for the religious functions, he cannot be his own sacrificer, instead he 'puts in front' of himself a priest, the purohita, and then he loses the hierarchical pre-eminence in favour of the priests, retaining for himself power only.

and he continues,

Through this dissociation, the function of the king in India has been secularized. It is from this point that a differentiation has occurred, the separation within the religious universe of a sphere or realm opposed to the religious, and roughly corresponding to what we call the political. As opposed to the realm of values and norms it is the realm of force. As opposed to the dharma or universal order of the Brahman it is the realm of interest or advantage, artha (1970:68).

The passage is not persuasive. ... If the kingly function is outlined in nothing less than a text like the "Laws of Manu" and is regarded by Hindus as formulations on dharma, and if the king's function is to administer the sacred laws in his kingdom, then surely this is a religious function, albeit not a ritual one. It hardly follows that because the Brahmin is the ritual specialist, while the king is not, that the king's role is thereby secularised. The Brahmin's alleged superior position to the king is simply arrived at by conflating ritual specialist with religion. In order to secularise and also demote the function of the king, Dumont ill-advisedly curtails the religious ambit to rituals which then affords the positing of what is an unwarranted opposition of religion and power, or religion and the secular, criticisms
of which have been detailed earlier. Even if his interpretation of job
specialisation were accurate it would be unwise to underplay the
ontological dimension, yet this is what Dumont does by rendering it of
a "magico-religious nature". Specifically he says,

I think, we may conclude that, while the kastra, or the
king, has been dispossessed of religious functions proper,
or of the 'official' religious functions, there are at the
same time at the core of the idea of kingship, elementary
notions of a magico-religious nature not 'usurped' by the
Brahmans. Below the orthodox brahmanical level, another
emerges on which, certainly in contact with popular mentality,
the king has kept the magico-religious character universally
inherent in his person and function (ibid:73).

The rendition of divine kingship is curious and does not actually confront
the issue but instead trivialises it by imputing the "magico-religious"
dimension, which thereby renders it somewhat lesser than the imputed
bona fide religious character of the Brahman. Surely such usage as
"magico" is unguarded and such distinctions between "magico-religious"
and "religious"¹ cannot be analytically sustained? If we bear in mind
that divine descent belongs to the mainstream of Hinduism, and interlocks
with a whole set of basic concepts, as we saw earlier, then his account
appears somewhat academic. However, to indicate the authenticity of the
king's divinity is not, of course to demonstrate that the Brahmins are
not regarded as gods and therefore are comparable to the divine king.
That is to say, to assess the significance Dumont draws from the fact that
texts refer to Brahmins as gods (1970:65), it is necessary to establish
what is meant by reference to Brahmins as "deities" and only after that,
turn to the contentious issue of the nature of the relationship between
these two types.

Considering contexts where Brahmins are referred to as "deities",
many of these are found in general discussions about society and therefore
present a framework for the depiction of the relation between Brahmins
and other castes as noted earlier. These need not precisely stipulate
the kind of relation obtaining between the Brahmins and the god-king
unless the king is allocated to the Kṣatriya category, which would then,
I think, misrepresent Hindu formulations. In the accounts we notice a
certain vagueness in the notion, "deities", which generally is not given
specific referents, whereas the king's divinity is definitely not left
unspecified but is unambiguously located, since Manu refers to him as

¹. It would seem that the Brahmin also has his stock of "magical"
powers (accepting Dumont's term for the sake of argument) and with a
proclivity to do harm when provoked according to Keith's account of the
"purohitaship" given in The Rig-Veda Brāhmananas (in Keith (tr.), 1971:339).
"Indra, king of the gods". In contemporary Nepal the idea is expressed in terms of Visnu's incarnation, as we have repeatedly stressed, so that the nature of his divinity is in no way left as a vague and general formulation, as occurs with the Brahmins. Given that according to Hindu thought there are gods everywhere, from the greatest down to the local, including little prepubescent girls who, incidentally, are worshipped just as the deity in the idol is, then the Brahmin's "divinity" has to be precisely described, if it is to be at all meaningful.

Brahmins die and are said to progress through samsāra, therefore they are treated as mortal, whereas in contradistinction the god-king, having descended from heaven to his phenomenal world, is said not to die, nor revolve in samsara, but simply to move from the fleshy frame of one king to his son, according to the cultural elaborations. The king's body descent is also important but is less problematic since it follows the biological lines of procreation and continuity. Relating to this dimension the Shahas impune an origin in the great Rajput dynasty of the sun and moon traced back in the twin sons of Rama, Lava and Kusa (see Burghart, 1978:530; and Hodgson, 1972:§6.39). In this way, attention is also given to the body, the product of conjugal union, thus suggesting the view that the body must also be the right vehicle for the reception of the divine personage. Though the god-king must perforse take residence in a body that had been womb-born, a limitation that generally does not apply to gods, yet, according to Hindu notions, as a god, he does not die. This is the critical distinction between the king and Brahmins. The prescribed activities for the king's son on the advent of his father's death illustrates the point in that the new king must not mourn, nor shave his head nor perform the funeral rites, cremation and the rest, for his father (a duty taken extremely seriously by Hindus). At the death of the old king, the spirit enters the ready-made body of the first-born son who, instead of attending to the funeral requirements, goes to sit on the throne comprising the seven-headed snake, Visnu's snake of time which supports the universe and is crowned in a private ceremony. 1 It is by reference to this event,

1. There are two coronations, the public one held at an auspicious date, some time after the old king's death, and another immediately at that man's death. According to reports from those present on the occasion of King Mahendra's death, the new king reached Hanuman Dhoka within ten minutes of the announcement of his father's death. Before that a secret ritual is performed to render the son "receptive of the crown". Given the secrecy no one knows what happens. Apparently, one of the reasons for the haste, is to establish divine kingship, for once established assassination is said to be less palpable. "You do not kill the king who is the incarnation of Visnu", to repeat what the Brahmin said about the matter.
that Nepalis sometimes explain the king's divinity. Abuse of this rite by one of the Ranas in the past is told as a story which vindicates the idea that divinity must proceed only in the kingly line, of first-born sons. It is said that some time ago under the Rana regime, when the reigning Rana died, his successor imitating the kingly practice, rushed to Hanuman Dokha, entered the coronation area and tried to sit on the throne, but was prevented by the snakes. His only alternative was to quit the place with the enterprise unaccomplished. No other Rana apparently has ventured presumptuously to imitate a divine kingly prerogative.

Although the spirit of the king does not transmigrate but instead invades the ready-made body of each first-born son, since that body is treated in the same way as other bodies through cremation, it would seem that the idea of human embodiment, to a certain extent, compromises the nature of this composite being, a god incarnated in a human body of flesh and bones, just like other humans. Yet the two dimensions, god and man, are each attended in the funeral rites and in this the king is distinguished from all others. Apart from the fact that the rites are not performed by the first-born son, in whom the old spirit now resides, there is a further significant difference. In a unique event a Kumai Brahmin eats, as part of his food, the charred remains of the frontal bone of the dead king's head, as discussed earlier, and in so doing, it is said, that this Brahmin takes the sins of the dead man. Presumably since the god-king as man would have committed sins, but since the god does not transmigrate, samārā but instead enters the son's body, then the principle of karmaphala is to be worked through in some other way. This is apparently achieved through the Brahmin's actions, where as surrogate, he absorbs that man's sins into his own person. Dealing with limitations of the human form is not limited to this context but appears to be the Brahmin's speciality for these are attended to by Brahmins not only in the funerals, but in the coronation as well. During the coronation, the Brahmin guruṇurohita sanctifies and divinizes those components of the king which are human, namely the historic body and the specific person of each discrete god-king. "Purification and sanctification" are just the features that the commentator chose to isolate in the outline of the event cited earlier. The functions of the Brahmin in this context are typical and appear also in godāna, homa, the sprinklings, the making and giving of pañcamā, in varying degrees to the populace at large, though never for the Untouchable. Otherwise it is to be discerned in his role as the fixer of containers where the Brahmin's ritual efforts bring the idol to the right state so that the spirit of the deity can
be infused into it; or again, as the channel to the other world, for to give to the Brahmin, the gift is said to reach vicariously ancestors and gods. Specifically with regard to the coronation, the Brahmin's ritual action is not so much that he renders the king a divinity, for this would mean in effect that the avatāra idea is not operating, but rather that he brings the particular individual's body and mind to that state which is appropriate to contain the divine incarnation. While it seems that the Brahmin is dealing with the human aspects of the king, the body and minds (with its proclivities) of that historic person, yet there is another facet of the coronation which might be taken to substantiate Dumont's general orientation, that it is the Brahmin who is critical for kingship through his role as "religious" specialist since the guru-purohita officiates over a special part of the coronation where the king is linked to the kingdom, a point underlined in the commentary cited earlier.

To be sure the Brahmin is the specialist in this ritual central to kingship where there is an establishment of a relationship between the king and the kingdom, but so must all four varnas, including the Śūdra also perform certain ritual actions. Even a person from the ādīnī nachalne jāt appears in the affair representing the Śūdra. But because they are involved in the ritual devoted to the king this does not mean that they are "superior" to the king, the general line Dumont takes. Dumont's heavy leaning on the ritual function is ill-advised for what is relevant in the coronation is that the Brahmin priests as well as the members from the four varnas each perform the specific task which is appropriate to their natures. With a concern to show a relation of supremacy between king or Brahmin, Dumont fails to identify and highlight the more important feature of ontological differences, a distinction to be discerned not only in the subjects' treatment of the king during the coronation but also to the treatment of the king during the funeral.

So the king's body dies. Long live the god. Brahmins revolve on the saṁsāra circuit.

But what of the special Brahmin? This type, according to one pundit's assessment, is the only one out of all the Brahmins who is worthy of the name "Brāhmaṇa" which means "attainment of Brähman", in that only he would have reached this state through his religious pursuits, and was

1. This presumably is the Agnihotri Brahmin, noted in an earlier chapter.
described by another as the "super Brahmin", and therefore might be
said to constitute a special category and one which suits Dumont's
argument about Brahmin's superiority. I am not so sure. If the super
Brahmin is cremated just like all other Brahmins and other caste members
then he is no different. In so far as the super Brahmin's corpse is
fired like anybody else's, and his son will perform the death rites to
help him on the transmigration route, and the specialist Brahmins will
be given the accoutrements of the super Brahmin's needs as happens with
other twice-born, all this suggests a designation, mortal, despite his
grand elevation in other respects.

So far there has been talk of divinities, ontological states, souls
entering ready-made bodies, yet the contentious construct is "purity",
for Dumont's case regarding the Brahmin's supremacy, hangs on it. It
would be nice if Manu's proclamation that the king is "never impure"
could be invoked as a counterclaim, but since the Nepalese king (and son)
undertake the life-crisis transformations, this presupposes vulnerability
to states of impurity, and therefore it has to be acknowledged that the
king is not in a state which is "never impure". Even so, if the
requirements can be attributed to the man's body and human proclivities,
which are necessitated through assumption of the human form, then a
possible argument against divinity can be side-stepped, since it is simply
a matter of understanding the complex range of components that constitute
the human, whether as ordinary person or divine incarnation. There is,
moreover, one context where the king, unlike others, is exempt from
pollution and is pure, a point backed by scripture (see The Garuda Purana;
XIII, 23 in Basu (ed.), 1911:116) and inherent in Nepalese practices.
The context refers to the requirements pertaining to the king in the
advent of the death of either of his parents, his mother as much as his
father. There are no pollution requirements imposed on the king, which
distinguishes him from others and ties up with a feature of his divinity—
gods are not womb-born. Unlike the human transmigrating soul which enters
the physiological body inside the womb, in contrast the divine incarnation
enters the physiological body of the would-be king (his son) later at the
death of the reigning king. Therefore, though the body in which the king
is incarnated is womb-born, the divine-king himself is not, and so the
connexion with his parents is different from that of his siblings, a
difference which is expressed in the idea that they become polluted when
a parent dies, whereas the king does not.
The variations pertaining to the king are interesting for though at first sight they might appear erratic, there seems to be a logic behind the different requirements. On the one hand there is the body in which the divinity will incarnate at some point in time and upon which ritual transformations are directed by the life-crises, the coronation and the death of a historic king. In this respect his bodily frame is no different from others, siblings or ordinary citizens. On the other hand, the one instance when the king diverges is in a context of a relationship between himself and his parents. That the king, unlike his siblings, is not regarded as impure when either of his parents die, seems to relate to a dissociation between himself and his parents, for the king's spirit, unlike that of his siblings, does not enter the womb, but instead a ready-made body existing outside it. Perhaps one could say that the gist of Manu's declaration is right after all: The god-king himself is never impure.

Though the Nepalese material indicates that there is a kind of "disjunction" between Brahmin and king, it is not the way envisaged by Dumont. Rather than depict the king as somehow anomalous in the religious order, merely encircled by it, we should let him stand squarely as part of the one cosmos, relating to the immediate world as a god. In the scheme of animate beings, he would signify the divine (divya), differentiated from ordinary men (vṛtya) and from animals (paśu), even though a god residing in the human corporeal frame. He is not just "political powerholder", as Dumont posits, but a god who has quit his celestial region and descended to this earth, as the features of the descent theory maintain. To describe him as having atavistic "magico-religious nature" at best, or otherwise implying that he is nothing more than 'the top dog' of the Kṣatriyas would be to fail to identify and acknowledge the significance of his ontological nature, and membership in a special category, comprising one person only. Because of his locus of origin, the god-king cannot be equated with or rendered lesser than the Brahmin. Each has a position at different levels along the cosmic stadia. Of course, the supremacy of Brahmans amongst those who exist in the saṃsāra circuit, what we generally refer to as the caste order of beings, is in no way in jeopardy.

What of the sādhu who is generally presented in terms of his transcendence of the social order (see Dumont, 1972: 280 and Das, 1976:261)? Though not entirely inaccurate it takes too narrow a frame if the nature of the
indigenous conceptions are heeded in that the sādhu transcends, not only the social order, but the range of existences of the sāmsāra cycle and that of creation as well. According to the Hindu scheme of things, he overrides time itself. The sādhu's special ontological state appears to provide the rationale for the unique treatment of the corpse, which unlike others, must be buried in a "holy place", or placed in a sacred river. No reduction to ash, no death rites (kṛṣṇa, etc.) by the son to propel the soul to take a human rebirth and no pouring of water, tarpāṇa, (see The Caruḍa Purana, X, 102 in Basu (ed.), 1911:96), a rite where the eldest living male incorporates himself, his own dead forebears and the forces which sustain them, into one continuous flow. For an understanding of the nature of the sādhu type, however, it is not enough to identify the absence of certain features associated with his death but requires explorations of what exactly is done to the corpse, and the significance of this treatment.¹

In Kathmandu, the sādhu burials are to be found in the grounds of the Pāṣupati complex and are boldly marked by a stone Śivalingam, capping each grave. The alternative treatment of the sādhu's corpse is to set it up in a barge and allow it to float down the Gāṅgā. It sits in a khat just like the ones used in Nepal for religious processions with the deity ensconced in it. Bedecked in lush embroidered apparel, the corpse moves in unison with the waves' rocking of the box, and the only sign displaying death is that the head slumps forward, but easily overshadowed by the grandeur of the rest of the paraphernalia.² No other corpse is treated in this way. If the handling of his corpse at death is unique to the sādhu, then it signifies an ontological distinction between himself and others, and not simply a reflection of a difference of location, of being "inside" and "outside" society. The ontological change would have already occurred well before this.

The sādhu as we know, is already dead, in that his specific personality was killed on his entry into sādhuhood with renunciation of the world.³ Therefore he is a non-person. Any wealth that he may have

2. See also Kane's account of the treatment of ascetics' corpses, Vol. IV, 1973: 229-231.
3. See Burghart (1976:63-104) for an account of the organisation of certain Vaishānava sādhus in western Nepal, where renunciation took a curious form in that some monasteries acted as state revenue collectors, the local judiciary and the head had a bodyguard of private soldiers (ibid:82,84).
had was given away on entry to that state just as others lose it at death. Features of his personality would have already been cancelled out and had he been twice-born he would have had to discard his thread, remove his śīhū (topknot), thus surrendering the ritual sacra pertaining to the twice-born state which is of tremendous value. Most important, there is the erasure of his specific personality since the śādhu performs rites with the rice balls (pinda) for himself just as a son does for his dead parent. Through ritual work the parent merges with the ancestors. If the śādhu on entry to his new state makes the surrogate body which a son makes at the death of the parent which enables the dead parent to journey to the desirable realms of the after life, so as to enjoy the consequences of merit (the kṛya activities) and also join with the ancestor (sapinda kārana sequence), then the śādhu as a person is dead. The idea appears to be confirmed by the prohibition that no son of the śādhu performs the tarpana rite for him. In this rite, the intricacies of which must be omitted, the eldest living male pours water into the earth (or river) and delineates a connexion in a chain of existences from the gods, the ancestor gods (devapitrīs) and the individual’s own immediate forebears (pitrīs, up to three generations) and himself. Especially important, are the linkages of those on the path of forebears (pitrīyāna) because this is the path of continuity, the rebirth circuit. Tarpana ordinarily is performed as a component of a person’s daily worship by those persons whose parent is dead and so there is the connexion between the first of the living with the immediate dead in a succession which will eventuate in a cycle since the dead will be reborn. If no tarpana is to be performed for the śādhu by his son and tarpana means being connected to the rebirth circuit, then the śādhu stands outside the path of continuity. Consequently, with entry into sadhuhood nothing of the initiant’s old historic personality would be left, except his own particular ātman and the impression from the past (karma vasana) and to boot, he would have shifted away from the samsāra cycle, as well as having renounced the world. Since these features indicate what he is not, then what is he?

A brief outline of the important ideas about the śādhu is given in The Garuda Purana:

1. The metaphysical system is omitted for it would complicate matters without adding to the argument.
2. "We do not think that the parents will go to hell", informants are want to say, regarding demerit.
A man, by the mere holding of the staff, becomes Nārāyana; because of carrying the threefold staff they never go into the condition of the departed. Those who know are always free, by a realisation of their own true nature, hence they do not expect rice balls to be given (in Basu (ed.), 1911:96).

Specific reference to its "three-fold" quality of the staff refers ultimately to the three gunās and their power to generate time which the śādhu transcends. Iconographically, holding the staff in his hands, signifies that he is not subject to the pull of the three gunās, the forces that run the cosmos, because he has overridden the strictures of time by liberating himself from the saṁsāra circuit. In addition, he "knows" and to know is to realise one's nature, which is that of the Paramātman, and if this is absolute, then he too is "free". Finally, the other important statement relates to becoming jīvanmukti, in that he "becomes Nārāyaṇa", the primal form of the Supreme according to designations of this text. Since these are the śādhu's distinguishing characteristics, added to which is his distinctive nakedness, signifying an untramelled free condition, then the śādhu while living, has become jīvanmukti, which is to merge the particular self with the Absolute which is also the "fourth" state and ontologically outside time's strictures. That there would be a difference between him and the other types is so evident it hardly bears mentioning. However, there is one difficulty, even if the śādhu has shed his individuality, erased his personality at his ritual death, his body is still a living thing.

Since the śādhu's corpse is not to be reduced to ash first but may be immediately disposed of in holy places, this implies that his body is not regarded as polluting. This is surely odd for no other corpses are so treated, not even the shell of the divine incarnation. Given Hindu ideas about the body, ideas summed up in these passages from The Ārūḍa Purāṇa,

IX.40-41. The motionless body, left by the vital breath, becomes detestable and unfit to touch; four foul smells soon arise in it, and it is disliked by everybody.

How can men, who perish in a moment, be proud of the body, with its three conditions, - worm, dung and ashes? (in Basu (ed.), 1911:81),

the orientation to the śādhu's corpse is curious. Other corpses must be burnt and rendered ash first; only after that, are they placed (as ash) in the river at the end of a year. Ash is a pure form, the
reduction of the material elements to the essence. With ordinary people the body has to be brought to the ash state before it can be placed in the holy river. There appears to be a compatibility between the ash and the unburnt, wholly intact body of the sādhu which in turn suggests that the sādhu's corpse is not regarded as an ordinary corpse but matter reconstituted, brought back to the essence particles as occurs in the return movement of matter when destroyed in the fire. Now, the nature of the yogic concentration is to take the energy of the outward movement and redirect it upwards to the head and beyond, reaching to that part where the thousand petalled lotus is sited, a process which is said to reconstitute the adept's composition. Such a movement is also known as a "burning", and is called the "fire of yoga". The process, it will be remembered, destroys the lingering impressions from the individual's past actions as well as reaches the culmination, the merging with the original form - Nārāyaṇa, to use the epithet given in The Caruda Purana. If this is the case, then the sādhu's body is transformed and it would seem uniquely so, for only the sādhu's corpse can be placed in the body of the goddess, the river, without being fired first. The sādhu's transformed state is echoed vividly in the ash he wears, ash which is essence gained from the fire, just as happens with yogic sādhana. From this point of view the sādhu is a distinctive ontological type quite different from other humans. There is however another instance where bodies are not cremated but buried and it might seem that the sādhu is not unique, which would of course compromise the argument.

Those people who cannot be cremated but must be buried are people who have died untimely deaths, regarded by Nepalis as "unnatural deaths". To have died an unnatural death is taken as post hoc evidence of some previous crime and in instances so designated, the person is debarred from the full funereal procedures others receive. Hence such people are excluded from rites which would keep them on the human circuit because in a previous existence they were according to this theory, intractible sinners. In which case, they are not presumed to be revolving in sāmāra and thereby adopting successive human existential forms, but instead their fate is said to be that of a preta, hovering disembodied till the end of the yuga. This possible fate for those who died prematurely is usually

1. The ash of the ordinary dead is kept hanging in a pot until the time for its disposal in a sacred river.
2. Except for the Nepalese caste, Sānyāsi. Although they are buried funeral rites are performed for them. Hence they stand as a special case rather than an exception.
given by the Parbatya. Otherwise they might refer to another fact, as does Stevenson (1971:202) that of regression back to the lowly forms of life, like animals and worms from which it takes 84,000 rebirths finally to evolve into the human form. Following from this, there are three major possibilities for an individual's existence;

(a) outside saṁsāra and the yugas entirely, as in the case with the sādhu

(b) part of saṁsāra, in terms of human rebirths; and

(c) not currently part of the saṁsāra of human rebirths.¹

Even though the unfortunate people are buried as may happen with sādhus, they are not at all equitable as types in any sense,² especially since there are further crucial differences. Not only is the sādhu buried in the temple grounds with the position capped by the Śivalingam, but he is placed in a seated position (perhaps the meditational posture), whereas the others are buried in a supine position, anywhere as long as it is not holy ground. Where on the one hand such unfortunates are caught by time, on the other, the sādhu is jīvanmukti, outside its strictures, according to the principles inherent in the ideas and practices surrounding death.³

1. This breaks into at least two sub-divisions;
   (i) stalled in the condition of preta till the end of this yugas; and
   (ii) destined to go through evolution from the lowest to the highest form of life-humanness.

2. Compare Das's (1976) discussion on liminality as the linkage of these types, as well as others.

3. The distinction is indelibly expressed in ideas about the behaviour of the different souls, for the sādhu, unlike the others who are buried, and also those who are cremated, whether the body of Brahmin or of the divine king, or any commoner, the soul of the sādhu is said to exit through the top of his head. With others it is quite different. The Garuda Purana details these: IX, 36-39. Then, of him who is righteous and has performed the rites, O Bird, the life breaths easily pass out through the higher opening.

   The mouth, eyes, nostrils and ears are the seven gateways through which go those of good deeds. Vaginā go through an opening in the head (in Basu (ed.) 1911:80).

   Sometimes that part is opened with a conch shell, so as to allow the life-breaths to leave, an instrument which is particularly apt, since it is associated with Viṣṇu-Nārāyana, the sustaining force, "unstruck sound", which is also breath. The practice is not performed for people other than the sādhu.
Since the distinctive features of the śādhu as a type have been primarily extrapolated from ideas inherent in the treatment of corpses, a formal exercise, does this tally with people's perception of the śādhu as one who has reached mokṣa? There are, as we know, grades of mokṣa and though each has to be actualised, the simple fact of rejection of life in the world and initiation appear to be taken as commensurate with actualization; at least at the lowest level, by Parbatya. This is also in conformity with the declarations of The Garuda Purana, a text, incidentally, which may be read to the family during the period when the death rites are being carried out. The "proof" of the śādhu's special state appears to be seen by Parbatya in his surrendering of all that had been his, or could have been.

When discussing mokṣa the first thing a Parbatya generally mentions is the necessity to "give up all". This is the index that the śādhu is no longer with attachments, and being without attachments he is outside, disengaged from the commitments and bonds of the ordinary goals of life, dharma, artha and kama, goals which people insist are valid and necessary for others who exist in the circuit of saṃsāra. This is how one pundit described the issue of goals:

Dharma is more than religion. Artha refers to material, worldly things. Kama to our desires. These are all necessary for this world. Without these, man cannot run.

Significant in the pundit's commentary is that the goals are not simply presented as attachments, but as the diacritical factors which make for humanness - "all are necessary for this world". If the śādhu is regarded as one who has rejected these, then he would have jumped the first hurdle of humanness which is a limited state, according to Hindu conceptions. If humanness means being shackled, existing in the rebirth course, operating subject to time's pressure and conditions, and such restrictions do not apply to the śādhu, then he has moved away from his human condition. From this point of view he is starkly different from the Brahmin and the god-king.

Although death rites are not the only indicators, they are critical. It would seem that each falls into an autonomous category discrete from the other types. A god incarnated in human form; the gods among humans, and the being who hasquit this human category. The interesting distinction between the śādhu and the king, is that the god assumes human form, which is the point of departure for the śādhu. Where the śādhu overrides
time/space, the parameters of the here and now, for his part the god enters into just this, by descent into this world. Though the god-king exists in it, he is not entirely limited by its conditions because according to this doctrine he does not die and revolve in samsāra like other humans, apart from the sādhu. With regard to the area of humanness and the inevitability of samsaric circling, the Brahmans are no different, not even the super Brahmin is exempt, because he too is cremated and has the death rites performed for him. This is not to say, of course, that caste persons cannot become great yogins, they may but apparently this is seen to be counterbalanced by the effects of remaining in the world. Presumably by so doing, one continues to create vasāna, even though some of it may be burnt by the fire of yoga, when meditating. Apparently, the surest way is by renunciation. The point is made adamantly by this respondent:

To reach mokṣa, one gives up everything, mother, father, wife, sons, one's position.....

Brahmins are the sattvika beings, among men, but according to this analysis, the Brahmans vis-a-vis, the god-king and the sādhus though undoubtedly "superior" men, the godly of men, are just men. To this effect, regarding the difference between Brahmans and the sādhu texts declare that "one yogin is superior to 100 Brahmans (see Kane, Vol. IV, 1973:388 and 398-99). Yet the same texts elsewhere will instruct all Hindus to feed a thousand Brahmans. Instructions, that appear to be heeded, because in Nepal at least, they are forever being fed. And fed they must be since they are, in the words of the popular refrain, the "mouths to the gods" and therefore important for those who desire their services. This introduces the problem of the nature of their particular powers, theirs as well as the other two Hindu types.

Intercepting the discussion, is a diagram which shows the relationships obtaining, as I understand them. It diverges from Burghart's account which depicts the situation historically as one where each type presented his own hierarchical model - thus making three different conflicting models (1978:519). Instead, according to ideas gleaned from funerals but viewed within a broader metaphysical scheme based on Hindu doctrine, I see one cosmic system where each type has its particular ontological niche, even though the renouncer's position cannot be placed diagramatically.
The two types can be compared but only by moving outside the caste order for they belong to disparate ontological categories. The standard guna scheme can be used as the format for arranging the comparison. The divine king, according to Hindu formulations, descends to rule those who exist in the saṁsāra circuit, though the divine force itself does not transmigrate but only exists in the cyclic time of the yugas. In contrast, the sādhu when successful stands outside both the saṁsāra and the yuga circuits, for reaching the state of mokṣa is said to become unconditioned, released. This, however, introduces a problem in locating the sādhu on the diagram, for if a person is unconditioned, he cannot be defined since definitions imply limitations. If the sādhu has realised the Absolute, he has reached the special "fourth" state which is beyond the strictures of time and conditions, and the play of the gunas.
2. **Different Beings and Different Kinds of Powers:**

If the king, Brahmins and renouncers are ontologically different, and if as a general rule different kinds of beings are said to have correspondingly different powers, then one would expect this to be expressed with the three types also. Scrutiny of the particular capability characteristically associated with each, appears to be meaningfully related to the particular nature concerned.

Since the *śādhu* is that type of person who can transcend the limitations of Hindu time/space, then his concomitant powers are in accord with his nature for they are of the kind that defy what we might call the "laws of nature" which are applicable to other human beings. It is said that he can make himself small or gargantuan, or fly through space and much more.¹ Such feats are known as the *siddhis*. Less spectacular but more in keeping with the *mokṣa* quest is his *yoga* expertise but if the matter was left at the *siddhis*, it would present the wrong weighting. According to one Nepalese pundit,

These *siddhis* are thought to be obstacles to the goal of *mokṣa*. Still they fall within our practices, though great sages do not like these *siddhis*. If I want to show the world my power then I want these *siddhis*. They are obstacles.

What seems to be relevant for *mokṣa* is *yoga* since it burns the impressions of past actions, amongst other things, and though the adept also may acquire *siddhi* powers, these, when utilised are perceived as impeding the most important goal, for as the passage indicates they imply ego-involvement with its concomitant limitations. The commentator takes up the point more specifically:

1. I cite one pundit's account:

According to our *śāstra* there are eight *siddhis*. There is *apīna*, that *siddhi* by which we can enter this cupboard by being small. By *mahīman* one becomes bigger just as Hanuman became enormous. Then there is *garīman* by which we can become heavy. If I am tired and elephants come to take me away they cannot because I am so heavy. *Laghīman* is to be lighter and lighter so that the wind can take you along. By *laghīman* *siddhi* one can fly with the wind without wings. By *prāptī* a person will get whatever he wants and whenever he wants. *Prākāmya*, by this he can appear in forms. When Kṛṣṇa went to the Danabas and was tied up so Kṛṣṇa became many forms, for within his body he had *prākāmya siddhi*.

The seventh and eighth are omitted. There is *vaśīta*, control over the five elements; and *kānāvāsāyītya*, the capacity to fulfil desires (see Lorenzen, 1972:93).
Desire is the first limitation and the first sin. All sins are done after desire. To become desireless is difficult, but it is necessary if one is to approach the highest things. When a person becomes desireless, he will get the highest things. 1

Further, to be jīvanmukti means to be "without desire, without worldly or spiritual willings" since these keep the individual in samsāra. The gist of his remarks indicate the great value placed on desirelessness and the conditioning effect of desires. Such an orientation, though noted in the literature, is not generally designated as power, yet it seems to me to be an extraordinary capability for it is in a sense, non-human, superhuman, in fact it refers to having the capability not to operate as a human at all. Mokṣa can be approached a number of ways. It has been rendered as "other worldly", which is in a sense a description of its mode of operation (getting out of society) and its sphere of interest, exclusive attention to the non-worldly quest. 2 Yet perhaps more significant is what success is said to entail - namely not to be conditioned by anything, anymore. Heady stuff, despite its familiarity. What of the situation with god-king?

1. This passage from the pundit in simple words summarises the Hindu orientation to the nature of man and the means for release, which is also expounded in The Bhagavad Gīta.

2. This man differentiated the "spiritual" from that relating to the soul, where spiritual generally referred to what we would call "psychic powers" such as the siddhis.

3. In a way, it might be interpreted as an ideological statement in that by postulating the futility of desires, it hides the possibility of success in attempting to bring about changes in the social arrangements which advantage some but not others. Yet, from another angle, it is not quite ideological in that by making a mockery of everything, it trivialises power, prestige, advantage, the lot. One might have expected that it articulates counter-cultural ideas, yet it unambiguously stands within the official doctrine, regardless of how it originated. Then again, the idea might be viewed as an ideal to which lip-service is paid, while the lesser goals are assiduously pursued. To adopt this orientation would be a little too easy since many more Hindus than I expected appear to take it seriously. Furthermore, if this is the stipulated ideal, one wonders why this, rather than any other that could be isolated as the ideal "non-event" against which practice goes contrariwise. One might also have expected that the strongest adherents of the value of mokṣa would not be those advantaged by the official categorisations, yet it is the twice-born castes, who constantly refer to this as the highest goal.
Strikingly different, the god-king as a being from other realms, embodied in the human frame, is perceived as a special presence and just to have a vision (darśan) of the king, is said to generate something more than physical information about his appearance because it gives the viewer, "merit ", " good fate " and " well-being ", what Parbatya refer to as "gati parnu" (Nep.). This kind of capability to bestow auspiciousness simply by being there to be seen is related to divinity in general and is borne out by the fact that vision of divine image, like Paśupati, is also regarded as promoting benefits in the viewer. Since the king's footprints are also said to bring about the same auspicious results, so people collect the mud whence the king had previously stood. Just as important, if not more so is anugraha, one of the five functions of divinity. Anugraha, one recalls, refers to the power to bestow favours, or interfere on someone's behalf regardless of the objective merits, since it is about mercy which is distinct from justice. The king dispenses both the punishment in the implementation of justice, but mercy which may counteract its operation as well. Since the king is designated a god, he acts as a god and provides "the big breaks" by dispensing favours (asis, Nep.), and grants pardons, cutting short the stipulated period of imprisonment, a boon generally granted on ceremonial occasions connected with the king, even though like the god Yamaraja, the king may also impose punishment in the present life, overseeing the operation of the laws of retribution. 1 Is there a contradiction here? First of all, since the king is supposed to be a god incarnate and does not revolve in aāmiśrā like the citizens, then he unlike them is not subject to the operation of the karmic laws but is outside this sphere of development 2 hence the imputed power to implement the course of retribution (the karmic course) now.

1. As Manu declares, highlighting the various divine characteristics, IX, 307. As Yama at the appointed time subjects to his rule both friends and foes, even so all subjects must be controlled by the king; that is the office in which he resembles Yama.

308. As (a sinner) is seen bound with ropes by Varuṇa, even so let him punish the wicked; that is his office in which he resembles Varuṇa.

309. He is a king, taking upon himself the office of the Moon, whose (appearance) his subjects (greet with as great joy) as men feel on seeing the full moon.

310. (If) he is ardent in wrath against criminals and endowed with brilliant energy, and destroys wicked vassals, then his character is said (to resemble) that of Fire.

311. As the Earth supports all created beings equally, thus (a king) who supports all his subjects, (takes upon himself) the office of the Earth (in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 397).

2. Where the Kumai's contribution is not to be forgotten.
If a person is implementing the operation of the law, he cannot be subject to them, despite his being subject to other laws. Bestowing mercy, though the opposite since it interferes in the course of development, would nonetheless fit within the same rationale. This would follow, I think because the king as divinity stands aside from karmic machinations and therefore can alter the direction of its movement by granting the pardons in the most sinful cases, and the boons more ordinarily. If the idea seems to weigh awkwardly, in the context of the king, controller of punishment, it would be in full accord with what deities do according to the stipulated power to grant favours. In addition there is the notion that it is the king as divinity who has the capability to sustain the kingdom and its people and bring prosperity and happiness. Finally, there is the recurrent and central idea of protector, protagonist, in fact the raison d'être for the god's descent. Expressed within the framework of the exposition, the specific capability presupposes this particular nature, god incarnated. The third extraordinary person, the Brahmin, is different again.

Just as the nature of Brahmins diverge so do their corresponding powers. Nevertheless there is also the appositeness between the nature of the type and the kind of power associated with it. Though the Brahmin, like other humans, must face the intrusion of the phenomenal conditions, if he is true to type, he will scrupulously maintain his individual excellence, and must do so if he is to perform a ritual for himself or officiate as a specialist. Not only is he rated the highest of caste persons but there are also other significant features like his ṛṣī connexion as well as descent from those who were mouth-born of Brahmana which render his being special. The Brahmins, as the first-born of men from Brahmana, are like the first language, Sanskrit, the first sounds, or like the great gods, the first cosmic forces, and therefore, out of all humans, Brahmins are closer than other humans to that which is perfect, and those invisible cosmic forms which are powerful. Though a person does not go to obtain a vision of the Brahmins, the twice-born especially feed them, because they are surrogates of gods and ancestors, and can be, because as beings, they stand at the highest level of human development. In the same vein, given this holiness, the Brahmins are fitted to handle the sacra by which transformations are generated through ritual work. Therefore there are two important capacities of the Brahmin as priest, specifically

1. Tantric elaborations will be raised in a subsequent chapter.
as an agent of transformation and as a channel to gods and ancestors, which in turn, also involve attempts to generate desirable changes. As far as the people who are the Brahmin's clients are concerned, the import of this type lies in his kind of relationship with invisible forces because of this sattviha excellence. If the Brahmin is important for his clients, it is not so much because he is "pure", "holy" etc. but because he can contact the unseen beings in the required manner, which only he can do in certain contexts, and for which his ontological state is the necessary precondition. There is a correspondence between the nature of his being and the nature of his capacities, a correspondence which is straightforward: since he is godly he can contact the gods; since the Brahmin, out of all humans, stands at the high point of ontological excellence, more remote from the phenomenal and pragmatic domains, he can act as the surrogate of the gods and the disembodied ancestors of other realms as well as handle the potent sacra. There is, however, a complication.

Where with the divine king and the ṣādhu, one can unabashedly talk of powers: the power to generate merit simply by virtue of being seen; power to burn the traces of past acts; while in contrast, the Brahmin's transformations result through sacra which only he is fitted to wield. As for the nature of his powers in the context where the Brahmin acts as surrogate for the entities of other realms, again, it would seem that it is his ontological nature which renders him the fitting vehicle, and though this makes bold his divine-like nature (or his sattviha excellence) among humans, however, as a power it is not direct but contingent. This appears to be the case whether one thinks of his role in ritual transformations as the handler of sacra, or where he acts vicariously. Yet this is exactly in accord with his nature for he is human, despite his standing at the high point of human development. The Brahmin is the holy,

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1. The power of the Brahmin's curse, which has received a lot of attention in the literature, is not unique to this type and what Nepalis especially fear is not so much the Brahmin's curse but that of their elderly parents. In either case, the potency I think resides in the words, as in the positive instance with the māntika.

Further, the highly complex situation where only a Brahmin Agnihotri can make the fire anew has not been discussed because it is complex, nevertheless what happens would not, I think, contradict the point. Though this is a very special item of sacra, he is a very special person who is making it. The Brahmin Agnihotri, the highest of all Brahmins in the caste order, stands at the apex of ontological excellence and therefore is appropriate to make the fire anew by rubbing the objects whose friction generates that special fire from which other fires are taken for rituals and into which all the deities will be invoked. Again, he is the handler of items of sacra, albeit extraordinary in this instance.
and sustained instrument which can manoeuvre the sacra, and can signify the sacred (gods and disembodied souls). Though this is not to deny either his importance or excellence, for it is via his special nature that the invisible forms can be reached and by which the unseen forces can be tapped and utilised in the transformatory rituals for others. Given that the deities are the "real powers", then his speciality for those who have access to his services is significant. Expressed differently, the centrality of the deities also means the importance of the Brahmins, those types who are ontologically in the correct state to reach and handle such forces. From another tack: given that in many instances the rites are about short-circuiting the operation of karmaphala, then, for his clients, the value of his actions cannot be underestimated. In comparison, those eligible to become his clients are limited in this respect, a point that can hardly be forgotten.

Detailed analysis of this kind would remain an academic exercise unless something of general significance is to be drawn from it. It is obvious by this stage that these disparate, but all highly valued types, have an exclusive capability, which according to doctrine is neither replicated by the other types, nor by the populace at large. Each may be understood as involved in generating what is seen as some kind of highly desirable result. Power to effect what are perceived as desirable changes, regardless of the area concerned, is therefore a value, according to such formulations, and a point re-inforced by the exalted position each type holds within the doctrinal scheme of things. There are two interesting dimensions in the implementation of their respective capabilities.

Since Brahmins may only officiate for certain castes, and since the sadhu's ideal pursuits are not relevant for other people, the only type whose powers have bearings on everyone in the kingdom is the king, god incarnated. The second and cognate point is that in the implementation, doctrine and power coalesce for what is taken and applied as doctrine is what is supported by the regime. It is the state which determines what stock of persons are to be designated pukka Brahmins and who are to stand as the right specialists for those concerned. And in turn it is the state which stipulates which persons are to be classified as thread bearers, eligible to have access to the Brahmin specialist to its most worthwhile extent. In this sense there is a close association between the Brahmins and the king, but not quite as Dumont elaborates, since it is not a matter of Brahminhood per se which is relevant but
only those specific persons officially classified as such by the state. The Newar Brahmins of the prior Malla regime are not recognised as such, let alone the washermen who also claim a Brahmanical ancestry. Unlike these, the special stock of Brahmins, are the ones who may ritually work to generate results of which one of the most important is the twice-born transformation for it is the only kind recognised by the regime as authentic in bringing some people to the exalted state of twice-born persons, the highest category of persons in the population. Let us backtrack to Burghart's discussion which was left with some unfinished business, the threads of which I want to pick up now.

As was indicated previously, Burghart argues that there are three competing models of society which are incongruent, and which in turn are also said to be regulated by the encumbers. Claiming to have based his discussion on Nepalese material from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Burghart says,

With three different codes of hierarchy in which the uppermost rank is held by a different person the social system becomes complex. In analysing this complexity, the unity of the traditional social system has been demonstrated in two ways. First, the Brahman, the ascetic and the king each absorbed elements of the other two codes into his own code and then claimed the absolutely supreme rank in the social system. Unity was created by each person to his own advantage finding the common denominator of the three incongruent codes. By analysing social relations in terms of three codes of hierarchy instead of one, traditional Hindu society is shown to have been a complex system composed of different hierarchical models which were transacted by the actors in any social event (ibid:533).

The gist of Burghart's argument regarding the regulating of a code, is that this occurs as a response to the other codes which are incongruent with one's own, and thereby some of the features of the other models are then incorporated into one's own. For example, the "pure" kind of superiority is not sufficient for the Brahmin in relation to the king and therefore as a response the Brahmin incorporates power into his repertoire, for his bid to supremacy. As Burghart puts it,

The Brahmins, however, could not have enforced their superiority if they limited their claims to matter of purity. They would also have had to claim that they were superior in matters of power (ibid:524).

This he continues, is the power to "bless" and to "curse", assumed by the Brahmin to countervail the king's bid for superiority (ibid:524-5).
Then, in turn, there is the king's regulation of the matter according to the competition coming from the Brahmin's hierarchical code. The king's code, in Burghart's view, was based on tenurial supremacy, so in response to the Brahmin's countervailing code, (presumably taken as religious) what he ended up doing was "deifying the kingship" (ibid:528). It is all most curious. Another puzzling statement is Burghart's rendition of the material, namely, that within the king's basic hierarchy, (the tenurial) the king "secularised his subjects"(ibid: 528). To take the last point first because it is simplest to deal with: if we focus on historical fact, the material for this conquest state shows that the Gorkha king in fact imposed a Hindu order on all and sundry, allocating tribals to a caste rank of Matwāli, tardly secular, even though the expression of tenurial rights may have been couched differently. Even so, when relevant (and perhaps expedient also), the king did take cognisance of caste as happened in certain instances.\(^1\) As for the general thesis, about each type's bid for supremacy, as expressed through the code which is then said to be regulated subsequently, this is simply an artifact of Burghart's method, for the various features of the "hierarchical codes", come as a package and not as a point, (competition) counterpoint, (regulation) as Burghart argues.\(^2\) All these belong to Hindu formulations, and do not necessarily stand as competing claims for hierarchical supremacy. Further, does it make sense that the Parbata Brahmins respond to the king's code by setting themselves up as capable of certain powers, like the power to curse? Rather their particular capabilities as we have attempted to show, may be understood as resting on their particular natures, for it is this which renders them the apposite type of beings to contact the invisible forces according to doctrinal formulations. As for the origin of the idea that those people designated Brahmins are the ones who ought to be ritual specialists, is this not shrouded in the history of ages past? With regard to the recent past, these persons officially designated Brahmins are specially important for the king and his regime, since they are the agents of the critical transformation which is officially recognised as the one which establishes only some people as twice-born, who for their part are key persons in the functioning of this Hindu order. Again, does it follow that the absolute ruler "deifies" himself because Brahmins stand at the apex of the "purity" ladder which

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1. To be discussed later.
2. Though on the level of historical acts of conquest a Hindu king invades other kingdoms and tribal communities absorbing them within his domain, while proclaiming his divinity, etc. etc.
is the gist of Burghart's argument? It would seem that we need an entirely different focus if we are to understand one of the most important features of Hindu doctrine, the idea that the person who is king is the one in whom it is said that a god incarnates for the sake of the well-being of the people.

The important area regarding "conflicting codes" in the Nepalese context, as I understand matters, is not quite as Burghart proposes, but rather is that of caste placement since contrary notions do arise about this issue. And then the critical question is which of the contenders involved in the controversy can render his version the prevailing one. This is the resultant "unity". If this kind of "unity" of the "social system" emerges, how relevant are the state's powers compared to the imputed responses to "conflicting models of hierarchical superiority"? Where Burghart talks of conflicting models for superiority occurring between the king, the Brahmans and the renouncers, I would point to the doctrine's presentation of the easy co-existence of the three types, where dissent occurs as with placement, of import is the fact that the application of doctrinal ideas and power appear together in the traditional state where the ruler establishes and maintains the operation of a Hindu order. In such contexts where power figures the important issue is whose definitions can prevail?
PART D

THE HINDU KINGDOM
CHAPTER 19

THE KINGDOM

While various topics have been covered ranging from suggestions that the processual approach distinguishes Hindu thought, that there is a preoccupation with differentiation, that inherent in the power of things are unseen cosmic forces which are amenable to man's approaches, and to the unique position one man holds in the lives of the rest of the population, as yet nothing much has been said about the social arrangements that people find themselves in. Such arrangements traditionally take place in a kingdom. A source for the formulation of the official view of the king's relation to the subjects and his powers within the kingdom comes from the overlord Prithivinivarsayan Shah to the subjugated Raja of the principality of Jajarkot, in 1769:

We confirm your ancestral authority within your territory, including your authority to award capital punishment, upgrade or degrade caste, collect levies to finance the sacred thread investiture ceremonies and weddings of royal princes and princesses and fees for the expiation of caste offences. We also confirm your authority to grant or confiscate birta lands and to collect judicial fines, escheats and fees for stamping weights and measures. You shall pay only Rs 701 whenever a new king ascends our throne. When a new king ascends your throne, you shall have authority to collect customary payments from your people (in Regmi, 1971:12).

It raises the relevant issues, the basis of the king's authority, the extent of the king's powers, his involvement in Hindu laws, the administration, the lands. And indirectly though nonetheless present, there is the relation of preeminence of the victorious Gorkha king himself over the subjugated minion, for it is the former who does the "confirming". While the latter raises the issues, our task is to attempt to explore them. Before proceeding, I want to indicate the areas of concern and what I will not tackle.

I am concerned to examine what I understand as the important features of a traditional Hindu state, as exemplified by Nepal up to 1951, and still applying in some measure, despite some subsequent significant reforms. With such a focus the analysis will draw on
documentary evidence and people's memory of things before 1951, pertaining to
arrangements as established by the Shah dynasty, which came originally
from the small kingdom of Gorkha, but whose conquests of various
territories created the state now known as Nepal. It is not my concern
to consider the different aspects of statecraft as practised during the
last two centuries, though on occasion references to changes in recent
times will arise and be noted, but not discussed in detail.
CHAPTER 20

LAND AND THE STATE

1. The Traditional System:

(a) King and Country: King and People

The interesting thing about relations around agricultural land is that the basic type, raikar (Nep.) has never been legally defined (Regmi, 1976:16). Raikar is that type of holding from which the ruler acquires tribute. Another type, birta, (Nep.), is mentioned in the letter from the Gorkhali conqueror. With birta, the king allots certain parcels exempt from tribute, which then accrues to the beneficiary instead of the king. The right can also be withdrawn by the king. The curious part about the king's relation to the land is the paucity of statements, where in Manu for example, there is nothing such except the proportion of produce to be taken by the king and the cultivator. When an ideological proclamation is explicitly articulated about the king's relation to the land, it is expressed around the idea of the totality, the country, the territory, the realm, as the letter also demonstrates. At least one point is clear, that the basis of kingship is not presented in terms of ownership of the territory nor control of it, but rather on the nature of the person and from this other things follow as a matter of course. In the letter, it is the king's ancestry, which in both cases (king and minion) is Rajput, and therefore descent from the heavenly dynasty, that is indirectly alluded to. This in turn relates to the predominant idea of the god descended to protect the people. If the basis of sovereignty relies on ideas about the nature of the person, ideas couched characteristically in ontological rather than legalistic terms, such notions should also provide the background for understanding two relevant and related issues, specifically the nature of the relationship between the king and the lands, and that between the king and the people who reside on and live by the produce gleaned from the lands.

Though the idea of the king as protector of the territory is stressed again and again, Hindu thought also posits an intimate connexion of a different order, an idea which is inherent in the coronation proceedings. During the ritual, soil from the four directions of the territory is

1. (VM, 12 in Buhler (tr.), 1969:236-7).

2. A distinction where in the first the issue hangs on what is proper, appropriate, whereas in the second depends on what are rights because of some legal claim, like ownership of the land, or as in the idea of divine right of kings.
brought to bathe the king, in a sequence which is executed by the four varṇas, as noted earlier, and though it relates to purification it also has an association with the kingdom for the king is rendered "born" of the country's "womb". A commentary on this event explains it in this way,

After the completion of śāna, the king is considered to be born of a national womb, and as such he belongs to the entire nation, not just to the initial place and family of birth. Soil and water used in the śāna are considered to constitute the newly evolved physical system of national magnitude. By requiring the king to accept such inanimates as a part and parcel of his system, the king is expected to inject his own consciousness into them so that they can be invigorated with life.

With the completion of this part of the ritual, the king belongs to all and all belongs to him (Sharma, 1975:98).

As I understand these complex notions, it would seem that after the transformative ritual the king is no longer tied to the specificities of a human birth which previously had linked him to his particular family, but instead is constituted of that earth which is the territory. In addition, there is the idea that through the merging of his person with the soil is the infusing of "his consciousness" with it. King and soil are rendered co-extensive. Further, in so far as the soil comes from the four directions, and from the four varṇas, the idea of the entirety also appears to be relevant, just as the commentator stresses.

As well there appears to be another idea, that the king, as male principle, is associated with the land as female, in which life is stirred by the male principle. This kind of association is not restricted to the coronation but also occurs in a number of Tantric rites whose exact meaning is difficult to decipher because of the secrecy surrounding them but which nonetheless suggest their relevance. In one the king is associated with a Bhairab and where the main participants are the Newar peasants, the Jyapus, and in which grains, the produce of the land's fertility, figure (see Anderson, 1971: 156-163). The king, in another ritual, (Mila Punhi) is associated with the cosmic pot, the kalaśa, as Narayana (another form of Viṣṇu). The idea that the father is also the son is a point repeatedly made by Nepalis. Such notions associated the king with generative power (rajas). His wife, also crowned during the coronation, is known as a form of Lakṣmī, the goddess of proliferation. The king in the past, like Viṣṇu, had two consorts, Lakṣmī and Bhudevi (the earth goddess). In yet another linkage, the king is intimately connected with Taleju, who is the tutelary deity, that is the protagonist of the kingdom,

and is worshipped during Dasaśera, that time of the year which is the anniversary of Rāma's defeat of hostile forces, and thus upholds sacred values. From various angles, the king appears to be associated with godly functions of the invigorator, sustainer and defender of the kingdom, and as well is portrayed as being co-extensive with the territory.

Just as a kind of co-extensiveness between the king and all the regions of the territory is rendered through the coronation ritual, the same kind of relationship between the king and the people is also generated, for the "king belongs to all, and all belong to the king", as the commentator expresses it. The idea of an entirety without discrimination, is articulated through the participation of all kinds of people like "whores" (Shrestha, 1975:35) and even "prisoners of war". Another type of relationship is delineated as well, for it is said that through this ritual and through the personage of the king "diversity is made into unity" (Sharma, 1975:99). While these ideas are oriented in terms of the king's relation with the people, others are oriented in terms of the people's relation with the king, since it is also proclaimed that the "intelligent" are expected to give him their "knowledge"; the strong their "bravery" and the others who labour, their "sweat and toil" (ibid:99). Finally, the words of one of the chants, "May Lord Indra make thy subjects conform to thy wishes" makes the nature of the king-subject relationship abundantly clear. If the subject's person is available for the king, and his obedience is taken as axiomatic, then it may be inferred that the king has sovereignty in a fundamental way. And of course the idea that the king is the protector of all, is ever-present.

The idea of the king as protector is so important that it is used in a context where it fits most ironically. In a letter, dated 1774, dispatched to one group of defiant peoples (the Limbus) whom he had finally defeated, the Gorkha king writes

3. Falling predictably into the three-fold patterning.
4. A statement from the coronation outlines:

"O king, live thou a hundred years, produce thou a brilliant sacrifice by protecting thy subjects! May all the gods come to pour waters of consecration on thee with a view to give thee both internal and external purifications! May they contribute their mite in the process of pleasing thy subjects by increasing thy strength of mind! O king, be thou a lord of our nation and may all thy subjects want thee always! O king, May thy nation remain in its pristine glory! Be thou as steady as a mountain, be thou a guiding star, like an Indra to thy nation! Like the sky, the earth, the mountains and the pole-star, be thou a constant king to us! May lord Indra make thy subjects conform to thy wishes".
Although we have conquered your country by dint of our valour, we have afforded you and your kinsmen protection. We thereby pardon all of your crimes, and confirm all the customs and traditions, rights and privileges of your country (in Regmi, 1971:13).

Such official declarations which present the conqueror as the protector prompt one to move to a critical perspective and draw together the other ideological dimensions of the preceding discussion. Where the ideology declares that "diversity" is rendered into "unity" through the person of the king, the diversity of people incorporated within the state is a function of conquest. Moreover, as we know, the diversity of castes is a result of the state's imposition of such categories on the population; and as we shall see later, caste divisions are maintained and transgressed punished through the legal apparatus. Where "ancestry" is depicted as the basis for that man's sovereignty, it emerged largely through military might. Here the subjects' conformity to the king's wishes was enforced by martial strength in many cases. When it is said that the king's "consciousness" invigorates life into the territory, control over that territory was obtained by a forebear's conquest. The idea of co-extension between king and territory, king and people is ultimately a matter of autocratic power.

Why go into the indigenous formulations at all, rather than plunge straight into the analysis? Firstly they are of interest in themselves, as pieces of significant data. Secondly, it is imperative to screen these delineations because in them the definition of the situation is generally vividly expressed and provides the relations involved. If, for example, one identifies that land and the king are regarded as co-extensive and that the king is said to invigorate the land with life, then to understand the complex relations around land a constant focus on the king is imperative. Put differently, even though it is important to look at specific relations, say between those who work the land, to attempt to make land usage intelligible it will be necessary to consider what bearing the relationship between citizen and citizen has on the ruler. If the ruler has permitted this kind of arrangement, does he gain or lose, or what? Or, if we find that the justification for the king's position and all that follows, like control over the land, is based on ontological notions, and not on legalistic ones (like "ownership of the land") then the direction needs to be heeded, otherwise wrong turnings could result. If say, one assumed that the idea of "ownership of the
land", applied and a Marxist approach were then adopted and imposed, this would, I think, be misplaced. For example, as Stiller (1973) argues, since the king owns the land, that is, has control over the means of production, therefore the king can control the people who must work on it to survive. However, this is not quite how the indigenous formulations are couched and therefore the Marxist syllogism would not follow. The king's relation with the subjects is more straightforward. According to the Hindu formulations, the king may control the people because he incarnated for that purpose. It is the divine king whose task is to rule while as human subjects their duty is to "obey", and to give the king their different capabilities according to their respective natures. This would mean that the significant utility for the king is the people, and the important point is that control is direct and not contingent upon an imputed idea of the king's ownership of the productive source.

With regard to agricultural land certain questions emerge. If in the proclamations what is discussed is the relation between the king and the territory, a relation with a totality, and couched in ontological terms presupposing certain royal functions, then how are the agricultural parcels of land to be interpreted? When the nature of the king's relation with the land is couched in a special way, that he invigorates life into it, protects it, and is co-extensive with it, how are we to understand the additional relations between citizen and the parcel of land, of which there are various types in Nepal. It is perhaps not so much that the lands themselves have primacy but what they generate. The key to unravel the problem lies, I think, with the basic type of land relations, raikhā.

1. As Stiller says

To put the political aspect of land control in the clearest possible focus, the land was life; the land was security; the land was wealth and prestige. And the land was the raja's. The raja, therefore, controlled life; he controlled security; he controlled wealth and prestige. And therefore he controlled his people... (Stiller, 1973:48).
2. The Principle Underlying the Variety of Relations around Land:

Dumont raises the important question:

First of all, one must remember the elementary but too often forgotten fact that, even in our society, it was only at the end of the eighteenth century that economics appeared as distinct category, independent of politics. So far as India is concerned, a further fact, many of whose aspects are known and studied but which is often overlooked in itself, in its full generality and fundamental character, is that the British domination emancipated wealth in goods and chattels by substituting for a political regime of the traditional type a modern type of regime, one of whose fundamental tasks was to guarantee the security of property, a regime which, compared to the previous one, abdicated part of its power in favour of wealth. The transformation of land into a marketable commodity is only a part of this change (1972:209).

The issue hangs on the question, that if land were not a "marketable commodity" then what was happening in the relations around land, in the traditional kingdom of Nepal? Given that there was a variety of land relations where negotiations were involved and individuals appear to have had certain entitlements, how are these to be understood? I think that although it might be presumed that land was being transferred, this was perhaps nothing more than a situation where the state was forfeiting its entitlement to tribute, that is, the land's harvest. Land relations were about the produce from the particular parcels, rather than the agricultural lands themselves, if the base was the totality, that mystical entity. This rendition is also in accord with the kind of formulations made in the law books where, as in Manu, the issue is discussed in terms of produce. ¹ There are further reasons why I think that the complex arrangements around land dealings rest ultimately in relations around produce, which should become clear when we consider the features of the diverse types of land relations obtaining in Nepal.

The terms of the range of land relations can be understood by reference to the basic type of relationship, that obtaining with raikar, since all the others constitute variations of it, in my view. What raikar reveals is a dyadic relationship between the cultivator and the state. There is, on the one hand, the king of the territory who takes some of the produce as tribute, and on the other, the workers of the land who make it proliferate. In the variations of land relations, the pattern

¹ Manu declares,

VII, 128, After (due) consideration the king shall always fix in his realm the duties and taxes in such a manner that both he himself and the man who does the work receive (their due) reward.

130. A fiftieth part of (the increments on) cattle, and gold may be taken by the king, and the eighth, sixth or twelfth part of the crops (in Buhler, 1969: 236-7).
is constant.

While in the basic relationship (raikar) the state traditionally leaves half of the produce with the producer, and takes the other half; otherwise the state allocates its share to others. To facilitate the exposition, let me anticipate and present the findings in diagram form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peasant</th>
<th>Raikar</th>
<th>King</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peasant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><code>birta</code> holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><code>guthi</code> for religious purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><code>jagir</code> assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><code>jimindār’s birta</code> (self)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>Jimindār</code> as Peasant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><code>jimindār’s jagarat, state takes half therefore like raikar</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><code>kipat</code> (Limbu) where state does not take half, therefore like <code>birta</code>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The peculiar features of `guthi` are confronted later.
With _raițar_ the cultivator gives half of the produce (_adhiya_) to the ruler, if not in kind then in moneys.\(^1\) Since what distinguishes the _birta_ type is that it is tax-exempt, then the holder acquires the state's half. Hence with _birta_, the produce is divided between the peasant cultivator who retains the half portion as usual, while the _birta_ holder gets the other half, which in the _raițar_ context would have gone to the state. Traditionally, _birta_ was granted to those closely affiliated to the state. The term _birta_, derived from the Sanskrit, means "livelihood". Another type, _jagir_ (Nep.), also relates to the procurement of livelihood from certain lands for the state's personnel, since it is associated with a particular post where the performance was reviewed annually in the ideal situation. If the incumbent were dismissed from a particular appointment, he would lose the _jagir_ right\(^2\) associated with it, therefore, the _jagir_'s right is temporary and contingent to appointment. It can be understood as a modification of _raițar_, like _birta\(^3\)_ since the state waives its hold on half the yield. So far, we can discern that the underlying patterning is between the ruler of the territory and the cultivator of the parcel, for when others are involved in the arrangements, all that is happening is that the state is forfeiting its tribute on the specified holding.\(^4\) Another arrangement, involving a state agent at first sight appears complex, yet here also, once placed within the framework I am offering, is in accord with the principle involved. The conditions pertaining to this special agent, the _jimindar_ (Nep.), are such that they straddle two kinds of land arrangements, under a scheme developed when the Ranas came to power and the Tarai was being reclaimed, and in such ventures, the _jimindar_ played a leading part.\(^5\) The _jimindar_ is given a _birta_ grant, where, to repeat, the state forfeits the right to half the produce; and in addition the _jimindar_ is allotted another parcel of land ( _jayarat_ Nep.) worked by the _jimindar_ himself and his family generally, keeping half the produce and surrendering the equivalent of the other half in tax revenue to the state. Since this is the case the situation is merely a compound of _birta_ and _raițar_. In contrast the _guthi_

3. This is how Regmi details the matter: _Birta_ owners and _Jagirdars_ were accordingly able to appropriate rents on their lands because the state had alienated its sovereign authority of taxation in their favour (Regmi, 1976:170).
4. Regmi(1976) relies principally on, though not limited to, these two types ( _birta_ and _jagir_) to argue his case that private property in the form of land existed incipiently in the traditional state. (see his chapter headings).
5. For details on the _jimindar_, see Regmi, 1976: 104-121.
type is straightforward for here the state or subject forfeits the portion of the produce for religious functions. Nevertheless, it is unique for it is the only type designated irrevocable where the guthi wealth must continue to be deployed for the purposes on which it was dedicated. The other half is kept by the cultivator. What of kipat, a communal kind of land relationship?

*Kipat* lands refers to those parcels of territory associated with particular tribal communities where a person has special rights by virtue of his community membership. Though *kipat* is not derived from the *raikarta* type but refers to the tribal mode of organisation, in effect, the way the state treated this in the critical instance of the Limbus, the only case where the tribal land organisation was allowed to be practised, merely implies a variation of *birta*, for it granted the Limbus the privilege of exemption of tribute on their agricultural lands (see Regmi, 1976:91). What they did internally was left as their own affair. The relevant point is the state's relinquishment of its hold on a share of the yield. Regarding the matter of the stipulated proportion, there is one difficulty which requires clarification.

Whenever revenue in kind (the *adhiya* method) was converted into moneys (the *kut* method) and afterwards no adjustment was made to the rise in the tax, leaving a discrepancy between the real (low) value of tax and the yield of the land, complications occurred, so that in practice the half/half apportionment was defunct in such instances. Nonetheless, the splitting of the yield into two (in this instance according to half/half) constitutes the principle underlying relations around land, as well as bringing into relief the dyadic arrangement involved, while the figure itself is not important, and could have been couched in any other proportion. It just happens that the half/half scheme applies in the Nepalese context. Unless the scheme is borne in mind, it is difficult to understand the range of types of land relations and how they differ from each other, and most important is what is the significance of such relations.

If the feature in the various land arrangements hinges on what happens to the produce, then the produce seems to be central, rather than the land. Expressed differently, in such situations the issue is not

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1. See Regmi, 1976: 46-70 for an account of *guthi*.
2. For example, in the far western regions and certain parts of the Tarai during the earlier period of the nation; and continuing later when the Rana regime accelerated monetization (see Regmi: 1971:30; 1976:128-31).
exactly about land as a commodity of exchange or transfer but about relations regarding the distribution of the particular harvest from specified parcels. This is borne out by the treatment of jagir and birta both of which could be taken as transfers of land, but in my opinion are not. In the cases of jagir all that happens is that the state temporarily assigns the office holder the right to take produce of the lands earmarked as stipend for that office, while the land itself is not surrendered but remains controlled by the state to be reallocated at its discretion. Though birta is not so straightforward, here too I think it is the produce rather than the land which is implicated in the relation between state and the beneficiary.

Birta, as the king's declaration showed unequivocally, can be bestowed and withdrawn by the ruler, yet we also know that a gift once given cannot be taken back according to Hindu formulations. Irrevocable grants only appear as those bestowed as guthi, used for rituals etc. So what is the nature of birta that it can be treated so erratically by the crown? Since birta means "livelihood",¹ it evokes the idea of the yield, the stuff of subsistence. Now if the birta grant is understood as relating to the produce, then, the problem evaporates, for produce is something which appears anew each year and is not a permanent entity. Since the harvest appears periodically and future harvests, would not as yet have been received then the possibility of rescinding a gift would not apply. When the birta is withdrawn, the beneficiary would not have obtained the next and subsequent portions of the yield since they only come up each year. The arrangement can be forestalled by rescinding the birta, while at the same time not violating the terms associated with the gift. In short, birta can be understood simply as a matter of the state's surrendering its tribute, and not as a gift of the land. None of this is to say that the state is bound to honour its promises and always behaves in a proper manner, but it is to attempt to understand the formal features of birta, which is the provision of a livelihood for some people by the ruler, remaining so, at the ruler's discretion, and therefore it has built into it, the condition of contingency that it can be withdrawn as readily as bestowed, a point made clear in the Gorka king's declaration cited above. The terms around birta contrast sharply with guthi, where the matter is indeed irrevocable.

¹. I quote Regmi:

The term Birta is a corrupt form of the Sanskrit term Vrilli, meaning livelihood. Birta therefore meant an assignment of income from the land by the state in favour of individuals in order to provide them with a livelihood (1976:16-17).
When the state permits an irreversible transfer, it is for a religious function, like the performance of rites as mentioned before, or as gifts to Brahmins operating as the guthi system. Lands allocated to Brahmins are called guthi in the land relations context, but would be the bhumidāna (land gift) in the gift context. The significant feature about guthi is that once donated the matter is irrevocable, therefore, even though there is a permanent transfer, the land is not treated as an item for exchange but is frozen for a specific religious purpose. Even though it is clear, I think that our western notions of commodity do not apply here, what is not totally unambiguous is whether the land is being transferred for religious purposes, or just the produce as in the other types. It might well be the land itself is involved, as evoked in the religious term "land gift", yet Hindu notions around land both from the perspective of the king's territory and other general notions could well indicate that even here the relation might be about the yield, what is generated by the force of the divine entity concerned. At least one point is clear, that once dedicated for the religious purpose, this cannot be rescinded or transferred, and from this point of view would not constitute a simple commodity.

The earth itself, as depicted by Hindu thought, is not ordinary entity, but a goddess entity. That vision persists to this day, despite all the changes emerging through the land reforms, for it is still considered unrighteous to shatter the earth, a goddess, with dynamite. Similarly, ploughing is regarded as inappropriate for the twice-born and especially the Brahmins. The Hindu approach to this entity, the earth, is not in accord with what is understood as an economic commodity. Where Regmi's analysis relies on land tenure concepts, like "private property", "freehold", such concepts seem to be out of context when the indigenous view is borne in mind. Thus far we have indicated that as far as the subject is concerned relations around land in all cases (even allowing for the complications of guthi) take reference from the produce rather than the land itself, and that it is a special entity which cannot be interpreted as a commodity to be used in exchange. When the land parcel itself features then it moves from a context of part of the god-king's territory to that where it is to be utilized for other sacred ends. The only instance then when land apportionments might occur is with guthi, land dedicated for some religious end which is then fixed and no further negotiation are possible, and therefore such arrangements do not move outside the constraints of a Hindu order. What then is the relationship between the agricultural lands and the king?

1. Another such gift is that of the cow (godāna), as we saw earlier.
As far as the arrangements around agricultural lands are concerned, what appears to be happening is simply a situation where the state is forfeiting its entitlement to the produce, that is, its tribute, rather than apportioning these agricultural lands to the subjects and where guthi, the special case, refers to those lands dedicated, as is the state, to the actualization of a Hindu order. If with the other types what is alienated by the state to some subjects is the share of the produce, then the territory, is not fractioned by these kinds of land arrangements. Rather the totality, the territory, constitutes the base whereupon the parcels of agricultural lands are simply allocated with regard to the produce. Thus the arrangements are also in accord with the mystical notion of king and kingdom.

If this interpretation holds then the produce of the parcels of the territory belongs to the king just as all wealth of the territory belongs to the king except in the special circumstances when he chooses to give up some of it. It would follow then that what the cultivator gets as his share, is that half for rendering the service, which he must render as subject.

According to the analysis several things follow. If the significant relation around land is between the citizen and the ruler, rather than citizen and citizen then to present these in terms of a class relations framework would I think be somewhat out of key. Secondly, given the centrality of the king, it would seem that one feature of Weber's notion of "patrimonialism" applies for it raises the importance of the singularity of that, a point brought into relief by Gellner(1979 - 351). Nevertheless, other features do not readily fit. For example, Weber says that the king is like the householder, the difference being only that of degree,\(^1\) yet if the king is unique and absolute then the difference between him and the other householders is surely a difference in kind.\(^2\) Rather what we have at least for Nepal is autocracy. The problem as it stands is that given these features of relations how are we to interpret the topic critically? As a preamble to the rest of the discussion let me note the two points. The important feature about the various kinds

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1. The fashionable notion of the patrimonial state owes a great deal to Max Weber. The starting point is the idea of a state which is like a household, and is run for the benefit of its master. In the patrimonial state the most fundamental obligation of the subjects is the material maintenance of the ruler, just as is the case in a patrimonial household... the difference is only one of degree (in Gellner, 1979:351).

2. Gellner also makes it clear that he is sceptical about the applicability of Weber's general orientation (ibid:352).
of land arrangements are the stipulations about what is to happen to the produce. Secondly, and obviously, the best relationship with land is one where it is worked by others.

3. Wrestling the Wealth from the Land:

The historical events in Nepal indicate that it was not a case where the economically powerful become politically so, but a case where the militarily powerful appropriated the wealth of the country and utilized it for the operation and maintenance of the state. Taking the contrary view, Dumont gives primacy to control over wealth for he maintains that, "Territory, power, village cominance, result from the possession of the land" (1972:191). In contrast, historians of Nepal, give primacy to the political dimension as the source of power specifically. Regmi says:

(The) combination of political and economic power was not due to the fact that a landowning class had been able to capture political power, rather, it was system under which the political elite was able to utilise its political power to acquire an economic base in landownership (1976:225).

For Nepal, the issue is not so much about the nature of the source of power since commentators cannot but recognise the import of military strength, given that this state was forged through conquest. Rather, the issue hinges around the nature of relations connected with land's produce and the implications of this. As I understand the nature of the arrangements, the standard perspectives on feudal relations, as outlined by Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon would not fit comfortably; nor would Regmi's conceptualization which distinguishes the presence of a category, "political elites" as being of central importance to the land system. Let us consider these in turn.

Of traditional Nepal, the three authors write:

This system resembled the European feudal system in so far as it involved parcelized sovereignties under an overall monarchy, each local lord able to appropriate surpluses direct from the peasants; but in so far as many areas were not under the jurisdiction of a local lord but consisted of an independent peasantry controlling the means of production and its distribution save only for the obligation to pay taxes to the central government, there are significant differences from "classic feudalism".

1. And this power according to Dumont is "legitimated by being subordinated hierarchically to the brahman and the Brahmans" (1972:197).
The authors evoke a feudal model with qualifications, and continue saying that,

The local lords themselves were not legally landowners, but were only granted temporary and alienable rights to appropriate surpluses produced in their domain (1980: 29).

Yet surely the material they themselves proffer, complicates any suggestion of the relevance of feudalism for if a person is not a legal landowner, and only has temporary and alienable rights, then what is the basis for the right to surplus which prompts the comparison with feudalism? If these "local lords" were able to wrest the "surpluses", the practice is not to be understood within a feudal framework then obviously the question is what does, in fact hold, a matter to be taken up shortly. But first to pursue the difficulties raised by Regmi's approach.

The bone of contention is to be found in Regmi's summary of the situation pertaining to relations around land,¹ in that he also maintains that,

In essence, therefore, Nepal's traditional land system represented a coalition between the aristocracy and the bureaucracy on the one hand and local overlords on the other to wring agricultural surplus from the peasantry and share the proceeds (ibid: 225).

While not denying the upper echelon's exploitative measures, since the ruler was (and is) absolute, it would not follow as a matter of course that a coalition existed, but rather that concessions were being made by the absolute ruler to these individuals. If this is the case then the construct, "political elites", is to be regarded warily, for by implying some kind of power position, it screens off the absolutism of the king. Further, in that their advantages depended on the whim of the ruler, points Regmi also stresses elsewhere (ibid: 44), then the so-called "coalition" would be far more tenuous and impermanent than the passage implies. Let me put it this way. If the official's gains, though handsome, were conditional to the ruler's pleasure, then this seems to be less a "coalition" and more a power relationship, and one which could be precarious for the official. To cite the ruler's instructions in one such case. Paragraph 14 of a letter from the then current king (1796) to one of his officials in an outlying region states,

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¹ Even though Regmi argues that the system operated as "state ownership" of land, throughout the discussion, weight is placed on the centrality of "coalitions", "political elites" the "oligarchical regime" etc.
You have been deputed far from the palace. You shall remain there as long as our favour lasts. In case any evil person submits complaints against you, we shall award justice after hearing both sides. We shall not hear only one side (in Regmi, 1971:216).

Apart from the declaration that the king will listen to both parties, what stands out is the contingent nature of the appointment which is unambiguously proclaimed to rest on the king's pleasure - "as long as our favour lasts". In other words, the officials are manipulated just like the peasants, albeit in different ways. To put it bluntly: where the peasants' "surplus" was appropriated by the state through its capability to wrest half, and by the agents of the state since it, the state, had allocated this right to its critical servants (through birta and jagir), these in turn were not only subject to the law of absolutism, but also dependent on its handouts as the favoured. This only means that they swallowed the bait. To scrutinize the features of that bait, is one of the particular issues of the next task, a consideration of the different kinds of land arrangements.

4. Relations around Land as State Management:

Instead of depicting relations around land as land tenure schemes thus stressing the economic dimension of the relationship, as Regmi does, these could more readily be defined in terms of political categories, the budget allocations for the different agencies and different governmental purposes in the running of the state and even simply supporting state values. This seems to be so since each type of land arrangement contains specific features which relate to the particular nature of a service to the state. In fact, many of the land arrangements cannot be discussed without referring to the services connected with the rights. Therefore I want to approach the topic, not in terms of the economic aspects of the land arrangements, but rather consider these in terms of their role in state organisation and what advantages accrue to the state as a consequence, that is, with a political focus.

(a) The Birta Bind:

With the arrangement known as birta, the state forfeits its revenue of the allotted parcel to the beneficiary (see Regmi, 1971:44). The deed is sealed by a ritual, and to all intents and purposes, such grants might

be seen to constitute the base for a land-owning class, especially since the right could be inherited by a man's heirs. Yet this cannot be presumed for, as we saw at the outset, the state maintains its right to negate birta according to its discretion. Even though the critical feature of this type of land arrangement is that it is conditional, nonetheless the state forfeits its economic assets to the benefit of the recipient, and therefore if we are to detect the state's gains in the deal, we need to know the circumstances of awarding birta.

In some instances, and of course these varied over the period under review, a grant was given as a reward for royal services. As Regmi describes the initial period:

There are numerous examples to prove that Biria grants were made by the Shah rulers to reward victorious generals and to win over or reward those who supported their newly established authority. During the last decades of the eighteenth century, the Shah rulers also granted Biria to the chieftains and members of the nobility of some of the hill principalities, mainly in Jumla, Dailekh, Doti and Baglung districts, which were annexed in the process of political unification. In the majority of cases, such favours were conferred because the nobility of the conquered principalities had defected to the Gorkhalis and rendered active assistance in their military campaigns. Where the chieftains refrained from fighting to the bitter end, they often retained their principalities on an autonomous, feudatory basis. The obvious aim was to extend the overlordship of the Gorkha dynasty without alienating the support of the existing chieftains and nobility (Regmi, 1976:25-6).

From the outline we observe that, apart from the generals, all the beneficiaries were past enemies, and though having capitulated to the Gorkha war-machine, nonetheless would stand as potential threats. The generals, experienced military men with trained troops likely to follow them should there be a breakaway, also would constitute potential risks. Consequently since the grant was bestowed upon those most likely to challenge the power structure, it was placatory, a pay-off. On the other hand, the utterly vanquished citizens of Kirtipur had their noses amputated by the Gorkha army. Though birta may be constituted a hand-out to these potentially powerful people, it was nevertheless a qualified perquisite, in that while the gains were large for the recipients, so would the losses have been in the advent of retraction. The same would apply to other instances of birta.

1. As we shall see later, inheritance laws have their own particular effects, also.
Birta grants also had strategic import for the state. While Regmi has drawn attention to the fact that jagir holdings were positioned in strategically remote areas (1971:40) and therefore were important militarily for the state, the same could more significantly apply for birta especially since the birta grant carried certain advantages. Since the right could be inherited, a relationship between the line of beneficiaries and the land could continue over the years. Secondly, residence would be likely either for the holder himself, his sons, or some surrogate. In addition in the case of large parcels of land, a population of peasants would be necessary for cultivation (Regmi, 1971: 43-4) thus bringing about massive settlement. Such factors would mean the opening up and development of lands which if sited on strategic points, like areas on the outskirts of the capital or routes through the mountains, would facilitate communications and a depot for the supply of goods and manpower, both in times of peace and war. In fact it would be a sound policy to bestow the birta grant in such locations and presumably was implemented. A policy was adopted of settling trusted families in key points "along the routes through the country which were open" (Still, 1974: 65) and in such instances the birta type would be relevant since it is the type which is permanent till rescinded, whereas the jagir variety is assessed annually. As well, when birta allocations were made in the outlying districts of the valley this would have been of significance, as outposts of the capital. Given that most of the birta grants were made to those who did espouse the Gorkha cause, like the Parbatya Brahmans, Thakuris and Chetris, and not the Newars nor the tribals (Regmi, 1976:27), then the allocation of birta in such areas would serve a double purpose: the beneficiaries' commitment to the regime could be secured, since it served their interest; and secondly it distributed people loyal to the regime, in strategically important areas. Thus, though the state forfeited its revenue from the birta allocation, in implementing the right, the holder's activities generated repercussions that were of political benefit to the state.

1. The Gorkha rulers were adamant about not disclosing the routes through the hills for without this information the country remained impassable. It was a conscious policy zealously to withhold the details of routes from the British (see Still, 1974:65).

2. There are numerous villages in the valley which today are peopled by a large number of patrikin. It is highly likely that these are the descendants of the founder of the village who was the original birta holder. He became the headman and through primogeniture each succeeding headman was appointed, though with scrutiny and ratification from the palace, first.
The grant was also allotted to high ranking officials who performed judicial and administrative tasks (Regmi, 1976:33), or perhaps it could be said, that the birta entitlement also carried with it the responsibility to administer the settlements earmarked as the birta, since the holder, more often than not, was expected to do this. Or, alternatively, the holders were treated as depots for a supply of goods, men and ammunition throughout the country, to be called upon when needed.1 Thus automatically, the state established administrators, reservoirs for supplies of men and goods through the allocation.

Further examples would merely list more details, without adding to the general point, that though the state lost its revenue in such instances, it also gained advantages, all of which directly or indirectly contributed to the maintenance of the regime. In a conquest state of such diversity, especially at the beginning, though indeed not limited to this period, it would have been imperative that the agents were bound to it. Yet, it must also be asked how effective would the birta hand-out have been in securing allegiance, at most, or inhibiting challenges to the regime, at least.

The state's power to rescind the birta grant gave it the leverage. It is in circumstances when a holder does not, or is suspected of such, or cannot comply (for whatever reasons), or appears not to be complying with the state's wishes, that it could terminate the matter. In some cases it did.2 With the particular terms of the birta arrangement the state could go a long way in binding its agents.

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1. Support of the military machine, as in the war with Tibet and China in 1788–93 (Regmi, 1971: 42), and in the Nepal-Tibet war of 1855–6 (Regmi,1976:36). Again in an internal power struggle that occurred between ex-king Ran Bahadur and King Girban in 1800, the latter ordered the Birta owners of a certain village in Nuwakot to, Bring one muri of rice for every twenty muri of land (owned by you), travelling day and night, to Nuwakot...Equip your porters, tenants and all persons of military castes with weapons and send them to us at Nuwakot (in Regmi,1971:42).

2. Discussing the nature of the holder of birta grants and jagir assignments Regmi says,

They held their grants and assignments always at the discretion of the central government. The composition of the Birta and Jagir landowning classes was subject to constant change (1971: 44).

Again,

...those made to persons who were no longer able to render services to the government were confiscated. In fact, Birta and Jagir grants were made liberally in newly-conquered areas in the initial stage and confiscated subsequently when Gorkha's occupation was firmly established (ibid:46).
The grants were more often than not handsome, where the wealth worked by peasants was retained by the *birta* holder, and at a person's death could be inherited by his heirs. In this way the headmen were rendered entirely dependent on the state for their privileges since it is the state which bestows. Alternatives open to them were migration and its uncertainty, or rebellion by the overthrow of the regime or secession. A person could only maintain his assets for as long as he served, or was seen as serving the Gorkha cause. Therefore, if he wanted to retain these, he had no option but to do just that. Further, given that the state could rescind the grant at any point, than at the first move towards the build-up of an opposition (real or suspected) could be nipped in the bud by pulling away the resource from those suspected. Expressed differently, given that failure in a rebellion was a possibility and could end in a fall from the luxury of a *birta* setup to one of peasant servitude and absolute rule from those who had the means, the economic power base to challenge it, is understandable. However to leave the matter at that might give the impression of a perfectly functioning organisation which of course is impossible; and, in addition, the historical facts do show that some of those advantaged by the arrangements were the ones who challenged the system in the various ways possible.

The alternatives to a situation of submission to autocratic rule were taken up by various people at different times. There was always the feeble reaction of petty and less petty corruption but this can hardly be depicted as constituting an authentic challenge, of the magnitude of treason, but merely cupidity while remaining within the strictures of the regime. As instances of something more substantial, there was secession, the break-up of the Malla kingdom into the three separate cities of the valley. In more recent times, the far western province of Kumaon seceded from the central government, though here collusion with the British contributed to the rebel leader's success in the rebellion; as a consequence the territory was absorbed into the British ambit of control. It would seem that there is the ever-present danger that these areas at the edges where patrol is most difficult are the most likely to break away. While this indicates where it is likely to occur, I would like to stress that the process appears to have roots in the nature of the system itself. Given that the alternative open to the ambitious was rebellion, the arrangements would promote a constant warring and change of boundaries since within there could only be total subservience.

1. Or absconding to avoid punishment in the eventuality of the offence being discovered.
Expressed differently, autocratic rule, may also generate a process of segmentation since there is no other alternative open to those who would want otherwise except overthrow of the ruler at the centre. In turn it is ironic these graspers of power set up another state of the same ilk, and the same potential for the pattern of development. Otherwise, there is the possibility of the palace coup, which happened with the Ranas in the middle of the last century. Here too the same autocratic arrangements continued. It would seem that absolute control carries the seeds of constant warfare and the continuous generation and dissolution of a state, or the interminable palace overthrows with the installation of another regime, since these are the only satisfactory alternatives open to the ambitious. Yet as with the dynastic changes, these more or less merely duplicate the organisation of the previous setup, so that apart from the ruler, the rest remain subservient to one man, though this is not to say that those close to him would not benefit from the change. For those who remained loyal to the sovereignty of the regime, enjoyment of prequisites like bīrta also involved acquiescence in autocratic rule. The operation of bīrta in binding agents is of course only effective while such individuals choose to remain as subjects, obedient to that order. Even though the grants did not always provide a Gorkhali knot, nevertheless when applied to those who remained within the regime, it was apparently advantageous for the state, since the practice persisted right up till the change in our times.

There are other aspects of bīrta, which I would like to touch on here, even though the matter will be taken up again later. Bīrta is significant for it introduces two points: the general issue of autocracy; and the particular idiom, the bestowal and withdrawal of favours, for bīrta is nothing more than this, a grant to the land's produce for as long as it suits the ruler. Further, since the royal favour and its retraction are the structural operation of autocracy, then the practice may be understood as of institutional magnitude. It also had interesting repercussions.

The bīrta favour is apparently a standard of traditional Hindu states wherein the ruler, as we know, is absolute, and therefore one would expect a significant connexion between the two. Let us consider Regmi's summary

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1. A point outlined by Srinivas.
of the state's utilisation of the grant:

Oligarchic regimes, such as those that governed Nepal before 1951, have always depended on select classes in society for sustenance of their authority. Land grants to members of those classes assured them a stable income and ample leisure to engage in war, religion, or politics in the interests of the rulers. In Nepal, land grants by the state in favour of priests, religious teachers, soldiers, and members of the nobility and royal family accordingly constituted the foundation of social and political life during the pre-1951 period. Such grants led to the emergence of the Birra system. This system had an ancient origin in Nepal. Even before the mid-eighteenth century, when the country was divided into a number of petty principalities, the Birra system existed in more or less similar forms (Regmi, 1976: 22-3).

Whether birra constitutes a device consciously built into the system or not, is hard to tell, but it could well be so, since other tactics, like devious strategy with external states, are part and parcel of Hindu knowledge. The simple fact of the matter is that though birra constitutes a favour from the ruler, it is a favour that can be withdrawn, and given that the stakes were high, the birra system would foster competition amongst those eligible and thereby generate a whirlpool of intrigue, citizen competing with citizen, vieing for the ruler's favours with significant repercussions. The yo yo careers of the members of two families, rivals for the king's favour, are cases which illustrate just what happens.

The downfall of prime minister Bhimsen Thapa in 1837 resulted in the confiscation of the Birra lands of all members of the Thapa family. But the new prime minister, Ranjung Pande, himself fell into royal disfavour after three years. Birra lands owned by members of the Pande family were then confiscated in 1842. Fortune again smiled upon the Thapas when Mathbar Singh Thapa, a nephew of Bhimsen Thapa, became the prime minister in April, 1843. The new prime minister forthwith took steps to restore the confiscated Birra lands of the Thapa family. He, too fell from power after a few months, and his lands were confiscated (Regmi, 1976: 28 footnote 20).

First and foremost, it shows the operation of autocratic power. Further, while the quotation demonstrates the rise and fall of certain families, what it omits, yet was very much present, is that competition, whether between citizen and citizen, or faction and faction for the ruler's favour, renders them divided. In the configuration, the element of impermanence is critical.

1. Traditionally the office of prime minister like the other posts, was a royal appointment.
With impermanence built into the situation, there is the possibility for those out of favour, that their turn will come; while for those with whom the crown is pleased at the moment, there is the possibility that this might not be so later. While such possibilities exist there is the competition, and with competition the men of rank remain divided amongst themselves. The paramountcy of the ruler is sustained in that those eligible to gain the high stakes become antagonistic towards each other. Further, while such individuals compete among themselves for the crown's pleasure, they not only reinforce its omnipotence by acceptance of the definition of royal power, to bestow and withdraw, but in the competition they scatter divisions among themselves defusing the potential they have to challenge that royal omnipotence. In all of this, birta has its part. Critical in the play of various factors is the possibility of change of favour from one subject to another, and since this entails birta rights, birta gives the substance to the favour, rendering it an institution and thereby demonstrating absolutism an actuality. Not a situation of oligarchy, let it be added.

If there was always the possibility of retraction, then whether a person was a fickle "nobleman" of a defeated regime transferring loyalty in the first wild days of Gorkha expansion; or a retired commander of the initial band of followers; or a state dignitary fulfilling the business of the state, or whatever, all as holders of birta carried the same risk, insecurity. While the ruler could attempt to secure the citizen's commitment to the Gorkha cause for his part the subject, regardless of how high he might stand in rank could not secure the ruler's, since the ruler was (and is) not accountable to anyone, and preferences will fall as he pleases, for that is the nature of absolutism. Absolute rule can be effected in such circumstances partly because of the curious way the favouring unfolds. Among themselves, others are recognised as rivals jostling for important positions, instead of fellow travellers at the mercy of the king. The irony is that while the state needs the service of such men, since ultimately it depends on them to effect the operation of the state apparatus, they kow-tow, accepting their subservient position. Behind the royal favour stands the lie of the henchmen's dependence on the king.

Returning to the general theme of this section, the argument that the specific arrangements around land will indicate the particular gain by the state. The significant feature with birta is that it comes with "strings attached". When the ruler surrenders his right of produce to
particular parcels of land, this is not outright, final and irrevocable, but contingent to the ruler's discretion, so that if a person is to continue to enjoy the perquisite, he must continue to please the ruler. Consequently even those who have access to the country's wealth do not hold this autonomously or unconditionally. Because of such conditions, concepts like land-owning class, rigorously speaking, are not applicable. From the cultural point of view it is consistent with ideas about the nature of the king, for his "ancestry" provides the ideological account of the king's authority to grant and withdraw birta at his discretion, which in effect is absolute control. It is his control over people, however, which can implement his wishes, a control which derives from two sources, the ideological but also the actual. When necessary he can forcibly have a beneficiary evicted by sending in the troops, if necessary, and prevent others from encroaching on the beneficiary's rights through the operation of the state's legal apparatus. That is to say, it is through the ruler's control of people that he can control what happens in the relations around land.

(b) The Vagaries of Jagir and the State's Control of Delegated Power:

The jagir kind of holding is critical to the understanding of the operation of the state apparatus for it provided the mode of payment to its servants, whether bureaucrats or the military. Though a number of features intermesh in the workings of this scheme, nonetheless it too follows a format where the terms of the holding relate back to a specific advantage of the state. First of all it is necessary to spell out the various factors involved in the phenomenon.

The jagir is nicely described by Levi who perceives that this method of paying all government servants, including the military, is an "ingenious system":

The ingenious system of the annual jagirs permits the Gorkha to compensate (for) the shortage of the metallic currency. Like the salary of the army, the civil stipends are paid in grants of land. Each year at the pajani, the king as absolute proprietor of the land bestows on the servants he employs or whom he maintains, a fief the extent and value of which naturally vary with the importance of the function; the year spent out, the fief returns to the king who again disposes of it according to his wishes. These fiefs bear the Persian name of 'jagirs' and the privileged are called 'jagirdars'. The government avoids as much as possible
the possibility of a fief remaining in the same jagirdar's possession for more than a year so as to better mark the temporary character of the concession, to prevent the attachment of the individual to the soil and (be) reminded of the omnipotence of the king (Levi, 1905-8: Vol.I, 296).

From the description five features stand out. To accommodate to the problems of an agrarian economy, instead of salary, a government servant is given a right to the produce of certain lands associated with a specific post and, secondly, both holding and post are temporary, points already noted. Thirdly, this kind of scheme is not conducive to creating a bond between the holder and the particular land. Most important, the absolute position of the king is heralded. The method is used comprehensively for the payment of bureaucrats and the military. Where Levi highlights the system's overriding of salary problems by the state, on the other hand Stiller alludes to the benefit for the recipient.

Stiller directs attention to Prithivinarayan Shah's concern that the soldiers be "free from anxiety" about the welfare of their families, instructing that jagirs be granted the soldiers.1 Stiller adds that the king understood that such moves would strengthen the army also (1973:25), so the policy of expediency is hard to miss, for a strong army may conquer more lands or patrol those already conquered. The system continued to be used for the army (as well as the bureaucracy), not only till the time of Levi's observations, a hundred or so years later, but till the revolution of our time.2 There is little doubt that it catered to the state's interest, as Regmi says "the jagir system served the needs of the government better because it was tied direct to service" (1976:74). However to leave the matter at such a general level would miss the intricacies of the arrangements.

If the state adopted this system where the land's produce constituted an official's salary, what exactly were the state's gains, Regmi details the particular difficulties involved which could be circumvented by paying salaries in the jagir way.

1. Prithivinarayan Shah's directive is cited in Regmi, 1976:74,

   It is of utmost importance that the soldiers required by the
   king should be provided with lands and homestead, so that they
   may remain free from worries about their family and bear
   a stout heart.

2. See Levi, 1905-8, Vol I:289, for a list of jagir value and corresponding military rank applicable during the time of his visit to Nepal.
Over large part of the hill region and Kathmandu Valley, the land tax was assessed in kind. Collection of revenue in this form, however, would have created manifold problems, such as the construction of storage facilities in different parts of the country and quick sales in the absence of transport and communication facilities. Consequently, although the flow of income from land-tax collections was checked at different points, the financial liabilities of the government remained intact. Instead of assuming the burden of land-tax collection directly, therefore, the government mitigated such liabilities to some extent by assigning lands to its employees as their emoluments. All that the government was required to do under this system was prepare land records and, later, lists of tax assessments leaving the more difficult task of collection and utilization to the jagirdar. Even when land and other revenues were assessed in cash, such assignments made it unnecessary for the government to maintain a permanent machinery for revenue collection. In other words, the jagirdar in addition to the functions pertaining to his office, also indirectly acted as a collection agent on behalf of the government (ibid:72).

With the two situations, one where "in kind" constitutes the jagirdar's payment, and the other in monies based on the assessment of the productivity of the jagir land, in either case the problem is passed over to the official. To understand the enormous difficulties involved, and the advantages gained by the state in transferring the task of the jagirdar, it would be wise to consider some of the features entailed in collection that apply to the raikar lands, where the state took its share in kind, and later in monies. Let us start with the earlier setup.

The state's resource was its half of share of the land's produce, but given that this is subject to the contingencies of nature, apart from the variations in effort from cultivator to cultivator, that wealth fluctuated. The point can hardly be underestimated in a country where the rightness of the monsoon is so important, since too much or too little, too soon or too late, can each have disastrous consequences. Therefore, when the state transfers jagir rights to its servants, it hooks these people to the vagaries of nature and the concomitant fluctuations. Had the system worked differently where a salary was paid, the state's servants would not have been subject to such fluctuations but rather would have received fixed amounts. The state would have had to dip into its coffers, which during disaster periods would have been lower than usual. The jagir as arranged shortcircuited such eventuality and benefitted the state, whereas for the jagirdar, it created a situation without security at all against natural and human contingencies. Later, when state revenue was collected in cash, the jagir method of salary payment persisted, the only difference being that then it was up to the official to collect the cash rather than kind from the allotted jagir holdings. If the self-collection
persisted then one may predict that the state gained by the arrangement.

Money in the treasury is hard won. Therefore if collection be passed on to the *jagirdar* it is one less administrative headache for the state. Since revenue collection is central to the state/land relation and bearing in mind that *jagir* is simply *raikar* allocated to a government official which, had it remained as *raikar* the state would have had the problem of acquiring revenue, then what are the specific problems overridden by the transfer?

From the state's point of view, tax collection necessitates delegation of power to the revenue collector,¹ which means he gets to it first, and chicannery enters with concomitant losses for the state. In handling the situation, the state preferred to use one particular method (the *ijara*, Nep.) precisely because it ensured more revenue, regardless of how this was obtained and the consequences for the tax-payers. By this method the tax collector paid a fixed amount to the state and kept the rest. In this, the more the agent acquired, the more he benefitted and therefore it is likely that he would put utmost effort in amassing taxes. By the alternative method, (the *ammanat* Nep.), the collector gathered for the state and for his services obtained a predetermined salary (Regmi, 1971: 124-5). Obviously the alternate method was opened to less efficiency by the collector, and, from the state's perspective, it was not the best means for maximizing revenue potential. Not surprisingly, the rulers flirted with the method, only to discard it after a brief experimental period during which times the revenue was sparse indeed (Regmi, 1971:134–6, 138–9). Apparently it was discarded for this reason and not necessarily because the taxpayers were also submitted to hardship under it. From the peasants' position, having the available cash at the time required was not always easy and led to borrowing at high interest rates, (see Regmi, 1976: 189-191). Not only did the preferred method, in general, yield a more stable revenue which was to the interest of the central powers, but through the arrangement, the state was able to attain a kind of aloofness from the operation, for it was the collector who stood as the visible villain, while the ruler remained on his throne at an innocent distance (ibid:139). All this has bearing on the *jagir* assignments.

The central powers by opting to pay officials with a *jagir* overcame the problems involved in the collecting, and the ill-will it generated was

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¹. There appears to have been no single office which acted as collector, for the records refer to the local headman of the village, administrators, *birta* holders, *jimindars* or express revenue officers, all being responsible for collection.
thrust at the jagir holder. In this way, the state could pass on its difficulties in one area (revenue collection) to a state functionary who had been appointed for other purposes, leaving it to him to garner his salary as best he could. It would seem that from this point of view, the carrot has its quota of worms.

That it could be perceived as precarious can be inferred from the fact that once jagirs themselves were deemed negotiable, many holders activated this right (see Regmi, 1976: 80-1). By this measure the jagir holder could obtain his pay-packet there and then, and avoid all the complications involved, now transferred to the third party. Not only did this mechanism allow the jagirdar to shortcircuitch the problems already mentioned, but also avoided his having to travel to those places where his lands were situated, or organize such matters since they were generally not located where he resided.

Isolating the risks to the jagir, should not be taken to imply that there were no gains, in some instances very substantial for the jagir holder. Compared to the cultivator there would be no doubt as to who was better off. Nonetheless the arrangement provoked great disenchantment as indicated by the outcry in recent times with the demand that government servants be paid by a cash salary according to a differential scale (see Regmi, 1976:86). They also demanded standard bureaucratic measures.

The significant features in the jagir arrangement indicate that while the assignee was faced with the necessity to amass his share of the land's produce through his own devices, we also know that the ruler maintained, the right to assess the individual yearly to consider whether to discharge or reappoint him or appoint another. Taken together, this set of features indicates that the state made the holder responsible for his salary in that the officer was left to corner it himself, and since kind was involved it was a salary which fluctuated. This meant that while the ruler could make demands on the officials, for their part the officials could not claim salary satisfaction, hardly a reciprocal relation. Moreover since all the state had to do was to allocate the resource to

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1. That disputes were prolific is evident in the establishment of a special court to deal with such matters. Though Hodgson (1836:104) refers to them as land courts associated with the military, it could only but refer to the jagir.

2. When the jagir availed himself of transferring his right, the uncertainty of the situation was presumably calculated, for the price he received was invariably low (see Regmi, 1976:80-1).
the official along with his particular post, and since, as Regmi stresses, the official had to take upon himself the added responsibility of acquiring his salary himself, then there is an extra service he renders to the state, a service somewhat hidden in the jagir idea of stipend. Where produce was involved, the jagir arrangements forced the individual officers to share the vicissitudes and problems, surrounding the amassing of the state's wealth, yet they were merely the ruler's servants, personnel in the bureaucratic machinery who could be shunted around the country and dismissed at the ruler's whim. In short, each at his particular level was implicated and shared in the difficulties attached to the operation of the state matters, but did not share the power for ultimately they were nothing more than agents. We now need to consider the other characteristic of this type of right, the impermanence of holding and its associated position.

From one point of view it might be said that the annual reviews and changes were related to job performance, a kind of bureaucratic ideal in effectiveness. Apart from the prevention of rebellious outbreaks especially in the early period, the major responsibilities delegated to officials were revenue collection, maintenance of the peace and the enforcement of caste rules and as Hodgson remarked, the revenue man and the judicial officer generally went together (Hodgson, 1880: Vol II, 231 note) What the state demanded of the official was restraint in the matter of corruption, presumably refraining from abusing their authority over those below, for discontent could lead to migration (see Regmi, 1976:83). The temporary nature of the scheme was presumably an attempt to monitor these requirements. However, given that it was an expressed policy to appoint no one at all on a permanent basis (Stiller, 1974:51) it would seem that the state had additional concerns to those of smooth running of the bureaucratic processes, concerns that were about the maintenance of its own paramount position. Such arrangements mean, among other things, that commandments and holdings were constantly changing (Regmi, 1971:43). 1 Kirkpatrick's description in 1772 seems to hold for the subsequent period. Of the handling of officials, he says that they are never allowed to remain a long time together in the command of the same place, being relieved for the most part yearly, and not infrequently in the moment that they are about to reap the harvest of their lands. The same policy, however, is discernible in all the other arrangements of the Nepaul government with regard to its delegated authorities, and the jaghire lands, both which are constantly passing into new hands. (Kirkpatrick, 1975:55).

1. See also Stiller, 1973: 17-18; 253; and 269-73.
The three strands of the jagir package, namely the individual concerned, the post and the land associated with it, are so manipulated that by constantly shifting the individual from a particular post, such man of import could not build up a following in any area. Further, since the lands affixed to the post were in different parts of the country and not necessarily located where the position was to be executed, the official had no direct connexion with the land in question, and for him it was simply an idiom for his salary. The complex arrangement created a disjunction so that any state official could not readily utilise his economic base rising to a position of wealth and preeminence in a region where the lands were sited because they did not come together, nor were they permanent. Through the terms of the jagir, the state pursued a conscious policy to attempt to retain power at the centre, in the face of the problems of delegation (see Stiller, 1974). Though these matters will be taken up again later, it is necessary to raise certain general issues here so as to delineate the association between the land arrangements and the maintenance of the state apparatus.

What we seem to have is a bureaucratic machine organised adroitly according to the state's own objectives, objectives which, I think, can be interpreted as being primarily concerned with "decentralisation without the loss of control at the centre", a phrase used by a contemporary bureaucrat about the aims of the current system, but which appears to apply as much to the past. In the operation, the resource, the produce from the specific land associated with a particular office, is utilised in the maintenance of that bureaucratic and military machine. When the state's objectives are borne in mind, (i.e. retention of power at the centre); and when the impermanent nature of an official's land grant is also recalled then one may notice that constraints derived from feudalism cannot appositely be applied in this context. Further, given the express policy of constant change in position according to the ruler's discretion, then competition between those eligible would follow. It is well established that this kind of arrangement fosters intrigue, factions and rivalry, men forever competing with each other for the ruler's favour. The impermanence here of the jagir is not unlike that of the birta for in both there is always the possibility of change from a favoured position to one on the side-lines or worse. Since the context

1. In the last days of the Rana regime (and even today) it is still a practice to transfer an officer when he becomes popular with the men under his command.
of favours generates antagonism between those concerned, and since individuals at any point in time could be either in or out of favour, could be suspended, or sacked, or be transferred from one post to another, and in conjunction with the ruler's absolute power, then the idea of "political elites", or "ruling classes" fits as uneasily as terms from the feudal model. Even if only two points are borne in mind, specifically that the official depended on the ruler for his appointment and the allotted lands, and that the ruler was omnipotent, the facts are fairly obvious. But if these constructs applicable elsewhere appear out of tune for the Nepalese context, what can be offered in their stead? Though hardly an elegant turn of phrase, the "currently favoured" at least brings out the significant feature of the relationship the jagir grant like birta is manipulated in such a way that the state remains the directing power of its agents who operate the machinery which keeps the state going.

(c) The Kipat, a Demographic Manoeuvre:

Pursuing a policy of expansion so as to create one large grand state under his dynasty, Prithvinarayam Shah of the principality of Gorkha and his successors, by violence conquered, or by the promise of internal autonomy to the leaders, wooed the different peoples of the territory and brought them under his domination. Apparently, the latter situation applies to the Limbus, who resisted the Gorkha pressures and had to be approached by conciliatory measures. The Gorkha's recognition of kipat tenure for the Limbu people can be understood within this general background. Other tribals less capable of resistance were not treated in the same way as the Limbus even though they pursued similar communal arrangements around land. What was expected of the Limbus, at least during the earlier years of the state, was non-action against the overlords, acquiescing to Gorkha domination, while for its part it did

1. At present, only the position of rajguru is an appointment for the period of man's life.
2. According to Caplan, there was considerable Limbu resistance to the Gorkha armies, but historians seem to be agreed that in the final analysis the incorporation of Limbu into the Saha Kingdom was as much a result of negotiation and compromise as of conquest (1974:180).
not tamper with the internal organisation, a facet of the Gorkha strategy of conquest (see Regmi, 1976: 93-4)\(^1\) that we have seen before in other contexts.\(^2\)

Limbu kipat tenure, for our purposes, reveals several distinguishing features. There was, as mentioned previously, tax-exemption on agricultural lands, though a homestead tax was expected. However, most important was the state's recognition of the Limbus’ monopoly of use of their own "ancestral land".\(^3\) Related to this exclusivity was the concession that kipat unlike raikhari holdings which, if vacated, reverted to state control, these would not. Instead, kipat lands, when vacated, were attended to by the Limbu headman (Regmi, 1976: 91-2) and the holder could regain occupancy of some land when he returned. Theoretically this at least means that each member of the tribal community had security and monopoly of tenure against outsiders on their tribal lands.

One way of understanding the concession is to see it as a means of pacifying a "turbulent" people located in a strategic area (Regmi, 1976:93). Yet there appears to be an additional factor brought out by an official's comment on the situation.

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1. Not that the Gorkha's terms were accepted readily and immediately by the Limbus for during the 1780s they rebelled and joined up with the enemy Tibetan forces, though the reconciliation agreement with Gorkha had been established only six years earlier. The Gorkha king declared his promise of protection, as cited earlier, yet the treaty apparently was not taken seriously by the Limbus since they joined the enemy. Nor was this their only reaction. Many of them quit the place, migrating to Sikhim and India.

2. The same policy was applied to the mini-states where the rajas were left alone, to run internal affairs, as long as dues, allegiance and obedience were paid to the centre. The letter quoted earlier exemplifies the approach.

3. Regmi describes the situation, incorporating Caplan's ethnographic account into his description:

Kinship, geographical location, and customary occupation were the main characteristics of kipat landownership. A kipat owner derived his rights by virtue of his membership in a particular ethnic group. Thus, under the kipat system "each segment of a dispersed patrilineal clan was associated with a particular territory and individual rights to land were established on the basis of membership in such local descent group ".* So long as such agnatic links were remembered and traced, a member of a local clan segment, even if living away from the territory of the group, could exercise his rights to a plot of land.

... Kipat land generally could not be sold outside the community. There was, however, no restriction on alienation within the group itself. Kipat land alienated by a Limbu to another Limbu would still retain its communal character (Regmi, 1976: 88-9).

In a report about Pallokirat, the Limbu area, in 1883 the state official commented:

Pallokirat is a border area which has been administered since early times through a conciliatory policy. If the customs and traditions of the Limbus are violated, they will leave the country and the government will be harmed (in Regmi, 1976:93).

The document contains a number of features of interest. The concern by this stage is not that the Limbus might rebel and if successful secede, but that if provoked they will migrate and leave Nepal. Therefore, from one point of view, respect for the retention of their customs and traditions was as much a ploy to stem migration from the area as anything else. How could this harm the government for, if anything, it would open up the traditional Limbu lands for raikar, thereby assuring the state of revenue, a likely possibility since there were many other people already settling into the Limbu region. In fact, kipat was a disadvantage to the state, not only through loss of potential revenue by the tax-exemptions, but also by using up large parcels of land that could otherwise be distributed to the officials of the state as birta or jagir (ibid:92). Yet the government wanted the Limbus to stay, for if they went the "government would be harmed", according to the report, and they must be allowed to "retain their traditions and customs" even though there is a cost to the state. This seems to be the point for, if the Limbus stay, and continue their traditional practices, they tie up their exclusive areas thereby maintaining a population on that part of the territory, and as a result, the settlers of other ethnic groups will perform have to operate other lands, which were abundant at that time (Regmi, 1976:89). Therefore, by maintaining the status quo, with the Limbus continuing to live in Nepal there could be a maximisation of settlement in this strategic area which links three polities, Nepal, Tibet and Sikhim.

The implementation of kipat tenure could effect the maximisation of settlement because the kipat lands were already ear-marked for the exclusive use by Limbus, and given that the land was abundant and rich enough to attract other ethnic groups, Limbu monopoly of their own was not to the detriment of the government. A large and loyal population in a border area provides the reserve of people and goods when contingencies demand. The earlier events of Nepalese history illustrate how the edges of a state could break away with the defection to the British of Kumoan in the west, and the defeat of Darjeeling and parts of the Tarai in the west and south. All lost to the British in India and ratified in the 1816 treaty of Sagauli.
The extent of the concession to the Limbus is highlighted by the erosion of kipat belonging to other tribes where the records from the end of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries show one encroachment after another by the state. It was eroded in two major ways: firstly, through the imposition of ceilings whereby the surplus lands were then converted to raikar, otherwise the agricultural lands were rendered taxable and to all intents and purposes were treated the same as raikar, regardless of the tribal method of organisation. Secondly, where kipat was recognised, it was in those contexts which carried compulsory unpaid labour services, a situation called kipat-seba birta. Thus kipat elsewhere was rendered null and void. In contrast, the exclusive rights to Limbu land, the kipat relation, was upheld till legislation made it transferable to non-Limbus in 1961 and rendered it taxable like raikar (Regmi, 1976:103).

Further, with the Limbus maintaining residence in Nepal, the state had at its disposal men who had become renowned soldiers, since the Limbus provided both the state and the Gurkha Regiment with troops. The Regiment in turn was an important dimension of the Rana/British alliance which buttressed the security of the Rana regime itself, and recognised the sovereignty of the territory of Nepal. It might be said that this undermines the strategy argument, yet I think not, for any regime, despite the kinds of deals and promises a foreign power makes, will attempt to secure itself as fast as possible should changes occur.
(d) The Raikar Base and the Raikar 'Rake-off':

I have suggested that underlying all the schemes relating to land is the basic scheme, raikar, which brings together the king and the cultivator who share the produce according to the principle of half/half, determined originally by the productivity of the land, despite the difficulties involved in assessing the amounts of revenue collection and despite the modifications that arose around this type of land holding. The current legislation prescribes that a tenant farmer must receive half of the yield while the landlord may not appropriate more than this and where the land is termed "raikar", and now constitutes a form of private property. The state imposes taxes on both cultivator and landlord (Regmi, 1976:179). In the past, raikar land was controlled by the state unlike the other land arrangements where the state forfeited its tribute to individual citizens. While the various schemes can be viewed as different kinds of services to the state, clear in the case of birta and jagir where the beneficiaries are its agents, it is most vivid with the raikar cultivator. Not only did such workers provide the state with its wealth, but also constituted the backbone for those lands assigned as birta and jagir. Therefore such cultivators were the constant in all the arrangements except kipat.

Where all along I have stressed the political nature of the land arrangements, does the raikar type prompt a shift, since here economic wealth is at issue? Two aspects bring the matter back to the political. Firstly, it is through political sovereignty that the state extracts its revenue, a point that comes through especially with the exception, the Limbus, who were able to garner tax exemptions. Just as the appropriation of wealth depended on sheer military might, its deployment was utilised in the same way, on the whole. The heavy military commitment of the kingdom is well attested by the records whether reference is made to the period of expansion, the later wars with its neighbours, or the times of peace from the middle of the last century reaching to the present. The wealth

1. Manu cites that the king's share can be one-twelfth, one-eighth, or one-sixth (VII, 130 in Buhler (tr.), 236-7).
2. The complications of assessing the productivity is detailed by Regmi, 1976: 123-47.
was used for the garnering of might through the purchase of supplies and armaments, and for the parade of power through public functions where pomp and show underline the ruler's omnipotence. And not to be forgotten the cultivator of *raikar*, assigned as *birta* or *jagir* provided the means of elegant sustenance for those men who operated the state apparatus. Our task at this stage is to consider the features of the relation between the *raikar* cultivator and the state and their significance; and, secondly, to scrutinise any important changes that occurred in this set-up over the last two hundred years in order to unearth what specific advantages these may have afforded the state.

(i) *Features Associated with the Peasant Cultivator of Raikar:*

Though Stiller nicely crystallises the state's orientation to land, the critical aspect of it all is left unspoken when he says, "Land, as the principal source of wealth, could not be allowed to remain non-productive" (1973:15), for this can only mean that somebody's labour has to be applied, if the goal is to be achieved. The features of *raikar* relate to this labour;  

firstly, the holder himself is the cultivator;  
secondly, if the *raikar* land were vacated by the cultivator, then another person was to assume his position;  
thirdly, in the event of non-payment of tribute on the part of the holder, the state reallocates the *raikar* rights to another;  
fourthly, sale, purchase and transfer of cultivator's rights are prohibited;  
fifthly, the state takes half the yield.

When the various clauses associated with the *raikar* holdings are scrutinised, all boil down to the central requirement, the necessity that

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1. Records cited by Regmi show that ammunitions and guns were imported from India; steel likewise; and machinery for making saltpetre was imported in the late 19th century (1971:156-8).
the holder, and no other, produces the harvest for the state's share. The terms of the arrangement stipulate his position as contingent on production, for it is only as long as he and only he, successfully generates a yield for revenue that he can stay on the land, for he cannot transfer it to another as his representative; nor leave and return; nor avoid handing over the state's share. Moreover, since the cultivator cannot transfer to another, the idea of tenancy in a rigorous sense does not appear to be applicable. He is a cultivator.

If tenancy were relevant as some authors insist, then one would expect that the peasant would have been able to sub-let or use a surrogate, the state not caring, as long as the revenue requirements were fulfilled. Instead, one finds an imperative connexion between the yield and the person who produces that yield. Yet it is so arranged that only the cultivator is to take the half. In this respect the peasant's relationship with the state is just like the other types of land arrangements for it is only where the cultivator provides a service to the state is he permitted to obtain something for himself. The implications of this are interesting.

It is easy to adopt an orientation which is tuned into our system of thought, especially when it comes to resource like land and the labour used to exploit it, by introducing ideas of proprietary rights. To be sure the king controlled the land's wealth and this had repercussions for the cultivator, but if we are to understand the nature of that exploitation it is necessary to understand the nature of the relation. The idea of tenancy as employed by Regmi, for example, does not give the right impression for it could be taken to presuppose a kind of peasant's rights, a leverage that he has in opposition to the king, and separate from the king. Following the gist of the official declarations, it is said that the "people belong to the king" and the "king to the people", and more important the king can expect from some, "their sweat and toil". This

1. The exceptions to the standard features of raikar occurred in the far western hill region and parts of the Tarai (Regmi, 1971:30-1) where with the first, transactions through mortgages were possible, and in the second, the person in whose name the holding was cited could get orders to work the land for him, and tax was extracted not in kind but in monies, in both. This was probably imperative given the distance from the capital. Where payment is not in kind but in cash then what is of concern for the state in other contexts, namely maximization of productivity, would not be so with tax which is fixed. In such contexts it is the surety of its cash revenue that is at issue. Therefore the seeming concessions make sense for when lots were transferred or worked by others such deviations would not affect the 'state's income.
is the important relationship for the peasant, and it is his discharging of obligations to the state that secures his own survival. Yet it is the king who is connected to the land. In this set-up, the peasant's position does not bear on occupancy rights which could imply a legalistic basis to his position but rather bears on his relationship with the king, for the cultivator's position is contingent to rendering a service to him. Perhaps it does not matter how the problem is approached since any approach will indicate the state's appropriation of the cultivator's surplus, yet I think by attempting to understand the phenomenon within its own terms first that we can more readily detect the nature of this kind of relationship. What comes out clearly is that the peasant is viewed by the state as nothing more than a cultivator of the state's wealth, simply labour-power to be utilised for its needs. The arrangements are such that the peasant is rendered utterly dependent on producing that yield for the state's share. Let us return to the conditions of the arrangement.

If he wants to survive he must produce for the state; this is obvious but crucial. If he leaves the plot he is working, he can only work elsewhere if he is allotted another, or else he is forced to clear the jungle and cultivate that, but in any case he is back where he started from. The army was an alternative employer but for that he had to be selected. So, the cultivator had little choice, apart from migrating, except to generate wealth for the state. When the obligation was not fulfilled, a range of retaliations could follow.

In the eventuality of eviction, the peasant family might have to start again, clearing another parcel of land, yet this would benefit the state's coffers since new lands would thereby be opened up. Then again, in situations where a tax collector acted as the broker, himself liable for the revenue, in a situation of arrears, the broker could take measures against the defaulting peasant. Measures could be harsh for "local officials" and "agents" often enslaved wives and children of peasants (Regmi, 1971:117-118), selling them in India.¹ In such circumstances however the state hardly approved for it was losing its population, as one report underlined, "the country is being ruined" (ibid: 118). State disapproval, clearly, was not necessarily against slavery, per se, but against depopulation. In fact, the state itself enslaved tax defaulters (ibid:118). What keeps coming through, loud and clear, is the state's

¹ Debt bondage could also result through arrears to a money lender (Regmi, 1971:118).
regulating of the subject's labour (ibid: 101-123). If the peasant can only generate a harvest for himself when he also produces for the state, then according to the terms of the *raikar* arrangement, in all probability the state gets its share. In this way the peasants are completely controlled because the conditions for their survival are contingent on producing a share for the state or its henchmen. The issue comes back to the centrality of the produce and the peasant's role in generating it.

In this kind of land relation there are repercussions which keep one category of persons as cultivators, and which are extremely important on two counts. Since it is the peasant who works the lands assigned as *jagirs* (and *birta*) and it is such assignees who run the machinery of government, they are thereby freed to undertake their tasks for the ruler; as well, there is the direct contribution to the state treasury for its own expenses and for trade, and the purchasing of armaments. Thus we come back to the points raised previously, and inevitably so, because the agrarian system was a totality, rendered piece-meal through the analysis. The terms of the cultivator's relations with the state, as they bear on land, are nothing more than the specifics of a general scheme, whereby the persons of this category are producing the wherewithal for the maintenance of the state. Given that according to this kind of land arrangement, their own survival depends on producing the revenue, and given that the alternative was migration, while they stayed however the dependence on the state ensured that this kind of social formation persisted. It persisted even though some individuals under later circumstances were able to bring about changes for themselves, as we shall see. For the moment we must pursue the situation of the peasant.

(ii) Compulsory Unpaid Labour:

The state could demand compulsory labour of every adult male (Regmi, 1971:103). Exemptions were only possible through royal order, generally bestowed to high ranking functionaries because of official duties. Sometimes the exemption was granted as a "royal favour" to those who had served the state well and pleased the ruler (ibid:103). Even so the idea of bondedness to the regime becomes most pressing and often least conspicuous

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1. To give one example, Nepal exported its grain to Tibet, in exchange for salt.
2. Priests of certain temples were allowed this concession also (ibid:103).
an imposition during the time of war, since the demand for allegiance to the state and its right over manpower and life is a state-imposed notion of citizenship. Sometimes citizens chose to reject this and join the enemy. On this score, there is the instance of the Limbus fighting on the other side "during the Nepal-China war" (Regmi, 1971:71). From the day to day angle, the state utilised unpaid compulsory labour for all kinds of projects, the construction of temples, dams, forts, roads, the capturing of wild elephants, or whatever the state required (Regmi, 1971: 102-7)\(^1\). Given these kinds of arrangements, plus the use of peasant labour for farming, slavery was not utilised directly in the running of the state but was deployed primarily in the domestic arena.\(^2\) Though slavery\(^3\) is the most glaring instance of control over some people by others, yet it should not detract attention from the other forms of control, where the state has the power to enforce obedience from its subjects. It is there with raikar, and though less obvious with birta and jagir, it is perhaps more insidious, for those people directly implementing the state's bidding, are its tools to be played with at the ruler's pleasure. While the weaker citizens were oppressed and subjugated, the so-called "political elites" were manipulated through the institution of "the favoured". That aside, the concern at this point is with the specific forced labour set-up.

Out of the various areas where regular forced labour was deployed it is not fortuitous that these which related to the security and maintenance of the state and the supply of goods and services for the palace, were the ones around which a special scheme known as rakam developed. If the state were to run these essential services efficiently then the manpower would have to be available when required. To this end the state granted the worker certain concessions.

1. It is worth noticing that the forced labour impositions appear to recognise caste differences and their corresponding caste requirements. The following instruction to the official in charge of a project takes heed of the variation;

Brahmins have traditionally been employed at checkpoints. Newars and others whose caste status permits them to work inside mines, shall do so. Other castes shall be employed in stone, earth and wood outside the mines (in Regmi, 1971:103-4).

2. For an account of enslavable categories in terms of caste, see Sharma, 1975: 294.

3. Treasonable actions, and violations of certain caste laws provoked the condition of slavery (Regmi, 1971:117-19). Also, tax delinquency could result in slavery (ibid:122).
What is called "rakam" is actually about fixed compulsory labour from the tiller's point of view, and the rationalisation of essential services from the state's point of view. The term relates to the work the peasant was obliged to perform on a regular basis, but who in addition had to generate produce or monies which were shared with another, whether this was the state as in raikar or with the state's agent (jagir), or a significant official (as with birta), or the guthi set-up to be discussed. It is worth mentioning at this juncture that an additional variant of state service was practised where the function was attached to lands (seva birta) allotted for specific tasks, like the performance of music, making of art pieces, certain crafts, and so forth. Since rakam was more extensive, the discussion will focus on this.

The regular compulsory service was practised especially in the hill areas including Kathmandu valley. Given that particular villages or areas were earmarked for service (Regmi, 1976: 156-7) and the personnel were recruited from "lower class people" (ibid:168) and that the bulwark of the service often came from the non-Limbu kipat holders, and since kipat is the tribal mode of land arrangement, then it would seem that tribals (other than Limbu) (ibid:156) constituted the life-line of the scheme. The state imposed a quota of seventy-two days of compulsory labour per year from the rakam workers (Regmi, 1976:161). The difference between this routinized labour and the other compulsory labour, was one of irregularity, deploying labour according to the task at hand, and when required the peasant was expected to come forth (ibid:157). In contrast, the characteristic nature of the work associated with rakam was transport.

Given the nature of the Nepalese terrain where the channels flow north/south

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1. Though called "seva birta", it should not be confused with birta proper since the former entailed particular tasks often of an "onerous" nature (see Gaborieau,1978:34) whereas in comparison, birta is a perquisite, as we have seen. Also see Gaborieau's accounts of the Muslim bangle-makers, one group operating within the seva birta confines (ibid:46-7).

2. The difficulty of precisely identifying the ethnic and caste composition of peoples implicated in the different land arrangements is most unfortunate, though glimmerings of what is happening appear. It is hardly likely for example, that the conquered tribals or Newars of Pani natchalne jat would constitute the category for the recruitment of jagirdars. Most surnames of the state officials on documents cited by Regmi and Stiller, the two historians who have lavishly supplied these, contain Parbatya names, members of the thread-wearing caste category.

3. Ordinary forced unpaid labour (jbara) fell on raikar workers in general and no concessions were involved as was the case with the variant of raikar, rakam.
but the nation stretches in a band from west to east but this is blocked by the terrific mountain barriers, where transport was achieved through human power only, then the work that these people performed can hardly be underestimated. They were the carters of arms and ammunition, as well the bearers of sedan chairs for the privileged according to circumstance. Then again they kept the bureaucratic channels open through carrying the state's dispatches, or carted the supply of wood fuel (ibid:158-9).  

For engaging in the rakhām imperative, the peasant was ostensibly given certain "concessions" by the state. These, when examined turn out to do little more than expedite the smooth running of the porterage organisation. In short, the features around rakhām were simply measures to avoid the dislocation of compulsory labour service. The "facilities" offered by the government detailed by Regmi, bear this out:

Rakhām workers who cultivated Raikār or Jagīr lands were traditionally exempted from the liability to provide porterage services for transporting rents to Jagīrdars. Nor were Jagīrdars permitted to evict defaulting Rakhām cultivators directly, as this would dislocate Rakhām services. The local headman of Rakhām workers was responsible for insuring full collection on behalf of the Jagīdar, and also for finding a suitable replacement if eviction was necessary.

...transfers of Rakhām lands were permitted only if the purchaser assumed liability for the appropriate Rakhām services. Similarly, Rakhām workers were permitted to appoint tenants to cultivate their lands provided they continued to discharge the prescribed Rakhām obligations themselves (Regmi, 1976:165-6).

Taking these one by one: porterage for the jagīrdār would mean not being available when the state needed the carrier's services. Secondly, when eviction pertained through default of providing the jagīrdār his due, then the responsibility to find a substitute worker fell on the headman. Thirdly, allowing transfer of access to lands associated with the rakhām worker was contingent on the new party's assumption of the compulsory labour to the state also. Finally, that a surrogate could work the land was conditional to the continuity of compulsory labour service.

What looks like security (not to be removed from holdings other than for non-payment of dues) and a concession (not to have to carry the jagīrdār's revenues) also means that the labourer is not absent when required. From this point of view, rakhām relation is a part of the rationalisation of labour - that the citizen is doing what the state wants

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1. Though the rakhām service was typically associated with porterage, it had been employed in one important area till 1888. Until that time gunpowder was processed in unmechanised "factories" but after the introduction of machinery, this was stopped (ibid:158).
him to be doing at that point in time. The fact that the rakam holder could transfer his rights to the particular piece of land does not alter the situation because the purchaser had to assume the forced labour obligations to the state associated with the particular parcel of land. In any of these evaluations, the rakam holder had to work that holding and pay over the dues to the absent beneficiary, whether he be the jagir holder or the state. His only real concession was exemption on the homestead tax, (Regmi, 1976:157) but this too had its political strings. Since it is a perquisite (though small) that accompanies rakam, it might be implemented. But if the particular individual is to benefit from the exemption, he must disclose the association between himself and his rakam position but in so doing, the state has a record of the worker's whereabouts.

Despite the fact that refusal to comply meant loss of entitlement to cultivate those lands associated with the rakam service, people did abscond (Regmi, 1976:162). Relinquishing of holdings was preferred if this meant avoiding this onerous service. "Compulsory" is the key to this kind of situation as it is to the other, the irregular type. It appears most forcefully on those occasions when soldiers enter the village to round up the recalcitrant workers (1971:110). Though the state's control of people is blatant in these kinds of situations it was not limited to this, nor was the method always as crude.

(iii) The Entrenchment of Raikar:

The different kinds of tenure that we have been discussing operated in Nepal for over one hundred and fifty years, and some of which had roots in earlier times, as with birta. During that period there were modifications and sometimes reversions, details of which are to be found in Regmi's wealth of documentation. He discusses how various features of raikar changed, especially from the middle of the last century under the Rana regime. Where originally raikar meant "stay put, cultivate and pay your dues", later the raikar holder was permitted to have others work the holding, and also to "relinquish" his rights to others. Of the situation, Regmi says that it shows the "emergence of an intermediary class on the land", intermediary between the state and the cultivator (1976:182). First of all, let us indicate what was happening.

Initially, all that happened was that the state turned a blind eye, as Regmi says, to the transfers between raikar holder and a third party.

1. Like making some birta grants taxable.
Since this occurred in the context of monetisation, with the development of rich and poor cultivators, the purchaser of the holding had the wherewithal to pay the tax liabilities of the seller. The state recognised the relinquishing of the raikar holder's right only when the purchaser assumed the tax liabilities of the original holder (ibid:176) which presumably he could do, if he were wealthy enough to buy a raikar holding. Eventually the state did legislate to recognise the raikar transfer in 1921 (ibid:177). Yet this gesture only went so far, and not far enough to infer the emergence of property rights, as I understand the matter.

The state only recognised transfer and not property rights since it retained power to allocate raikar as birta, just as it did with ordinary raikar (ibid:178). In such an eventuality, then the purchaser would have been left high and dry for the surplus of the land would have been taken by the birta beneficiaries (ibid:173). Though there was some allowance for compensation, it was hedged in with the requirement that it would only occur where a homestead had been constructed and even that is not clear (cf. ibid: 176, 178). Moreover if the state did retain its power to treat the holding as raikar, reallocating it as it deemed fit and without compensation (ibid:178), then, from the state's point of view, little had changed in its relation with the land. This is further borne out by its legal treatment of these holdings.

The status of the holding did not change since the legal term, "peasant" (mohi), continued to be employed for the purchasers as for ordinary raikar holders, which indicates that the state had gone no further than recognising transfer without surrendering its rights over the raikar land. The terminology of the legislation refers to "transactions" and "registrations" (ibid:177). If all that the state did was recognise the transfer from one citizen to another, then it was not endorsing a change in legal status of the raikar holder, nor allowing that transfer to affect its relation to the holding. This has bearings on my rendition of the pattern of relations around land.

Regmi says that there was the intrusion of a third party, the emergence of an "intermediary class", yet I have suggested that land relations in general and the raikar in particular are best understood in dyadic terms. To be sure three parties are now involved, the state, the raikar holder and cultivator, yet from the legal point of view the relation remains dyadic since the state did not allow the fact of purchase

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1. With monetisation, came the lenders and the amassing of monies by some people, with the reduction to penury of others (ibid:189-191).
to enter its calculations but treated this as a private matter between the citizens (ibid:78) However what we perceive is a fluctuation in the government's orientation, according to contingencies, yet in each instance, the framework includes two terms.

To take one kind of situation, where the state could "resume" it as raïkar, or allocate it as birta (ibid:178). Here the presence of the purchaser is irrelevant for he is totally disregarded by the state. If this is so, then the purchaser's right is ignored and the state treats the matter as dyadic, comprising itself (or its agent, the beneficiary) and the cultivator, in those contexts where it wants to reorganise the holdings. In other contexts, it is still dyadic, even though here, the purchaser is recognised.

Now when the state recognised the transfer, but the holder's use of surrogates was not treated as a consideration, it was in a situation where tax obligations could be met. This is dyadic. It is also dyadic when the state treated the holding as ordinary raïkar, allocating it as birta, for then it ignored the presence of the purchaser, allowing for the operation of the traditional two, beneficiary and the cultivator and maintaining its prerogative to grant birta from raïkar. Just as important as the nature of structural patterning is what the state gained, for one sees that in the fluctuations the state cannot lose: tax security when it wants, and control over lands to be distributed when it wants. Such being the niceties of the affair, especially since the state retained its control over this kind of holding, is this a situation of the emergence of a landowning class, as Regmi implies?

If the state could assume control over such holdings without compensation (ibid:178) and could ignore the purchased right, allocating the holding as birta (ibid:178-9), then this type of raïkar holding would not constitute a form of "private property" nor the base of a "land-owning class", but a situation where there were persons with large holdings, but without the legal security that these would remain theirs. Only when the interim constitution of 1951 declared the right to "acquire, use and sell", do bona fide property rights appear (ibid:229). Previously, if the rights were precarious and contingent on the state's discretion,
then those holders could not be interpreted as constituting a propertied class strictly speaking, despite the inordinate extent of their assets.

(e) Jimindar, the Latter-day "Developer" and Tax-collector:

The jimindar is an office and the bearer in one context acted as a "developer". If this type of official is to be understood as a "developer", and developers are notorious for pursuing their own gain, how could his achievements be of service to the state? A further complication is that a jimindar was a tax state agent and not a holding, though land was involved. Initially, a jimindar was an administrator and a tax collector where the state allotted him a percentage of the collection and land for himself, (Regmi, 1976:104-6). However, later a scheme instigated by the first Rana Prime Minister, Jang Bahadur Rana, aimed to develop the Tarai region and it was here that the jimindar arrangement took a special form, though tax collection and organisation remained central.

The jimindars were expected to undertake the opening up of large tracts of the Tarai providing credit to the workers, seeds and equipment (Regmi, 1976:107-121). In the venture the peasant farmers were drawn mainly from India in the reclamation task, at least during the earlier period of development. As an incentive the jimindars were given rights to one-tenth of all the land reclaimed, while the rest fell to the workers in a raikar situation. The tenth share constituted the jimindar's tax-exempt birta (ibid:108). In addition, he was allowed, as jirayat, any remaining waste lands for which there were no settlers available. This functioned as a raikar and therefore he had to pay tax on its proceeds. On his lands, he could utilize the unpaid labour of the settlers. Such were the terms permitted by the government. For his part, not only was the jimindar to pioneer development of new lands but he was personally liable for the revenue collection of the lands under his control, though for the period of initial development (ten years) the state allowed tax exemption. Moreover, the state also allowed transfer of the right to another person, or to several, since the set-up was allowed to be fractioned and managed by a number of people (ibid:112). This also

1. See Regmi for details on the early form of jimindar (1976:104-6). There is also some confusion about the label and whether it constitutes a different type from the zamindar (see Regmi, 1971:32-3 especially pts 80, 81, 83; 1976: 104, 106-7, 234, 236).
2. The Tarai constitutes the focus of an up-to-date study of Regionalism and National Unity in Nepal by Gaige (1975).
suggests that the affair was not a straightforward matter geared to predetermined success.

In so far as the jimindār acted as an investor in the opening of the new territory, presumably the allocation of one-tenth of these as his birta was merely a variation of the formula, a service to the state, except in this instance it was tied proportionately to the achievement reached in the enterprise. Confronting the developer, there was the jungle, malaria and the terrific heat, and especially the contingencies that come through working with nature, despite the incentive of tax exemption during the early phase of settlement. Though losing out initially, after that period, the state obtained its revenue for all cultivated lands (apart from the jimindār's own birta) since they all fell under the raikar arrangement (including his own jirayat). In addition to organizing development and utilizing his own monies, the jimindār assumed tax collection, which was his own personal liability, and bearing in mind the complications around this, the jimindār fulfilled an important function for the state. That in so doing the jimindār may have perpetrated inequities on the peasant, is not the point. Nor presumably was it of concern to the state. Of relevance to the discussion is the point that the state could not lose by the arrangements, for if the man wanted a birta of maximum size, he would have had to declare the total extent of the reclamation, where the more that was declared the more revenue it could obtain. It is hardly fortuitous that the scheme stipulated that the birta grant should be proportionate to the total of all the reclaimed lands, from which the state derived revenue. Nor was the timing fortuitous.

The scheme was promoted by Jang Bahadur Rana, the first hereditary Prime Minister, at the same time as he was wooing the British, in fact with such intensity that he personally led a regiment of Nepalese troops against the Indians in the Sepoy Mutiny, and, as is well known, over the years an alliance was built up between the Ranas and the British. With support from the British, the Ranas had an extra-territorial power base, rather than a potential enemy. Prior to this period of Rana-British friendship, the large scale development of the Tarai had not been arduously pursued since the wild character of the jungle served as a natural blockade against foreign attack. The shift in policy is to be partly understood in the context of changed foreign relations. That aside, more relevant for our discussion is the nature of the terms of the jimindār's
holdings.

Up to this stage, though the developer-cum-collector's usefulness to the state is clear enough, what is peculiar about this type of relation between state and this type of agent? A period of tax-exemption for the initial phase of clearing and settlement was standard practice, though with *raiwar* it was permitted for a shorter period (three years generally).¹ So was the utilisation of unpaid labour on an agent's lands. What is peculiar is the bestowal of *birta*, a handsome payment when the current practice for emoluments was primarily rendered through *jagir*.² The allocation of *birta* makes sense since this was permanent and development of this kind could not operate effectively on a temporary basis. In turn, the proportional nature of the *birta*'s extent was hooked into the degree of success in the implementation of the enterprise. In fact, the scheme is only formulated in terms of what happens when the venture proves successful. This is where the state's position becomes clear. Though the *jimindar* outlays all the monies for the enterprise, should it fail, there was no indemnity forthcoming from the state. Yet if the enterprise were successful the state had its insured revenue since the *jimindar* was held personally responsible for the tax on the entire settlement under his jurisdiction. Therefore it was that kind of arrangement where if the *jimindar* were successful, the state would take its revenue, however, if he lost out then the matter was treated as his private affair. It eventuates that the state was only involved where there were gains, but it shared none of the risks. It could only win.

(f) Guthi Endowments:

*Guthi* land is land dedicated for the implementation of some religious function, like ritual, or maintenance of temples, or acquisition of merit.³ When so dedicated, the produce of the land is used to fulfil the particular purpose of the endowment. This means that the state withholds its right to revenue on *guthi* lands, a withholding that theoretically is irrevocable, so that such lands are permanently tied up to the religious purpose. Out of all the types of land arrangements, it is the only one which the state generally treats as inviolable. Of all the traditional types of land

1. See Regmi, 1976: 123-6, the Tarai settlers were allowed five years' exemption 1976:109.
2. Except to members of the Rana family.
3. This is distinct from the Newar organisations which are also called *guthi* (see Regmi, 1976:48).
arrangements, it is the only one on which the state has not imposed radical changes, through recent land reform legislation. In so far as it diverges from the other types, it is both interesting and significant.

*Guthi* lands were bequeathed by the rulers, and by private citizens who held *birta* lands, and by *raikar* holders after transfers were permitted. As usual, *guthi* land was worked by the peasants and the surplus was allocated for implementing the purpose of the endowment. Such endowments were given for various reasons but these all appear to fall into one general category, attempts at wrestling well-being from those forces outside oneself, and implemented through either rituals directed at the gods for advantages in the here and now; or through the act of giving, whereby the individual attains merit and with this the hoped for advantages in life after death (Regmi, 1976: 50-2). Once bequeathed, not even a creditor, whoever he may be, had the right to claim the lands in lieu of the outstanding debts (Regmi, 1976:54). Though at one stage of their operation they were used as a tax dodge, even in this, it was imperative to fulfil the purpose of their bestowal first. The dodge consisted of surrendering say, *birta* grants for a specific religious function, a function which presumably cost less than the beneficiary's proportion and then retaining what was left over. Moreover, since the right was inviolable it gave some modicum of protection against the state's rescinding of the rights to the land in question (ibid:58).

Legislation passed after the revolution made it impossible to manipulate *guthi* lands in this way. What interests us is less the tax dodge and bids for security by private citizens, but more the state's abdication of its rights to the products, an abdication that persists to this day; and also the problem that in sanctioning the inviolability of such bequests, the state might be regarded as radically departing from its stand in the other land schemes. It is the only instance where the state has surrendered permanent control of the arrangements, unlike its posture with *birta*, where it retains the right to bestow and withdraw. With *guthi*, the state permanently and irrevocably surrenders its prerogative over those land parcels, which must be utilised only for the expressed religious purposes for which they were dedicated. The idea of "pledged" land (*sankalpa*) is central, and in the past it was sometimes called that (see Regmi; 1976:47 footnote 11). Though there were exceptions, and occasions when a ruler

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1. According to Regmi four per cent of all cultivated land in Nepal was under the *guthi* scheme in 1950 (1976:56). Today, the *Guthi* Corporation "is the largest landowner in Nepal" (ibid:69).
did moot the possibility of reallocating the wealth for another purpose\(^1\), the interesting thing is that the exceptions have been fewer than the recognition of inviolability. There are other interesting aspects of ruler's orientation towards the \textit{guthi} set-up.

It was the state itself which was the largest donor of such lands, lands lost irrevocably for the stipulated cause (Regmi, 1976:56-7). Yet the wealth was used for rituals, whereas the ruler could have been deployed if elsewhere, for example weapons or as funds for further aggrandisement of his own divinity. To boot, recourse to rituals, if anything, minimises the supremacy of divine kings by positing and recognising the existence of forces that he wants to tap which therefore are forces more powerful than himself. Unlike the other relations, this appears to have a cost for the state.

Yet, it is easy to overlook the simple point, that rulers are also believers who are also concerned to obtain favours from the gods. In fact, the records reveal that many of the donations were made with just that purpose of ensuring success in some delicate venture, by wrestling divine help. One ruler for example, made an enormous bequeath to Brahmins "for performing mystic rites to ward off the Chinese invasion" (\textit{ibid}:52). If, according to Hindu formulations, it is with the gods that the "real power" lies, and via the Brahmin's work these can be tapped then the ruler's actions constitute attempts to gain, though this operates in a non-empirical venue. In a similar vein, the \textit{guthi} allocations for annual events, like worshipping of the god of rain (Indra), instead of a historic threat, are directed at tapping such forces with the expectation of some benefit arising as a consequence. In other words, the actualisation of the \textit{guthi} wealth is to be understood for what it appears to be for those involved, attempts to provoke favourable responses from what are perceived as formidable powers. However, a difficulty arises for the argument, since this could imply that there is no distinct benefit for the state, since the entire population could benefit from the fruition of the ritual performance in those instances where the \textit{guthi} holdings are allocated for such purposes. Then there are also the specific grants given by individuals, simply to gain merit for themselves (Regmi, 1976:59).\(^2\)

\(^{1}\text{There is a popular story that the Malla king mooted that \textit{guthi} wealth be appropriated for procuring means of defending Kathmandu against the invading army of Prithivinarayan Shah, but in the end discountenanced this possibility.}\)

\(^{2}\text{Stiller summarises the situation," gratitude to the gods", to temples and Brahmins (1973:287).}\)
Contrariwise I have suggested that whatever the type of land arrangement, there is generally some correlating 'pay-off' for the state.

According to the terms of this kind of land arrangement the task at hand must be fulfilled, otherwise it is not guthi, as we have noted, and it is the state's function to patrol this, ensuring that the terms of the pledge are actualised, and that the lands are not transferred for other purposes (ibid:59). Now, if the state maintains the inviolability of this arrangement, seeing to it that the wealth is not used for other purposes, it is adhering to its brief as the protector of Hindu values. From another angle the same task is fulfilled since the state punishes any desecration of sacred sites (see Hodgson, 1836:127). With the guthi lands dedicated to a religious purpose several dimensions come together.

The context is a Hindu kingdom where the king is co-extensive with the territory, protector of the peoples, preserver of the peace and the one who establishes a special kind of order, a Hindu order. Though the last feature has not been elaborated in great detail and will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, it can be taken for granted that this holds. Within the Hindu order, the invisible forces are cognised as relevant and powerful and the acquisition of merit as an important endeavour. Since the wealth of the guthi lands are earmarked for such purposes, they cannot be withdrawn for this would be to ignore such values. By operating guthi as it ought, the ruler puts into effect his role as the protector of these values and actualises a living Hindu order. Politically it is to the ruler's interest.
CHAPTER 21

THE LAWS AND THE HINDU ORDER

Many of the standard ideas about the state's position in the application of the laws are inadequate for the Nepalese situation. For example, punishment, usually the state's prerogative, is transferred to an individual in the instance where the cuckolded husband is permitted to kill the paramour, cut off his wife's nose and expel her from the house. Even though, by the concession, the state transferred its punitive powers in this particular instance, yet at the same time it upheld another value about what is the proper kind of relationship obtaining between a man and his wife. It brings into relief the necessity that conceptions about other kinds of legal systems cannot be readily imposed in this context (see Stiller, 1976:159). Nor can one simply say that, through the operation of the laws, the state merely arbitrated disputes over conflicting claims to rights and maintained the peace, thereby fulfilling the important function of any state; there is more to the Hindu laws than this, as commentator after commentator has remarked. Nor does the particular sociological view hold which focuses on "rights", noting they are differentially distributed, and thereby deducing, as Tambiah (1973) has done, that the laws merely support the prevailing system of "power and privileges" oriented according to the caste hierarchy. The approach is too narrow to incorporate the material readily. For example, there was a Nepalese ruling which protected the life of all women, and thereby also protected the Untouchable woman. It, like some other laws, for example, against killing cows, has little to do with maintaining the line of power and privilege according to caste rank, though this is not to say that the general orientation is irrelevant. The problem is to identify why such actions as killing women, cows, and so forth, were perceived as great sins which provoked the ultimate form of punishment. Such crimes related to core Hindu values, which the state sought to uphold through the machinery of the courts. Not only were there numerous laws of this nature but many of them permeated important areas of life. While any state takes upon itself the "administration of justice" in disputes over contrary claims to certain rights, yet what is characteristically Hindu are those additional laws which distinguish the Hindu polity or "caste society".

The ideas and practices of the traditional system are described
by Hodgson, a British resident during the last century. He refers to
the features which were in the mainstream of the traditional judicial
system consistent with records of past practices (see Stiller, 1976:168).
Let his comments set the stage for they bring out key points which
provide a general background:

The penal law of Nepal, a Hindu state, is necessarily founded
on the Sastras; nor is there anything material in its
marvellous crimes, and more marvellous proofs, for which
abundance of justificatory texts may not be produced out of
the code of Menu, and others equally well known on the plains.

...If, then, there be any material difference between the
Hinduism of Nepal, considered as a public institution, and that
of the Hindu states of the plains, the cause of it must be
sought, not in any difference of the law, the sanctity and
immutability of which are alike acknowledged here and there;
but in the different spirit and integrity with which the
sacred guides, common to both, are followed in the mountains
and in the plains. The Hindu princes of the plains, subject
for ages to the dominion or dictation of Muhammedan and
European powers, have, by a necessity more or less palpable
and direct, ceased to take public judicial cognisance of acts,
which they must continue to regard as crimes of the deepest
dye, but the sacredly prescribed penalties of which they dare
not judicially enforce; and thus have been long since dismissed
domestic tribunals and the forums of conscience, all the
most essential but revolting dogmata of Hindu jurisprudence
(1834:45).

...The code of Menu and other Hindu sages are full of these
strange enormities; but it is in Nepal alone (for reasons
already stated) that the sword of public justice is now
wielded to realize them.

...Whilst their literal fulfilment is the Hindu magistrate’s
most sacred obligation, British magistrates shrink with horror
and disgust at the very thought of them; and he will be better
prepared to appreciate and make allowance for the sentiments
of Hindu sovereigns and Hindu magistrates. The Hindu sovereigns
dare not, and we will not obey the sacred mandate. But in
Nepal, it is the pride and glory of the magistrate to obey it,
literally, blindly, unbiased by foreign example, unawed by
foreign power (1834: 47-8).1

The obvious, but important point is that the Hindu laws were imposed by
the state, and sacred texts like Manu served as basic references. What
were designated crimes, according to Hindu conceptions, were extraordinary,
in Hodgson's eyes, just as what was taken to constitute a proof. Further,
the relevance of patriotism, though it tends to get overlooked in the
anthropological literature does not escape the perceptive foreign
resident, and is, I think, a critical wing in the workings of

1. Hodgson's stresses.
traditional Hindu states. The Nepalese kingdom was not only zealously committed to Hindu values, but also through this, it distinguished itself from other states and therefore articulated both a spirit of patriotism and also a certitude about the import and rightness of administering this kind of order, while neighbours were forced to succumb to all kinds of pressures. In comparison, Nepalese autonomy to implement the traditional Hindu ways is underlined. However it might be misleading simply to rush to the peculiar, without some consideration of general disputes which were significant issues taking up much of the court's time (see Stiller, 1976: 168-171). Nevertheless, the major concern in this chapter is with the Hindu dimension of the legal apparatus.

1. Disputes:

(a) The traditional mode of handling disputes:

If there is not much that is distinctively Hindu in the fact that the state provided machinery for the settlement of disputes, is there anything of interest to be said about the way the courts handled them? There are three aspects of the legal process; What Hodgson calls the "oath", the "ordeal", and the "confessions". All seem to be based on a Hindu orientation that only the individuals concerned, and the gods know the truth. Both, "the oath" and "the ordeal" are instances of what Hodgson refers to as "marvellous proofs". Further the utilisation of such procedures indicates the nature of the state's role in the settling of disputes which appears to be different from what westerners understand by the legal process, in that ultimately adjudication is irrelevant.

One of the "marvellous proofs", the utterances under "oath", was taken as evidence and appears to have been regarded as authentic, if not more so, than what we would call "objective" evidence. This kind of testimony was apparently given by all participants, defendant and plaintiff as well as external witnesses, after the individual has cursed all those who falsely testify. Both the self-cursing and the relevant material were uttered while a sacred text was held on the person's head; it remained there while he was making his case. The message of the self cursing is that he "who gives false evidence destroys his children and ancestors both body and soul, and his own earthly prosperity" (Hodgson, 1836:118). What the man says about himself and others is taken

1. I use the term "external" to distinguish them from the particular, for as Hodgson says "parties can always be witnesses in their own cases and always speak under the same penalties for falsehood as external witnesses" (1836:118).
2. If a Hindu, a Hindu sacred text, if Buddhist, Buddhist, and if Moslem, a Moslem text was used (ibid:118).
as "evidence" which is as likely to be true as a document, for that can be forged. Even when external evidence was overwhelmingly against the defendant, the court did not act without the defendant's confession. When a self-confession was not forthcoming a harassment could be inflicted, and even after this if the accused continued to deny his guilt and persisted in refusing to confess his crime, he could demand trial by "ordeal", or trial by the gods (ibid: 119-21). This is the second of Hodgson's marvellous proofs, and for our purposes the other feature which indicates an orientation that only the gods (and the individuals concerned) can know what actually happened. ¹ That the court demanded either that the culprit himself confess his guilt or if not, allow the verdict to be made by the gods, both indicate a Hindu orientation that knowledge of the truth comes from participants or deities. Without one or the other, the state neither passed sentence nor penalised the accused. This in turn has bearings on ideas about the court's role in litigation.

The necessity for the two procedures, the self-confession or trial by the gods, indicates that it is either the defendant who must convict himself or, if not, the gods. This would mean that the important function of the courts was to provide the context for either to emerge, rather than to determine innocence or guilt. Had the court's responsibility been otherwise, it would have passed sentence without the self-confession or the ordeal but in no instance was this possible. That the ordeal was seen as efficacious presupposes an orientation where chance has no place at all. After securing the truth in either way, the state passed sentence and imposed the penalty.

Such procedures reveal that Hindu conceptions were not irrelevant in litigation. If the state's role was to provide the situation where the truth was to emerge then its mode of administering justice was of a Hindu kind, and also what was especially important was its role in punishment, for along with this an individual could also atone for his sins. This was executed by the guilty person's touching a stone regarded

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¹. During the performance of the ordeal the Brahmin performs a rite to Varuna, and reads from a sacred text. According to Hodgson,

The meaning of which is, that mankind know not what passes in the minds of each other, but that all inward thoughts are known to the gods, Sūrya and Chandra, and Varuna and Yama, and that they will do right between the parties to this dispute (ibid:121).
as the symbol of the king's feet. \(^1\) It is not clear whether all offences, civil and penal and Hindu crimes (like breaking caste taboos or cow slaughter) or only those which are peculiarly Hindu, could be expiated in this way. The attachment of sin to the crime is presented by Hodgson as diagnostic but that does not clearly illuminate the issue, because he does not elaborate what crimes are not regarded as sinful (see note 1836:126). At least one point is clear, that the provision for the offender's atonement parallels a declaration by Manu, that the king's punishment now, obviates the necessity to exhaust sin later.\(^2\) If according to the indigenous approach there is an inextricable intertwining of "religion" and "power", Dumont's separation of the two appears not to hold.

Before considering characteristically Hindu crimes, it is necessary to say something briefly about one of the state's major concerns, what ultimately boils down to corruption.

(b) The state's overriding concerns:

The scriptural injunction to the king is to protect the weak from the powerful, yet in judicial dispatches, the predominant concern is that the state's delegates do not misappropriate the funds of the omnipotent but hardly omnipresent ruler. That is to say, ironically, the preoccupation is that the "powerful" (the state itself) is not abused by the comparatively weaker, its officials.

Since the state controls the wealth of the country, one of its major concerns was that it not be appropriated by those who had the opportunity, especially the officials. Many of the judicial regulations were directed to this self-interested end.

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1. As Hodgson details, the judge commands the loser to put some money on the stone, to touch it, and then says to him, You have committed an offence against the Maharaja as well as the other party: that stone is the symbol of the Raja's feet, touch it, thereby acknowledging your offence, and be freed (note 1836:126).

Since the stone has the footmarks of Viṣṇu engraved on it, the king is invoked during the proceedings, the king as incarnation of Viṣṇu is relevant.

2. Manu says, VIII, 318. But men who have committed crimes and have been punished by the king, go to heaven, being pure like those who performed meritorious deeds (in Buhler (tr.) 1969:309).
In one dispatch of 1804, (in Stiller 1976: 79-85) from the current king to his administrators, of forty clauses of instructions, the bulk (fourteen) related to offences where the officials might misappropriate state revenue of lands,¹ a few more (six) related to ordinary subjects' shady actions which were to the state's disadvantage.² This if directives reflect a preoccupation, the ruler was certainly preoccupied with his own interest. In contrast, only a minimal number (four) referred to disputes between subjects, (issues over land or creditor's rate of interest).³ Another condemned the practitioners of illicit slavery,⁴ that is slavery not ratified by the state, for slavery as we know was lawful.⁵ The document opens with a warning about bribery, elaborating on the punishment applicable. One would expect the state's major concern, that officials did not dip into state revenue, for corruption seems to be an inevitable repercussion of the impermanence of the "favour", (the idiom of autocratic rule) along with the problem of monitoring the delegate. Hence many of the documents bear the admonition to avoid or monitor corruption and to be true to the king. For example, "Accept no bribes. Be true to our salt" appears in the judicial regulation we have been discussing (in Stiller, 1976:79).⁶ As for the relations between subject and subject, when the courts operated to preserve the peace, this also bore advantages for the state.

The state's role in litigation between subjects had its cost for them, since not only did the convicted culprit have to pay a fine, but the winner had to pay special fee (jitauri Nep.) to the ruler,⁷ presumably because the court's decision went in his favour. Either way, the subjects contributed handsomely to the coffers, so much so that the "administration of justice has been interpreted as a front for obtaining revenue".⁸ Another was a kind of ratification fee, the salami (Nep.), which was little less than a coffer-filler. To ensure that the decisions

1. Clauses 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, 21, 25, 27, 31, 38, 39.
2. Clauses 5, 11, 26, 29, 36, 40.
3. Clauses 2, 7, 33, 37.
5. Of the others, five were about caste matters, and two related to religious issues like destroying temples. The remainder instructed the officials to gather information.
6. See also clause (16) of the royal dispatch sent in 1828 (in Stiller, 1976:171).
7. See clause (1) in the list of instructions issued by the king, in 1828 (in Stiller, 1976:169).
8. Stiller (1976:179) interprets this aspect of the system as a straightforward means of providing revenue. As well, the subjugated rulers of the mini-kingdoms were allowed to retain the right of collecting judicial fines, as a perquisite, a point detailed in the royal dispatch of 1769 cited earlier.
were upheld, that fines and fees were paid and the sentences inflicted, the courts had troops assigned to them (see Regmi, 1971:209).

In a conquest state, or a state which discriminates against some members of the population, epithets like "justice", "laws" when applied to the legal apparatus, merely and clearly evoke the questions, "whose laws?" "whose justice"? Moreover, when it is a matter of rule by one person over the multitude, one can only but wonder how. Even if the troops were stationed in the courts, what would induce them to do the ruler's bidding? The same question applies in the instance of the judges for that matter. The land arrangements which served the officials' interest, as we have seen, played a part in binding the officials to the ruler, yet there was more to it than that. The repercussions of the peculiarly Hindu laws ultimately also have bearing on the operation of absolute rule in a Hindu kingdom. More immediately, it can be asked what is happening with the implementation of the characteristically Hindu laws?

2. Making and Maintaining 'Culture':

To depict the Nepalese legal system as "The Administration of Justice", if justice is taken to refer to disputes and the upholding of rights, though undoubtedly relevant to the state's task, would be too limited a depiction to incorporate all that was involved. This is because the kingdom's laws related not only to the protection of rights as happens with disputes over debts, for example, but also to core Hindu values. Nor can some of the offences be exactly described as being of a personal nature, better suited to "some domestic court" or to the "confessional" as Hodgson remarks,¹ (1834:47-8) because according to this kind of conceptualization they are not simply about personal proclivities but relate to other aspects as well. For example, activities stipulated as crimes in many instances take reference from ideas about the nature of the people involved (offenders, or culprit and victim), and are seen to propel consequences which affect the ontological state of the individual and even others not directly involved. Sometimes an entire caste, and even the entire city were implicated (Hodgson, ibid:47). Moreover, retention of caste levels was perceived as a critical part of the legal apparatus, since the court demanded purification when loss had occurred

¹ Though Hodgson undoubtedly recognises the importance of caste differentiation in the legal system, such remarks indicate an approach via western conceptions.
through some caste transgression in such instances, an imperative which came as often as penalisation. Therefore, in a way, two kinds of offences in the legal administration can be analytically distinguished.

There were those cases which infringed rights, and those that infringed rules. If we were to use the old anthropological construct, "culture" in the sense of "proper ways of behaving", it would readily apply to the rule dimension of Hindu laws. If that is the case then with the administration of the laws what was happening was that the state was making and perpetuating a special kind of "culture", or special order. And in the divergence, punishment, sometimes less severely, sometimes with the harshest of measures and, most important, purifications also were inflicted. If such rules were depicted as "rights", this would not bring their characteristic nature into relief. For example, the injunction, that a higher caste person must not take water from an Untouchable, cannot quite be designated a "right" or an "absence of rights". Rather, rules like this, which are distinctive, are of a kind which permeate into important areas of everyday life requiring that behaviour is commensurate with the ontological levels of the caste ranks. They also indicate the state's concern that the different caste levels are maintained, and recovered when lost, for, in the eventuality of loss, it was the state which also stipulated the purificatory requirements. However, even though there was a preoccupation with the maintenance of caste, through the correct behaviour according to the level implicated, there were other actions, designated as crimes, which were applicable to the entire population, regardless of caste. The obvious example is cow killing. And so another Hindu value, the sacrosanct nature of the cow, obtrudes. Even here the performance of such an act provoked irrevocable caste loss for the offender, and therefore caste locus enters into the picture again. The matter clearly is complex. With such a regulation, one discerns that the laws applied to a more extensive range of issues than, what might be seen as immediately pertaining to caste distinctions, though caste is also implicated at a certain point. However, a kind of crime where a value, like cow killing is involved, may be understood as also taking reference from the natures of the beings implicated, as I hope to demonstrate later. To take another kind of situation, that of exclusions, whether from temple entry or access to the Sanskritic stream of rites, what is relevant according to Hindu conceptions was that the nature of the individual was
inappropriate. Hence the rationale for exclusions relates to the same basic idea as required behaviour for the different castes. As a consequence of exclusions different people were prohibited from certain activities open to members of other castes. Such matters were in the hands of the state, where an official who was knowledgeable in the sacred texts, the Adhikari, was in charge in the capital, and his representative, in other parts of the country. All of these features embedded in the operation of the Hindu laws indicate that the state was promoting the existence and continuance of a special kind of cultural order.

Through the operation of this kind of legal system, the state acted as the creator and preserver of a Hindu order, itself a special kind of social system. It was "cultural" order in the sense that many of the rules related to everyday existential matters, determining how a person was to live, rules which varied from caste to caste. Further since what was designated as constituting a crime was an event where a central Hindu value was violated, whether loss of caste to a person of high rank through, say, a hypogamous union, or action affecting the sacrosanct nature of the cow as stipulated by Hindu definitions, then the nature of that order was Hindu. The formulation of what was to be taken as constituting a criminal act seems to take reference from the nature of the participants and in this respect is in accord with the general Hindu approach. Therefore, the kind of order established was Hindu. Finally, since purifications were an obligatory part of the process, bringing about a return to levels, there was a concern with ontological differentiation of the peoples. This also means the perpetuation of a special kind of social order. However, when caste recovery was impossible pursuant to committing certain crimes, the offender was officially degraded and banished from the place. Hence with this demographic sorting, a distinctive Hindu arrangement was effected. In other words, there are three major points which indicate that the laws propelled the operation of a particular kind of order. Firstly, since many rules refer to basic matters like eating and sexual union, ways of life are involved. The point can be phrased in terms of the two dimensions isolated in the thesis, specifically requirements and exclusions: since such rules determine what kinds of activities are possible for different people, they orient cultural mores. Secondly, what is peculiarly Hindu seems to be the ontological basis of these rules, for what is regarded as proper depends on the nature of the person or entities involved. Thirdly, whenever loss of caste occurred, the state stipulated the necessary purification, and consequent to the return, caste distinctions between the population were retained. When impossible, the culprit was
irrevocably degraded and banished or killed. Therefore, there was the
demographic sorting of undesirables. As a total picture what was to
eventuate was an order of differentiated beings each following behaviour
appropriate to level. If an overall cultural order was being effected
through the operation of the legal machinery, and culture is about behaviour,
we may say that the state’s control of people through this avenue was
powerful indeed. I now want to describe these points in some detail,
giving more attention to areas that have not been considered elsewhere.

There were some activities where what individuals simply did with each
other constituted an offence, interdining and hypogamous unions for example.
Since these ontological matters along with exclusions have been discussed
fully elsewhere they need not delay us, except to notice how one judge
when describing the legal arrangements to Hodgson, framed the points with
regard to behavioural requirements to avoid loss of caste:

Eating with those with whom you ought not to eat; sexual commerce
with those between whom it is forbidden; drinking water from the
hands of those not entitled to offer it - in a word, doing anything
from negligence, inadvertence, or licentiousness, by which loss of
caste is incurred, renders the sinner liable to the censure of the
dharmādikāri. He must pay the find called gāo-dān to the
dharmādikāri, who will cause him to perform the prāyaschitta (1880: Vol.II,214).

When the extreme crimes are scrutinised, we discern that what is
designated a crime appears to be connected to the particular relation
pertaining between the nature of the offender and the victim, or between
the two offenders. To take one kind of crime, murder, appearing in Hodgson’s
list of the twenty-six important crimes, it is not murder per se which is
cited, but special murders formulated in terms of the relationship between
those involved. Four belong to the set of the great crimes, pañcakhat,
( ibid: 214 ), which will provide the starting point for the analysis.

The Nepalese five great crimes comprise, "killing a Brahmin", "killing
a cow", "killing a woman", "killing children", and "all unlawful
intercourse of the sexes, such as incest, adultery, or whatever involves
a loss of caste by the higher party" (ibid:215). All were punishable
by loss of life2, confiscation of the person’s property and caste
degradation (except for some types of incest)3. With the four great sins,

1. The meaning of the terms are cited in Hodgson.

Prāyaschitta: the ceremonies necessary to be performed by an
individual for recovering his lost caste. Chandrāyana: expiatory
ceremonies performed by the whole city or kingdom, in atonement
for the commission of some heinous sin or uncleanness, the
consequences of which have affected a considerable body of the

2. Unless the criminal was a Brahmin or a woman.

in so far as special types are isolated as relevant, it is not simply a matter of taking life which is at issue. What we know about these types is that all are deemed worthy of worship in some situation or other as forms of deities, or the surrogates of the deities, so here it would be the particular nature of the living thing which is relevant to the designation of a horrendous crime. Even the state itself recognised the sanctity of their lives and no woman, nor Brahmin, was ever beheaded but instead they were degraded and expelled from the place, rendered outcasts. If the appropriate orientation towards all such types is homage given their special natures, does the same hold for the other types of horrendous murders, matricide, patricide, and killing the guru of the Gāyatrī mantra?

Parents in Nepal are treated with great reverence and a day of the year is allocated for them when their offspring render them homage. In this relationship parents are the ones who have provided sons and daughters with the means for rebirth for the current phase of existence. Similarly, the guru of the Gāyatrī mantra has been instrumental in birth, though it is a second and special kind of birth which pertains. It would seem that the enormity of the offence derives from the particular nature of the type of victim as it relates to the criminal. The other important crimes related to sexual liaisons.

In this area of prohibited sexual relations, again it seems to be a matter bearing on the nature of the individuals involved. Those persons related in terms of "from the father seven steps and from the mother five grades" (Hodgson 1836:130), were prohibited from marriage. After this generational span of time had run its course, marriage between the descendants was possible. The idea of the exhaustion of effects through time passing has been noticed before, appearing in a number of contexts. Since marriage is permitted after the required generational span of time has passed, this implies that the sharing of the same body particles has been exhausted. Only when there is no longer any sharing of the body

1. As discussed earlier in the thesis: out of humans, Brahmins are first-born, godly beings who are not only honoured by being fed, but are worshipped as the surrogates of the deities and ancestors during the funeral rites, and in general are the important intermediaries between the tangible world and the invisible forces. The second: a cow is a form of Devi, and rituals are often performed and must be, during the festival of Dewali. The third: a woman, as we have been told so often, is a form of Devi (Sakti or Praṇāḍī) and is worshipped as such by her kin during the wedding sequence. Finally, young children are also forms of the deities, specifically, Kumārī and Kumar and during Dasaṇ are accorded ritual just like the gods.
particles is marriage possible. Now, since marriage is said to entail a union, where the offspring gain half the components (the female components) from the mother, and other half (the male) from the father, this presumably would fall away within the range of prohibited kin, since already there is the sharing of the body particles. The relationship would be inappropriate because it falls within the same body stock. We see that here where a connexion already exists between the parties involved, another of the same ilk is forbidden, and therefore the formulation of the crime appears to derive from the nature of the persons involved. Similarly, the prohibition on union with the guru's wife or mother, also treated as incestuous, can be understood in terms of the same rationale. Since the disciple is connected to the guru through the second birth, he is also related to that man's wife and mother, through the guru's connexion with them. Adultery, another sexual offence of a serious nature, though not as straightforward as the others, appears to be based on the same idea, that the relationship is most inapposite, given the nature of the parties implicated.

Adultery was not regarded as a criminal offence for all castes, and where traditionally a group treated such liaisons lightly, so did the state. But it should also be added that the perception of marriage was also different. Where the cuckolded husband was a Parbatya, the state allowed him to perform the execution himself if he were able, but if the cuckold escaped, then success in that event prevailed and the cuckold was not to be pursued further (Hodgson, 1836:133). This idea of success is critical and crops up in various contexts and in one it is extremely important as we shall see in a later chapter. To understand the enormity of the adulterous offence, marriage has to be placed within its Hindu parameters.¹

Marriage was traditionally regarded as an irrevocable union between the husband and wife, so much so that a widow was prohibited from remarrying, as is well known. Prohibition on adultery appears to relate to the same conceptualisation. In the wedding, the couple together move over the seven steps, when the bridedroom takes the bride's big toe (womb, ovum?) and places it on seven stones after which the marriage is said to be final and binding. Marriage then renders the couple irrevocably joined as the one entity, Puruṣa/Prakṛti, made up of the half/half. Given the nature of the relationship obtaining between the two, it is a singular bond where the

¹. The Newar marriage differs considerably. Divorce, as is well known, is permitted (Hodgson, 1836:130-1).
husband stands as the special half of the wife's person. If it is designated a singular bond between two specific people, then a third, the adulterer, would stand as an intruder to, and a destroyer of, that unit.

The range of crimes seems to comprise a system with a common rationale where what is depicted as constituting a crime depends on a particular kind of relationship pertaining between the nature of the offender and the victim, or of the two offenders, as the case may be. The relevance of the nature of the person is not new and also applies with regard to what constitutes an offence in other instances where only the individual himself is concerned. In other words, the orientation is one which takes special heed of the nature of the persons implicated, and not simply the event itself, a feature which I think may be said to characterize the Hindu approach. When criminal activities are performed and loss of caste follows, the necessity for recovery by the relevant purificatory action is stipulated by the legal officer, the Dharmadhikari. This is another constant. Since ontology figures in these kinds of crimes in that they entail loss of caste, the framework is quite different from what is usually found with legal matters, and therefore there is some justification in talking about the establishment and maintenance of a special kind of order. Yet many of the crimes listed would be rare indeed, for how frequently would disciples end up killing their gurus, for example. Tambiah (1973:215) has a point when he draws attention to the fact that many laws are often concerned with extreme cases. Even so, there does seem to be a point to it all for, whether the crime is committed or not, to designate certain actions as criminal is to express a value, a point of view. This can be seen in the inviolability of the marriage bond for certain castes as in the ban on adultery, the value of children, women, cows and Brahmans, parents and gurus in the case of murders, and in isogamous and hypergamous unions. In fact, if viewed from a critical perspective, the Nepalese batch of the five great crimes may be interpreted as constituting the nation's resources in some form or other. This would follow in the case of the great murders since the cow, for example, provides essential products for Hindu requirements, purificatory and sustaining; women are reproducers and nurturers; children are the country's potential strength, a point inherent in the term for the crime, where "balahatiya" means "killing the strong"; Brahmans as the links to unseen forces present another capability within Hindu formulations. Moreover, the ban on hypogamy, in conjunction with what is permitted, is also important to the state but will be considered in a later chapter. This is not to say that all values 1. To isolate the value underlying incest within a special range of kin is more problematic.
are exclusively Hindu and are not held by other members of the polity, it is to say that what is important is that these are the issues officially defined as of value and are incorporated as part and parcel of the system. There are however, two points which could appear to go contrary to the argument.

One difficulty that might arise is that certain rulings only apply to the twice-born, and if this is the case, how can one talk of a state establishing an embrace Hindu social order? Secondly, in many instances the internal arrangements of the Matwali castes comprising the Newars and the tribals were not interfered with. If the members of this category were given autonomy in their internal arrangements then it might appear to be a far cry from the argument that the state was imposing a special kind of order on the population.

The recognition of internal arrangements for certain castes is not a special concession given uniquely by the Nepalese state, but a bona fide feature of the Hindu system. By not interfering with the traditional ways of the Newars and tribals, the Nepalese state was not doing anything idiosyncratic. Where the greater range of requirements was applied, it was to those people designated twice-born but a greater range would apply to them given their ontological excellence which is a feature of this kind of cultural order. That the state was concerned about caste retention of the twice-born is evident in the judicial regulations sent by one of the rulers.¹ Not that the Matwali castes were given free rein, for they were subject to certain prohibitions also, which of course applied to the twice-born as well. Two examples suffice: the non-acceptance of water from Untouchables and the prohibition on sexual union with Untouchables.² Such variations from caste to caste do not contravene Hindu tenets as we know, and in fact reveal a characteristic of this kind of social order. It cannot be repeated too often that with this kind of cultural order there is a wider range of requirements for people allocated to the twice-born level than others. As well as the requirements, there are the concommitant openings and closures, and when these are considered together a pattern emerges.

While the most closures apply to the Untouchable and fewer to the Matwali, the greatest range of possibilities is open to the twice-born.

1. See clause (35) regarding the alcohol ban; and See clause (15) regarding water pollution, of the Judicial Regulation of 1804 (in Stiller, 1976:79–85).
On the other hand, most requirements are demanded of the twice-born for him to retain his ontological state, fewer of the Matwali, and virtually none of the Untouchable. If these two sets are borne in mind, one may understand certain peculiarities about the arrangements. Since exclusions are greatest with the Untouchables their particular hamstrung condition and their subjugation to the state's cultural order are clear-cut. In contrast, the picture appears more blurred for the Matwali with the seeming picture of laxity, and state tolerance. The blurring, however, is more apparent than real and simply follows from the possibilities provided by the system, given their comparative freedom from constraints (fewer exclusions than the Untouchable and fewer restrictions than the twice-born).

With the twice-born, there is the greatest access to the good things of Hinduism (a feature isolated by Tambiah as the only point of the laws), yet at the same time, the twice-born are also subject to the greatest range of prohibitions (an angle highlighted by Dumont), and necessary if they are to conserve their ontological level. The general pattern of behaviour is, to a certain extent, the consequence of the state's implementation of the laws though not entirely so, since some people would fulfill requirements etc., regardless of the state's demands.

... Of course, it is well established that Hindu rules bear on the operation of culture, however, what Dumont has misrepresented is the state's critical role in all of this. In traditional Hindu societies, it was the state which delineated what was taken to be relevant, whether applicable only to one category, as with the ban on alcohol for the twice-born, or to the country, as with the prohibition against cow killing. It was the state which imposed the behavioural rules, and in the breach enjoined that purificatory rites be performed, and the extent to which a purificatory rite would apply (for example, only kin in the caste concerned, or the total city). When restoration was not a possibility, it degraded the culprit and expelled him from the city, thus ridding it of ontologically unacceptable persons. Such matters were handled by its official, the man competent in the sacred laws (the Dharmadhikari) in the capital and his representative in the provinces. And not to be forgotten, it was the state which determined which peoples were allocated in which caste category. If the state was doing all this, then its role was central in the creation of the cultural order. It also means that the distinct analytic constructs that we employ, like "society" and "culture" intermash, and that power and values are not to be treated as Dumont proposes. Let me put it this way, if the king's role is to administer the scriptural laws and these are concerned with the "purity"
of the castes amongst other things, then Dumont's proposal that power is separate from religion in traditional Hindu kingdoms cannot hold despite the dextrous way in which the argument is couched. If anything, the state's implementation of the laws relates to the creation and perpetuation of a special kind of social order where Hindu values are overwhelmingly relevant. It would seem also that the implementation of the laws produces and maintains a Hindu culture through directing ways of living, as oriented by the idea of appropriateness according to caste level, a Hindu basis. The ways of behaving exhibit a patterning of differences where the behaviour rests on the facets of discrimination, the different requirements and the closures. The operation of requirements and closures make intelligible the problematic behaviour of the middle rank. Moreover, by incorporating both facets we can accommodate to the seeming irreconcilable view points of Dumont and Tambiah, where Dumont highlights the great range of requirements bearing down on high castes, and Tambiah highlights their advantages in the system.

The state's implementing of a special culture is an important undertaking. The case for the import of its role is on record in an unsolicited commentary made by one of the judges to Hodgson. It also details some characteristics that we would expect, but also brings into relief that a special kind of human order is involved, and in generating this, the state machinery is crucial. This is the extract from the judge's voluntary observations:

Below, let man and woman commit what sin they will, there is no punishment provided, no expiatory rite enjoined. Hence Hinduism is destroyed; the customs are Mohammedan; the distinctions of caste are obliterated. Here, on the contrary, all those distinctions are religiously preserved by the public courts of justice, which punish according to caste, and never destroy the life of a Brāhmaṇ. If a female of the sacred order go astray, and her paramour be not a Brāhmaṇ he, is capitaly punished; but if he be a Brāhmaṇ, he is degraded from his rank, and banished. If a female of the soldier tribes be seduced, the husband, with his own hand, kills the seducer, and cuts off the nose of the female, and expels her from his house. Then the Brāhmaṇa or soldier husband must perform the purificatory rites enjoined, after which he is restored to his caste. Below, the Sāstras are things to talk of; here, they are acted up to (Hodgson, 1834:48-9).

According to the commentary, what is taken as the reference for Hindu ideals, and taken for granted, are the caste distinctions. What the kingdom upholds is seen to be achieved through punishment, and through purification especially, for without it there is no restoration and offenders would remain polluted, and thus differences "are obliterated".

1. "Below", needless to say, refers to India.
This proposal is interesting since it relates to the wider significance of purification, not simply the redeeming of caste, but through such actions the possibility of the continuity of differences between the members of the kingdom. However, if the crime is of such a nature that caste restoration is impossible, the person is degraded and then cast out as noted earlier. If no undesirable persons remained within the confines of the society then it would only comprise those people who were in the ontological state, the unworthy being sorted out. Therefore, the legal apparatus "selects" from the population only the members of certain species (that is, the members of the non-fallen jāti), and only these are permitted to reside within the city. So the kind of order which was being maintained was, in the final analysis, an ontological order. That is to say, through the operation of the legal system particularly through the purifications and expulsions, the system moved to create, not just a social order concerned with appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, but an ontological order of humans.¹ Thus the various events propel a pattern of demographic organisation.

Inside, with restorations to caste level after any fall, there is the return to the various levels for those concerned, so that any blurring of distinctions through the offences which provoked loss of caste, is overcome with purifications and so a differentiated population could be maintained. In instances where this was impossible, the offenders were banished, made to live beyond the pale. Their fate was probably to join up with the Untouchables outside the city, for, according to modern informants, they "would not have any where else to go", otherwise they perhaps migrated. Implementing such an order is seen by the judge to interrelate with patriotism.

The Nepalese state, unlike others elsewhere on the sub-continent where nothing more than lip-service was being paid to Hindu ideals, is praised, for it actualises ideals. Thus the speaker distinguishes the hill kingdom, presenting it as unique, and offers a rallying point for those who also hold the scriptures in high regard. The judge's last remarks indicate that for the Nepalese state, the administration of the laws was perceived as a necessity, the fulfilling of an ideal. If the ideal was the establishment of a cultural and human order, what kind of

¹. The state's concern is outlined in clause (9) of the Jumla Administrative Regulations, 1796.

Persons guilty of immoral offenses shall be granted expiation in accordance with local usage and in consultation with a representative of the Dharma Dhikar (in Regmi, 1971:216).
picture does it evoke?

The anthropological literature presents, amongst others, two opposing versions of caste life, one by Srinivas and the other by Tambiah. The latter says,

Much of Manu's code show the mind of a lawyer writing up rules for exigencies and emergencies rather than for everyday life. On reading these rules one might imagine that an Indian village would consist of highly exclusive groups having much less social contacts than peasant communities which are not weighted down by rules of purity and pollution. This is objectively false. Despite Srinivas' characterisation of Indian village social relations as 'back to back' rather than 'face to face', the quantitative aspects of social interaction in an Indian village are probably no different from that in other stratified societies. The interrelation between castes is best seen in the *jajmani* relationships, in the graded participation of castes in temple festivals, and in the rites of passage staged by superior caste patrons. The rules of commensality and connubium can thus be seen as focussing on contact rather than segregation (1973:216).

This would not tally with the Nepalese situation despite the qualification, "quantative", Tambiah seems to miss the spirit of Srinivas' argument as well as its import. If he is saying that segregation does not arise from the application of the rules then this would not apply to an operating traditional Hindu state. If there were contact between an Untouchable and an orthodox clean caste person through water acceptance then purification was imperative. In the past, if sexual congress occurred, between an Untouchable male and a higher caste woman then the Untouchable male was executed and the female given the standard punishment procedure, if it occurred between an Untouchable female and a higher caste male, again the male was severely punished, with death applying to certain castes, and the standard punishment imposed on the female ¹ (Hodgson, 1834:51-2). So, regardless of how much or how little attention Manu specifically devotes to everyday life, the idea of separateness is loud and clear, and was pursued by those who implemented his injunctions. If it appears unfair to evoke laws which have since been abolished, then there are many current situations which are definitely not in accord with Tambiah's rendition of matters. Any contemporary observation of "rites of passage" which Tambiah cites, reveals that the barber (Untouchable) never enters the sacred part of the shrine, though his necessary services are utilised and hence he must be present. The resulting social contact that Tambiah underlines when it occurs, occurs only because it is unavoidable if the Untouchables are to perform these services. Furthermore, segregation is

¹. If the offender is a Brahmin man, he is not killed; if a Brahmin female, her nose is not cut off.
blatant in those temple festivals where the Untouchables are debarred from entering when the temples are the "abodes" of the high gods. As for the alleged "interrelation" between castes in the jajmani relationship, this is highly contestable since there is no necessary interrelation between the castes serving the same master. The only relation that operates is in that direction, master and servant. But this connexion need not bring the family sweeper and the family cook together, in fact it would be anathema should it occur. The major error, and one not restricted to interpreting the jajmani situation, is to presume that because all the servants are related to the one person, the master, they are therefore associated with each other. To propose that the rules "focus on contact rather than segregation" is to miss the presence of barriers which though sometimes invisible, were undeniably present.

The arrangement of peoples into castes was a critical component of the order imposed on the diverse peoples engulfed by Gorkha rule. It was that kind of order, speaking generally, which was alien to some (the tribals) antipathetic to others (the non-polluting Newars) and insufferable to the Untouchables (regardless of their provenance). Their view of the ideal would hardly tally with the judge's version.

3. The Population and the Upholding of the Regime's Values:

It is highly unlikely that the official values were espoused by the entire population, given both the nature of the values and the fact of conquest. Regardless of what people thought, they were forced to obey its strictures except that in certain matters internal customs were recognised.

That Hindu values were at stake and not necessarily the values of the entire population appears in a number of instances. For tribals, the cow was not sacrosanct, but they were (and are) forced to forego using the animal. Then there were the marriage possibilities where what the laws stipulated as possible was hypergamy but prohibited cross-caste marriage in the other direction. Such rules do not constitute tribal values nor Newar, for these laws rely on caste designations, themselves imposed by the state which allocated these people to the lesser ranks.
The matter was exacerbated because hypergamy, the acceptable type of union, meant that the higher caste males had access to tribal and Newar women but not vice-versa. The commensal rules also operated on a caste frame of differentiation, demarcating caste grades, hence defining those concerned as lesser kinds of beings. The legal order also invoked the system of closures discussed earlier, where access to the special valued portion of Hinduism was limited to those people classified as twice-born. Given the nature of these ideas it would seem that it is not a cultural order of a kind where the total population is likely to agree totally with the formulations. One of these, caste placement, is significant.

Whether those forced to acquiesce to political subjugation were at all concerned with caste classifications and ritual exclusions in the face of other matters, is difficult to determine for the earliest period. However, there is some evidence, (see Sharma, 1975: 294-7) that later on tribals were not indifferent to Hindu customs. With this, we come to the issue known as "sanskritisation", a process identified and explored by Srinivas (1967: 1-45).

Sanskritisation as formulated by Srinivas, is the process by which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste. Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community (1967:6). Some tribals in Nepal, in assuming certain customs of the twice-born Hindus, discarded some of their traditional ways and moved into the caste frame of reference. However, with state-imposed categorizations, the tribals' imitative behaviour did not render them twice-born (Sharma, 1975:297). Generally speaking, to be successful the bid required endorsement by others, a general point Dumont also stressed. As Berreman (1971:19) observed in his critique of Dumont, if the ideas of some people can prevail, and reject claimants' attempts at caste mobility, then caste is not separate from power, but in fact is determined by it. If the upper castes, and in Nepal the state also, neither in the past nor present accept these people as twice-born, then their displays are simply irrelevant and futile for no

1. Sexual union with an Untouchable of either sex was totally vetoed (see Hodgson, 1836:131-2), a feature which if forgotten can lead to misconstruing the complexities of the situation.
2. Stiller (1976:165), utilises Srinivas's concept to describe the process of forced incorporation of tribals into the Hindu polity, and even though Stiller makes it absolutely clear that he has modified the concept, it is a pity he employs the term, since one of the critical features of Srinivas's concept is the voluntary nature of the process. "Enforced detribalization" is perhaps a more apt term in the period when a Hindu regime conquers tribals and imposes Hindu laws upon them.
amount of imitation can propel them to higher rank. Such bids have theoretical significance for they indicate a rejection of the operating caste system.

If the tribals, designated Matwâli, are attempting to rise in the rank order, then they are rejecting the system which is an applied set of ideas pertaining to specific people. In other words, if the classification locates them as Matwâli and they are making a bid for placement in the twice-born level then their actions would be challenging the system, which only exists in application to a set of referents, for there can be no system without the referents for the categories. The same point was raised earlier, regarding the Untouchable's claim.

In fact, the imitative behaviour, if it is a bid for caste mobility would indicate that the tribals are rejecting the twice-born and official notions. Now, as we know, the core ideas of Hindu caste formulations are that of a differentiated universe of beings, which are said to have differential worth, and certain rules of behaviour which are commensurate with one's nature, and which vary from level to level. The tribals cannot be accepting the system, for the system locates them as comparatively low beings, regardless of what kind of customs they adopt. Acceptance of the official formulations would mean the acceptance of the position for themselves as defined by those who have the power to enforce such definitions. If the distinctive feature of tribal culture (see Sharma, 1975:293) is the absence of distinctions like caste, then it is not likely that such people will readily toss out their own definitions and replace them by a scheme which demeans them as persons. Yet we find they adopt some rites and customs practised by the twice-born. So what is happening? If, in the imitation of certain twice-born ways, the tribal ignores the prevailing formulations appropriate for his own level, he is adopting requirements (for example not taking alcohol)\(^1\) which are not pertinent to it. Then he is indicating a rejection of the caste system as it impinges on him. Had he accepted it he would not have sought to fulfil a requirement which did not pertain to his level. Put differently, attempts at caste mobility constitute an expression of defiance of the formulations impinging on them.

In Nepal an interesting development occurs in the process, and one which seems to be totally in accord with scriptural definition. Through

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1. A restriction applying to twice-born.
their adopting Hindu ways, but given the particular exclusions imposed on them, and openings possible, the kind of tribal behaviour which eventuates is such that it neatly fits into the Hindu scheme of things.

In Nepal, what happens in the detribalization process is the shedding of many idiosyncratic tribal characteristics and the utilization of Brahmins as their priests, and the performance of certain Hindu rituals. Yet in the descriptions of what is happening we notice that the tribals may proceed only as far as the system will allow. They may utilize a Hindu priest, but not be given Sanskritic mantras; they may have rituals for purification, but not the critical rite which will shift them to the twice-born level. Now, this is exactly the classic situation applicable to those designated Sudra, in the varna scheme (including the fifth category, those outside); it follows from the possibilities allowed by the system which, while permitting some practices, at the same time also imposes the limiting closures. If the tribal avails himself of what is possible, he slips into the classical role of Sudra. With the openings and closures, the system can effect the amalgamation of alien peoples, or more precisely, the descendants of conquered alien peoples into the cultural order, where their behaviour would tally with the requirements for the Sudra of the varna scheme, or the Matwali of the Nepalese. If Hindu states were characteristically conquest states, and there appears to be evidence that this was so, then the Hindu rules offer a system fitted for conquest and incorporation. Not that matters would happen overnight but given time, the descendants of non-Hindu conquered peoples, would adopt Hindu mores available for the level to which they are allocated (non-polluting and non-twice-born), and being debarred from access to transformations restricted to twice-born, such people by their activities bring about a fully fledged caste system, with the required differences in behaviour between levels. If it were a trap, one could say that the tribals have fallen into it. Instead one may say that the system has its manipulative features, the combination of entry points and closures for those people allocated to a level, which is neither polluting, not twice-born.

The situation is of course different for the Newars, since they constitute the remnants of a past Hindu order. I shall try to detail their

1. Upreti (1976:47-70), amongst other things, explores the behaviour of one Nepalese tribal group, the Limbus, in terms of Srinivasa's concept of Sanskritization.
2. But not necessarily acceptance of placement as a lesser kind of being than the twice-born.
perspective, in the context of providing a general picture of people's orientation to the Gorkha scheme, even if only sketchilly. Judging from what is said at present, where matters are less rigid, one finds a general antipathy to the caste application from people at the lower levels. Since matters were more rigid in the past, it is unlikely that the forebears' view of caste matters would have been more acceptable. Out of the population, the persons who do not query the validity of the caste ordering in its entirety of application are those designated twice-born, whether their origin derives from Gorkha or any of the other Hindu states. Those people who do not accept the caste system in its entirety are denigrated in some way or other. From the general Newar perspective, the official twice-born (the Parbatya) are perceived simply as the conquerors. The Newar high castes dislocated by the new scheme deny its authenticity entirely, and instead refer to their high placement in the old Malla scheme. The same might apply to most of the other Newars although probably just as important is their hostility to the internal Newar arrangements of the older Malla scheme. A similar general disagreement with the official scheme would hold

1. The twice-born of the defeated Hindu states would not have been affected by the change since they remained twice-born within both contexts, where the overlords permitted the continuity of internal practices which were Hindu. What is odd is the absence of Parbatya people in the middle Nepalese category (or the Śūdra) for they are only allocated to the twice-born and Untouchable ranks. There appears to be some evidence that certain tribes of particular states may have fitted this slot in those earlier times (see Sharma, 1975:295) and in the Gorkha overhaul were probably allocated to the middle rank, along with the other tribes who had operated within their own kind of polity.

2. Sometimes, the Newars refer to the Parbatya twice-born simply as "Khas", an ethnic term which is pejorative.

3. They do not even refer to the official scheme but only the one Newar. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Newar Hindu and Buddhist versions are discrepant, where, on the one hand the Hindus place the Buddhist in the lowest twice-born level, and, on the other, the Buddhist Newars place the Newar Brahmī and Kṣatryās (Shresthas) in that slot. Given that it was a Hindu kingdom, then it is likely that the version given by the contemporary Newar Hindus may constitute the official scheme. If that is the case, then the Buddhist Newars would fill the niche of the older Malla scheme, just where the Sānyāsi caste is located in the current Shah scheme, (i.e. the third level of the top category) and where the same set of circumstances apply, the descendants of renouncers who turned their backs on renunciation. More research would substantiate the suggestion.

4. For example, the Newar peasant, the Jyapus, who comprise the Newar demographic majority, claim that their remote forebears were the authochthonous people subjugated by invaders to the valley, being reduced to a secondary place in the scheme of things. Whether factual or not, the legend exhibits non-acceptance of their positioning in the Newar order.
with tribals said to desire caste mobility. If they desire high placement for themselves then this indicates that they disavow the official position in the operational scheme and opt for high position themselves. Some tribals in my experience, however, do not take caste seriously at all, viewing it irrelevant and only of interest to Hindus. Some urban Moslems, also stand apart in their orientation and are, to a large extent, free-floating and affiliated to another value system. Other Untouchables, as we have seen, presume high caste background for themselves and thereby make a bid for eminence but, at the same time, will not assume the position of lowliness. As we said at the beginning of the thesis, there appear to be no willing takers for the bottom. Moreover, there also appear to be a lot who refuse to take the middle rank as well. Wherever there is a projection of high placement for self (some tribals; some of all of both Parbatya and Newar Untouchables; some or all of the rest of the Newars) even though there is acceptance of the idea of grades, since there is the refusal to be takers of anything short of excellence for themselves, then the caste system as it applies is challenged. Berreman illustrates, in great detail, just how much variation over categorization does occur (1972:567-586).

1. The point is also made indirectly with the complaint that the epithet, "Hindu" when applied to the country of Nepal, ignores them, the non-Hindus.

2. Despite the individual's orientation, state policy is clear, for after the reforms, an official announcement declared that "the new legal code had not abolished the caste system" (see Pradhan, 1973:158).
4. The establishment of the In-category:

Given the peculiar nature of Hindu laws which divide and grade the population into particular spheres and apply different requirements and exclusions accordingly, then the imposition of those laws creates and perpetuates a special kind of social formation, the twice-born species, through the location of some people at the top. Further, since these particular people are favoured by the categorizations applied to them, located as worthwhile beings, and also have exclusive access to the prized Sanskrit portion of Hinduism, then the system would have ready-takers, less likely to cavil with the ideas, than any of the other peoples. From this point of view those individuals designated twice-born would stand as the proponents of the prevailing cultural ideas. As we have seen with the discussion on caste orientation, antipathy does not come from this quarter. The others are either less committed to the elaboration of the system in its widest extent or reject it, tout court, for all kinds of reasons but especially because of their negative placement (both Newars and tribals), or because of its alien nature (the tribals). We may also discern further implications regarding the twice-born's special role in the system.

The twice-born tend to project themselves as the Hindus par excellence, in so far as the fullest range of the ritual tradition, stipulated as the finest, is accessible to them, rather than to the other castes. Though what these other castes do is also regarded by them as a wing of Hinduism, it takes a lesser form. Through this kind of identification the twice-born see themselves most closely affiliated to the system, as well as distinctly demarcated from the others in the nation. In this particular regime where the king is also Hindu and undertakes the same range of rites as they, the twice-born perceive a special affiliation between themselves and the monarch which does not pertain between him and the other castes. Whether the other castes would agree with this special connexion between twice-born and king, or not, makes no difference to twice-born orientation to the regime and its values. The intense sort of commitment to the values and practices that can arise, is vivid in the judge's comments, cited earlier, though, of course, he would not have been (nor is) unique. Given these factors, then those people designated twice-born are to be understood as the purveyors of the cultural notions. Moreover, since practices are a necessary corollary of ideas, where essential ontological states are actualized through requirements or exclusions, then the people designated twice-born are also the ones who will implement them. It is such persons who would be concerned with maintenance of ontological states especially,
(through the fulfilling of requirements) and the enforcement of exclusions. From this point of view, what these people do will also affect what others may do, and so they become a critical formation for the implementing of the system. Let me try and bring the threads together in one passage. In so far as the people classified as twice-born accept the official scheme of caste categories, in conjunction with their identification and commitment to the system, then they stand as its proponents as well as its major implementers. To be predicted, this kind of situation where the members of the twice-born associate themselves with the polity and its ruler, yet at the same time distinguish themselves from the rest, would be important for the operation of the state on several counts. Thus we turn to a consideration of how the state is advantaged by this kind of situation. The same question could have been introduced from a broader angle: the utilization of a caste framework for distinguishing subject from subject is continued by the state, even though the stocks change. Since the utilization of caste distinctions is continued, then this kind of labelling is highly likely to play a part in the maintenance of absolute rule. In considering this we have to return to those disadvantaged by the definitions.

A system which designates persons as lower kinds of beings is unlikely to find its staunchest adherents and purveyors of ideas to the fullest extent in that quarter, even though these people might share the same orientation as the twice-born towards certain things, that, for example, the gods are approachable, and that rites may have consequences, or that persons can be differentiated ontologically, or that the king is powerful and divine. They are, however, likely to disagree with the definition of themselves as lesser and for some at least to resent their exclusions from events seen as important and were likely to perform their own version. Put differently, Hindu ideas are such that an all embracive commitment would not apply throughout the entire social universe, since some people will be antipathetic to some aspects, variations of which have been discussed. If nothing else, the matter of caste allocation will be contentious when one’s placement is not up top. But it would not make any difference what these people think since there are others (the twice-born) available to effect the official policy and render it the prevailing culture. The odd feature of Hindu formulations is that it has an in-built possibility for dissension by some, just as there is the probability of its espousal by others, the twice-born. Now to take up the issue of the situation for the state.
The operation of the Hindu laws in general, and caste in particular, have a particular pay-off for the state. First of all, the laws provide a ready-made scheme for dividing the ruled and one which automatically incorporates advantages for only some subjects, who are singled out from the rest as of great worth, thus actual divisiveness within the whole is facilitated. This characteristic of the Hindu polity keeps cropping up in all kinds of situations but is at its most blatant with the castes. Judging from present day orientations, the subjects from this category perceive themselves as more closely affiliated with the regime, irrespective of what those from the other castes might think on the matter. Whether the ruler adopts an identical position towards the twice-born and the other castes as do the twice-born themselves is another matter, presumably the lesser castes would not be as totally irrelevant for him, since they also constitute his population. Nonetheless their attitude to his cause would not be of consequence, as long as he had the support of the twice-born. From what can be gathered from the past, and which still applies in the present, the state appears to have recognised and utilized the commitment of the members of the twice-born category, for it drew and draws its important agents from this source.  

Because of this and all the other factors, I inelegantly label the twice-born, the "In-category", I shall come back to this point, since here there is a further implication to be considered. In so far as the important personnel are selected from the twice-born category to implement affairs of state, and given that the regime is not the softest, and in addition that officials are themselves prone to abuse their powers and exploit those under their jurisdiction, then it is likely that these officials in particular, and the twice-born in general, are perceived as the perpetrators of bad times by the members of the other castes. This appears to be the case at present, in that members of the other castes are particularly hostile to the twice-born, though not all twice-born occupy important posts, those who are officials have the opportunity to abuse their delegated power; consequently the members of the category in general are seen as pernicious. The

1. The kind of breakdown I allude to is not detailed in the official handouts yet it is well established that in Kathmandu, the major posts, bureaucratic and military, are filled by the Parbata twice-born, even though demographically, the Newars predominate in the capital. The caste origin of ministers from 1960 to 1972 is detailed by Pradhan, where the vast majority come from the twice-born category, with fifty-one out of a total of seventy-five (nineteen Brahmans, thirty Chetris and two Sannyasi cited by the family name Giri, in the Table)(see Pradhan 1973:156). In the past, with the most important post after that of the monarch, the prime ministership, all men were drawn from this twice-born category (see Sharma, 1978:10).
ruler, in contrast, is regarded as betrayed by his agents. The interesting point in the configuration of pulls and orientations, is that the antipathy is not directed at the structure, nor the ruler, but at the agents (and the members of that category) who work the state apparatus. The divisiveness between subject and subject and the link between subject and ruler is a feature that is recurrent. It is not the only peculiar thing about the arrangements. In a way, the caste laws entail a circular process where the system sets up the critical divisions. Out of these, one division becomes the critical formation which to a large extent keeps the system working, as the cultural proponents and as the source for the selection of the state's henchmen. Now, it might be wondered why I have called the twice-born, an "In-category", since there is a term in the anthropological literature which might at first sight appear to be applicable here.

The construct in question, is "dominant caste". I prefer not to utilise this because it would bring out a different stress and focus downwards. Srinivas's concept, "dominant caste" (1967:151-2), as I understand it, takes reference from a particular group's dominance in a specific locality through its economic and political sway over the members of other (lower) castes in the area. That is to say, the focus is primarily within the local territory and on the relationship between some of the people and those who dominate them. I want to stress rather the relationship between the twice-born and the centre of power, which constitutes the backing for any superior position they may gain over other castes. Moreover, with the twice-born I am referring to a category of people rather than a group, for they are scattered throughout the country where what linked (and links) them was membership in the same category and with the same caste identifications and requirements. More importantly, this category merely provided a catchment area from which the state mostly recruited its agents, for the appointments and land grants were always bequeathed to individuals and not groups, as we have seen in the discussion on land earlier. In short, it is only some members in the "In-category" who are "dominant". There is also the other dimension, the significant connexion between those who are

1. This perception of the king as an innocent let down by his officers, is also repeated by Parbatya twice-born, to account for the failure of effective government.
"dominant" at the local level, and the state. Though in certain localities there were certain persons who were advantaged by the land arrangements, and one of these was also the village headman responsible for revenue and judicial matters, so in this sense an individual from the twice-born castes was "dominant", and his kin well-off. However, given that the land allocations would in all probability have been reviewed as birtha by the group's forebear, then that group's association with the state is the critical factor. Otherwise the land would have been purchased and therefore was one of the special forms of rāikar. Nevertheless, in either case, the person was allocated to village headship, or in whatever way office was prescribed, and had to have state ratification. Even when the position went in the line of the most senior person of the lineage (primo-geniture in the succession), the state had to approve of the new encumbent in each case (see Gaborieau, 1975(a):30). Thus, the political factor impinged, and invariably linked back to the centre of power, the state. In such instances, dominance is derivative. To bring to the fore the state's role in the special positioning of such persons, I have labelled them "henchmen", persons who are generally drawn from the "In-category". Both terms attempt to highlight the intimate connexion between those individuals and the ruler, the centre of power, which established the particular Hindu order. Finally, though the twice-born identified (and identify) with the Hindu order and the ruler, they cannot quite be labelled "ruling class", since they had little power over their own situation in the face of the ruler's absolutism, whether they were henchmen or just ordinary twice-born. For my purpose of paramount significance is the relationship of power, as well as that between the ruler and the twice-born. There is a point which requires clarification.

Even though the cultural system imposed by the state was that of the conquerors, and so what is called "culture" is more accurately to be understood as aspects of the official ideas and values, yet this is not to say that all ideas and values were (and are) necessarily rejected by the lower castes, as we have already indicated. Nor is it to say that all the ideas are to be understood as ideological, simply covering off what is crucial, while serving somebody's advantage. The situation obviously is far more complex. What is important is that given the breadth of knowledge, which includes both ideas and ideologies, it is the twice-born individuals out of the lot who are the proponents to the fullest extent. Since these individuals stand as the members of the "In-category", yet
all do not have a place of high office in the society, but only potentially so, this finding may allow us to confront a problem of theoretical interest.

One of the major difficulties in caste studies is the presence of the inconsequential high caste person, generally the Brahmin, who is devoid of power, and poor, the irritating fact that bedevils the approach which would want to correlate high caste with power whether via the avenue of class relations (Meillassoux) or otherwise (Tambiah), and which appears to vindicate Dumont's position which would keep the two factors (caste and power) distinct. To be sure, there is a connexion between caste and power, but it is more circuitous than described.

There are two instances of nondescript twice-born. If the preceding analysis is plausible, we see that in Nepal certain members of the Parbatya, the official twice-born category, in becoming the state's henchmen have some kind of power, albeit secondary since it is subject to the ruler's veto. In contrast, he is accountable to no person. Nonetheless, the henchman held delegated power to run affairs, could obtain forced unpaid labour from peasants, and inflict some kinds of punishments on those under his jurisdiction etc., through the connexion with the state. In all of this, however, it is only some and not the entire category of twice-born who are well-off and hence the irritating fact of high caste positioning but hardly a correspondence with power. Then there are the demoted twice-born Newars whose forebears were allocated to the middle rungs of the Gorkha order and despite the placement under the Malla scheme, they remain in the middle category. The first instance of the inconsequential high caste person of the official scheme is not an issue for my argument, since it does not make high caste placement co-exist with power, though indeed connected to it and such a person is simply a member of the "In-category", and stands in the reservoir of those eligible for selection. In contrast, Dumont's general argument propounds that caste and power are discrete and the relationship between the two is one where power is encompassed by religious values, including caste. His approach would not only fail to distinguish that there is a connexion but also the nature of the connexion. With the Nepalese material there are both the poor Parbatya twice-born of the "In-category", and the demoted Newar twice-born and in both...
cases their situations are related to the power of the state. Tambiah, presumably in response to Dumont, projects a picture of a straightforward correlation between high caste status and access to power and privilege, especially as effected through the laws. It is far too imprecise. Further, the nondescript individuals of high caste have been treated as "vestiges" by Meillassoux. By presenting the problem as the answer, Meillassoux side-steps the matter, for he simply describes a situation that needs to be explained. How can an imputedly "declassed" high caste person "keep" his high status if, as he says, power and caste are interrelated. Are such people "keeping" anything or merely vocalizing high caste locus, while the important others ignore their declamations? Why would the powerful and the rest take any notice? What the Nepalese material indicates is that there is the official category of twice-born, from which the Newar twice-born are excluded, rendering their claims irrelevant. In this context, there is an example of a "vestige", where power is certainly not irrelevant, and their "keeping" of high caste is merely a personal matter, of which others are ignorant or indifferent. However what would be especially difficult for Meillassoux's thesis is the presence of official twice-born persons who are neither "declassed", nor "vestiges" but are undoubtedly non-descript. I have attempted to account for this kind of person in terms of membership in the general "In-category" of twice-born, which does not automatically presuppose the acquisition of power, etc., only the eligibility. Eligibility, of course, does not mean the likelihood of success for all. Thus there will always be twice-born who have not reached the pinnacles of power, though the successful, the "henchmen", will derive from it. Thus, there is a connexion between power and caste, albeit of a circuitous nature.

1. Meillassoux says,

Although deprived of their class functions and privileges these fragments tended to keep their hereditary status, and the more firmly the more their new occupations threatened to confuse them with the low levels of society (1973:106).
CHAPTER 22

ON THE STRUCTURING OF POWER

A focus on the traditional Hindu state will invariably bring into relief the absolute position of the ruler. One knows, however, that this is an attribution easier said than maintained. The ruler sits on the throne at the centre with the populace scattered in the four directions of the territory, which in its entirety has to be administered, and therefore power has to appear, in some guise or other, at the local level. How can one person, the ruler prevent his agents, in their thousands, from not fulfilling their brief or even from usurping control and ousting him? Can a Hindu ruler actually check the checks to his power? Though some points were raised in previous chapters, the issue has not been dealt with in any detail. This is one specific problem, there is also the more general problem of the overall structuring of power.

With specific reference to the Nepalese state, one major approach to the structuring of power in terms of "chain of command", is formulated by Gaborieau (1978@).

1. Chain of Command?

Gaborieau depicts the Nepalese arrangements as a "chain of command" from the centre to the outer districts where the state limits its delegate's power by retaining control over certain areas. Gaborieau describes the situation:

These powers, the king cannot exercise from the capital. One is surprised however, in reading documents, especially those at the end of the eighteenth century, or the first half of the nineteenth century, of the number of cases, even minor ones and dealing with faraway parts of the kingdom that were dealt with by royal counsel. However, the king delegates part of his powers conserving at the same time the prerogative to alone resolve the more important questions; it is thus all the land grants are made in the name of the king, that all serious offences which carry the death penalty or debasement to an inferior caste are judged at the royal tribunal. These areas being reserved, the delegation of powers is made in two distinct directions. The first, with which we are familiar, is given to a series of ministers and officials at the central and provincial levels, whose functions are renewable annually during the major 'movement' pajani, which takes place in September/October, the tenth day of Dasai (Gaborieau, 1978@:33).

1. That is eminent "master of the soil", "judicial" powers, "monopoly of force", and the "protection of Hinduism" (see Gaborieau, 1978@:32).

2. This is a free translation of the French.
To fill in the reader regarding his reference to that "with which we are familiar", I quote him again;

We discern at the local level the last link in a chain of which the other extremity is fixed each year, by royal power... (ibid: 29).

Concerning the nature of subordination he says,

...at the summit, royal authority appears as a centre of autonomous decision and last of which is power, based on the ultimate monopoly of force, se pare des prestiges, by divine right; at the other extremity at the local level, power is only exercised by delegation of royal authority. The latter protects its monopoly of fixing and codifying the laws, but it delegates to its representatives at the local level a part, more or less, big according to the case, in the application (points of administratives) and certain privileges and revenues which are attached there (ibid: 30).

Gaborieau says that delegated powers

...come under five headings: land administration, tax collection and corvée, maintenance of order, administration of justice, celebration of collective rites (ibid: 30).

Apart from reference to those areas where the state retains its power (with land grants, final say in caste matters, monitoring of important issues in outlying districts), the description fails to indicate how the difficulties of delegation are actually overcome, or attempts can be made in that direction. After all, the problem lies with the "one part" of power delegated to the state's representative. Given the possibility that delegation might not proceed as the king desires, the claim that the king retains his "monopoly" of power is more or less left unexplored. Gaborieau's description of the patterning of the distribution of power is thereby left vague, for references to "levels", "extremity" and "centre", "links of a chain" do not adequately indicate how power is in fact sustained at the centre.

The immediate task is to obtain some picture of the administrative organisation of the country. Given that executive and judicial functions were not separate and both are facets of the state's administrative arrangements (see Hodgson, 1836: 108) we can validly utilize Hodgson's description of the state's organisation of the judicial apparatus for this purpose. By scrutinizing the arrangements we may discern what, if any, measures are taken to retain central power, that is to say what are the checks on the delegates who run the state. In this there are two major areas of state concern, firstly, that its agent does in fact
fulfil the responsibilities and does not abuse his power which could lead to a depopulation of the territory through discontent; and that he does not misappropriate state funds. The second area is that the significant officials do not usurp power for themselves and secede. Now to turn to Hodgson.

The heart of the country is Kathmandu Valley and the heart of the Valley is Kathmandu. So it is in the present and was in the past when Hodgson was describing the organisation imposed by the ruler from Gorkha. Hodgson (1836:98-108) details the composition and functions of nine organisations, four of which are clearly courts of justice concerned principally with judicial processes and another four which are also referred to as courts (for their senior officers are invariably judges) but are essentially administrative centres or records offices, and at the apex of all, at the core of the kingdom and for every corner of the nation, there is the ninth, the final or supreme unit of appeal and for confirmation as well as for decisions and penalties regarding grave matters touching the well-being of the state, this is the Raja in Council. It is, as its name implies, presided over by the king himself.

Beyond the valley, the country was divided into three divisions, with a special fourth category which we will leave aside for the moment. The three constituted the hill region of the east, the hill region of the west, and the Tarai of the lowlands. Within these three broad areas there were further breakdowns. The eastern region was left as one major zone; the west was segmented into two; while the Tarai was broken into six. In the eastern region with its one major division there were two centres with fixed residences for the ambulating judges ("Bichari", Nep.). In any instance, there were always two judges. In the western region of the hills with its two major divisions, there were four centres with fixed residences for court sittings presided over by its two judges each time. The lowland Tarai region with its six major divisions had special administrators, termed "Subah" (Nep.), under whom the judicial functionaries operated. Sometimes there were two of these judicial men, "Faujdar", Nep.) sometimes one, but each time he worked under the authority of the chief administrative officer, the "Subah". Both fulfilled administrative and judicial functions. Though the judicial functionary was nominated by the region itself, his post had to be ratified by Kathmandu (ibid:105). Similarly, the judges of the hills were also appointed by the capital. Each division was independent of the other

1. "Bichari" literally means "speaker".
2. To avoid confusion I keep to Hodgson's spelling of the technical terms placing them in quotes.
While in the Tarai the "Subah" with his assistant (the "Faujdar") attended to judicial, as well as other affairs, whereas the hill areas had their special judges sent expressly for that purpose from the capital. We come to the fourth major territorial division.

There were special administrative regions of great import because therein resided the Governor, a person who was more than a state official since he was the representative of the ruler himself, yet with certain limitations. These areas were special because they constituted the annexed states of Palpa, Doti and Sallinah. Within the kind of administrative division, the governor had judicial authority, but only to the extent applying to all the other divisional heads. The governor's powers, like theirs, were limited at one particular point. We shall take this up shortly, after describing arrangements for the village.

Everywhere there are the village courts, says Hodgson. Within the administrative framework some villages were accommodated within the relevant district division where the court was located at the centre of the district. In a district, apart from its court, there was another type, presided over by an official ("Dwariah") sent from the capital who was assisted by a local senior person (the head "Nukhiah"). This court's sphere of operation could cover one village, or a number of villages (Hodgson, 1836: 110). It is described by Hodgson:

The Nukhiah is the representative of the community, the Dwariah, of the government, both in matters of revenue and justice. The latter is the responsible person, but he acts with the assistance and advice of the former (ibid:110).

The phrase "representative of the community" could be taken to imply that the community had some kind of right to express a point of view, or some kind of leverage to bargain with the centre's agent, in the matter of justice. To interpret it along these lines would be far from the truth, for local customs were generally only taken into consideration when it served the state's interest. Rather, the headman was a person from the "community", head of the senior lineage, whose forebear had presumably

1. Hodgson describing the arrangements pertaining in the eighteen-thirties lists the governor as the judicial figure. Earlier in the seventeen-nineties, a document relates how the Gorkha king had granted internal sovereignty to the Rajas of such mini-states to administer caste matters and to degrade and elevate castes, award capital punishment etc. Since Hodgson does not allude to this, but refers to the governor, it may be inferred that changes had occurred by this stage. Since the article refers to the same restriction on his powers as with other judges, then presumably the governor had a judicial function (1836:106, 107) and was explicitly linked to the provincial court (ibid:107).
opened up that area, or been given a grant in the settlement, but headship had to be ratified by the centre. Thus he, like the state official, was appointed by the capital. In as much as it was the official who was the key figure in expediting judicial problems according to the wishes of the centre, the centre's wishes were to predominate. The responsibilities at the village level are summed up by Hodgson:

The Dwariah assisted by the Mukhiah or head villager also collects the revenues and settles all the village disputes. He is in fact the principal source of justice in the villages. His cognizance extends over all cases not included in the Panch-khat, not touching life or limb, or the substance of a man's property. He cannot capitably condemn, maim, mutilate or confiscate. He can imprison, and punish with the cornah, and fine. The extent of his local limits is not fixed: sometimes he presides over several villages; sometimes over only one, if it be large (Hodgson, 1836:110).

According to this description, it would seem that the jurisdiction of the men at the village level did not diverge radically from those obtaining for the courts of the wider geographical regions, because the limits of their powers were just those faced by the more grandiose courts.

With regard to the range of courts: when one identifies the restrictions in the juridical field at the village courts (ibid:109-110), and compares them with those pertaining to the courts at the district centre, the lower courts in the cities of the valley, including that of the capital, they are all the same. All judicial bodies had to refer to the high court of the capital for any issue which brought a sentence regarding loss of life and limb, confiscation of a man's entire property and irreversible caste degradation (ibid:98,104,106,107,108) and that court in turn had to refer matters to the Council of State presided over by the king (ibid:104). Therefore despite any of the differences in rank of the personnel concerned, or the extent of territorial area administered, when it came to the crunch, all the courts, whatever the level, were limited in the same way. In effect, the village courts, the courts at the district centres, and the minor courts in Kathmandu valley could attend to and settle the same set of legal affairs, but had to pass over the other set to the major court of the capital. Since reference has already been given for the local courts, to substantiate the claim that the same breakdown for the courts at the district centre applied, let me quote Hodgson's summary,

...every court of the interior must forward a written report
with the offender's confession to Kathmandu to be laid before
the government which refers them to the Ditha.1 The Ditha
reports the customary proceeding in such matters, and
according to his report a royal command is transmitted to
the local court to award such and such punishment, or to send
the offender and witnesses to Kathmandu, as the case may be.
No governor of a province or judge of a district court has
power to decide cases involving loss of life or limb, or status,
or substance of property (jat and pani): to the decision of all
others they are competent (ibid:106).

At the capital was the major court (Inta Chapli, Nep.), the one which
could treat such matters, though not without its limitation. The minor
courts of the valley only had the same range of powers as those outside.
In the capital, Kathmandu, the two sets were together, but the powers of
the minor courts simply paralleled those of all the other courts
regardless of where they were sited. Hodgson brings the points together:

There are no regular limits placed to the jurisdiction,
personal or local, of these courts, nor indeed of any court
in Nepal. Offences, however, involving the loss of life or
limb, or confiscation of a man's whole substance, can be
decided only in the Inta Chapli, where to them must be
at once transferred, for trial as well as sentence, if they
originate in any shape, in any other court of the Capital
or its environs as they must be referred to it, prior to and
for sentence, if they originate in any court of the mountains
of of the Tarai (1836: 98-99). 2

Thus, despite the hierarchical arrangement of officials and variations
of the trappings of authority3 that distinguish the various types of
officers, as far as system of jurisdiction was concerned it was very
simple - a set with two terms, the minor courts and the major court, and
with critical events, the Council of State. At the local level, and
any local level, the court could handle minor affairs, but only the
high court of the capital could deal with offences whose punishments were
of a severe nature. The final say came from the Council of State presided
over by the monarch in the matter of control over the citizen's being,
his body, his caste and his assets. In effect no subject could determine
such losses involving another subject. If power over the crucial aspects
of the subject was retained at the centre, the state also controlled
its agents.

1. The "Ditha" is the chief judge, distinguished from the lesser, the
"Bicharis".
2. Degredation of caste should have been included.
3. Though it would be foolhardy to deny the elaborate arrangements along
a hierarchy of appeals (see Hodgson, 1836:107), given the limitations
of their powers to handle these issues, they must perforce be viewed
as nothing more than what they are, transit offices.
Extrapolating from Hodgson, the geographical distribution of the courts and thereby the administrative organisation of the territory can be diagrammatically depicted in the following way:

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<td>- 2 DIVISIONS</td>
<td>- 1 DIVISION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with its fixed residence for court</td>
<td>courts - 2 fixed centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sittings</td>
<td>Kathmandu Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+ villages)</td>
<td>(+ villages)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARAI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 6 DIVISIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 &quot;Sukahs&quot;. Each has special judicial officers below. They have administrative and judicial functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+ villages)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plus Governors of Palpa and Doti Provinces. The Governor had administrative and judicial authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+ villages).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the following page is the scheme of the Census districts of Nepal as they were defined after 1951. It is of interest in so far as the old patterning of divisions persists apart from the special cases. It is taken from Gaige (1975:7).
Census regions and census districts of Nepal.
The arrangement of personnel may be diagrammatically presented also, (again, extrapolating from Hodgson, 1836: 104-110):

**Raja in Council**

Major Court of Kathmandu  
Senior Judge ("Ditha")  
of Kathmandu + Dharmadhikari  
priest for scriptural and  
purificatory matters

Minor Courts in Kathmandu,  
Patan and Bhadgaon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HILLS (East &amp; West)</th>
<th>TARAI</th>
<th>SPECIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(a) DISTRICT COURTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>(a) DISTRICT COURTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>(a) SPECIAL CASES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ambulatory judges in each division of a Hill district</td>
<td>&quot;Subah&quot; + at least one &quot;Faujdar&quot; in each division of a district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>(b) VILLAGE COURTS</strong></th>
<th><strong>(b) VILLAGE COURTS</strong></th>
<th><strong>(b) VILLAGE COURTS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government agent (&quot;Dvariah&quot;) + local headman</td>
<td>Government agent + local headman</td>
<td>Government agent + local headman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Sometimes the word "Pradhan" is cited. This is the word generally used by Newars, whereas Parbatya use "Nikhiah" (Hodgson, 1836:110).
The organisation of the judicial personnel and its interweaving with administrative functions shows that the powers were curtailed in some way or other. Given that executive and judicial functions were not separated, then these were executive as much as judicial zones. Therefore the area of discourse is the bureaucratic field in general. First of all there was the territorial limitation where jurisdiction only applied to certain territorial units, which were in a sense autonomous to each other. Therefore, in that each division was separate from the other, no division became inordinately important, and no chief administrator could hold sway over any extensive territory. Since each of the critical officials was appointed by the centre or the position was ratified there, whether this was the senior or junior person, the centre held control of the appointments, thus by-passing the high-ranking officials of an area. If the village level official's connexion is with the centre rather than the regional head, depending on it for the position (and the perquisites), then allegiance would go in that direction also. Further, there were apparently always at least two officials involved, whether this refers to the government agent and the village headman of the village courts; the two ambulatory judges in each division of the Hills; the high administrator officer and the Faujdar in each division of the Tarai. The patterning of at least two officials in each type of court presumably was to provide a check, one on the other. The check is a constant motif in the organisation as we shall see. The interesting feature about the judicial and administrative arrangements is that the powers come through delegation and were not hereditary, there appears to be an attempt to retain control of agents, whether in the case of the career bureaucrat (administrator, circuit judge, village officials) or village headman since each depended on the state for his appointment and this, as we know, was subject to constant review. As for the extent of these delegated powers, though the state allocated responsibility to its agents who could thereby judge and penalise accordingly, this was cut off at that point where comprehensive power over the citizen, entailing the totality of his being (loss of caste, wealth, life and limb) was involved. So the agent's power over the citizen was restricted while the state retained ultimate control. More significant is the point that the responsibilities of village officials (headman and agent) are not so inordinately different from the man with a grandiose title. In fact the high-ranking officials

1. Unfortunately the information on the court of the provincial government (Palpa and Doti) is inadequate.
seemed to have been constantly checked by the centre. It would seem that responsibilities are distributed in much the same way regardless of different rank for as we have seen the judicial powers are limited at the same point; extent of responsibilities are much the same in that the village chaps collect revenue for the state like the district officials. In short, the delegated power is distributed to state agents all and sundry rather than being concentrated in the hands of any one person. There is no build up of allegiance in an hierarchical form from more junior to most senior in a region, for the junior (like the senior) is appointed by the centre. The local man at the village has his connexion with the centre for his position depends on that connexion and not on the regional head. The pattern of arrangements is that of scattering the delegated power, rather than leaving it concentrated in the hands of the significant officials with the grand titles. All these factors indicate that the state attempted to cater to the contingencies of decentralization without loss of centralised power by preventing regional heads' building up of power in an area and ultimately assuming local autonomy. Though the system appears intricate with the various courts, a range of titles from chief administrator to village officials, and the hierarchy of judicial appeals from village up through regional courts and finally to that of capital, beneath such intricacies is a system of utmost simplicity. Two features stand out: each official is connected to the centre, regardless of rank and all officials' areas of responsibility in legal matters are curtailed at the same point. The key to the simple organisational manipulation is the importance of the village unit, and its officials which disturbs any idea about hierarchical arrangements. The clue is present in Hodgson's depiction of the arrangement as "inaccurate genius".

2. Absoluteism

Hodgson makes the important observation about the nature of the arrangement of the state's representatives, even though he fails to identify exactly what this is. Specifically, commenting on the nature of the distribution of the courts, which it will be recalled generally carry administrative as well as judicial functions, he says:

The territorial limits of the metropolitan courts are the Daud Costi, East, and Trisul Ganga, West: but Bhatgaon and Patan have their own courts: and everywhere there are village courts. Its inaccurate genius is the chief characteristic of the Nepal judicial administration, as of that of the whole of Asia, and indeed of Europe until late years (1836:104).
What he appears to be highlighting by using the term "inaccurate" is presumably that the arrangement does not conform to any standard or pattern like "chain" or "levels", but one which seems arbitrary. Yet, as we have seen there appears to be a significant patterning in the distribution of the courts and the bureaucracy to which they are tied. There is also an efficacy in the arrangements which relates to the state's ability to retain power supremacy, despite the problems involved in delegation outside and irrespective of deficiencies in other aspects of the administrative process. Responsibilities were distributed to the widest possible extent where, more or less, as much went to the village unit and its officials as to the important men of rank in a wider territorial unit. That is to say, the state's delegated power was not concentrated in the hands of any high-ranking official and therefore the centre was linked separately to the connexion at the local level, repeated in each instance. The key idea "inaccurate genius", also applies to the mode of appointment.

Alongside the assortment of administrative levels there seems to be another kind of structuring, a series of dyadic ties going from the centre to the greater and lesser officials, but from the centre in each case. This is to be discerned especially in the method of appointments, dismissals and reviews. If this is the case, then it renders the idea of a chain of command far too simple and one-sided an account, for the significant arrangements is not the chain, but the dyadic tie between ruler and agent, regardless of import or positioning in the administrative hierarchy.

The pattern in the structuring of power, as I see it, takes form in the series of dyadic thrusts radiating from the centre to each of the state's officers, with each separately linked to the centre, for not only is the king's senior-most representative in the district appointed by the centre but lesser officials also. In a district, for example, though there is the hierarchical gradation of posts comprising the head (the sardar) and under his command are other officers of state (the subbas), yet each individual holder is appointed not by his senior but by the central powers. Therefore, there is an alternative structuring of power alongside, and in addition to the formal hierarchical one, since each official is equally dependent on the centre. Since a junior's allegiance is to the centre, it bypasses his immediate senior. This has two important repercussions: that the key man's power over his juniors is compromised; and that the state can counterbalance one of the major
problems inherent in delegation of authority to its key agent. A reconstruction of the period is outlined by Stillier. He says

The key man in the provincial administration was either the sardar or governor. These men were in supreme control in the provinces, and were given wide discretionary power. The use of that power was kept under constant check by the central authorities. The sardar or governor was expected not to take any action of moment in the province without consulting the other nobles present, and whatever action was decided upon was detailed to the central authorities in the monthly reports or in special letters sent for this purpose. In matters of considerable moment the course of action proposed by the sardar or governor was regularly commented upon and often corrected by the authorities of the central government (1973:272).

...Since all of the nobles stationed in the area could, and did send private reports to the centre, and since subbas who served under the governor were not subject to his appointment, but were appointed by Kathmandu itself, the sardar or governor could rest assured that every move he made was known to the centre (ibid:1973:273).

For our purposes we may notice several features.

The centre, by according an ear to the junior officers, as much as to the senior, connects itself closely to each officer regardless of rank. This has general implications since an official's prime loyalty is not structurally hitched to his senior, but rather to where the appointment originates, the palace. Given that this is repeated on each level, then there is a general patterning of connexions and separations. There would be a range of officials linked in this dyadic manner with Kathmandu.

If the patterning of allegiance short-circuits the fellow officials on the hierarchical list, there is no resultant chain of allegiance in the last analysis, but a range of dyadic sets, jumping from the official to the durbar, then the general pattern is a bit like a wheel, if we only bear in mind that the spokes are of assorted lengths. Thus the structuring of power contains a series of dyadic links radiating from the hub to each separate high official, regardless of his particular rank and separated from each other by that important state connexion. None of this is to say that rank is thereby dissolved, but rather through such arrangements the powers of high rank are checked and that the ruler does not cease to remain the ultimate pivot of power. In this, the relationship
obtaining between official and official is as important as that between official and ruler and though this has been referred to, I want to say something more.

In the state's attempt to contain its agents, there were a series of manoeuvres, one was the "check on the boss" through the reports, mentioned by Stiller. Another was the spy. The "check on the boss" and on anybody else for that matter, manifests in a crude form, the spy system. Bereft of the misplaced connotation of intrigue, a spy system in this context simply means the deployment of an individual to report on the behaviour of the state's representative, where the spy is responsible to the state. Unfortunately, the association of spying with intrigue detracts attention from its authentic standing as a structural feature of this kind of regime, for if an official is to be accountable for his actions, then the centre must have the information. The spy situation is just another variation of the citizen to ruler link and also carries the expectation that it serves the state's purposes. But more important it brings to the fore, the citizen/citizen opposition. In any of these arrangements the officer is expected to act as watch dog for the state's interest. In order to patrol the activities of its agents, the checks were established but as a result it propelled mistrust between subject and subject, and conniving, for there is no guarantee that the reports on others will be accurate. Be that as it may, what is more relevant to our discussion is that an official is expected to assume the position of patrolling the state's interest against those who might follow their own, especially by abusing their power at the local level and appropriating state funds but, in so arranging matters, it eventuates that subject is pitted against subject, which presents another version of divisiveness in the subject relationship. The same would apply with the annual review, for a review presupposes the situation where reports come from persons other than the official himself.

The issue of the official's accountability to the state came to a head in the yearly review but in so doing it also provided the field for the play of rivalry between subject and subject. The ruler's assessment of his officials could hardly follow unless he had some kind of information on the activities of these men, other than what they themselves preferred and reports from colleagues and others were presumably forthcoming.

1. A less sensational monitoring of the potential autonomy of the state's representative came with the auditor (see Stiller, 1973:273).
Evidence from another quarter makes this a fair assumption. In one of the dispatches (dated 1794) to an agent from the centre, clause (10) declares,

Complaints against you shall be disposed of only after proper scrutiny of evidence submitted by both parties. One-sided evidence shall not be heard (Stiller, 1973:262).

It can be interpreted two ways, either as a complaint from a member within an official's jurisdiction, or from an enemy, for there is strong expectation that it might be fabricated, a possibility of others conniving to oust a person from his post. From this and the other measures taken to patrol the agents the same general feature in the structuring of power emerges.

The measures taken to cope with the problems of absolute rule, like checking the activities of the agents, automatically set up divisions between official and official (or faction and faction) for that is the nature of the operation of this kind of game, whether it entails the "spy", the "reports on the boss", the "complaints", or whatever. From what can be gathered, such moves did not stop the officials from abusing their delegated powers within the area of jurisdiction for there are instances of emigration from various areas which indicate the populace's discontent according to records of the period. Nor did it impede corruption which apparently flourished. This is documented for the late Rana period, by Edwards (1976: 16, 19-20, 23,26,28).\(^1\) The state seems to have been more successful in retaining its sovereignty and avoiding secession for there were no further breakaways after the Sagauli Treaty of 1916,\(^2\) though other factors like the nature of the alliance with external powers might have also contributed to the regime's retention of power. My concern is not whether the arrangements were always successful or not, for what is of import is the mode of structuring of the relations that an absolute regime imposes, and which enables it to exist and operate for shorter or longer spans of time. The problem is always how come absolutism and what are the consequences and the ironies?

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1. In trying to contain the problem, the Ranas set up an inspection system which is detailed by Edwards, 1976. Further, one of the important agreements between the Ranas and the British was the agreement that a kind of proto interpol was established whereby absconding officials were returned to Nepal (see Geilner, 1979:361).

2. Though the Ranas placed themselves in supreme power, they did not erase the Shah dynasty. This will be discussed later.
With regard to retention of the regime's sovereignty, certain arrangements were imposed. One was a policy of constantly circulating men of high office around the country (Stillier, 1974) which would mean that by not remaining in an area for long the opportunity of building up a band of local supporters was not enhanced. Another mode was to distribute areas of responsibility and power as widely as possible, as the analysis of Hodgson's data attempted to show. By fracturing power amongst as many officials as possible, no one person holds sway over a wide area of jurisdiction. Further, regardless of rank, each official's power is curtailed at the same point in the authority to inflict punishment. Thus it is the centre that makes the final decision for the termination of a man's life, his caste and the erasure of his assets. The ruler is also the final court of appeal and therefore the last place of hope. Then there is alignment of dependence between all officials and the king, one of the most important features in the manipulation of the state's agents. Since this feature is crucial, let me recapitulate on it.

If the king is to retain his omnipotence but also is forced by the limitations of time/space to delegate powers to his agent who represents him in the locality, then there must be countervailing procedures which, when successful, mitigate against the local man's powers and at the same time assert the centre's ultimate authority. Given that such men are remote from the capital and have been delegated power in the state's name, the problem for the centre is that the head person does not ignore the centre's instructions, or assert his own autonomy, and ultimately separate from the centre and control that territory for himself. We have seen that there is a structuring of necessary loyalty in so far as it is the durbar which retains the sole authority to appoint its agents of whatever rank and, as a consequence, the top man's authority is compromised since the loyalty of his personnel is directed at the capital and not at him, their immediate superior. Another way of presenting the situation is to notice that a junior officer's loyalty cannot be readily directed at his immediate seniors, if the senior is just as dependent as he is on those central powers for tenure of office. This appears to follow a format that we have seen elsewhere, (e.g. in the discussion on arrangements pertaining to land) a format of the kind where there is divisiveness between citizen and citizen, and inter-connexions between citizen and ruler. The subjects are divided from each other in as much as loyalty (or dependence) of each individual, regardless of rank, is chained to the ruler and not to others because
the citizens do not depend on each other for their positions, nor the continuity of their positions. Always the state binds the individual to itself. Putting these points together, we can see that when we find linkages they are in terms of the ruler/citizen, which when multiplied fall into the series of dyadic sets, of official/ruler, official/ruler and so forth. Where we find little of the sort, and the likelihood of divisiveness, it would occur in the relation between official and official; or a faction of officials as against another. Therefore it is not so much a matter of divide and rule but linking with those who are divided and thereby rule absolutely.

If an outline focusing on "the chain of command" does not heed the nature of the accompanying structure of relationship (the series of dyadic sets) then it is inadequate in illustrating how the list of "the chain of command" is compromised by this alternative set of relationships, since it tends to give a general picture of a scaling of power which does not conform to the complexities of the situation. Undoubtedly, the top men in a region have authority and power to administer those under their jurisdiction, yet to focus on this without critical attention to the nature of the various relationships with the centre could give a lop-sided picture. From the "chain of command" angle, it might appear that the top man in the region holds supremacy in his position, and relative to the other officers holds greater power in his role as the chief administrator, but if we look at it from the other angle, we see that all the officials are equal in the one critical fact. By making all officials of greater and lesser importance equally dependent on it for their appointments and retention of posts, the state places all of them in the same situation of subservience despite the variations of rank. Though there is the neat hierarchical list of a "chain of command" which delineates the various agents' positions in the scheme of things, it is only a partial account which does not highlight the fact that all these men, despite the variations of "power and privilege", are, in the final analysis, all subjugated to the one centre of power. They are all equally at risk for the centre's favours. If you look downward along the line at the official's realms of operation and sphere of responsibilities you get one picture; if you look upwards and notice the manner in which they are controlled you get another picture. But in either case, the absolute ruler is absolute. The statement is intentionally circular since the process is also circular.
The king's favour derives from his structural position of absolutism, and absolutism can work when people work within the parameters of that institution. In the relationship between official and official, the individual competes for royal favours, that is, an official post, the land grant to back it, and any other worthwhile perquisites that fall his way. The perquisites can only come from the king, for in this kind of regime there are no alternatives for ascendancy except manoeuvring, secession or ousting the ruler from within. Thus the state agents are tied to the ruler, yet ironically it is the ruler who depends on such men for making his state work after a fashion.

Even though the regime stays in power, corruption flourishes. Corruption seems to be an inevitable outcome of the processes which follow from absolute rule, which, in operation is the royal favour. The favour is to be understood as an authentic structural feature of this kind of regime: it is simply the idiom of absolute rule, and not, as Dumont seems to be implying, as almost subversive.¹ It is not only the pragmatic dimension of absolute rule but an entrenched aspect of the procedure for a Hindu king, for as Manu puts it

Let no (man) therefore, transgress that law which the king decrees with respect to his favourites, nor (his orders) which inflict pain on those in disfavour (VII, 13 in Buhler (tr.) 1969:218).

Certain things follow from the operation of favouring. Being favoured carries the possibility of impermanence given that others are likely to be favoured in turn, and it is in the king's power to change the situation, for example by appointments to higher or lesser office, or land grants. As well it entails a situation of rivalry between those eligible since a favoured position is not permanent, and those in high office are anxious not to be ousted, while the others are eager to obtain it. Given the background of impermanence, the big fish rely on the idea of insecurity to necessitate the need to maximise on their position for as long as the opportunity lasts. We will come back to this. First let us notice that

¹ Dumont juxtaposes it with "violent interference" thereby giving the impression that they are of the same ilk. Both of which, Dumont says, can change the titulars, reducing the dominant caste to the state of tenants, and tenants to dependents (1973:202). Violent interference within the ideological framework is illegal, while the favour is a legitimate aspect of the king's power, just as is the king's relation to land, what Dumont calls "the eminent master of the soil".
within the system itself matters are so arranged that there are few alternatives for the ambitious to gain any advantage. Apart from waiting for royal favour there are only situations like overthrowing the regime, or being part of a movement which secedes both of which means moving out of the system. Otherwise if an ambitious person wants to stay within the system, all that is left is to maximize on the situation while the opportunity lasts. It is the local variant of opportunism.

When discussing corruption, Nepalis generally refer to the insecurity of tenure promoted by their personal enemies, and the cynical say that it would be foolish not to indulge, because everybody else would do the same given the chance. Neither the distributor of favours, nor the restrictive nature of the absolute system is evoked. In fact, people insist that such corrupt men have violated the ruler's trust, complaining that there are no men of integrity around. In all of this, the ruler remains the innocent, while the officials stand as the villains. Now this is exactly what the sacred texts, like Manu declare also.

VII 123. For the servants of the king, who are appointed to protect (the people) generally become knaves who seize the property of others; let him protect his subjects against such (men) (in Buhler (tr.) 1969:235).

According to this formulation, it is taken as axiomatic that power corrupts in the case of officials, and that it is the king's responsibility to protect the people against them. Thus the king is depicted as the essential guardian of the people against the men of high office.

While on the one hand, absolutism and the process of favouring, the insecurity, and most important the blockages it establishes and the avenues it leaves open, breed corruption, yet on the other hand corruption itself provides the occasion for the despot to declare his concern for the well-being of the little fish and to protect these weak people from being abused by the strong. Further, let it not be forgotten that the strong obtain whatever opportunity they have through the auspices of the state in order to implement its objective, the operation of state machinery. Whether the absence of absolute rule would eradicate corruption is a moot point, but it is fair to say that its presence breeds it, and generates a series of circular processes which to a great extent are unsatisfactory all around. For the absolute ruler, at least he retains
his absolute position, so perhaps the administrative inefficiency and the corruption are not such a high price for he has the rest. The state's concern for the populace can of course be genuine for their contentment, or at least lack of gross discontent, also serves the ruler's interest. The worst that could happen to the state would be a mass exodus to India and without a populace the ruler would be a bit like the fairytale emperor without clothes. As it stands, the officials' abuse of their powers and the general discontent with such big fish is undeniably to the ruler's advantage for he is seen as the one who stands above such unworthy indiscretions. The blame is never thrust on the ruler nor the structure of absolutism. Time and time again it is said that the king is hamstrung by corrupt, selfish men and if only men of integrity would emerge all would be well. And so he becomes the single ray of hope. So the royal commissions are set up to purge the country of the big fish who would swallow the hapless, the helpless. Thus ironically the necessity for the presence of the king remains a fundamental truth, and the pernicious effect of this kind of absolute system goes unnoticed.
CHAPTER 23

CONTROL OVER THE FORCES OF DESTRUCTION

Though I have frequently referred to the state's control of the use of force, on the whole, the topic has been left unexamined. What is entailed by the idea? What does it presuppose? What are the implications? Further, since the use of force effects destruction of some kind, and since there are other less likely contexts where this effect also occurs, then what are the repercussions for the state, the master of destructive power? When the issue, control of the use of force, is explored, one notices that at different stages of a state's development, different aspects are especially important. War stops. The state then imposes its laws throughout the territory. Production can be maximized for labour is released from warfare. One might say following the Hindu metaphysical line, that at one stage the forces of production are relevant; those of maintenance (the laws), during the period of stability and those of destruction during war, but that would constitute an uneasy analogy, shifting from one universe of discourse to another. A state's development is not quite like that, in that its growth depends on a contest where winning simultaneously entails the destruction of another polity and killing other humans. The development of a state entity follows a particular kind of path, for always destructive force is present and predominant. As we are dealing with an absolute ruler, it is he who controls this force. Use of force in one context means killing is an occasion when humans assume powers that ordinarily belong to nature (whether our nature, or the Hindu Prakṛti). While such power can be viewed as awesome, awful and perplexing, it cannot be denied that control over this kind of destructive force is impressive and, as we have mentioned, it constitutes the core of the problem. Specifically I want to show that destructive power appears in a state's life in obvious but also less obvious guises.

1. Expansion

a) The Prerequisite for Expansion:

Without a doubt, for the work of destruction, one needs the workers of destruction. It also helps if one has them in numbers. Control over the use of force therefore presupposes control over men, because they are the dynamic components in the operation, as the ones who will wield the sword, pull the trigger, or whatever knick-knack is to unleash the source of destruction. The matter is complicated because if a ruler is to have control over force this presumes that some men are willing to implement his desires and, in the case of war especially, put their lives in jeopardy, in a contest where the greatest gains in all probability will accrue to the leader. While on the one hand, submission is comparatively easy to understand in a
situation where a person responds unwillingly, or is confronted by the facts of force, and the alternative is his annihilation, or some lesser disaster, on the other hand, the situation where some people willingly participate in a process whose outcome is unknown and there is the risk of death is more difficult to understand. Again, while it is easy to understand how a soldier follows the path of duty when he is armed and simply has to round up unarmed civilians compelling them to perform, for example, their unpaid involuntary labour, or chase criminals for the court trial, since in both instances effective force is in the soldier's hands and there is hardly, if any, risk to his person, on the other hand it is quite another matter to follow the leader who embarks on war. Let me make it clear. I am not referring to those people who automatically follow a leader, like the king, unquestionably accepting the definitions of the situation and his power; nor am I referring to those contexts where the henchmen's fate is so bound into the connexion with the ruler, outlined in a previous chapter, that the king's defeat would implicate them negatively. Since warfare is radically different from that of administration and patrol of a country, the issue hinges on what is involved in rousing a following from those people not given to obey unthinkingly. Especially puzzling, to my mind at least, is how could a ruler gain followers for a venture of armed confrontation where the outcome is unknown, as did Prithivinarayan Shah, for example.

The significance of the personal qualities of Prithivinarayan Shah seem to lie at the centre of Stiller's appraisal of the Nepalese conqueror's ability. Remarking that the ordinary Gorkha peasants were a wily lot not given to embark on an enterprise unthinkingly, Stiller surmises that it must have been the king's "leadership" qualities, which were able to make them "share in his vision", to stir "group enthusiasm" and to "infuse" them with the "vision of the world which might be theirs" (1973: 92-3). It is an argument which proceeds more with the perspective of hind-sight, that it must have been so, rather than by substantiation as is the general difficulty with such psychological constructs. The argument seems to be circular proposing that since he raised a following he must have had the appeal of leadership qualities to raise a following. This is not useful analytically since it does not indicate how a following is amassed, in that leadership itself is only

1: Though occasionally there is a hint in his description that leadership qualities might also entail the king's awareness of his men's desire for advantages (ibid: 92), the general idea of leadership qualities seems to predominate (ibid: 74-97).
identifiable by gathering a following. Capitulation to others, seems to be easier to comprehend and provides a clue to our problem.

Involuntary capitulation to force when the odds are against a person is intelligible and acquiescence to another's power makes good sense, for the persons confronted often only have several alternatives, existence with acquiescence, or alternatively death or some wounding with resistance, often strikingly irrevocable, or a lucky escape. Now as we have said, in the set of possibilities, the problematic dimension in the control of force is the logically and sometimes historically prior situation of gaining military supporters, problematic because when involved in this way, they would know that they run the risk of their own non-existence in pursuing a particular course of action. But if the leader's cause is also presented as one which entails a threat anyhow, a possibility of non-existence, or any other horror, posited as coming from outside, then there is cause for alarm and a reason for rallying to the leader's side. To confront and fight what is depicted and perceived as disturbingly dark forces likely to destroy oneself is a choice which makes sense for, if the enemy succeeds, then the subject loses things of value. Ironically the rationale here for fighting against an enemy, namely to avoid the negative outcome, is exactly the same as for acquiescence when faced with superior force. In the context of gathering men, the alternative to not fighting, if presented as a nasty fate, provides a good reason to take up arms. Supporters may then rally to defend what is regarded as most valuable, their lives, their families, their crops, or even a worthwhile kind of order (Hindu, or whatever the regime calls forth). Consequently, when an outside threat to one's well-being is posited, then the other facts of the matter, like the ensuing risks to self in following the leader, would tend to get over-shadowed by such external dangers. The outcome of not joining the leader would be worse than following him. Therefore the choice would not be difficult, for the alternative to not fighting would be as bad, or even worse than putting one's life in danger. At least with fighting the enemy there is the possibility of surviving and retaining the prized things. At a general level, as I understand the situation, one of the most effective ways to gain support would be through the idea of threat imputed to jeopardise something of value. The possibility that something negative could result to oneself and others would therefore constitute one of

1. Russell says, ...propaganda must appeal to desire, and this may be confirmed by the failure of State propaganda when opposed to national feeling, as in large parts of Austria - Hungary before the War, in Ireland until 1922, and in India down to the present time. Propaganda is only successful when it is in harmony with something in the patient... (1960: 96).
the most important factors in the configuration of relations rather than simply a case where strong leadership attracts people, as the proponents of the personality theory seem to be implying. Rather than examine the leader's qualities as these are assumed to affect the followers, it might be wiser to focus on the issues involved and how these can be used to arouse allegiance. In which case, the situation will entail a third factor.

If a man's control of the use of force is ultimately about the wielders' loyalty to that man, then to secure this the presence of a third factor is, I think, critical. More often than not, the third factor constitutes the enemy, real or alleged, and it is this which brings leader and willing supporters together. 1 If when a man has the allegiance of others to employ violence for his cause, he has control over the forces of destruction, then the enemy, the threat, is probably one of the most effective instruments of propaganda, in that it can induce commitment to the leader's cause by making it appear as one's own. The issue will be taken up later. Needless to add here, that though the threat is probably the most significant instance of the third factor, it does not constitute the only possibility.

The presence of a third factor would apply in the other significant possibility, that of gain, though here I would suspect that the venture would then be presented as straightforward and not extremely precarious, where the leader simply plays on the followers' cupidity. This is not to say that the promise and expectation of gain would not also feature where threat is employed as an incentive. The followers' self-interest obviously figures in both, since the loss of good things is to be avoided, just as the acquisition of good things is sought. Having considered what appear to be significant from the formal point of view, let us turn to the material.

The first objective of Prithvivinarayan Shah's expansionist policy in the eighteenth century was to take the cities in Kathmandu valley. They held the monopoly in the hill region of the trade and traffic between India and Tibet, and controlled the route (Regmi, 1971: 5-9) which went through their territory. In consequence opportunities for Gorkhas were restricted, their betterment put at risk. 2 It is reasonable to infer that the king

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2. Conquest is probably undertaken for a host of reasons. What is striking in Prithvivinarayan Shah's own commentary is a sheer desire for self-aggrandisement, an indulgence in vainglory, and utter disregard as to how the fulfillment of his desires would affect others. On first seeing the valley, the very young king said: From Chandragiri's top I asked, "Which is Nepal?" They showed me, saying, "That is Bhadgaon, that is Patan, and there lies Kathmandu". The thought came to my heart that if I might be king of these three cities, why, let it be so (in Stiller, 1973: 75).
inspired a desire for gain but also played up the hostile unyielding
behaviour of the Newars, and its negative effect on them all, Gorkha
king and subjects, since this is how present day Parbatya describe the event,
and this is highly likely to reflect the official line of the past.

The significance of the presence of a threat, specifically the British
in neighbouring India, is raised by a Nepalese scholar, commenting on Stiller's
book, The Rise of the House of Gorkha. The scholar, Khanal, says,

At the end of my reading, I have been left with the feeling that the
full meaning of the threat of British expansion in India to the survival
and security of the emergent Gorkha State is only imputed in your book

In reply Stiller says,

The question, then, was fairly put. Did British expansion in India
constitute a threat to the survival and security of the emergent Gorkha
State? Further if such a threat existed, was Gorkhali reaction one of
fear, one of precaution, or one of heightened activity towards internal
unity and external security? (ibid: 42).

Stiller's empirical orientation provokes difficulties, for the first
question is not whether the British posed an actual calculable threat or not,
but whether it was perceived as such by the Gorkhali king; and, secondly,
even if Prithivinarayan Shah did not fear the British, it would have been
worth his while to project their presence as constituting a real, dangerous
possibility, and thereby arouse antipathy in that direction and commitment
to the Gorkha cause. Where Stiller seeks to establish that
Prithivinarayan Shah was not afraid of the British but only concerned with
their presence, is it not also likely that this presence, to a large extent,
was to the king's advantage in consolidating his position vis-à-vis his
supporters and in establishing and maintaining a Hindu polity, for the
alternative could have been incorporation into the Miệcha's sphere of
operation and subjugation to their power. Stiller's calculations about the
actual power of the British East India Trading Company, though impressive,
are to a certain extent irrelevant to this point, for what is important is
firstly how the Gorkha king himself assessed it, not the "objective" facts
of the killing potential of the enemy; and, secondly and most importantly,
how he utilised it, regardless of whether he thought this presence was
threatening or not. 1 I would suspect that the danger, which presumably was
recognised as such, was not only catered to, as Stiller demonstrates through
identifying the various precautionary measures adopted, but also that it was
played up, since such a danger gives the switch to stirring the patriotic

1. Stiller does not consider the possibility of ideological engineering.
spirit, and specially from those most likely to lose, whatever it might be.

That there was hostility to the British and their kind of order, as well as the arousal of commitment to the Gorkha cause, to the upholding of a Hindu order, is ardently vocalized in the judge's speech quoted earlier. There is no reason to believe that the sentiment was new or limited to that period, even though the judge's remarks were delivered in the eighteen thirties, some time after the conqueror king's death. There is additional evidence of an earlier but sustained hostility to outsiders, though found in an unlikely place. It is inherent in the prophecy that eventually the warrior protagonist, Kalki, the last divine incarnation, will ride in on his horse and trample the enemies of Hinduism, the Mlechhas, underfoot.1 External dangers, of course, were not restricted to foreigners.

Apart from the British and Muslims, the presence of like Hindu states in the neighbourhood would have provided the reference for the external threat as a constant possibility.2 If in this general kind of environment, there was always the possibility of a neighbour's expansion (see Stiller, 1973: 86) there was also the concomitant possibility for portraying the likelihood of threat to them all. The historic particulars need not be further itemized since the point is straightforward, that the outside threat, actual or alleged, would contribute to the consolidating of the ruler's power, since he as defender has responsibilities to combat such dangers, and in order to do so he must control the militia. The fact that the threat might materialize and topple the regime, though pertinent, does not alter the point that with the presence of external regimes, the leader has a specific situation whereby he can present himself as the people's protector.

Now it is just this kind of posture which is officially presented as epitomising the leader's significance. Let me spell this out. Since there are always outside powers, therefore the ruler always has at hand, contexts for raising the issue of threat, and so present himself as its fighter, defending the people, etc. and therefore, the actualities of neighbours lend plausibility to the ideology. Though it might constitute a real threat, or a miscalculation, or just a fabrication, nonetheless the threat provides the issue whereby the leader may loom large in the protector role. At a general level,

1. Kalki is portrayed as a militant figure. He is described in the texts riding a horse which tramples the evildoers of the Kali age (Pal, 1970: 49). The evildoers are the Mlechhas (ibid: 49) according to the Agnipurana 49, 9 (cited in Pal, ibid: 165).

2. To circumvent possible aggression, the Hindu principalities of the Tarai left the jungle standing as a precaution, for if opened up this would allow for the passage of invading troops, according to the early British observer, Hamilton (cited in Stiller, 1973: 51-2).
it is this kind of rendition of the ruler which is used in the ideological formulations, specifically in the idea of avatāra, the god who incarnates to become the saviour of the people against the enemy. In the configuration of ideas, the outside danger then constitutes an integral component, for with the presence of this negative factor, the claim, that the ruler is the people's protector, is vindicated. Not only is it the standard ideological posture for kings but apparently for other rulers also. One ruler's utilisation of the idea of dark undesirable forces, and the presentation of himself and his family as the ones who stave these off, thereby indicating his import for the people, appears in a speech by the last Rana Prime Minister. He told the people that, . . . It was even feared that the country was on the verge of ruin, and our very independence was seriously jeopardized. It is just over one hundred years ago that power came to the hands of the Ranas. What has happened in the country in those hundred years, in the field of law, usage and customs, of security and freedom from fear, of national and international peace and goodwill, and of the betterment of the country, are matters about which history will relate— I shall not speak of them here. But the fact that this small mountainous country preserved its independence, that Nepal was able to maintain her rightful place in the comity of the free peoples of the world, situated as she was between the mighty empire of China on the one hand and the rising flood of British power on the other, is one which her rulers, the Ranas, can take legitimate pride.

In as much as he refers to external threat and also internal disarray, both negative forces which, according to him, the Ranas had to countervail for the benefit of all, the sentiment of the declaration fits into the mould which portrays the ruler as the guardian of life, country and valued things. Here, as elsewhere, defender presupposes the existence of potential aggressor, a point not overlooked by the speechmaker. Other things are patently absent, which also seems to be the standard practice.

On the one hand, what is played out in such declarations is the ruler's fulfilment of his responsibility, while on the other, his reliance on men is left unspoken. This contains two interrelated points. Firstly, it is significant that the external threat, the area which would induce the men to follow a leader since it carried the possibility of their loss of good things, is the particular area highlighted as the king's responsibility, in which he fulfills his exemplary role. Along with this, while the ruler's importance for the people is amplified, the relevance of the ruler's dependence on them to implement matters does not get a mention. Perhaps megalomania, but at least


2. One cannot but notice a bit of double talk. Despite, the Rana's suggestion that others will judge the Rana achievement, yet shortly afterwards he asserts that they have grounds to be proud of it. The double talk is not surprising since it is a politician's stock-in-trade; what is surprising, however, is that it often seems to work.
clearly ideology. Furthermore, in the case of the Shahs the idea of protector stands as an undigestable tale when the historical facts are borne in mind. Ideology obtrudes here also since the protector god-king through conquest created the entity which he now sets himself up as the protector of, and the double role is assumed by his successors. The important question is: what is the ruler actually protecting? This will be taken up later, but first let us consider the pronouncements on a negative situation, where the external danger materialised through the British confrontation with the Nepalis, who were defeated in the encounter.

In the advent of war when failure occurs and instead of gaining people and territory, bits are lopped off, though the nation survives, as happened in the war with the British in the early part of the nineteenth century, it would seem that this kind of defeat could consolidate some kind of unity for the newly formed state of Nepal. Since the dramatic event constituted part of the country's history it became part of the tradition continuing over the generations, and though the defeat could be taken to illustrate lack of military power and humiliation, the matter seems to have been transposed and instead the positive aspects are brought into relief. In interpretations what is stressed is the fact that "the British never occupied Kathmandu", "Nepal is the only part of the subcontinent that was not absorbed by the British". It is the country's uniqueness which is aired, not humiliation. In addition, people refer to the injustice of the aggressor's tactics, that "Darjeeling is ours, parts of the Kumao are ours. . ." and they elaborate that the injustice is continued by the Indian Government. Further, the idea that "Nepal is the only surviving Hindu kingdom" is also invariably raised, whenever these other points are being discussed. Thus even though the regime lost territorially, the propaganda pay-off seems to have been handsome, since the spirit of Saggeri (the place where the treaty was signed with the British in 1816) evokes such responses. Its positioning in the development of the Nepalese state is especially pertinent for the discussion. Once a conquest state is engaged in a war with outsiders, the frame of reference would, I think, change, and a different conceptualisation tend to emerge in many people's minds. The idea of "We Nepalis" would take on a new significance by virtue of the foreigner's invasion which could be seen to put them all at risk. Where previously, Prithivinarayan Shah might have been perceived by the assortment of conquered peoples as an aggressor, later, with the invader's attack on them all, his successor becomes their defender against the foreign Mlechhas. The change of hats goes unnoticed. Once there is a common enemy, then the idea of "us", all Nepalis, is likely to emerge, and along with it the identification with the state. This is not invariably the case, and some people may continue to remain disaffected. Nonetheless, with
others there is the possibility for its occurence. The common knowledge sedimenting into tradition is likely to generate a solidarity, a patriotic sentiment appearing where it had not necessarily existed before and becoming cemented where it had. If war creates the state, there is nothing like another war to consolidate it. This is especially so, if that war entailed defeat by the enemy without total subjugation, because afterwards there is the common image of their shared survival, injustice and defiance. ¹ Whether positively, or negatively, it is the presence of the third factor (in this instance the British victory) which can offer the ground for the citizen's sense of solidarity with the state, and hence also the ruler. For the ruler, it provides the proof of the existence of an external danger. Demonstrating that defense is necessary, and he as the necessary protector of them all, must establish militia under his command. Ideological complications impinge again.

The interesting feature in the state's development is that the ruler can persuasively assert that his position is essential in confronting threats and challenges from outside aggressors, while attention is deflected from the fact that the state itself exists for, and operates so as to maintain him, the absolute ruler. Therefore while the ruler claims that he protects the population from external dangers, internally, as absolute power, he can subjugate to any degree and in any form according to his discretion. The so-called protector is also the absolute autocrat. To boot, more often than not, the protector line stems from a conqueror ancestor.

Starting with the basics, as we know, if there is no population, there is no one to rule, therefore the ruler needs the populace, yet the ideology proclaims that the people need him, as guardian, and upholder of a special order, to be defended against the invader. While the ideological emphasis is on the ruler's import for the people, the facts are that the people defend the state, which if it is the embodiment of the ruler, means that they are defending his sovereignty. Actually, they are fighting for a dynasty. For many, the invader's impositions are just as demanding as those of the previous regime as would apply for example to the peasants of the mini-states (see Stiller, 1976: 32-3). Although for others advantaged by the regime defeat would alter their conditions. But in either case, as far as subjects are concerned, the outcome of the war is less significant to them than to the ruler. When the subject's interest is presented as coinciding with the

¹. See Stiller, 1976: 2.
ruler's as one great patriotic sentiment, in actuality all that the subjects end up doing is fighting for the retention of a particular dynasty of men to rule over them and all their progeny. When the ideology works, it stands as a formidable kind of power. And, of course, it does not always work, as in the instance of the Limbus who joined the enemy. Yet when the patriotic idea works, and people accept that there is a "common interest" in fighting against the "common enemy", for many the change-over may make little difference, subjugation to the ruler, to forced labour, to tribute, etc., all much as before, then the sentiment blurs the real issue, that every fighting man puts his life in jeopardy for another man's self-aggrandisement. Even those who are advantaged through their intimate connexion with the ruler, share this fate, along with the lesser citizens. What can change and changes radically, is the dynasty in power.

It is evident that the positions in the relations of destruction are of a kind where the followers work for the leader's cause, which is about his absolute sovereignty. Consequently, if the divine king maintains that he is protecting the people yet the actuality is that they are fighting for his regime, and for all subjects of a Hindu kingdom the outcome of a traditional context brings no radical change but the replacing of one absolute ruler by another. If the claim is one thing, but the actuality another, then the postulate, "defender", stands as one of the most adroit and effective examples of ideology-making of all times. It is hardly unique to the Nepalese situation. Nor is it a solitary euphemism.

Euphemisms, like "defender", which blot out the historical facts, abound. Another is the "common good". Another, the "unification of Nepal", is the official version for the conquest of many territories through brute killing. Another piece of double-talk is "illegitimate" or "treasonable", since what this refers to is merely the opposition's viewpoint, but one which has been defeated in the play of force.

In the play of power the successful use of force by one set of contestants, obviously, is critical. Nevertheless, it tends to go unnoticed, or unexplored (see Dumont, 1972: 197). It is central, for what is defined as the "legitimate" force in such contexts is the force of the winning group. Thus legitimacy about whatever is at issue, is a consequence of successful violence. When a force is labelled "illegitimate or treasonable", or however it is phrased, it is generally the force of the defeated group, simply defined as such by the winners and therefore Dumont's rendition puts the matter back-to-front. If effective violence determines which regime is to exist, and held as sacrosanct, then successful use of
violence is significant for it directs the patterning of future arrangements in the creation of a new regime. We turn to the processes involved in the formation of a state, which can only but entail the destruction of other polities.

(b) Growth of Sovereignty Through Success in the Deployment of Destructive Force.

Though the leader's control of human force has, as a first prerequisite, a band of followers, this can only take the leader so far. Expansion of domination comes through a contest of might, and success will depend on a number of factors. Apart from the following, there is the relevance of technologically superior weaponry which was an important factor for Prithivinarayan Shah who not only bought more sophisticated armaments from India, but also technicians with the skill to manufacture them in Nepal; there is the ability to make deals; there is the control over knowledge, keeping secret special information, like the routes that lead through the hills of Nepal, the strategic value of which the Gorkha king was extremely aware, even though it meant not allowing the British traders into the country (see Stiller, 1974: 69-74). Treachery also is important and it was not until one Untouchable, a Kasai, had defected to the Gorkha army, that it was able to take the city of Kirtipur and enter Kathmandu Valley. Although it is extremely difficult to weigh the value of such factors in implementing victory, one point perhaps can be made. A configuration of factors is involved in the martial art of killing, where the economic is simply one amongst others. This is not to say that the extent of the economic resources is not important, but that these are just one among a number of contributing factors, where even something as unimportant as treachery can be crucial in the outcome, as with the case of the "traitor" from Kirtipur. In this kind of contest gains can be made by stealth, cunning, secrecy, commitment to the cause, all of which are part of the process in deploying force in a context, but once triumphant the winner then determines what else is to follow. In such situations where a change-over takes place, something which may be effected within a few hours, (as with the Rana slaughter of all the important officers of state 2), or require years of warfare (as employed by Prithivinarayan Shah in the campaign to take the cities of the valley 3),

1. See Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon, 1980: 27.
domination over others comes with success in the battle. Therefore from this point of view, destructive force, when successful, is a primary, or generative power. It is primary because it can be effective in promoting change through annihilating opposition to a regime's domination and as a result usher in a new order which determines whose laws are imposed, which category of individuals are to be allocated to which caste ranks and which individuals are to be eligible to assume high posts of the state. It will also determine which category of individuals will be favoured with land grants, and exemption from tribute; and which is to surrender half of the yield to the state. It determines which dynastic line of men are to hold absolute sway over the people, whether they concur to subjugation, or not. The sequence of events indicates that it is not so much that the laws "legitimate" force,¹ but rather that the successful use of force determines whose laws are to be applied, and whose laws are to be taken as legitimate. While it might be said that economic relations are fundamental, yet since the nature these are to take is itself imposed by the state, along with other imperatives, then in this context these are secondary to the relations around force. If people's position in the relations around land themselves depend on legal formulations, backed by the availability of state force, then such relations are contingent also. This is straightforward, I think, in such instances as ascendency to political power. But the same would apply with the period of the state's establishment, since this is just the continuing development of that outcome. Conquest sets up the parameters of the subsequent situation or, in less reified terms, through success in battle, the leader of the winning side moves into a position of absolute power and in all probability will attempt to structure relations in such a way that he retains power. His avenue is the law and his means are his agents. Thus conquest also sets the scene in orienting the structuring of advantages and disadvantages.

Since the different kinds of relations pertaining after conquest depend on the legal definitions which themselves were determined by the previously successful use of force, then force has logical and historical primacy; and if the leader of the wielders of successful violence impelled the particular kind of arrangements that were to prevail, then the system of relations we are dealing with is better understood, I think, as militaristic and legal, a conquest state, first and foremost. Characteristically, such formations are subject to change, with extinction through defeat; where all

¹ Dumont, following Weber, adopts this general approach.
that is left is an ethnic identity; and growth for the winner, by devouring these previously existent polities.

If a polity comes into existence by conquest, or disappears through failure in such martial confrontations, then it is a destructive force which is relevant and success in its utilisation which is central. A preoccupation with acquiring the ability to succeed in overcoming obstruction is evident in the popularity of two unseen forces. The capacity to accomplish the task is a power bestowed by the God Ganeśa, who is always worshipped both before a ritual to other gods so that the ritual itself will be effective and without mistakes; and as well as before any venture. Specifically to the battle situation, it is the Goddess Durgā and her various forms, especially Kali, who are the champions for doing battle against the enemy. Both are approached to obliterate obstruction, or the opponent. With victory certain things follow for a triumphant conqueror, one of these is his establishment in a stronghold, which is, of course, an offensive and defensive arrangement of space.

2. In Control

(a) Entrenchment in the Marvellous Fort:

With control of the city, the king controls space so arranged that it is a great encampment, blockaded by the city walls, and containing a concentration of military men and armaments for defence against aggressors. It is a well protected site for the residence of the absolute king. For the victor, thus secured in one place, the capital, the rest remains to be effected in the operation of his domain. What is given historically is that caste organisation occurs in a state kind of formation. The state can incorporate more than the capital, but as far as we can gather there was always a capital. Sometimes the state was nothing else than the city and its hinterland, as was Kathmandu before the Gorkha conquest.

Where the anthropological literature has tended to take the kingdom as the wide unit for analysis (Dumont for example) or to focus on the village (as Gough 1979, for example), significance of the capital, tends to go unnoticed, yet it is the essential geographical unit because once this falls, so does the dynasty associated with it. While the villages are undoubtedly

1. For example, the Newars and the Gurungs.
2. Presumably taking this as a basic element, where the series of villages makes the totality. Even though Gough utilizes a Marxist model, the village constitutes her unit for analysis.
3. Although Gough takes cognisance of the city's importance, she emphasises its economic significance rather than treat it as the centre of political power (1979: 270).
important, there is no Hindu state without the territorial power-centre at which all things of import converge or from which they emanate. It is the place where the critical decisions are made, decisions which affect the existence of subjects, like warfare or not; or the conditions of their daily lives, like the amount of revenue to be extracted, or the time for compulsory unpaid labour and what that might be; or the determination of what kind of person a subject is to be recognised as, and it must be so because this is where the absolute ruler lives. Since the ruler lives in the capital, it is the most fortified place in the realm, where the fortifications are based on structural and human dimensions.

The old city of Kathmandu, where the traditional features are distinct, is an encampment, despite its urban elegance. On the periphery outside the city walls reside the Untouchables whose yells when attacked would give the first alarm, and thereby act as a human defence edifice. Then come the walls, nowadays nothing more than chunks of bricks but in the past were firmly resistant to attack (see Stiller, footnote 1973: 94). Inside are the residences of various castes, but near the heart, the durbar, are those of the Newar Brahmans, and more important, the officer Newar Shresthas who live in a street flanking the Newar king's home.¹ It hustles amongst the manifold buildings making up the nexus known as the durbar. Entry is blocked by an enormous, thick, mighty door with the military to guard it. As part of this complex there is Taleju, the tutelary goddess, who can manifest a further eight forms which together comprise the set of the nine Durgäs. In that they are the protagonists of the place, their temples stand at the eight directions just outside the city walls guarding the points of exit and entrance. Their eight special houses are located within the city and used to be the storehouses for the state's armory. These too were aligned for easy access to the opening in the fortified walls. Each presumably would have belonged to a special zone since the city was divided into tols, a "group of houses which formed at one time a unit of combat; each one of these tols was in charge, in time of war, of one of the city gates" (Levi, 1905–8, Vol. I: 60). Though the city was not large, the Newar housing density was sufficient to shelter a population big enough to provide labour for the maintenance of the reigning king and his henchmen.² In the case of the Gorkha occupancy when the numbers

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1. Recently, the street was known as Hippy Lane but with changing times, is now called Freak Street. Its Newari name was Jochee Tol.

2. Specialisation appears to develop around providing for the palace needs, survival, militaristic or self-glorification and with what is left over being used for exchange. The oil-pressing organisation of the Manadars is a case in point. Similarly, the importing of Muslim bangle-makers to supply the adornment of royal women provides another instance where specialisation grows around royal needs. Further research would substantiate the suggestion.
were inadequate, the soldiers rounded up people from different parts, bringing them to the city for the construction of buildings, roads, bridges, temples etc., points already detailed. The capital then is the ruler's residence arranged to guard and garland his person, containing as it does, the requirements for defence and offence, as well as the paraphernalia for self-aggrandisement through the beautification of his urban space and other devices for pomp and show. The conqueror also acquired access to the tutelary deities, the fierce protagonists of the king, where invisible powers are also amalgamated into the king's stronghold.

It could not be said that the city is arranged for the benefit of the people. It could not follow since the Untouchable segment was (and is) located outside, despite the critical functions this group performs for the state, comprising an integral part of the legal apparatus for doing the mutilations and the executions. It is no accident that the officer Shresthas resided where they did. Nor is it fortuitous that the durbar is also a mini-fort where entry is patrolled; nor that the various administrative and legal bodies were located within this protected edifice. Amongst all the features, access to certain cosmic forces should also be understood as part of the strategic arrangements, even though not of an empirical kind.

If the important component in the use of force is efficacy in destruction, and this power has its source in the relevant cosmic forms, then the ruler's attention to them is comprehensible when approached within the parameters of this worldview. Since the cutting power of the sword is seen to derive from the cosmic force of destruction, just as the power of the jet is said to derive from the corresponding cosmic energy, then storing armaments in their houses and worshipping them makes sense. Since the army aims to gain this particular capacity, blood, already ritually infused with their destructive potency, is placed on the regimental colours, at the right time of the year.

That time, as we know, is Dasai. One precedent for this ritual was established by Rama centuries ago, when having utilised this particular format he was finally able to defeat Ravana. Furthermore, the image of Taleju is said to be the idol that Rama worshipped originally and which ultimately arrived in Kathmandu long after the legendary encounter between him, the great incarnation, and Ravana, the demon. Since the form and the appropriate ritual gave Rama the power to defeat the demon, it is perceived as constituting

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1. With the superimposition of Gorkha power on the Newar city, variations arose. For example, according to informants the new military were billeted in private homes.

2. See Bista, 1972: 59.
a tremendous militaristic asset for the person who now has primary access to it. This is the king.

Taleju, as we know, is also one of the set of three, (Guheyswari, the mysterious, the secret: Kumari, the young, the beautiful; and Taleju, the strong) who are the local forms of the three cosmic forces and are said to constitute a source of power for the king, a feature found in other Hindu states and in no way restricted to Nepal. The relationship between the king and the tutelary goddess has been interpreted variously. One rendition is that the great temple deity is to be understood as the source of the king's power as has been outlined for kingdoms in South India. Against this thesis, Dirks argues (1979: 202-3) that the temple complex is not to be understood as the basis of the king's power for this is evoked through the idea of the king's divinity in his own right, and through tracing a connexion to certain great dynasties of the region (that is of South India). The same applies in Nepal where divine incarnation, as well as the connexion with the Rajput dynasty are both assumed by the Shah kings. Moreover the protector idea of the king presupposes destructive capability since the king cannot be a protector unless he is a successful destroyer of the enemy. Though this is not to say that access to the great cosmic protagonists is not important, but it appears to be of a different ilk. His association with the temple deity is no doubt a source of power for him, but it is not necessarily the source of his power as god-king. The relationship, nonetheless, is highly valued insofar as access to the goddess (and her forms) is regarded as access to tremendous power, and the king's relationship is the closest since it is tutelary. Where the populace may only visit Taleju once a year, the king as her special devotee may worship at other times. Moreover it would be the king who would obtain the great prasāda (mahāprasāda), while the populace obtains only the ordinary, less potent, pieces, for example. The power of destruction, needless to add, figures centrally.

To please these destructive forces every attempt possible was apparently made in the past and, according to Levi, offering male humans (a high form of being) was also practised. An old tradition continued by the Gorkha kings was to sacrifice "two men of rank worthy to wear the sacred thread every twelve years" (Levi, 1905-8, Vol, II: 36-7). The cycle of twelve years is significant because it is the unit of time associated with the male principle,

2. For example, during the coronation the king was seen moving into Talegu temple.
and many rites dedicated to Bhairab, the male fierce form, fall according to this measure, and with which the king is associated. Exactly how I do not know, but the least that can be said is that the traditional god-kings of Nepal heeded and continue to heed these cosmic destructive forces, and that the secrecy surrounding the relationship indicates that it is regarded as worthwhile. Such powers were not only tapped in this way, but in another, also, specifically the attempt to control the personnel of the administration. The oath of allegiance to the state had to be taken by officials while standing before the terrific big, black Bhairab (Kalbhairab) which is located just outside the palace complex (Anderson, 1971:157). Given that it is said to know all, and given that it is fierce and wrathful, then according to this view, men who would dare to pursue treachery, would be doing so at their peril. Destructive power here is yet another indication of its centrality in this kind of state.

Hindu kingdoms were typically conquest states. In the region now known as Nepal, the various rulers and their entourage at different times seem to have come from India penetrating the hills, conquering the indigenees, then establishing the numerous states that we have had occasion to refer to (Hodgson, 1972, Part II; 37-40). We also know that these god-kings were autocrats, whether the ruler was a Malla of his city-state, or the Shah king of Gorkha who superseded him and amassed a much larger territorial domain. Since the king was an autocrat and a conqueror, he had to have a base to locate himself and his key personnel who operate the state apparatus. That base was of a kind as impregnable to attack as was possible, where attack could come from within (generally from those closest to him) or without, (generally from another peer of a like-state). Consequently there were the two fortifications, the durbar and the walled city.

Control over the capital provides the spatial base for the location of the king’s person, his militia, the people committed to his cause interspersed among the defeated, as well as the administrative agencies. Control of a Hindu capital also means access to powerful invisible forms which interconnect with the empirically organised strategic arrangements, ready for any attack on this bastion. Whether we use patriotically inspiring terms like "protection", "military prowess", "protagonism", or anything else we can think of, the matter comes down to the capacity to do violence on, or withstand violence from, others. With success and control of another king’s city, and the entrenchment of his own militia, the victorious conqueror may proceed to implement the laws the

1. Anderson says that according to legend "many Bhairabs are identified as various ancient Nepalese kings" (1971: 158).

2. A large chunk of Manu presupposes this (see, for example, VII, 154-207 in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 240-250).
way he chooses which then sets up the terms of reference for this kind of polity. Since the regime emerged through the skilful use of violence, one would expect that violence, amongst other things, will also figure afterwards during the stage of maintenance.

(b) Violent Punishment:

Once in power, the current ruler can establish the organisation for the operation of the law, and the devices for punishment. The hardest punitive measures were provoked not only by treasonable actions, but caste crimes which do not directly threaten the existence of the dynasty. For example, intercourse between a Matwali and an Untouchable is unlikely to topple the Shah from his throne, while a plot might. The punishments were horrendous. It is a complex topic tied to the possibility of instilling fear in the citizen; perhaps the glorification of brutality, but whatever else, it entails use of destructive power as necessary and effective for certain ends; the cavalier treatment of the human person; and even patriotism.

The interesting thing about the punishment is not just the brutality, but the kind of effect meted, for it involved that kind of violence whose results were often conspicuous (who can miss a noseless woman) and generally permanent. It would seem that permanancy is critical for when reforms were innovated by the first Rana Prime Minister, though many of the extremities were abolished, the new punishments still effected results which were irrevocable, specifically through branding the face of the criminal. Punishment is interpreted from a number of angles.

If the scriptural lawmaker's comments are taken as a guide, punishment induces fear and thereby channels conformity. According to Manu (VII, 17 in

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1. Reforms primarily applied to punishments and not to the crime itself. Certain events (like cow killing, incest, intercaste sexual liaisons etc) still constituted crimes and where a change occurred it was a matter of moving from harsh to less harsh violence. For example, instead of amputation of bodily part or the death penalty, the punishment involved branding on the left cheek. This happened with incest with sister or daughter (Adikhari, 1976: 107). With theft, body mutilation was also replaced by branding for a habitual criminal. Killing a new born baby under the prior legislation had entailed loss of a woman's nose, but after reforms, branding was used. In many instances there were also imprisonments, fines, etc, (see Adikhari, 1976: 107-111). Similarly, sexual union with an Untouchable woman previously involved amputation of penis for "soldiers" (caste unspecified by Adikhari) whereas the reform stipulated imprisonment and the branding. What cannot be ignored is that with such punishments, visibility persisted with the irreversible scar on the criminal's left cheek.

In some instances, for upper caste men (the twice-born and Matwali), the punishment for a hypogamous union was changed from death to six years imprisonment. Thus what were delineated as crimes persisted and even though the violence of punishments was extenuated it was definitely not eradicated.
Buhler (tr.), 1969: 219) punishment, by generating fear, will promote "obedience to the laws". Yet the matter is not left at that since the infliction of punishment is also considered in terms of the state's role rather than people's response. By imposing punishment, the ruler is successfully implementing what is expected of him by the traditional texts, since inflicting punishment is treated as co-extensive with the operation of the laws. As Manu says,

VII,17. Punishment is (in reality) the king (and) the male, that the manager of affairs, that the ruler, and that is called the surety for the four orders' obedience to the law.

18. Punishment alone governs all created beings, punishment alone protects them, punishment watches over them while they sleep; the wise declare punishment (to he identical with) the law (in Buhler (tr.) 1969: 219).

While scholars and jurists are not so certain that punishment governs all creatures, presumably that it induces conformity and inhibits further recalcitrance so that people can sleep at ease etc, the law-maker takes the matter for granted. The frequency of crimes observed by Hodgson seems to dispell this opinion. Nevertheless Manu's view that law and punishment are co-extensive is echoed in the judge's speech quoted in a previous chapter. According to him, through punishment the laws work for, as he said, without punishments (and the purifications) there would be no laws. So the official line depicts punishment as inducing fear and conformity, and maintaining order; it is seen as an intrinsic aspect of law; and it is the king's responsibility to enforce these penalizations. The data show that punishments were violent. We can bring these threads together.

Presenting the infliction of punishment as the operation of the laws there is the implication that the ruler's use of destructive force which is the mode, is not to be regarded as unwarranted but rather, necessary, since it can effect the desired results, penalization of criminals and thereby a functioning legal apparatus. In this instance, it is seen as the actual upholding of the law and so the ruler's enforcement of violent punishment is to be lauded. Inherent in these approaches is the posture that the use of force is a good thing since it propels certain effects which no other kind of power can do. Recognition of the usefulness of force is brought out in another context. When a Nepali was discussing the fierce deities, and in response to a question about their terrific and horrific natures, he replied

1. Also nominated by the state, through the Dharmadhikari (see Hodgson, 1836: 131).
that to a certain extent a lot depended on the orientation of the worshipper, what lay in his "heart", and if he had reason to fear these forms he would. The man continued, insisting that destructive powers are significant and are not necessarily negative for they can destroy what one wants to eradicate. To have this capability is worthwhile and is regarded as a prerequisite of divine kingship.

Destructive capability is presented as significant and necessary, a requirement of any Hindu king, since he must combat what are portrayed as the forces of darkness, and this dimension is attended to during the coronation ceremony. On this occasion the king is infused with might, the capability that goes with the protector, through the sequence of the ascension to the throne, singhasana, the "lion's seat". On the lion seat, are draped the skins of five fierce animals (wolf, wild cat, leopard, lion and tiger). On this edifice of violence the king will sit. One interpretation of the king's ascension to the throne states:

All the animals are beasts of prey and represent in varying degrees certain aspects of violent character. By requiring the king to sit, on their hides, the king is enjoined upon subjugating violence for the peaceful development of the kingdom. In short, by sitting on the hides of these beasts of prey, the king is duty-bound to maintain peace and order in the kingdom he rules (Sharma, 1975: 99).

Another commentator rendered the event around these predatory animals as indicating that it was the king's duty to "fight those who prove a liability" (Shrestha, 1975: 98), which drives into relief the idea that for a person to guard effectively, violent capacities are necessary. All these are variations on the theme, elaborated or implicit in many of the standard texts, that the king's presence and powers of a violent character are necessary to protect the weak from the strong, and as well, especially in the past, to fight wars. Thus the destructive capability is recognised as relevant, and is expected to be part and parcel of the king's nature. The deployment of this kind of power in the punishments is not merely something to be feared for it is presumably seen to generate peace and order; and most significantly the use of destructive force is to be admired for through such measures the laws are perceived as becoming a prized reality, at least for those who agree that the laws are the authentic ones. Yet, one cannot help but observe that any of these laudable features could be gained without these kinds of punishments, for punishment can take various forms. We cannot help noticing that the severest punishments were brutal and had immutable effects - that

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1. The linkage between the king and Bhairab might occur here in that these are fierce in nature, just as is Bhairab's distinctive quality, though, of course, more evidence is required.
more often than not, the "stick" ("danda" literally means "stick", as it also means "punishment"), must have been replaced by the sword or branding iron. We also observe the ready association between punishment and warfare. Let us turn to two other forms of punishment since they seem to throw light on these issues. One is the husband's personal punishment of the cuckold; the other is caste degradation.

Force has to be used effectively, and if a person employes it maladroitly and fails to fulfill his goal against the other party, he must suffer the consequences. Evidence for this orientation comes from the mode of penalising a cuckold, and what happens with failure. According to customary practice before the reforms of our times, it was the Parbatya husband who was to take it upon himself to kill his cuckold, but if he did not succeed, the villain escaped with his life and kept the husband's wife to boot, and the state took no further action, on this score.¹ But it did penalise the unsuccessful husband, the innocent party for, in response to his failure, he not only lost his wife but was subsequently debarred from any government appointments.² The recognition of success in using force, is also expressed in the standard farewell from a mother to her son, or wife to her husband, despite the additional factors which complicate the matter. Even so, for our purposes, the farewell which states, "Better a dead hero than a live coward" means that the soldier is admonished to be an efficient soldier that he use violence successfully, for bravery generally refers to killing a lot of people, at a great risk to oneself, even death. Another, more straightforward instance of fouling up the use of force was detailed earlier where mismanaging the sacrificial goat, by not being able to kill it in one stroke, is perceived as augering ill. More specifically to punishment, the case of the unsuccessful husband seems to have general implications.

The significant aspect in the use of force, as we have seen before in the instances of conquest, is that it be effective and not simply that it be employed. With the state's punitive force, of course, there is little chance that it would not be the case. Nevertheless, when it fails, the criminal is let off scott-free, and the innocent party suffers just because he failed to use violence efficaciously, thus showing how important it is that it be employed successfully and not just employed. The details of the triangle, indicate what aspects are seen as relevant and important to the general

¹  Hodgson, 1836: 133.
phenomenon of state punishment, in spite of the fact that the odds in the encounter are stacked in the state's favour. In fact, that might very well constitute the point, that in punishing the criminal, the state will and must be triumphant over him, or her. Now to turn to the other kind of punishment, outcasting.

What is significant here is that outcasting was imposed in such a way that an ontological change had to occur, and it was not simply a case of a change in legal definition, but entailing as it did a procedure whose effects would have to be taken as irreversible, just like mutilation and death. Hodgson gives a description of the method which accords in general with that outlined by the Nepalese informant, detailed in an earlier chapter.¹ Hodgson elaborated that

if the wretch be a Brahman, his forelock must be shaved off; his thread broken; he must have a stripe of the hair on all four sides of his head shaved off; must be crammed with all forbidden food, and, in a word, utterly defiled and degraded; paraded thus through the whole city; his infamy proclaimed; and finally he must be driven out of the country, with confiscation of all his property (1836: 128).

If caste degradation were simply a matter of a legal definition it might have been possible that there would be nothing to stop the degraded person from undertaking an intense series of purifications and resuming his particular ontological state, persuading others that all was then well. But by such polluting and concrete actions inflicted on the offender as seems to be the case with the food; and by irredeemably terminating the twice-born transformation, through cutting away the tuft of hair, (the special connexion with the deities) and breaking the thread of second birth, the legal machinery did destroy the offender's particular caste, making it ontologically impossible for the members of his caste to live with him, should they have so desired.² Thus the punitive effect is rendered permanent, totally irreversible.

Now the kind of punishments meted by the state through destructive force are also of this nature in that they involve an ontological change in the criminal which in a way stands as something more than punitive, for as we know, this can be done in numerous ways. The significance in the use of violence is that it radically changes the offender's person, marring it irredeemably. An ontological transformation is perpetrated by the state on its recalcitrant subject. Insofar as the effect of the violence is permanent,

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1. Except Hodgson does not mention the procedure of wearing the pig.

2. Hodgson describes the particulars for a Brahmin who suffered this kind of punishment in instances where others were executed. (1836: 127).
rendering the offender a transformed being, this conspicuously displays that
the state was successful in its use of force and triumphant over the criminal
who could only but submit to the state's overriding power. Therefore in
this way the state illustrates that it fights successfully against the dark
forces within society, and thereby upholds its brief. The use of force,
whether feared, lauded or abhored, in a way, can be understood as the state's
victory over the internal enemy for who could doubt the concrete proof in
the permanent scars, or immutable mutilations scored on the criminal. Who
could doubt the state's superior position in the relationship. Therefore,
like victory in warfare, these kinds of punishments especially constitute
another kind of triumph for the state. It is small wonder that the ruler
reserved for himself the power to make decisions around these harsh
punishments.

Even though there were courts all over the country, all crimes which
involved loss of limb or life; confiscation of property; and caste
degradation had to be communicated to the centre, ratified there at the
monarch's council, itself standing over the judicial courts of the capital
and the provinces. Since none of the state's emissaries were permitted to
make decisions on matters which entailed these harsh penalties, this meant
that only the ruler's voice through the Council of State could determine the
ultimate penalties which brought irrevocable change on the citizen concerned.
Now the three punitive measures related to three aspects of the person which
together comprise his totality, in that they refer to a person's caste,
property and his body. The trilogy of dharma, artha and kama reappear, for
according to a person's past actions relating to dharma that person reaches
his particular caste level; property is wealth (artha); and, finally, it is
the body which is said to be the field of desires (kama). A preoccupation
with the same three is shown by Manu, for he says,
VII,26. They declare the king to be a just inflicter of
punishment, who is truthful, who acts after due consideration, who
is wise, and who knows (the respective value of ) virtue, pleasure,
and wealth (in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 20).

If curtailment of the three involves loss of the most highly prized things,
royal control is glaring; if the ruler could destroy all three dimensions,
kill or maim, confiscate his goods, or debase him in caste, then through such
punishment, the ruler has power over all aspects of the offender absolutely.
Though it might be said that the villain provokes the outcome by breaking the
laws, nevertheless it has to be admitted, that the state's mode of punishments
could be otherwise, but are of a kind which do in fact indicate the ruler's

1. The crimes which provoked those ultimate punishments were, the five
horrendous sins; some forms of incest; and treason.
control over all aspects of the individual, except what he thinks. Even that autonomy is lost with capital punishment. This raises another problem.

It has been observed that certain caste crimes which did not threaten the security of the dynasty were treated as severely as treason, where the intent is the specific overthrow of the dynasty. Yet, it may be inferred that these characteristically Hindu crimes are perceived as being intrinsically related to the nature of the regime, for such laws were part of the particular kind of order which the ruler commits himself to uphold, and the Hindu dimension is taken to characterise the nature of the particular polity. If breaches disrupt the operation of this special kind of order they are heinous and therefore to be quashed by the ruler whose responsibility is to make the order a reality. Further, maintaining the order was also linked to patriotism in the case of Nepal. The judge's comments quoted in an earlier chapter, indicate that it was only the Nepalese kingdom, the only place in the whole region of the Aryans, where these values were not only articulated, but "acted up to". Thus the regime has an ideal to pursue (the realisation of a Hindu kingdom), and a focus for presenting itself as committed tenaciously to the sacred values, and also a reference point to distinguish itself proudly from other states and other Hindus. This is how Hodgson commented on the matter:

...if there is much diversity between the Hindu laws and Hindu judgements, now and for ages past given in the public tribunals of the Hindu princes of the plains, there is no less between the law of the Koran and its first commentators, and the judgements of akbar and his successors.

But neither persuasion, nor example, nor coercion has had room to operate such a change in these mountains; the dominant classes of the inhabitants of which, originally refugees from Muhammedan bigotry, have, in their seclusion, nursed their hereditary hatred of Islamism, whilst they bade defiance to its power; and they have latterly come, very naturally, to regard themselves as the sole remaining depositaries of underfiled, national Hinduism (Hodgson, 1834: 46).

This brings us squarely to ideological issues. But before attending to that certain points must be clarified.

None of this is to imply that everything in the penal set-up was irreversible for there was always the possibility of the king's pardon, an instance of the favour. Furthermore, on auspicious occasions, it was common practice to rescind sentences releasing prisoners from jail. Of relevance is the custom where the conquering king liberated all the prisoners of the defeated king, which also means that the conqueror is destroying the terms of reference established by the old regime. It should also be mentioned that in everyday legal matters where caste offences were not extreme, the person of the king himself provided the means of atonement for destroying the effect of the sin committed. This was achieved by the criminal's touching a stone
holding the king's footprints. The rite itself was known as "touching the stone" Hodgson, 1836: 126 footnote). For this, the offender paid a fee to the state. Of such practices and other fines associated with the courts, Regmi says that they constituted little less than the opportunity to gather monies. Whether this approach is wide enough to account for the complexities of the matter will be left aside. Yet it does raise the need to take up the ideological repercussions surrounding crimes, punishments and the role the state plays in them, even though by now the general run of ideological scrambling has been delineated and further examples merely detail other instances.

Manu provides the instances of ideological posturing when he adumbrates that

VII,9. If (punishment) is properly inflicted after (due consideration, it makes all people happy; but inflicted without consideration, it destroys everything.

20. If the king did not, without tiring, inflict punishment on those worthy to be punished, the stronger would roast the weaker, like fish on a spit

21. The crow would eat the sacrificial cake and the dog would lick the sacrificial viands, and ownership would not remain with any one, the lower ones would (usurp) the place of the higher ones...

24. All castes (varna) would be corrupted (by intermixtures), all barriers would be broken through, and all men would rage (against each other) in consequence of mistakes with respect to punishment (in Buhler (tr.), 1969: 219-220).

35. The king has been created (to be) the protector of the castes (varna and others, who, all according to their rank, discharge their several duties (ibid: 221).

Yet the declarations are disturbing in the light of the historical particulars. Since the state defined what stock of people belonged to which caste category, then the brief of verse (35) is circular. Further it was the state itself which determined which particular men of the population were to become "the stronger" (verse 20) and which the "weaker". Caste intermixtures arise in contexts where initially caste definitions are imposed by the state on the population, (verse 24), yet the kind of intermixture that is treated as opprobrious applies only where the lower caste men would unite with upper caste women (hypogamy). If the successful use of force by the winner's group determined whose particular laws were to be imposed, then the claim that punishment according to those laws "makes all people happy" (verse 19) is surely controvertible. Moreover, when the specific nature of some of the punishments are born in mind, one could hardly agree that the penalized individual is made "happy". Instead what is to be discerned is the offender's helpless and hapless submission to the state's triumphant destructive powers.
(c) The Fragmenting Effect of Inheritance:

Another form of destruction could occur in the mundane situation of inheritance, for the citizen's assets (including birta, guthi and certain forms of raika holdings) had to be divided equally among his sons, according to the Hindu law known as "Metakshara".

All sons of a subject must equally share their father's assets at his death, according to this law. While the inheritance laws pertaining to subjects could be phrased as might be expected, in terms of the son's right, yet there is a compulsory element as far as the father is concerned, for a father "cannot alienate a rupee from him by will, save only, and in moderation, to pious uses" (Hodgson, 1880: Vol. II, 233). It was (and still is) impossible for a man to make a will which disinherits any of the children, including the sons of a junior wife. Equity moreover was taken so seriously, if the age-old adage cited frequently at present reflects the orientations of the past in that it stipulates that "even a grain of gram should be pulverished first to ensure exactitude in the apportionments to the sons". Since such a law means that the wealth is broken up at a man's death, according to the number of sons, therefore in the instances where increase occurs, over time the value of the asset for the members would shrink proportionately. This would happen whether land was partible or impartible (as with guthi). Consequently, such families if they were to continue in positions of privilege would have had to rely on other injections of grants from the current ruler. When it comes to the king, the matter is otherwise.

1. Regmi does not discuss inheritance rules at all. Of guthi and birta Hodgson says,

Guti is land consecrated to the deity, a sort of mortmain remaining in the hand of the mortmainer and his descendants, (ostensibly for the use of such deity, but really for own use; the obligation to the god being liquidated by a petty annual offering to him,) is for security from rapacity of government or the prodigality of heirs. It is deemed more sacred than "bировка" which is an offering to Brahmans, not to god himself, and is an alienation too. Whereas Guti is only ostensibly an alienation - in fact, an entail of the strictest kind on the descendants of the Gutiyar. It is neither partible among heirs, nor transferable in any degree (1836: 133).

2. According to Hodgson, "the sons of a wife", (Presumably the senior wife) shared equally, while a "concubine's" son obtained a third of what constitutes the share of a son by a wife (1880: Vol. II, 232). Unmarried daughters were also entitled to "the marriage portion" (ibid: 232). Hodgson also says that Buddhist Newars had certain "rules of their own", which presumably related to the fact that the "monastic" property was not partible, nonetheless no member could be disinherited there either. Generally speaking "in regard to inheritance, all tribes agree" (ibid: 233).
It was only with kingship that primogeniture applied, and so the king again stands in a unique position compared to others, in a contrast of the singular to the common. An exception might be raised for the case of the subjugated rajas, but even here there is a mitigating factor which alters the situation.

Even though primogeniture applied to the subjugated rajas, their royal position could be revoked at any time; therefore theirs was not an outright right to sovereignty but conditional on not displeasing the Gorkha king (see Stiller, 1973: 258-9). Hence the continuity of the line was not simply a matter of course effected through promogeniture.¹

Primogeniture has also been interpreted as applying to succession of village headship, but it seems that this is mistaken. Village headship and access to certain perquisites is described as based on primogeniture according to Gaborieau. He says it arises from succession, obtained by the eldest male of the oldest lineage, that is, the founder's lineage (1978: 33). However, if headship had to be ratified by the centre, as Gaborieau himself says (ibid: 30) and if such perquisites in other cases were claimed simply as part of the official emoluments (see Regmi, 1971: 34), then even here, the idea of primogeniture as the criterion for appointment has to be discomfited, since it was merely the condition for eligibility. Otherwise, transmission to heirs followed the standard format for commoners (Gaborieau, 1978: 33).

With primogeniture applying singularly to kings, there is continuity of the assets in the dynastic line, whereas with the commoners at each generation, there is the rule for the breakup of assets, going to all the sons. One, the royal, is the way of continuity, the other, the subjects', of

¹ In case it might seem that these petty rajas also prove exceptional in the matter of state administration, as outlined in the previous chapter, let me cite what Stiller has to say:

But in order to prevent them from becoming a disruptive force within the country, these local rajas had to be closely supervised and constantly reminded that the centre was ready and willing to depose them the moment they stepped out of line (1974: 70).

Furthermore these petty rajas end up by becoming the regime's agents, just like the officials, though in another, a princely guise. Their authority to run affairs internally amounted to this, for the concession of internal autonomy is simply a necessary requirement to expedite matters. If the subjugated king was beholden to pay tribute to the Kathmandu durbar and surrender allegiance to it (see Stiller, 1973: 258-9), he also stood as a state agent involved in the maintenance of Gorkha power. The only difference between the two types of henchmen, is that in one, the state sends one of its own chaps from the centre, whereas in the other it utilises the local talent. In the case of the petty rajas, retention of position also meant retention of the Gorkha king's pleasure.
fragmentation.\textsuperscript{1} Of course, it might be said that automatic natural increase should not be presumed and that instead decimation of some families might occur. Nonetheless this does not detract from the point, that the principle is not formulated to conserve the asset by restricting transmission to one individual. Given that the production of sons, moreover, was regarded as highly desirable, the great goal for parents, then the ideal situation was (and is) increase.\textsuperscript{2} Further, given that polygamy is possible it adds to the likelihood of its occurrence, at least under favourable conditions. The important feature about inheritance laws applying to all citizens, is that they are not framed to facilitate the retention of assets over time as would occur with a ruling like primogeniture, or ultimogeniture or any other rule where the assets may only go from one to one to one... Whereas with the king, there is the structural protection on it, since inheritance must proceed in this singular way. Consequently, the descendants of any man who had been richly favoured by a king could not ride in on that favour because it would dissipate proportionately with increase and therefore the import of the royal favour is sustained. There is no formation comparable to European nobility, where one individual only succeeded to his father's estate. In the Nepalese context land grants then do not negate the continuing relevance of the king's power, the inheritance laws are framed to fragment with procreation. If there is the ordinary increase, no family line retains an asset in the shape with which it was received, which in turn means that reliance on the current king persists and renders impossible any degree of independence, separate from royal favour. The continuing relevance of the favour is the significant point, and also occurs directly with confiscation of \textit{birta}, as we have already seen. It is reinforced from another angle again.

\textsuperscript{1} Meillassoux's framework of feudal class relations for caste society would hang awkwardly in the Nepalese context since it ignores the complications of inheritance and does not distinguish the inique position of the king. In Nepal, though Marx's concept of "despot", one feature of the "Asiatic mode of production" framework does apply, however, other features do not. Gough (1979: 286–7) outlines the different features of both the "Asiatic mode of production", and that of the "feudal type" and suggests that each is applicable to the relations found in two different kinds of South Indian polities, but in both cases, as Gough indicates, the fit is inexact.

\textsuperscript{2} People explain their great desire for sons in terms of the son's critical role in the parents' death rites. A sonless person is described as being in an unenviable state. Though other agnates may perform the death rites, it is not regarded as being the same.
Although birta has been discussed, there is a further point which must be added, at this juncture. At the death of a king, the successor could review and choose to rescind all titles that the previous king had bestowed. The title bestowed by one king was not automatically valid after his death and did not bind his successors to honour the grant, or render it a title in perpetuity for the beneficiary and his heirs. Cancellation could be easily achieved simply by melting down the title, since these were recorded on copper-plates (see Vajracharya 1975: 16). Hence, if a new king was not hamstrung by grants endowed by his predecessor, at each generation the particular king's power of favour remained relevant, untrammelled by what happened during a previous reign. At a general level this is simply another wing of absolutism in that this means not to be conditioned, not even by the allocations made by the former king.

During the state's stage of maintenance, destructive processes continue to be relevant. Though disparate, they relate in some way or other to the ruler's entrenchment in the capital; his control over empirical forces as the head of the military and special access to the invisible forces, his tutelary deities; the violent punishments which entail the king's triumphant power over the criminal; or his singular position through primogeniture compared to that of citizens who are subject to the eroding effect of inheritance when progeny proliferate; or like the gods, the power to give and withdraw a favour. So far so good, but it might well be asked, what happens to divinity when a king is overthrown?

3. Destruction of a Regime and the Matter of the King's Divinity:

The chapter began with a consideration of the relevance of "leadership" for attracting a following as the means of implementing might, in the perilous context of war. Their allegiance to a leader, I have suggested, often depends initially on the presence of a third factor, some issue which provides the rationale for men to implicate themselves in the campaign. It provides the leader with a "cause". Though the construct, "leadership", when used in an explanatory way to account for the phenomenon is circular, or is so dense with unspecified aspects that it is again inadequate, nevertheless there is something about the nature of the Hindu king which is central to an understanding of the Nepalese situation where one man wields power over the rest. Is the idea of divinity in the operation of power for the man designated king a significant factor? It is an unavoidable question given the kinds of circumstances obtaining: given that states are absorbed by the expansion of another regime, or else break away from the centre because of
weakness in the ruler's internal control, or for whatever reason, given such changes how do these relate to the attribution of divinity? There are thus two major aspects to the problem: the practical, how is the idea of divinity handled in the face of a king's defeat; and the general, how important is the idea of divinity for the retention of power? I start with the practical.

In the event of invasion and a take-over what happens to the vanquished king and his descendants? Of the situation in the Hindu states of Java, Geertz writes that the invader grasped office and "displaced the no longer sacred king" (1975: 223). His description fits the facts of Kathmandu in that the ousted Malla king and his descendants were no longer treated as divine after the Gorkha king had usurped power. Today the Malla dynasty is regarded as past history, and the descendants, though important Newars, are not isolated as constituting divine royalty, different from other subjects. In the past, at the dramatic moment of conquest, sovereignty was immediately recognised in the triumphant victor, the Gorkha king, and according to contemporary and past accounts it was expressed in a ritual. The Gorkha army entered the city of Kathmandu during a festival where the climax is reached when the living Goddess places a tika on the divine-king which, amongst other things, acknowledges the divinity and sovereignty of the man who is king (see Anderson, 1971: 135). On this occasion, the successful conqueror after having obtained control of the city was treated by the living Goddess in exactly the same way as she had treated the Malla king on all previous occasions. That was the end of Malla divine kingship, and is exactly our problem, for though Geertz's rendition is in accord with the Nepalese material, we need to know something more if the situation ("no longer sacred king") is to be made comprehensible.

In another context with a comparable set of factors, one Nepali adopted the same posture as that shown to the vanquished Malla but also added an explanation. In commenting on the ousted Dalai Lama, it was said that "since he had been defeated he could not be a god, otherwise he would have been able to withstand the attack". Hence defeat itself is taken as evidence that the divine incarnation must have left the body of the person. Divinity then is seen as presupposing power. If a person proved impotent then obviously he could not be a god. Thus the interpretation of the defeat brings into relief the idea that divinity is something that is manifested or actualised. The treatment of the Mallas appears to indicate the same orientation, in that the king's total defeat is seen to constitute a post hoc demonstration of absence of divinity. It would seem that, according to this world view, a man's
failure to retain sovereignty is taken as implying loss of divinity.

In the Hindu body of knowledge there are other areas to which reference is made to explain a person's capability, and which need to be briefly considered. One type of account relates to a person contacting the unseen forces which are regarded as being amenable to championing this cause. For example, as we saw, the power of Śakti was invoked by the last Rana, and in his view, it was Śakti who provided him with the source of his particular power. Another instance of Devi's power comes from Rama who finally obtained a special idol of Devi (in fact, as we have observed before, according to one story he stole it from Ravana) and through worship of this form in accord with the Dasaī format, Rama finally obtained the capability to defeat Ravana. A king's special relationship with the tutelary deities appears to fit into the same genre, for the king has access to such forces which are understood as being amenable to provide him with the capacity to succeed. When another individual obtains this favoured relationship it is perceived as being withdrawn from the former (as with Rama and Ravana). Another kind of account that could be proffered is that of the astrological. Astrological powers, said to effect inauspicious, indifferent, and favourable influences on individuals in general, also apply to kings for they, like the rest, take heed of them in timing any enterprise.¹ Failure would indicate post hoc, also, that the individual concerned is not favoured by such forces whereas success indicates the opposite. When a man is triumphant or vanquished, any of these kinds of explanation could be invoked to account for his success or failure. In one, the favours would be withdrawn and bestowed on another, with the astrological type, inauspicious forces influence him personally so that he cannot be successful. But it would seem that it is the first type discussed that is most relevant to our problem, for these others merely account for the loss of anybody's specific capability to realize goals rather than directly confront the issue of loss of divinity. With the first kind of explanation, a man's capacity to retain a position of pre-eminence is seen to relate to his particular nature rather than external factors. That is to say, it is an ontological approach to the phenomenon.

Divine kingship, according to this kind of conceptualization is something which is actualised. It is one instance of the general idea that occurs and reoccurs, namely that a particular capacity is tied to the particular nature of

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¹ Birendra's coronation was programmed according to such calculations, for example.
the being concerned. Another way of formulating the idea is found in the central proposition, that "the effect lies in the nature of the cause". It also means that from the effect generated, the nature of the cause can be inferred, and by generating certain effects, this too can constitute a demonstration of the kind of being the person is. This has bearings on two interrelated issues; firstly one of theoretical interest regarding the concept of "legitimation"; and secondly, one which is related to a problem mentioned earlier, the general issue of the connexion between divinity, kingship and the retention of power.

The significant feature in this phenomenon, with its cluster of facets, is kingship itself, where divinity is taken to follow as a matter of course, for according to this world view, kingship presupposes divinity, and not the other way around: therefore it queries the exactitude of the construct "legitimation" for this context. If the indigenous formulation maintains that there is an intrinsic interconnexion between the ontological nature and the corresponding capacity of the person concerned, it would mean that divinity is not exactly legitimating kingship, but rather that sovereignty manifests divinity. In which case Weber's concept of legitimation could not apply. In a way Weber's approach rests on the premise that things could be otherwise, they could be different in so far as it presumes that justification ("legitimation") is at issue. But as we have seen, when matters are otherwise, divinity evaporates along with sovereignty. The Weberian approach seems to be oriented according to justification, whereas with the Hindu, the issue is formulated more from a conceptual than a moral or legalistic viewpoint in the western sense. Put differently, one is dealing with an ontological explanation rather than a legalistic justification. It also means that any notion like the "divine right of kings", is not quite apposite.1 In terms of the Hindu approach divinity is not to be understood as justifying the man's power, for divinity and power come together as an inseparable package. If this is so, then it would follow that autocratic control or sovereignty is the way a divine monarch operates. Thus divinity does not "justify" or "legitimate" sovereign control, rather it demands it. It would seem then, that, according to the indigenous conceptualization, absolute sovereignty presupposes divinity, just as loss of sovereignty implies the loss of divinity.

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1. Dumont also notes that the idea of "divine rights of kings" is not appropriate for the Hindu context (1970: 71).
The orientation towards the king's overthrow has further implications. First of all, it also raises another difficulty for the "legitimation" approach to this Hindu phenomenon. According to a legalistic definition, a right is a right, and if a person were ousted then the right should remain, and the injustice done stand out. Whereas the Hindu orientation is such that when matters are otherwise and the man is no longer king, divinity is no longer relevant either. Let me illustrate the differences between the two kinds of approaches this way: the legalistic posture when applied to this context would be formulated in a proposition of this nature, "since the man is divine he has sovereignty". Loss of sovereignty would then create difficulties for the idea of divinity. This does not happen with the Hindu formulation since it is couched the other way round. The proposition, formulated according to Hindu conceptualisation, would state, "since the man has sovereignty, he is divine". Now it is just that kind of proposal which as we have observed, not only belongs to the ontological complex but also caters to specific situations, especially change-overs. It obviates the necessity to deal with anything like an unjustifiably ousted claimant to the throne since the claimant has been defeated, and therefore is outside the picture. Rights are irrelevant. One can see that this explanation is of a kind which would have significant implications in the operation of power. This kind of ontological explanation about a man's power contains two important interrelated features: to repeat, firstly, the explanation is a post hoc view of the matter, for as we have seen, a person's overthrow demonstrates loss of divinity, just as sovereignty implies its presence; secondly, it is ontological with a situational field or a field of manifestation. Both features render this kind of explanation adaptive to changes.

It might be said that I have thrown out the baby with the bath water, and denuded the idea of divine kingship of all ideological potency. I am not suggesting that the idea of divine nature is irrelevant in the configuration relative to the man's power, but simply that the Hindu conceptualisation presents divinity and sovereignty as intrinsically interconnected. It is not to say that we do not find situations where the purported nature of the man who is the divine king is not used as a support for his particular position. We may find propositions of the order, "since he is god-king, he must be obeyed", but here obedience to "him" follows as a response to his constituting a special kind of power, specifically, "god-king". The two are one and always come together. And disappear together.
The interesting analytic aspect about divine kingship, from a general point of view, seems to be its flexibility. When a man has failed and is proven powerless, divinity does not apply, whereas in an ordinary situation of succession and retention of power, or the dramatic situation of conquest, the king involved manifests divinity by virtue of his position and operation of royal power. The ideas about divine monarchy, then, are so formulated that they allow for change within the terms of the tradition itself. The successful use of force by another divine king does not appear to put the whole conception of divine kingship in jeopardy at all, it merely decides which of two will retain divinity. While royal usurpation was one kind of change-over, there was also another to which we will now turn.

Another fact of Nepalese history where the king was displaced not by an outsider king, but by a junior minister, Jung Bahadur Rana who was able to become despot as Prime Minister within a short period, establish his position as hereditary, while the divine monarch and his descendants remained in the background for a century, clearly raises questions for the discussion. While I have suggested that with divine kingship there is an inseparable connexion between kingship and divinity, yet for a hundred years there was a situation where certain men all stipulated to be divine kings had no political power at all. How are we to understand what appears at least at first sight to be a divergent package?

The situation is not as radically dissimilar from the normal context, as one might think, though it is more complex in that there are now two people, not one, standing at the head of the kingdom. The Rana Prime Minister ruled a Hindu polity, but did so in the name of the king. Power and divinity were here not divorced, even though they inhaled in two different personages. It would seem that divine kingship is important for the operation of power in this context, since the Ranas chose to rule as the king's Prime Ministers, rather than in their own right; and since they refrained from killing any of the kings over the century, but instead used them as a front, even though each king in turn constituted the greatest threat to the prime ministerial position. Their reluctance to kill the king in this context, though unexpected for they were adroit in rapidly and unsentimentally dispatching other rivals, is significant, since it indicates that they heeded, or calculated the necessity to heed, the importance of the king. Their fastidiousness here was not without a likely political motive.

Such a policy also brought its own complications, to which we will return. Whatever else, the fact remains that the line of kings survived, and as long as the Ranas ruled as Prime Ministers, rather than as kings in their own right, they not only supported but also continued to cede value to the idea of divine kingship.

The Rana Prime Ministers hence had to resort to the accoutrements of the divine kings' paraphernalia which apparently they did utilize. They employed the king's seal for all official matters (see Levi, 1905-8: Vol. I, 286). The king's presence was also needed for the annual review of appointments,¹ and for the allocation of birtha grant.² Even the initial creation of an exalted origin for the Rana line was implemented by the then reigning king. Here Rana eminence was articulated through the title of "Three times blessed" (tin panch, Nep) and by descent from the solar dynasty, a typical claim of royalty in the Hindu world. Yet in making this secondary to the divine king's "five times blessed" (sri panch) the basic tactical error was compounded, and the king's position as supreme personage, despite political impotence, was maintained.

In the set of arrangements the Prime Minister could not stand as the divine incarnation, for there can only be one in the kingdom: therefore though each Rana Prime Minister became Sri Tin Maharaja, with a pedigree in the heavenly dynasty, this did not effectively demote the divinity of the kings each of whom remained titular head. As long as the royal line remained extant and conspicuous in their virtual prison and while the Ranas continued to act as its Prime Ministers, they adopted, paradoxically, the role of functionary to the king, despite the appropriation of ruler's power. But in so doing they fostered the greatest threat to their own position. The basic error the first Rana committed and one perpetuated by his successors was to rule as Prime Minister of the king and not to assume the role for himself and his successors, since the king's presence and the recognition of his line, entailed the greatest internal threat to the Rana position: constantly exposed was the illegitimate treatment of royalty.

1. Levi's account states:
   For just an awakening of the king, even should it last a few moments, can annihilate the party most solidly encamped in power. Nepal is every year, on the eve of a legal revolution. All the employments are annual; beginning from the Prime Minister to the humblest soldier, all wait the 'pajni' or 'panjani' which must either confirm or reject them brutally from the services of the state (1905-8: Vol. I, 287).

The fact that the Ranas chose not to kill the line of kings, was apparently the lesser of two evils: according to some Nepalese accounts, to commit regicide also carried a risk which derived from the sancrosanct nature of the man designated divine king. Two reasons why regicide was not perpetrated are given by some Nepalis. When asked the question, some Parbatya respond with astonishment at the possibility, and reply that to kill the king would be to kill the divine incarnation of Viśṇu, which is utterly unthinkable.\(^1\) The other reason, which, though relating to the Rana's adoption of a policy of political expediency, comes back to the same point, the possibility that regicide might provoke a reaction from the populace and suggests that people in general regard the king's person as hallowed. It would appear that the Ranas by preferring not to kill the line of kings were aware of the possible repercussions and were not prepared to take the risk, despite the strength of their external support from the British in India. Instead, as we know, the course chosen was to leave the king as the paramount person of the Hindu kingdom with a Rana holding paramount power. So what was happening?

Since the Ranas not only kept the kings alive, but also allowed them to remain supreme personages, and most important, ruled as their Prime Ministers in a Hindu polity where traditionally this feature is intrinsically tied to kingship, kingship then was used to legitimate their special position, hereditary ruling Prime Ministers. Another venue was intermarriage with royalty, thus injecting the biological component. Though the royal connexion might serve to validate their own position, in turn it also reaffirmed the value of divine kingship. This could not be avoided not only because of their treatment of royalty but because of the whole political framework within which they operated. By maintaining a Hindu polity and upholding the sacred laws, the Hindu order was perpetuated, but in so doing, since divine kingship is an intrinsic part of this, it could not be and was not side-stepped.

A Rana Prime Minister, like the divine king, taps the standard ideologies regarding the ruler's role, as the speech detailed previously shows. The same speech also brings into relief the Ranas' connexion with the king and a desire to demonstrate that they have maintained a traditional Hindu order.

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1. The unthinkable does occur, of course, but this does not mean that regicide would not have had repercussions, a possibility of which the Ranas were aware. It should also be mentioned that unsuccessful attempts have been made on the life of Mahendra and Birendra during their respective reigns.
The present administrative system under which the supreme authority of the State was entrusted to the Rana family started with the joint approval of the king, Bharadars and people.

"With the king overhead, and the people on the lap", we, the Ranas, have carried on the administration of the country in accordance with our sacred usages between king and people, proudly flying the flag of a Hindu constitutional monarchy, as described in our Shastra (Address of the Prime Minister of Nepal upon the Inauguration of Nepal Act).

If the Ranas opted for tradition, then monarchy cannot be irrelevant. Had they opted to kill the king and adopted an entirely different system, things might have been otherwise, but while they chose to work within the parameters of the traditional system, they were caught in a cleft stick which finally snapped, when both the royalist and democratic forces united to depose them, at a time when the external buttress to their power, the British in India, withdrew.

What of the argument about the inseparability of divinity and kingship? With a separation between two persons the phenomenon cannot be the same, obviously it cannot be a case where sovereignty manifests divinity. What we find is a situation of legitimation where the divine king is used as a front for Rana power, ruling as Prime Minister to the king. The ruler's power also undergoes a modification for it is not quite absolute, not unconditioned, if the Prime Minister prefers not to test it by assassinating the king. An absolute monarch is not hamstrung in this way and may label any threat treasonable and dispatch the problem. Moreover, since the position of Prime Ministership is legitimated by reference to kingship, as its officer, then ironically the Ranas were not presenting themselves as having power in their own right. To be sure the position was made hereditary, but while succession was permanently secured in the family line, it does not render the position itself an autonomous right, but contingent. It is contingent since a Prime Minister only exists in relationship to the king of the land. Hence, since the Ranas retained a Hindu order, and ruled as Prime Ministers, that is as Prime Minister to the king, and allowed the kingship to survive, despite its mitigated form, and did not catapult themselves to the highest position, but secondary to the king's divinity (the relation of five to three), then we have a situation of segmenting the two aspects of kingship, where the Ranas take political power but not ultimate supremacy in the Hindu kingdom, with corcommittant modifications on both sides. In all the complications, the idea of divinity appears to be relevant for the Ranas' validation of their position. Yet when the justification came or comes from this kind of quarter, then it is likely to back-fire, as it did.

Divine kingship is a risky kind of legitimation since it provides the living embodiment to an alternate, fully traditional regime, and is likely to be seen as preferable when discontent is rampant.

As soon as there was a weakening of the Ranas' entrenched position, through the loss of British support, the divine king's presence allowed for the mounting of a royalist cause in the revolution against the Rana regime. Of course the Ranas may have been ousted without this factor, we do not know, but the divine king was there and, as it happened, played a crucial part in the overthrow, the royalist forces, along with the democratic, and with aid from the newly formed Republic of India were able to topple Rana power. Given all these factors, it is evident that I am not suggesting that the king's presence determined the overthrow, but I am indicating that it was one contributing factor in providing a rallying point as an alternative to the Rana despotism. Further, in the set of events the important consequence is that the existence of a traditional Hindu king allowed for one possible direction that the country could take, after the Rana defeat and one which was finally taken. Given these events, it is clear that for the line of Shahs, the idea of divine monarchy seems to be relevant to their position, for it contributed to their survival, to their resumption and continuing retention of power, in that the line outlived the Rana regime, and later overthrew the post-Rana democratically elected government and reinstated absolutism of the divine monarch as the political mode for the operation of this sole surviving Hindu kingdom. Today, his successor rules in this way.


For the work of destruction, one needs the workers of destruction, for the establishment of a special kind of Hindu order in the defeated territory, one needs its proponents in numbers, but in the reproduction and increase of such people, the diminution of another category is inevitable. This raises the issue of the relationship between the rules about marriage and procreation and the state.

The range of controls relating to marriage and the positioning of offspring comprise the possibilities of isogamy, hypergamy, polygyny and monandry; a ban on hypogamy, and an absolute prohibition on union with Untouchables of both sexes; a ruling that the offspring of permitted unions belong to the general caste category of the father. As the word, "possibilities", indicates, the relevant features are not enforcements but something that may be activated. While certain kinds of relationships like
isogamous marriage, could be approached via cultural meanings, I do not propose to do that. Instead I want to indicate that this particular batch of possibilities and prohibitions with regard to sexual unions, and the legal positioning of offspring, are such, that when activated, there are three significant consequences: the retention of the normal reproduction in the lowest, the Untouchable category; the shrinkage in the middle, the Matwali level; and an expansion over and above normal increase, in that of the top, the twice-born. Such a patterning, especially the effect with the twice-born, would serve the state's interest for it would generate the most extensive proliferation of people possible, in that crucial social category to the detriment of the Matwali level.

The traditional cluster of laws about marriage possibilities and prohibitions affected the castes differently, for the ban on hypogamy determined that high caste women could not marry down, while hypergamy allowed the lower caste women to move up to the men in the top category. Moreover, if the range of possibilities were utilized, this meant that the reproductive forces of women could be concentrated in the twice-born category, which in turn would have demographic repercussions for the members of the lower category. Specifically, the cluster of Hindu laws which allows for the possibility of anvuloma (hypergamy) and the strict prohibition of pratiloma (hypogamy), in conjunction with polygyny and the ruling that offspring stay within the category of their father's caste (if the marriage were endogamous), or within the general caste level, (if it were hypergamous) has significant repercussions for the special category, the twice-born.

If utilized, it would have the effect of their cornering the supply of women (through hypergamy) and capitalizing on it (through polygyny) to the detriment of those lower down, and with the access to, and maximization of, the reproductive force would eventuate in swelling the numbers in that top rank. This would be at the cost of depletion in the middle where comparative scarcity of women would prevail, because the situation was not one of hypergamy throughout, but one which stopped short, since union with an Untouchable woman (as with a man) was totally barred. This last ruling is also significant but often ignored in discussions on hypergamy, for example, Tambiah's (1973) analysis on hypergamy ignores the ban on union with Untouchables and as a result the interpretation suffers accordingly. The cluster of rules regarding sexual unions and the position of offspring have bearings on the demographic distribution in caste categories which in turn have political repercussions. In other words, the laws about male/female unions and caste placement of offspring may be understood from a political
angle where access to, and appropriation of, the female's reproductive power is central, for the operation of the rules can generate consequences of demographic gain in the twice-born category, which contains these people most closely affiliated to the particular regime which, on its part, imposes these laws. If any of these avenues were activated this would not affect the situation of the Untouchables since intercourse there was barred and the conditions for ordinary increase were left intact. Hence the state sets up barriers which would not facilitate the evaporation of this important category. Where decrease is likely to occur through implementing the possibilities it is with the middle caste category, Matwāli, who in Nepal comprised the conquered tribals, and the demographic remains of an extinguished Hindu polity, the Mala kingdom, whose territory is the location of the conqueror's capital. Since the points are dense, I shall spell them out in detail.

The twice-born can corner the supply of women and swell their numbers when polygyny is practised in conjunction with hypergamy, (and when the progeny's positioning is oriented by the father's caste). Otherwise hypergamy would simply be a case of one twice-born male uniting with one Matwāli woman, which would make no difference at all to the twice-born numbers. Indulgence in hypergamy alone swells nothing. This point seems to have been overlooked by Sharma who argues that it is the practice of hypergamy which is increasing the numbers in the twice-born level, especially that of Chetris (1975: 287). What hypergamy does do is produce a shortage of women in the middle category since they lose their women to the top and cannot replenish them by taking women from the bottom. Consequently, the activation of hypergamy would affect the numbers in the Matwāli level, preventing normal increase. With regard to the twice-born, Sharma's concern, their indulgence in hypergamy without polygyny would simply provide a situation for normal increase, the only difference being a matter of the wife's provenance. Moreover, this kind of situation where wives have come from lower ranks and a man only has one wife (hypergamy without polygyny) would have repercussions for the top caste women since many of them could be without spouses, as the men would be taken up by Matwāli women through the hypergamous union. If there is to be a demographic expansion of twice-born vis-à-vis their own potential, then this will only occur with the simultaneous indulgence in polygyny and hypergamy by some of these twice-born men, where wives are derived from their own caste (an isosagmous union) and others from the Matwāli level (an hypergamous union). In short it is only with the operation of isogamy, utilising their own women, in conjunction with hypergamy, utilising somebody's else's, can the twice-born actually maximise on the situation to
swell their numbers. Such a combination was available to the twice-born and was utilised.¹ Thus they had greater access to the reproductive resource for expansion, but only if the offspring were not lost to that category. Since the progeny of hypergamous unions were recognised as belonging to the Father's same general caste category (Sharma, 1975: 286-7), they were retained within that category. Therefore, the fact that hypergamy and polygyny were permitted, and offspring were located in the general caste of the father, such stipulations together provide for the possibility of demographic expansion in the top category. This may happen because these stipulations operate in such a way that it is the twice-born who may end up with more women; and the progeny of these hypergamous unions, regardless of the mother's natal locus, are not lost but are positioned at the general caste level of twice-born.

Not only are the offspring of hypergamous unions fully incorporated into the twice-born category, when the father himself belongs to that group, but those sons share inheritance rights along with the sons of isogamous unions (see Hodgson, 1880: Vol. II, 232-3). Although this was marginally less, these sons could not be disinherited, and should such an attempt be made, and the matter be brought to the court, it would bring down a decision entirely in favour of the victimised party who would then be allocated the entire inheritance (Hodgson, 1836: 125). Hence as with caste placement, so with rights, these types of sons are recognised even though the differences between them and the position of the offspring of isogamous unions was also recognised by the law.

The placements differ when the father is a Brahmin, though his sons, like those of other twice-born men, are allocated to that general caste level like other progeny of these cross-caste marriages.² Offspring of a hypergamous union where a Brahmin father is concerned become Chetri as do all their descendants (Sharma, 1975: 287). Therefore it should be added that in this instance, a hypergamous union is not all that advantageous to the highest caste, and accounts which maintain that the laws simply articulate benefits in the rank order of castes over-simplify a complex matter. Rather, the advantage goes to the regime, for the members would augment the Chetri ranks of the twice-born. Where the offspring of the other twice-born castes like Chetri are concerned, for three generations their ontological state is regarded as mixed (ibid: 288) but nonetheless they are Chetri members of the

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2. The Legal Code promulgated by the Ranas was researched by Sharma and from it the patterning was extrapolated. His material, needless to add, provides the basis for my discussion.
twice-born category. After the exhaustion of this generational time, the descendants assume the full Chetri state (ibid: 288). Thus, hypergamy is catered to by recognising a different effect in the progeny where the father's bone and the mother's blood are not comparable, nevertheless since the bone determines what kind of person evolved from such a union, the son remains within the general category, twice-born. From a sceptical point of view, this also means that if numbers are not lost to this category, and this category is crucial for the operation of the state, then such arrangements are in the regime's interest. The outcome of hypergamy has been described differently by Sharma who depicts it as a process of "sanskritisation" (ibid: 290-4).

Rather than interpret the hypergamous situation as that of "social mobility" for a woman and her offspring, as Sharma renders the situation, I would prefer to see it as one where the top castes appropriate the women of the middle rungs who in addition lose not only the offspring she would have produced there but all her descendants. Nor can an interpretation of social mobility exactly apply to the man's son, as Sharma suggests, because that person (the son) was never a member of any group and only came into existence at his birth through a twice-born father. Furthermore, the attribution of social mobility might be inept for describing the position of the hypergamous wife. The union might constitute a desirable situation, but then again, it might not, especially if the union had resulted through what Nepalis call "kidnapping" and Manu calls "marriage by capture", but in either case is regarded as a bona fide form of marriage and binding on the woman regardless of what she thinks. For the concept of "social mobility" to apply, there has to be a degree of desirability, otherwise it is a matter of enforcement, or some kind of pressure. Further, since it is likely that the Matwali woman would come into a polygamous household where the senior wife, in all probability would belong to the husband's caste, and given that the position of co-wife is not always the most tempting of all relations, there again is the possibility of a woman's being disenamoured by the hypergamous arrangement. If her family's response is speculated upon, then the attractiveness of the matter is not at all clear, for it means that the men of that group (and caste level) must surrender their women to the men of the top caste, but they in turn cannot have access to their women, because this was prohibited. Not only that but, as we know, the state severely punished any instance of ahypogamous nature (see Hodgson, 1834: 51-2). Moreover, when the demands made on the wife's family in the affinal relationship are also borne in mind, the unequal and unreciprocal nature of the union stands out even further.
In Nepal, a woman and her husband and offspring are regarded as worshipable (pujya) to the member of her natal family and this also demands an unending flow of ritual gifts, and hospitality of a grand nature. It is not reciprocal, since the wife-givers cannot ask the daughter or her husband for anything. The wife-givers do not visit the daughter's husband's house. Their relationship only extends to the daughter, (or their sister in the case of brother), her husband and offspring, but definitely does not go beyond to the other members of the husband's household. While many demands are made on the wife-givers, the only thing required of the daughter from her natal family is that she attend certain rituals in her natal home. Another point arises here. Marriages have also been interpreted as forms of alliance or exchanges between the groups involved. However, given that the pujya relationship is non-reciprocal then the idea of alliance with its connotation of social or political advantage to both parties is, I think, misplaced. The idea of alliance or exchange is inapposite not only where the relationship is isogamous, but more conspicuously so, where it is hypergamous. The modification, asymmetrical exchange, used to cope with such contexts is just as inept. If the members of the lower castes are being drained of their women by the top castes, and the arrangement is not reciprocal, then surely appropriation of women is more at issue. Given that the possibility of a one-way traffic of women to the males at the top, along with a prohibition on top women coming down to those in the middle was articulated as a law, patrolled by law-enforcing agencies and in the breach was punished most severely, then conceptualisations like "social mobility" and "alliance" do not exactly facilitate an appreciation of what is involved.

In all of this, the female is the critical power for the production of sons which is expressed through the idea that a woman's sole fulfillment lies in having sons. More cynically, a critic from within the culture, asserted that "in Nepal, women are just machines for making babies but especially sons". One would extend this, adding that as far as the twice-born are concerned, the husband has a monopoly on his wife's or wives' reproductive power for the duration of their lives, in that divorce was impossible for the Parbatya twice-born. The husband's monopoly on his wife found legal backing in his right to kill another who entered the husband's domain, as we have

1. The value is so entrenched that it affords the only exception to the current legal prohibition on polygyny. If a man has no sons by his first wife, he may marry another, according to the present legal code.
seen. Now while the husband had a monopoly on the wife, this was not reciprocal for he could take many wives, and so the saying that "a husband is half of her" cannot be, and is not, formulated the other way round.

The requirement that a woman stayed with her husband and that the union was indissoluble can also be gleaned from sati where the wives even followed the husband in his death. After the abolition of sati, the idea still was enforced inasmuch as a widow was not permitted to marry another man. This particular feature of male/female relations could hold difficulties for the argument in that at first sight it does not appear to be related to the appropriation and retention of women in the upper castes, and the ensuring of numerical gains. The difficulty arises since monandry if broken would not necessarily affect the demographic possibilities. Should a woman herself from a twice-born base, join up with another twice-born then further procreation could occur. Of course, if the twice-born woman went to a Matwali man, that would locate her in the wrong camp, but that was covered by the prohibition on hypogamy. However, there is one context where the ruling could have repercussions, that is the situation where a wife of a Parbatya twice-born man derives from the Matwali caste. If it were possible for her to leave her husband and marry a Matwali, then the gains from the hypergamous arrangement would be cancelled every time a woman moved out. Thus, from this point of view, the indissoluble bond between a man and all his wives preserves the advantages gained through the operation of polygyny and hypergamy for the twice-born. Though the consequence of the performances of sati, and its reformulation, specifically the permanent state of widowhood, meant a wastage of the woman's breeding potential, presumably it was necessary, to maintain the hypergamous gains and could be tolerated because there was no scarcity of supply, given the twice-born men's access to the women of their own category and that below.

1. While Parbatya and certain tribal husbands, according to Hodgson (1836: 133) could kill the wife's adulterer, etc. this did not apply when she was a Newari. His discussion is brief. It would seem that the regime recognised the special position of those Newari women who undertook marriage to a god in a ritual, and regarded it as the authentic marriage for them (see Allen, in press). Therefore marital relations with the human husband for such women does not have the seriousness that it has for other women. Any kind of union for these Newari women is, in a sense, adulterous, even that of the husband, given their prior marriage to a god.

Regarding divorce, Hodgson only details its possibility when marriage occurs between a Newari woman and Newari man, where the marriage is rescinded by the wife's returning the betel nuts, the sign of the relationship used during the Newar human marriage ritual. Presumably the possibility of divorce would not apply in instances of a hypergamous union between a Newari woman and a Parbatya twice-born.

2. Recent reforms have lifted the ban on widow remarriage.
In contrast, within the Newar community, the women were not wasted but recycled since widow remarriage and divorce were possible. Hodgson refers to special Newar customs. From one point of view, it suggests a situation of scarcity which would arise if many of them were taken by the Parbatya twice-born. The point is also illustrated by reports that monogamy was usual for Newars while polygny was the frequent indulgence of the Parbatya twice-born. A complaint by a contemporary Gurung also directs attention to this general issue.

The Gurungs in the past, according to this man, were extremely numerous peoples, yet today their numbers are sparse in comparison. He attributed this decline to genocide. Perhaps his inference is not without some substance, especially during the first forays of conquest. Their involvement in the Gurka regiments might also have bearings on this issue. Even so, decrease could eventuate with the Gurung loss of women through hypergamy and could just as readily have contributed to the decline of demographic stocks here.

At this juncture let me clarify one point in relation to tribals and Newars, the components of the Matwāli category. As far as tribals are concerned, in certain matters they were allowed to follow their local customs; inter-tribal marriage may have occurred but clearly this would depend on their own postures. Given that all Newars and tribals were lumped together as constituting one category, Matwāli, according to the legal code of the mid-nineteenth century, and which according to Sharma was simply a codification of the tradition (1975: 277-8, 283-4), then, as far as the state was concerned, marriages between these people would constitute isogamous marriages. Since the Newars were permitted to follow their own customs which were based on the rulings of a prior Hindu kingdom, then the effects amongst them would have been comparable to those within the total Nepalese situation.

Another instance of small numbers appears for the present-day Karmacharya, one level of Newar Brahmins, thus also indicating the effects of past marital arrangements. This is not to say that the practice of hypergamy is the sole cause, but that it might be one of the contributing causes, since the Brahmin level is most compromised by this kind of union, unlike the other levels of the twice-born (Parbatya or Newar). It will be recalled that a

1. Though the exposition stands at a high level of generalization, rigorous analysis would require a break down of the Newar internal variations, considering, for example, whether the flexibility was something that occurred within the middle ranks of the Newar order pertaining for Malla times, while strict male/female relations with male exclusivity was the purloin of the upper, the Newar Hindu twice-born castes.

2. Whether this refers to the Parbatya Brahmin of the official twice-born category in the overall scheme or the Newan Brahmin within the internal Newar caste scheme.
Brahmin man's offspring and their descendants can never obtain the precise level of the man who initially indulged in the hypergamous union, whereas with the other castes it is simply a matter of time for the descendants. Now the Newar Brahmin in the top reaches of the Matwali, the middle of the caste order, may lose women to the top, but if he replenishes them from below, the offspring do not belong to the original group, so every loss of a woman is a critical loss indeed. Worst of all is the self-defeating option, for the availability of Newar lower caste women, if availed, simply produces offspring in a lower (albeit Newar twice-born) category but thereby the opening does not allow for the perpetuation of their particular group.¹

In so far as the material from these two instances, Gurung and Karmacharya, shows demographic disadvantages at the key Matwali point of the caste order, exactly where it would occur when the cluster of rulings is applied, it is likely therefore that these demographic facts can be understood by reference to the operation of those rulings. Of course, two swallows do not make a spring nevertheless it is significant that the groups were demographic decrease as striking are those positioned at the diacritical Matwali level, just the ones who would be affected when the marital possibilities were activated. There are other indications as well.

The contemporary proportions in the demographic distribution of the castes also suggest the likelihood that the possibilities were activated in the past. Now according to the logic of the formal situation, the operation of hypergamy along with polygyny would denude the middle category of their reproductive forces and presumably in several generations the demographic situation would exhibit an imbalance in favour of the upper castes so that this twice-born category could become numerically predominant within a short space of time, even if it were not so initially. The contemporary figures show that all the tribal peoples to-day only constitute less than twenty-five percent of the total population (see Sharma, 1975: 299) which is low, even though initially some tribal groups were not demographically impressive others, like the Limbu, Rai and Gurung, are said to have comprised numerous peoples in the past. This

¹. The Karmacharyas are in a difficult position at the moment. They are said to number less than a hundred where they all belong to the same gotra. If they marry within, this is counted as incestuous and they would automatically lose caste. If they take wives from below then the offspring belong to a different level, even though they stay as we know within the Newar twice-born level. They see it as the end of the Karmacharya.

Generally speaking, the high risk of not perpetuating the group unless right marriages are contracted, could make intelligible the parents' concern reported in the literature, that marriages are in fact made, and made at an early age when both bride and groom are young. In these situations, the caste requirements are adhered to rigorously.
suggests that a depletion has occurred over time. In this I think that
marriage rules have played a part, and though it was probably not the only
contributing factor to the contemporary proportions, it could have had some
influence, though this would only be conclusive if statistics of the earlier
period were available. My case however is not based on figures for these are
unavailable but on formal terms of what is probable, given certain facts.
Polygyny was practised by the Parbatya twice-born, and tribal women provided
the catchment for secondary wives in a hypergamous union (see Gellner, 1979:
361). Moreover, informants refer to numerous instances of hypergamy between
twice-born men and Newar or tribal women¹ (and which is still practised).
If these practices occurred, then from the logic of the situation an imbalance
would be generated in the two caste levels involved, in spite of the fact that
the extent cannot be ascertained. The important aspect about the laws is that
they are available as a set of possibilities and when utilised will propel
certain demographic consequences. When the possibilities are resorted to, not
only is it a case where that special formation, the In-category, can build up
their numbers, but also as a necessary corollary, where the defeated, of the
middle Matwâli rung, cannot build up theirs.

Indulgence in polygyny as one would expect has repercussions in other
areas. When a particular man indulges and ends up by procreating inordinately,
and given the inheritance law that all sons must share equally in a father's
assets, and the sons of junior wives receive one third of that, then the assets
will be scattered proportionately. So with an increase of numbers, there is
the concomitant shrinkage of economic resources. Hence, ironically, the
twice-born who performs the greatest service to the regime through siring
many, also does the greatest disservice to those offspring by creating a
situation where the inheritance is to be shared widely. The advantage for the
ruler's position has already been commented upon. In the case of the Ranas,
their notorious over-indulgence in polygyny back-fired since some of the junior
members, disaffected by their position in the scheme of things, joined the
opposition which was ultimately to oust the regime, (see Gellner, 1979: 363)
though in the meantime one particular brood of Ranas apparently had its uses.

¹. Hypogamous unions are no longer punished by law. Yet the occurrence is
rare. When it does occur it is a notorious event and has grave
repercussions for the women in that the members of her natal family are
likely to ignore her. The pujiya relationship becomes impossible. One
respondent presented this anomalous consequence as a reason for the ban
on hypogamy. The Brahmin said: "If my daughter marries a lower caste
man, how could I pay him deference, bow at his feet?"
The various members of the powerful branch of the family (the Shamshers) were advantageously deployed in the key posts of the administration (Edwards, 1976: 14). This is not to say that a Rana's personal motives for such indulgence was to gather a band of sons around him, for we do not know what the motives were, but rather once there they, as members of the particular group, were available to be utilized in running the Rana administration. Similarly, at the wider level, the question of personal motive of practitioners does not enter. What is relevant is the legal system, and those who devised or imposed it as law.

The significant point about the configuration of rules is that when implemented they are not detrimental to the regime and, at the same time, it is the regime which enforces the laws. The beneficial consequences cannot be ignored. There are, for example, militaristic advantages in swelling the Chetri at the expense of the Brahmin. As important, if not more so, is the possible increase of the twice-born level in general, since theirs is a critical category which is specially important during the period of a state's consolidation. Of course, the regime does not directly say to the twice-born men, have many wives and reproduce, rather it permits the possibility should the men so choose. Even where polygyny is not practised, but hypergamy is, given the ruling that it is the father's seed which determines general rank, then the normal demographic increase can take its course even when women from the same caste are not available. In instances like warfare or periods of the early consolidation of a regime when men are stationed in different parts of the country, then the ruling makes it possible for a man to take a woman from a lower caste, as long as she is not from the polluting caste. It is especially with the standing of the offspring that we can see the state's directing hand, for it is not simply a matter of the conquering group's assuaging their appetite in sexual liaisons with the other group's women, but a matter where the state determines that the progeny are to be recognised as theirs. Therefore the fact that the state allocated them to the general category twice-born and backs up the position by permitting inheritance to go to all sons alike, regardless of the mother's provenance, means that the products of a hypergamous union are kept within that social category. Put differently, if the state does not allow the offspring of a hypergamous union to belong to the mother's group but insists that they belong to the father's, then the state is engineering the pattern of demographic distribution. It so happens that it is also

1. In that all tribals and Newars are Matwali, according to the legal code, marriage between such peoples would constitute marriage within the same caste category.
advantageous to the state, and although this has become a refrain I think it is warranted.

Let me try to bring the threads together and indicate the general implications of the exposition. First it must be stressed that the cluster of stipulations are bona fide Hindu and not some Himalayan anomaly. Even the husband's right to kill the adulterer is based on a characteristic Hindu posture, regarding the nature of the husband/wife tie. As well, the special ontological position of the Brahmin husband is catered for, in that the state performs the offensive act for him in cases of punishing the adulterer. There is little in the Nepalese cluster which radically deviates from Manu's texts (specifically, the offspring of the permitted types of cross-caste union remain within the general category twice-born and their ontological state is affected, but only for a number of generations and is eventually exhausted\(^1\); polygyny is legitimate\(^2\); and there is a ban on intercourse with the lowest\(^3\); marriage by capture, which simply means that the state backs the abductor, is also one of the forms listed by Manu and practised in Nepal till 1951.\(^4\) Even variations, when they do occur, are permissible within the lawmaker's orientation insofar as Manu advocates that local customs be recognised. This applies to the Gorkha treatment of certain Newari variations, it will be recalled. When variations do occur, one can be sure that the state's non-interference does not go against its interest for there are other instances where the state discountenances them entirely.

As for the rulings themselves, one can hardly but be impressed by the way the whole assortment constitutes an elaborate mechanism which can have significant consequences for the demographic distribution of the castes. Most important is the way the stipulations fall. There are the precise injunctions, what must and must not happen; and the possibilities to be activated when desired. According to the injunctions, as we have seen, there can be no sex with Untouchables which means that category's demographic patterning is not to be interfered with; there can be no hypogamy which means that the top is not deprived of women, the reproductive resource; and the offspring of hypergamous unions remain in the twice-born category in that it is only at that level that hypergamy is relevant in the state's delineations, for all people in the Matvāli level are treated simply as members of a single caste category. It is the ban

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2. See Manu, IX, 85 in Buhler (tr.) 1969: 342.
4. Manu lists this form as a possibility for Kṣatriya only (see III, 21, 23, 33 in Buhler (tr.) 1969: 79, 81).
on hypogamy which reveals the state's impress and which cannot precisely be rescued by the idea of the loss of a woman's high ontological state for that is only a potential to be realised, in that the rule stipulates that a "woman takes her caste at marriage." Therefore had she married down that would be that. It would also mean loss of her reproductive power and that of all her progeny. There are also the possibilities, hypergamy and polygyny standing alongside what is the usual form of marriage, isogamy, which is taken as the automatic course, while the other two are there to be activated when desired. When utilised, they would generate consequences where the distribution of numbers in the caste order would definitely not hamper the running of a Hindu state. What is amazing is that there is a whole range of stipulations, none of which would generate an effect in any caste level which would be awkward in the operation of the state. Moreover, many of the possibilities available to be activated when contingencies demand, thereby allow for adapting to the processes involved in the development of the state. Then there is the fact that the rulings constitute a time-tried cultural package of Hindu laws which come as part and parcel of this kind of kingdom. What can be drawn from all of this?

If the whole assortment of injunctions and possibilities are time-tried, and recur as formulations in the Hindu state's body of knowledge regarding organisation, the Dharmaśāstra of Manu for example; and as well they have a flexibility in that some are available to be tapped or not, and can cater to contingencies brought about by conquest where the important matters relate to demographic factors; and if activated the distribution of numbers in the particular caste categories is of a kind which would facilitate the running of a Hindu order, then this suggests that the kind of polity (the Hindu kingdom), that we are dealing with is characteristically a special kind of conquest state, with a potential for demographic expansion in the top caste category, the twice-born. Obviously conquest is empirically given with the Nelapese case and hardly needs to be demonstrated through sex and procreation. I am suggesting however that this configuration in other contexts would also indicate that the society in which it is found is also likely to be based on conquest. Furthermore, the point is not merely about a label but the theoretical posture which it implies, that the kind of society we refer to as caste society, or a Hindu kingdom, is to be understood as essentially one kind of conquest state. The orientation would also bring into relief the significance of marriage rulings etc, in that for a Hindu conquest state its important elements are people - but distributed in certain ways at particular stages of the state's development-and some are more expendable than

1. The same idea is expressed by Manu in general terms (see IX, 22 in Buhler (tr.) 1969: 331).
What is interesting is that the proportionate decrease in the middle level would deprive the regime of important labour, but that is irrelevant for our thesis and would only follow if one took a Marxist approach as Gough and Meillassoux do either implicitly or explicitly, correlating castes and classes and considering these in terms of their respective positions in the relations of production. Rather, of relevance for the historic material of this Nepalese kingdom, is the people's position vis-à-vis the regime and, as one would expect, during the earlier stages described by Hodgson, it was the twice-born and not the tribals who were committed to the Gorkhas and to the kind of order the regime was imposing. What was important for the state was having the numbers distributed in the right proportions in the right places. If what we are dealing with is characteristically a special kind of conquest state, are there other features in the arrangements which support this suggestion?

5. **Implications:**

If, as we have seen, the arrangements are such that by the laws the state can allow for the appropriation of women by the top category with significant demographic consequences; it can organise the land's wealth for the retention of the dynasty's power; use all subjects' energy to its own ends (despite the fact that some seem to be advantaged through the royal favour, for it has a cost, total submission to another's will); and if what are given as the official laws are dependant on military success, whether way back or closer in time; and if the operation of the laws are also backed by the militia, then there is a fundamental interconnectedness between the laws and force.

Force is recognised as an important means in generating certain effects but only when utilised successfully. Therefore it is the accomplishment which is critical, and from this the "winner takes all". Although its deployment in war is precarious in that the outcome is unknown, apparently for an adventurous king it seems to be worth the risks involved in that triumph brings domination over more people, a grander domain and self aggrandisement of some magnitude. Utter failure can of course bring ignominy. When used successfully, force

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1. The point is echoed in the distribution of Nepalis in the Gurkha regiment attached to outside polities, for these were and are primarily tribals and not Parbatya twice-born. It is notable that the Nepalese king's control is also conspicuous here for he obtains (and obtained) remuneration from the British and Indian governments, who use his citizens as their soldiers. For an account of the utilization of the Gurkha regiment by foreign powers, see Enloe, 1980: 23-29.

2. As we saw earlier, though concessions were made to Brahmins in the working of the mines, they were still part of that labour force. Needless to add this does not negate the point that twice-born Brahmins were typically the receivers of land, it only complicates the analysis, for it is with this caste and the general twice-born category where the variations especially occur and which defy easy generalisations. Nor does it deny the point that the Matwali (apart from the Limbus) constituted the important block for forced labour.

generates the destruction of the enemy, but also a triumphant position for the winner-king. The winner-king can replicate this patterning in the relationship between the state (himself) and the criminal in the context of inflicting punishments, where the state's victory over the internal enemy is programmed to eventuate that way. The pattern also appears as a possibility in the propaganda formulations, for the suggestion of a real or imputed threat of destruction may impel men to proffer their allegiance to a leader, perceive his cause as their own and embark on a venture where their lives are in jeopardy and where the outcome is his glory if their side wins the struggle. Like anything else, it is the accomplished result through the utilisation of this particular means which is important. This brings us to two issues: Firstly, that of the relevance of achievement and its interconnexion with ontology; secondly, the area of change since success or failure also entails a new situation.

It is sometimes said that achievement is more an orientation found in non-traditional societies, whereas in others, the members are hamstrung by the tradition, however, achievement or accomplishment (siddhi) does figure in Hindu society. Though it figures, what is of significance is the way it is handled. Accomplishment interconnects with ontological notions. For, as it will be recalled, a king's defeat presupposes his loss of divinity. Similarly, a person's present condition is accounted for in terms of past actions, even though these belong to the invisible prior lives. Capability to effect results is linked to the ontological dimension since this kind of relationship is posited. Now when a king demonstrates his success in realizing his goal, he also demonstrates that he is a special kind of being which, with kingship, is predefined as a divine incarnation, but with others who accomplish successfully, there will also be a presumption about their particular natures, because of the idea of the interconnection. In so far as a person's success also implies an enhanced kind of being, the adulation which follows would be directed at the two facets. The same kind of reasoning appears to apply to failure. Now to turn to the second issue, the political changes.

When successful, the use of force determines whose regime is to be imposed, whose version of the laws will be effected and the general conditions of the varying destinies of the population, oriented by those discriminatory laws. If success in force determines whose laws are to be imposed, then the laws do not legitimate force. Success and failure obviously mean that changes are introduced on the newly absorbed polities, but what is of interest is that we also find that certain traditional ideas and practices are so framed that they

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1. A cult figure like Sahi Babi is a case in point. Another is Indira Gandhi.
automatically cope with these, channelling the direction that the changes ought to take. It would seem that it is not the only instance where this happens.

Several mechanisms are geared to directing the format for changes and variations. The traditional approach which interprets the defeat of the king as presupposing his loss of divinity means that the tradition itself caters to contingencies. This is probably one of the most important findings in the analysis since it vividly brings into relief a characteristic of the arrangements which also occurs elsewhere. Apart from this instance where changes are handled by the tradition itself, there are the rulings regarding marital unions and caste placement of offspring; and, as we saw earlier, there are the possible openings and closures available for those people who are not Untouchable nor twice-born to move into the Hindu order at the classical Śudra level. The nature of the rulings relating to sexual unions are of a kind which may or may not be activated, and so obviously, they are not only flexible but direct the patterning of change. If the full range is activated then a particular pattern will result, with the comparative expansion of numbers in the twice-born (based on the stipulation that a child’s caste is oriented by the father), the contraction in the Matwāli, while at the same time permitting no possibility for change in the lowest level, and eventually, the middle category could become a minority. If nothing else, the ban on hypogamous unions means that there can be no comparative swelling of numbers at that level, to the detriment of the top category. Similarly, the stipulations regarding the extent to which the Hindu tradition is to be made available to certain peoples, also generates a particular kind of patterning, where the lowest range is totally excluded and those designated Matwāli may only to to a certain extent, while it is only to the top, the twice-born, that the fullest tradition is available. Here, if any of those tribal peoples, designated Matwāli, opt to assume twice-born mores, given what is available to them with the openings and what is prohibited through the closures, then this process of "sanskritisation" means that they end up behaving like pukka Śudras of the vānīya terminology. Another aspect of the Hindu approach to things also seems to be relevant here: the nature of Hindu formulations, as we have seen, is all embracing, whether it is a matter of another god over the hill or another kind of human, there will be a place available since the universe of discourse is comprehensive.

The placement is not haphazard but is oriented by the terms of the standard formula. All in all we may say that the various rulings regarding marriage and caste location of offspring; the ritual possibilities and exclusions bearing on the incorporated outsiders, in our context the tribals; the idea of the inseparability of divinity and kingship (or more generally the interconnection of the ontological nature and corresponding capability); and
the all-embracing extent of their world view; each in its different way copes and programmes variations and changes. But most important, since these are Hindu stipulations about what is possible and what is to happen when adopted, then it is the system which determines the resultant format for these changes and variations. In other words it is the tradition itself which is flexible, allowing for different possibilities but at the same time predetermining the nature of the outcome. It can hardly be arbitrary.

It would seem that this flexible system with its in-built mechanism which channels the direction of changes and variations is of a kind which fits a particular type of social formation, the Hindu conquest state. The conquest state, as we know, is itself a developing entity where its growth first of all means the cancelling of opposition, then incorporation of other peoples and their domain, but it is how these changes are handled which provide the Hindu characteristics. The possibility of another claimant challenging the triumphant conqueror is circumvented since a king's defeat implies the loss of divinity. Success in using force does not violate notions about divine kingship but rather these notions are so formulated that they accommodate to what we would call the pragmatics of the situation. The conqueror's imposition of caste definitions on the population ought to be mentioned here for the sake of comprehensiveness, though the issue is straight forward since change is effected through unambiguous force. The particular patterning of caste position on the referents, as members of his Hindu kingdom (that is, those people incorporated into the conqueror's group, his allies and subjugated peoples), is not arbitrary but tends to follow the lines of conquest, or the conqueror's interest for the sake of expediency, as we have detailed earlier. The rulings for marital unions and placement of progeny are more interesting. Since none of the possibilities interfere with the demography of the lowest caste, the Untouchables, this ensures the retention of that group. Given that a threefold patterning of peoples can be maintained, and that the consequences of activating the possible arrangements would provide at best, an expansion of numbers in the top caste, the critical In-category, or at least, no proportionate increase in the middle ranks, then this kind of distribution would suit the regime's interest, since the more ardent proponents of this kind of order are not numerically outnumbered. Again, I do not think it arbitrary that the "sanskritization" process can only go as far as a certain point, a point which allows the non-twice born (but not the Untouchables) to assume certain Hindu mores and thus participate in the tradition, but without allowing these people to leap to the position of twice-born excellence, and so the divisions are retained. There are two implications following from this: one relates to a general point about the persistence of forms; the other to the direction of power.
Since the traditional system contains mechanisms formulated so as to cater to contingencies, and it belongs to a milieu of change, which in this instance is a conquest state, then it would seem that this kind of social formation may persist without any kind of dislocation in the face of changes brought through conquest. Or put differently: this kind of conquest state, since it contains certain in-built mechanisms which orient the format that changes and variations would take, is preprogrammed to persist as a particular kind of social formation while undergoing particular historic change-overs through the process of conquest.

To come to the second issue, the direction that the lines of power take. If, as we have seen with warfare, the "winner takes all", afterwards during a state's existence the rulings allow for a kind of eventuality in the particular caste distribution of subjects which is not against the ruler's interest; and the continuing presence of caste divisions is critical for it allows the ruler as separate personage to link with all of them as their king, while the caste division keep them divided from each other; the arrangements in varying ways reinforce the position of the winner-king. Of course, that is only till such time as he or his successor is defeated. However, while a regime is maintained and the ruler is in power, not only do these mechanisms but also others, such as the particular kind of administration implemented, also contribute to his power. Once entrenched in the position of god-king the odds are on his side. The danger for him is conquest by another regime, or his overthrow, but whatever happens the pivot in such processes is one man. The expansion of a state ultimately means that one man ousts another man, as the Shah vanquished the Malla; or one man's sovereignty (Shah) absorbs other polities, as with certain tribals. This approach to the Hindu kingdom varies from that of Gough's (1979) who relies on a Marxist framework, specifically the "Asiatic mode of production", for analysing one kind of South Indian Hindu kingdom whose features in many respects correspond to those found in the Nepalese context. Gough's article, therefore raises the question of the validity of an approach like the one I offer, which would present the structuring of power in terms of political relations from subjects to one person, the king as central; and the kind of entity we are dealing with, as a special form of conquest state.
CHAPTER 24

THE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES IN APPLYING A MARXIST FRAMEWORK TO TRADITIONAL HINDU SOCIETY

1. The inapplicability of the Asiatic Mode of Production:

Gough argues that the "Thanjavur system, centred on the delta of the Kaveri, was a complex variant of what Marx called the Asiatic Mode of Production" (1979:268), though some features of the material do not fit the mode (ibid:287). Before saying anything further about Gough's exposition, let us just consider the two important features of the relations around land, for the Asiatic mode. There are two positions in the economic structure, the relations of production. Firstly, there is the state, the "higher unity" personified in the king, who thereby not only stands as the "sole proprietor of the land" but also obtains the surplus product (Marx, 1965:69-71). The state also appoints officials as its representatives (Gough, 1979: 270, 271, 286; and see Godelier, 1978 (a): 224; Marx, 1965:70). Secondly, there are the producers of surplus who are the joint "hereditary possessors", what Gough calls in brief, "a landowning peasantry" (ibid:287). Labour may take the form of a family independently working its plot, or involve large scale common organisation for irrigation (Marx, 1965:70). Godelier (1978(a):240) renders a summary of the situation as one of a society characterised by the contradiction of a "final form of classless society (village communities) and an initial form of class society (a minority exercising State power, a higher community)". Since Gough refers to a "state-class" which obtains the surplus she appears to be following Godelier's rendition of this mode, at least from this particular angle. It is around the two positions in the relations to production, namely the state (and its agents) who control the land and take tribute; and the producers of this surplus who are communally attached to the land as "hereditary possessors" that the scheme takes its particular shape. We also notice that membership in the community is important for the individual in that it provides him with his

1. Regarding the situation, Marx says,

...For instance, as is the case in most Asiatic fundamental forms, it is quite compatible with the fact that the all-embracing unity which stands above all these small common bodies may appear as the higher or sole proprietor, the real communities only as hereditary possessors. Since the unity is the real owner, and the real precondition or common ownership, it is perfectly possible for it to appear as something separate and superior to the numerous real, particular communities. The individual is then in fact propertyless, or property-i.e. the relationship of the individual to the natural conditions of labour and reproduction, the inorganic nature which he finds and makes his own, the objective body of his subjectivity - appears to be mediated by means of a grant (Ablaßsen) from the total unity to the individual through the intermediary of the particular community (1965:69).
existential locus and the means for "producing and reproducing" himself as co-member of the community. According to this theory the community is the diacritical social unit, while the state is the "higher unity" poised above these others and emerging from them (see Marx, 1965:69-71).

Before turning to what Gough presents as correlations with the terms of the "Asiatic mode", let us consider what she lists as the discrepancies (1979:270). Firstly, the "despot", she says, was not particularly despotic, in that he "shared" his power. Secondly, a "state-class" resided in the village and therefore the distinctive feature of a village community of cultivators and artisans does not apply. Thirdly, there was also a "large class of communally owned slaves". Fourthly, cities were not mere "excrencences" on an undifferentiated countryside but important centres in which an elaborate division of labour flourished. Trade was also developed, especially in the ports, where "capitalists" of sorts operated. Now regarding the first point, it is difficult to understand why Gough depicts the despot as "not very despotic" and therefore this feature would not correlate with that of Marx's scheme: if the ruler takes tribute, which means that the cultivators are worse off by half, and thereby the ruler can determine the general conditions of their existence, then to suggest that he is "not despotic" seems strange. Further, since it is the ruler who imposes his version of the laws on the population, so that their self-determination is out of the question, then, by the nature of the situation, he cannot but be despotic, irrespective of whether within those parameters he is benign or tyrannical. Her reason that the king "shares power" simply means delegation, which is an imperative for all despots. Another aspect of the system also hints at the ruler's power since Gough refers to a state-class who "possessed" land by virtue of their role as administrators (ibid:270, 287). This would mean that the land grants depended on their relationship with the ruler. Therefore if the system of allocation of grants described by Dirks for another Hindu kingdom\(^1\) applies for Thanjavur also, and it appears to, then the grants (except for one type) are contingent on the ruler's discretion, and consequently discarding the idea

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1. Dirk's article (1979) is concerned with the traditional Hindu kingdom. He says that "the ultimate political base of any little kingdom in the pre-British period was its military capacity" (ibid:200). The bulk of Dirk's exposition is devoted to a most impressive analysis of the various types of grants as correlating with different kinds of services to the state. In that the various land assignments were associated with different services to the king from the assignee (ibid:180), Dirk's material is in accord with that outlined in this thesis for the Nepalese kingdom. The king, according to Dirks (ibid:184), "was the source of all alienation" (that is, of land). Land grants, as in Nepal, could be withdrawn (ibid:178) except for those which were dedicated to religious purposes (ibid:197). From the material Gough provides, a comparable set of arrangements seems to hold.
of despot might be unwise. In fact, in my view, "despotism" is probably the only significant factor of the empirical situation which tallies with that of the model. Gough's rendition however details other features as corresponding with the terms of the "Asiatic mode".

Thus, I have argued that the "Asiatic mode" was formerly dominant in Thanjavur because of the joint possession of land, cattle and slaves by village communes of peasants and gentry based on kinship and because of the direct appropriation of surplus by a bureaucratic state-class in the form of both kind and labour (1979:286).

While it might seem that the two significant factors of the mode apply, specifically the community of cultivators who are attached to their lands and provide the surplus; and the state-class who appropriate the surplus, this is not the case. Only the latter pertains, for the community who hold "joint possession of land" etc. are not cultivators but members of the state-class. Gough herself recognises this in her concluding remarks,

These designations, however, are tentative, they invoke some problems. Thanjavur, for example, had a non-cultivating gentry which was part of the state-class residing in most villages and jointly owning the land, rather than a landowning peasantry (ibid:287).

What then is left of the model? The relevance of community has to be discarded, I think, and the centrality of the state brought to the fore, since joint possession of land derives from a subject's connexion with the state (as Gough herself describes them, they are members of the "state-class"), and not from membership of the community. Yet it is this aspect that Gough would highlight and argues that it is the "communal character of the system" that warrants the application of the framework (ibid:287). But if there is a state-class residing at the village level, then this piece of information makes one suspect that the idea of village community, in a strict sense, would have to be discountenanced.

What Gough's material shows for this important area of positions in the relations of production are the connexions between subjects and the state. If the peasant members of a village were nothing more than cultivators and
did not have "hereditary possession" of the land at all, then their position could not depend on membership of the community\(^1\), but instead presumably only rights to a share of the produce, itself dependant on their production for the state, as in Nepal. There, as we have seen, a cultivator's position was contingent to his generating a yield, and failure brought fines, eviction and sometimes slavery. If members of the category who do, in fact possess the land, do so by virtue of their relationship with the state (the ones designated by Gough as members of the "state-class") what is left of import are only those relations which form around the link between citizen and the state, specifically the local managers, higher officials, the tenant cultivators, and village servants as they each connect with the state, the "despot". Slavery also links to the state, in that the state ratified this form of control over any one of its citizens, or captives. The state's relation with, and control over, all of them appear in the allocation of produce which was state patrolled (ibid:296), and presumably the proportions would have been state determined. So, it would seem that the material discloses facets of the operation of "despotism", the varying relations between subjects and the ruler. Yet Gough suggests that the system is distinguished by its communal character. What does she have in mind and is this an acceptable rendition of the data?

Gough's application of the idea, community, to the material creates misgivings in that it is imposed indiscriminately to a grouping of either a simpler or more complex kind of situation and seems to be an attempt to maintain the applicability of the model. Let me put it another way: if, as Gough herself says, there is the presence of a state-class at the village level, then surely this would necessitate a modification of the idea of "village community", a possibility which might pertain had the data been otherwise. Secondly, given our knowledge of the caste order anyhow, then the idea of a "village community" would have to be approached cautiously.

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1. Furthermore, where "joint" possession is said to apply, as with the managerial groups, the upper castes, a difficulty arises. If my misgivings hold, then this would further challenge the validity of the appropriateness of the model. Gough states that the land was controlled by the dominant micro-caste, a "commune" (ibid:269-71). But she also says that within, at each generation the lineage or the stem family "divided" according to "Mitakshara law" (ibid:271). Yet she also insists that the unit involved had no fixity of land, nor even a house, which is curious in that it makes the partition, that this law implies, a non-event. If the law operated as it generally does, it would entail a partition of a man's assets with the shares divided equally for all sons. But if that were the case, then the idea of "joint ownership" would not apply, but instead that of "individual (male) ownership". Berreman (1978b:42) also refers to the fractioning effect of inheritance, for the area he studied.
Difficulties in handling the concept "community" can therefore be discerned both from the angle of castes and the angle of power (and as we know these are interrelated). Gough applies the terms "community", "commune" or "commonality" to any of these groupings of various orders like a caste, a micro-caste, and the village. A community, as I understand the notion, is a social formation which contains like members, and from membership within, certain relations follow. In which case it might appear to apply to micro-castes. But to adopt that approach would ignore the characteristic of these entities, which are not simply differentiated social units, communities, but also ranked vis-à-vis each other, a critical feature which is not catered to by the idea, "community". The "village" cannot rigorously be viewed as signifying a "community" or "commune" since it is not only differentiated but also contains asymmetrical relations, whether considered in terms of power or of the caste ordering of peoples. If as Gough herself remarks there are the state's representatives at the village, then it is not so much a "community" a "commune" or anything of that ilk, but rather a political administrative unit containing a ranked demographic order. Moreover, following from the demographic distinctions, rules and exclusions were, in all probability, imposed accordingly by the "local managers", and a Hindu order effected; and when what would be entailed is borne in mind, then the inappropriateness of the notion "village community" is unavoidable. Finally, when it is recalled that the so-called "village communes", which are said to "hold joint possession of land, cattle and slaves" (ibid:286) comprise only some village members, specifically the managers, and not the entire village, then any substantive base for the idea of the "village community" is absent. Now it might be said that I have overlooked the possibility that what is meant is simply that organization is based on community structures, that is, according to caste: groupings, an approach which seems to be implicit in certain parts of her discussion. For example, since the high castes comprise the managers and are the appropriators of surplus, therefore they would correspond with state-class, one part of the local village structure, and so forth with the

1. Residential arrangements, for example.

2. Gough undoubtedly is aware of these aspects. No criticism is levelled at this scholar's knowledge, for it is impressively extensive, but a query is raised regarding the validity of the terms of the Marxist framework for the context of a Hindu kingdom which, as we have noted, Gough herself only puts forward tentatively.
others. This kind of correlation does not hold, since we find that, for example, not all members of the micro-caste to which the managers belong, are managers but some are peasant cultivators. But if class (and its corresponding caste) is to be defined in terms of position in the relations of production and only some members of a caste belong to the state-class, then this high caste and state-class are not co-extensive. Yet membership of such an important caste would have social significance, and would require analytic illumination which is not provided by the model Gough employs.

The difficulties appear from two angles, the recalcitrance of the material to the terms of the model and the model's ineffectiveness, at least in this utilization, in facilitating our understanding of two striking problems found in this kind of society. If the material indicates that the castes are not simply a congeries of like units (communities) differentiated from each other according to membership, but constitute a ranked order which is defined, imposed and applied by the state; and if castes do not exactly correlate with the economic categories ("state-class" etc.); and if the village entity is less a community and more an administrative unit where those in charge are drawn from a special segment of the caste population (the twice-born), then the model's applicability to the material at the level of the village is questionable. Moreover the analysis does not readily make intelligible the two characteristic and problematic features of Hindu society. We keep returning to the same point, no analysis can be satisfactory unless it incorporates some means for illuminating the role that ontological differences assume in the pattern of relations as applying to caste ranks; and the nature of the man who is ruler. Caste relations are not made intelligible by a class framework and are injected extraneously by Gough. We are dealing with that kind of society where people constitute the components of the system in the sense that these comprise the factors for the play of the ruler's sovereignty. If the nature of the system is one where control over people is remarkable, this necessitates a political framework.

1. Gough accounts for this by saying that the shares, "originally allotted equally", had become unequal (ibid:269). Presumably it was the state which allocated these. It is likely that inequality arose from the play of inheritance and reproduction.

2. If the state-class comprises say, Brahmans, but not all Brahmans belong to the state-class, then membership of this caste is not an index of membership of the class. Hence the implication of a correlation between a particular caste and a particular class is found wanting.
If the general picture of the Hindu kingdom according to Gough is one where,

the surplus obtained from the land in Thanjavur was large; from one third to half the gross produce was claimed by the state-class as its "upper share". The local managers retained only about a quarter of the produce after the state-supervised grain payments had been made at each harvest to the village servants, to any cultivating tenants, and to the slaves. The state paid its officers, mainly through prebendal estates or inams ... (and there was a) professional army quartered in barracks at strategic points throughout the kingdom...During the Chola period (9th to 13th centuries) the government was predominantly a theocracy with a divine kingship and a Brahmin bureaucracy...With the Vijayanagar and the later Mahratta conquests more posts were allotted to military governors (Gough, 1979:269).

then, what we know we have, is a special kind of conquest state, the Hindu kingdom, and a divine king as absolute ruler, and a highly elaborated politico-legal order, as in Nepal. Then we might ask can this reality be reflected in the idea of a congeries of self-sufficient village communities, with a "higher unity" poised over the rest, as the Asiatic mode details. From the material that Gough describes, there are two major points that her account does not cater to. Firstly, a class framework, with the positions in the relations of production (the state-class and the producers of surplus), does not isolate the common oppression of all subjects under an absolute ruler. Rather the notion of state-class obscures this. Secondly, that this kind of society was a conquest state figures prominently in the description, yet there is nothing in the terms of the Asiatic mode of production as Gough outlines it, which would cater to this ethnographic detail. Destructive force which plays so vital a role in orienting the nature of social arrangements of this kind of society is a feature which cannot be underplayed.

2. The Question of Epistemological Assumptions:

Marxists posit that the starting point for analysis is subsistence and that the mode of production is to be given primacy in any theorising about man's history. It is, as is known, a materialist conception of human history. Following from this, violent work is relegated to a position secondary to that involved in production. The fundamental premise of the Marxist philosophic anthropology is clearly stated by Marx and Engels. They contend,
we must begin, by stating the first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premise, namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history". But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life. Even when the sensuous world is reduced to a minimum, to a stick as with Saint Bruno, it presupposes the action of producing the stick (Marx and Engels, 1968:39).1

The claim that mere survival through the production of the means of subsistence constitutes the basis for all theorizing about man's history is contentious for, although survival presupposes the necessity for food, etc., yet in order to survive and need food, people also need not to be put to a premature death. Therefore, destructive force is just as relevant. It is something Hindu thought does not ignore. While the universality of the proposal regarding subsistence cannot be denied, nevertheless, the fact that this universal need is itself dependent on a person's being allowed to remain alive would mean that the "universal" is conditioned by the factor of death. In our context, destructive force perpetrated by one set of humans against others, is another kind of social relation which is critical. Furthermore, even allowing that the imputed primacy of the importance of production holds for certain kinds of situations, there is no methodological necessity that it be taken as such for all situations.2

The advantage with the material base is that it provides a motif for the analysis of social relations over time as these are seen to develop according to the changes in the modes of production and the contradictions and resolutions they engender, thus bringing all historic situations within the same perspective; and to indicate how that progression assumed movements, starting with a classless set of relations and culminating in the class relations of the industrial capitalist mode and to its dissolution. But that is speculation taken by some as universal truth. As far as the first "moments" of history are concerned, Marx selects according to the principle of what is necessary as a precondition, what has to be present, (1968:39-49), but

1. Regarding the other "four moments", four aspects of the primary "historical relationship", see Marx and Engles (1968:40-3).

2. It is highly speculative that human history can be charted according to one theme. See Russell (1961:748-55) for a critique of Marx from the philosopher's perspective.
tends to ignore what has to be avoided for continuity. Destructive power is also impressive and, in one way at least, it has the edge on production given that with the latter man simply acts on nature, whereas in a destructive act like killing, he preempts nature. In fact, man acts as nature, forestalling its sequence of development. Force, to be sure, does figure in Marx's work, nonetheless, its import is placed secondary to that of production and is a posture which appears to be followed by Marxist anthropologists (like Godelier), as we shall see.

Violence in Marx's account is on the whole presented primarily as it relates to property. The treatment of warfare for example seems inapposite, handled so as to accommodate to his thesis. In that Marx describes war as a "task for the acquisition and preservation of land" (1965:89), he depicts it as nothing more than an instrument employed for economic ends. Warfare, whatever the long-term goals, is first of all that kind of relationship that has victory for self, and vanquishment for others, as its immediate goal. Since it takes this particular format, and given that the state, which is the ruler in our context, embarks on war, it illustrates the ruler's power over the citizens to use their life-energy for him, an obvious point but one worth repeating. The long range goals can vary from a desire to acquire more land, as Marx says, but also revenge, so-called preservation of an ideal, and sovereignty over more people but whatever else, in the Hindu situation, it will end up with the conqueror's glorification, his aggrandisement, for winner-king takes all, and by that becomes the unique god-king and absolute. With the various play of factors, it would be foolhardy to deny that victory in war does not acquire "land", but if in turn, this is used as an instrument for the retention of a ruler's power and his continuing absolutism, as we have attempted to indicate, then that "task" is itself a means for the ruler's political ends. The preoccupation to view relations and actions narrowly as these bear on property, and relations around this, can be discerned in other comments by Marx on war and plunder. In this, violence is treated as a secondary factor, in as much as conquest is described by Marx in the following way:
In the trivial form, however, in which these questions have been raised above, they can be dealt with quite briefly. Conquests may lead to either of three results. The conquering nation may impose its own mode of production upon the conquered people (this was done, for example, by the English in Ireland during this century, and to some extend in India); or it may refrain from interfering in the old mode of production and to content with tribute (e.g. the Turks and Romans); or interaction may take place between the two, giving rise to a new system as a synthesis (this occurred partly, in the Germanic conquests). In any case it is the mode of production - whether that of the conquering nation or of the conquered or the new system brought about by a merging of the two - that determines the new mode of distribution employed. Although the latter appears to be a precondition of the new period of production, it is in its turn a result of production, a result not simply occasioned by the historical evolution of production in general, but by a specific historical form of production (1970:202-3).

Where the focus is on the consequences for the mode of production and distribution, another is to sight the outcome of conquest, noticing that it is the winning party which determines the ensuing social arrangements. With such an eventuality, radical changes in the nature of existence can occur and which are as significant as the material relations, for in this kind of polity the ruler controls much more than people’s labour. I am not sure that it necessarily is always the case that the mode of production\(^1\) determines the new mode of distribution, as Marx maintains, for this might be guided by factors of political expediency\(^2\). Furthermore, it cannot but be recognized that for the victors, destruction is an effective kind of force and plays more than a secondary role in orienting the nature of social relations. Regarding plunder Marx takes a comparable line of argument as with war:

> It is a long-established view that over certain epochs people lived by plunder. But in order to be able to plunder, there must be something to be plundered, and this implies production. Moreover, the manner of plunder depends itself on the manner of production, e.g. a stock-jobbing nation cannot be robbed in the same way as a nation of cowherds (ibid: 203).

1. That is the combination of the particular productive force of a society and the relations of production.

2. As the discussion on land arrangements attempted to indicate, political expediency oriented the state's handling of the Limbus, who were treated quite differently from other tribals. Additionally when the state forfeited its surplus, it was to those persons who administered the locality for the regime.
Plunder is similarly presented in terms of the objects stolen and which had to be produced, a point which is not at issue. What is at issue is that the producers lost it and, for the brigands, the taking is quick, appropriating possibly in hours what it took others months or years to produce. The effectiveness of might as a means can hardly be ignored. And destructive force as we have seen in so many contexts is not ignored by the kind of society under our review. The members of a Hindu kingdom indicate their concern through ritual work which aims to grasp at the underlying cosmic power of this kind of capability, as well as the other two guna powers. Like each of the others, the destructive force generates its own particular results, which the other forces do not and all three figure in their conceptions.

3. Godelier's rendition of the Asiatic Mode of Production:

It might be said that Marxist Anthropology has gone a long way since Marx, and therefore it is imperative that the theoretical developments be considered, if there is to be any solid indication as to the irrelevance of a Marxist framework for the Hindu material, and though Gough's article has been discussed, the approach is primarily descriptive, sizing up the features of the Hindu kingdom against the terms of the Asiatic mode. With regard to the "Asiatic mode of production", Godelier says that he himself has taken Marx further. In his rendition of this kind of social formation, he modifies Marx's idea of "despot", (1978 (a):214) and in so doing, somewhat ironically seems to slip back into a structural-functional frame for investigation. He also suggests reasons for the development to this particular formation, from a kind of society where relations were communal and classless to this, the Asiatic form, where class relations according to Godelier appear embryonically. Nevertheless, he retains certain critical features (ibid:216-225, 240). Specifically, individuals are "dependent"on the "higher unity", the "despot", as "sole owner" of the land, who therefore controls the means of production and can exploit the workers through appropriating surplus; in addition there is an emergent "state-class" who may do the same, as the "despot's" representatives. A classless organisation, the particular communities, appears at the
local level. The gist of Godelier's outline of this particular mode is summed up in the ideas of "dependence", and "exploitation" in as much as individuals are "dependent" on the despot who personifies the higher unity, the state, and appropriates the surplus thus exploiting them and, therefore, this constitutes the first change in the movement from a classless to a class (exploitative) society (ibid:221). The idea of "dependence" is one of the most difficult aspects about Godelier's approach, and will be assessed later. First to consider his rendition of the "despot", necessary since it tones down the significance of a feature that I have taken as central.

Marx's concept, "despot", is dismissed by Godelier, who perceives it as "ideological", based on "eighteenth century" preoccupations that ought to be discarded, especially in view of the work performed by Radcliffe-Brown on the function of African kings. Godelier seems to be implying that autocracy is impossible. He defuses the idea of despotism perhaps because despotism presents an ambience of personal political power which, if delineated as crucial, might undermine what according to general Marxist theory, "in the last analysis", is the "determinant role of economic relations". Whatever his reasons, his resurrecting the observations made by Radcliffe-Brown, that the king had responsibilities, functions to fulfil, might itself be highly "ideological" since it presumes that the functions ought to be performed. With this point of view, the king would probably concur. But given that the important function for a king is administering the laws and inflicting punishment, and given that with Hindu states, where the Asiatic mode is said to apply, a ruler could determine the ethnic

1. Exactly what is involved is left vague by Godelier, sometimes the idea that social organisation is based on kinship is used as a referent for the concept "community" (ibid:213); sometimes he refers to "community structures" (ibid:240); otherwise there is the evocative but highly obscure idea of "solidarities of communal life" (ibid:247). Since the difficulty that the Hindu material brings to the concept "village community" has been treated in the discussion of Gough's account, no more will be said here.

2. Godelier elaborates, Among these dead elements, let us mention: a) The concept of 'despotism' which is not scientific but ideological. It carries with it the philosophical and political conflicts of the eighteenth century, and generally expresses in a distorted and partial way the fact that in its primitive forms, the State is incarnated in the person of the sovereign and seems to depend on his arbitrary will. As Radcliffe-Brown emphasised regarding the traditional African sovereign, the king is head of the executive, legislator, supreme judge, master of ritual and administrator of the chief resources of the kingdom. This 'fusion' of functions and power in the figure of a single man, has mainly appeared to the Westerner to be the mark of a 'despotic' power knowing no law other than the arbitrary will of the sovereign (1978 (a) : 214).

stock's membership of caste categories and from which other legal
distinctions followed, it is likely that the responsibilities of the king
were not viewed by all the people, at least not during the early stages of
a newly expanded state, in the way that Godelier purports. But if conquest
and the military power to enforce such an order impinge too heavily, then
the import of the political factor cannot be kept down at all, and hardly
secures the "materialist basis" of this kind of social formation. The
facts are that the ruler could rule by "whim", present in the institution
of royal favouring, and is not as Godelier contends, a biased version
arising out of eighteenth century prejudices. The significant relation in
this kind of society is the ruler's control over people.

Surely, if the situation of the Hindu kingdom, where the Asiatic mode
is said to apply, is one where the ruler holds absolute power, controls the
army and imposes a legal system which is discriminatory, then at least from
these few points, the Marxist scheme which isolates the relation of the
people's "dependence" on the ruler, is somewhat inappropriate for
understanding this particular system. Where on the one hand, that scheme
would bring into relief the idea of dependence and exploitation, on the
other, the striking features are political control and oppression, and
flowing from that, exploitation of various kinds. Is it a matter best
approached in terms of the people's dependence on the ruler, as Godelier
depicts, or of the ruler's control over them? How can the
multitude depend on one? Yet the model channels an interpretation of this
order since it takes it as axiomatic that the evolutionary movement goes
from a situation of community (ibid:212) where relations are characterised
by joint ownership or joint possession of land, co-operation and inter-
dependence, changing to one of a kind where there is the subjects'
"dependence" on the ruler and his exploitation of them. While Godelier
would stress "dependency" and "exploitation" as the key features of this
kind of social formation, the material from a Hindu kingdom indicates a
situation of political control and oppression by the absolute ruler.
Comparable difficulties are generated by Godelier's account of the processes
involved in the transition to the "Asiatic mode".

The problem of Godelier's rendition of the transition can be approached
from two angles. Firstly, a consideration of Godelier's reconstruction of
the transition in general terms; and secondly, a scrutiny of what would be
involved when the material from a Hindu kingdom is held against the
features of his framework.
Godelier's account of the transition unfolds:

With the concept of the Asiatic mode of production, Marx has shown us societies within which particular village communities are subject to the power of a minority of individuals who represent a higher community, the expression of the real or imaginary unity of the particular communities. This power at first takes root in functions of common interest (religious, political, economic) and, without ceasing to be a functional power, gradually transforms itself into an exploitative one. The special advantages accruing to this minority, nominally as a result of services rendered to the communities, become obligations with no counterpart, i.e., exploitation. The land of these communities is often expropriated to become the ultimate property of the king, who personifies the higher community. We therefore have exploitation of man by man, and the appearance of an exploiting class without the existence of private ownership of land (ibid:240)1.

While a quick reading may give the appearance that it follows a smooth path from initial co-operation between all concerned to that of exploitation, but on close inspection of the processes detailed, one may also discern that political action and struggle could very well be involved. It would make intelligible what is left opaque by Godelier's reconstruction of events. The process that "gradually transforms" power "rooted in functions of common interest" is obviously obscure, yet constitutes the heart of the problem. Furthermore, if any sense at all is to be made of the acts of "expropriation", then force must figure somewhere along the line, for how else to dispossess people of their land?2 Then there is the controversial statement of a "power", which he says, "takes root in functions of common interest" since the positing of "common interest" in a context of

1. The underlining is mine.

2. In a later paper (1978 (c)) Godelier seems to be following the same general line of reasoning though the details are somewhat different. Godelier conjectures on the possibility that some persons held a "monopoly of the means of (to us imaginary) reproduction of the universe and of life" which was regarded by others (the dominated) to provide them with benefits (1978 (c): 767). Yet Godelier's suggestions, which seek to illuminate the complex processes, appear to entail just as many problems. Since "monopolizing the means" presumes that the holders had some kind of power, capacity or right to exclude others from access to the same range of technological knowledge and capabilities, one must ask how this could come about. If they were able to acquire the monopolistic control of the means which was not known to others in the community, who were they? Where or how did they obtain this know-how which was not available to the rest of the community?
asymmetrical relations alert us to the likelihood that the purported "common interest" said to be fulfilled by those in power instead might serve someone's (or some group's) particular interest. As noted earlier, there are similar misgivings about Godelier's treatment of the king uncritically delineated as fulfilling his "power" and functions as "head of the executive" etc., and not airing the possibility that lack of consensus but dissent; lack of co-operation but acquiescence; lack of common interest but instead particular interest might be more pertinent to the relations obtaining.

In that Godelier presents the emergence of this despotic mode as evolving from a situation where the powerful provided a service (1978(a):240), or where there was some kind of exchange (1978(c):767) since, according to Godelier following Marx, the "exercise of a social function was everywhere the basis of political supremacy" (1978(a):212), the account provokes difficulties. It provokes difficulties because the analytic posture is somewhat like that of an ideologue for it does not entertain the possibility that in some circumstances the social function might have been initially a self-appointed function, an imposition, where many were concerned. There is the possibility, moreover, that in such cases, the proposition is back-to-front, that the "exercise of social functions" is in fact sometimes the outcome of "political supremacy" (cf success in the use of destructive force). It is not an analytic imperative that the situation be viewed according to the formula offered by Godelier. To be sure the official declarations posit the necessity for the presence of a god-king to administer the sacred laws, protect the people and establish a Hindu order (the necessity for the "social function")and that this function is fulfilled, but then this, surely, is the bone of contention for it screens off the possibility that some might simply be acquiescing in the operation of this kind of system. It might well have been the case that the need for the exercise of the social function was the ideological account and justification for political supremacy of those who held sway (which itself was propelled by the destructive winning). If the performance of the social function had been an imposition and the declaration of its necessity merely the doctrine of those who imposed its operation on others, then to seek an origin which is in accord with "doctrine", as Godelier seeks to do, then in these instances, it would be to treat doctrine, the "justification",
the ideology, as if it had a concrete locus in history. A lot would depend on the sequence of events.

When it is a matter of political incorporation of a number of polities under one man's sovereignty but which is ideologically accounted for, in terms of the autocrat's "personifying the totality", where the facts of the totality are better rendered otherwise, then to seek the background to what is ideology is, ironically, to try to "prove" that the ideology accords with actuality, rather than to "demystify" it. The official proclamations do nevertheless provide some markers pertinent for our purpose. If the ideology in this kind of social formation is couched in political terms (the "higher unity") then it is likely to relate meaningfully to a political context also, connecting the king and the subjects, where something of import is refurbished in official terms. This brings us to a recent theoretical development: the difficulty that the ethnographic data engenders, for in many pre-capitalist formations certain ideas and practices, (like religion and specifically caste in Hindu societies, and kinship in others) are said to "dominate" and so the particular social formation does not revolve around relations of production. In addition the ethnographic material queries the applicability of a Marxist framework to such societies. From the Marxist viewpoint, such practices and ideas belong to superstructure, and "in the final analysis", will relate to the economic base. Godelier takes up the issue in a recent article.

4. Some Theoretical Issues

(a) The Problem of "Domination" for Marxist Theory:

Broadly speaking, Godelier's argument (1978(c), 1979) is, amongst other things, an attempt to vindicate the applicability of the Marxist theory to pre-capitalist societies, including the Hindu kingdom. Godelier takes up the counter argument to the Marxist thesis, that in the final analysis, relations around production are determinant, recognising that other forms of relations appear to be "dominant" in pre-capitalist formations. Specifically, he says that a particular society has a "general form", and that "every event or problem is viewed as a direct aspect and a meaningful consequence of relations between people" in the terms of the form in question. In societies of pre-colonial India, "religion was the general framework
between individuals and groups" (1979:110). He continues saying that these ethnographic facts do not refute the Marxist position, for the "general form" (kinship in some kinds of societies, religion in Hindu society) is determined by the relations of production. As he says, the task is first to demonstrate that the general form of a society is determined by the very nature of the social relations of production, of the social relations through which members of a society appropriate nature, understand it, and transform it into their own material conditions of life (1979:110).

While that "provides a methodology for analyzing data", "it does not explain why the social relations of production are kinship relations in some societies and religion in others" (ibid:110), which is, according to Godelier, the fundamental problem for Marxists (ibid:110). This second issue, why relations of "domination" (as with the hierarchy of castes) have the particular form they do have, is again resolved in materialist terms, that it is the mode of production (i.e. the relation between productive force and relations of production) which is, in the last analysis, the determinant of the form of the social relations obtaining in the society concerned (ibid:110). Thus the Marxist posture is maintained. For our purposes the difficulty lies with the nature of the Nepalese material.

We do not find that caste relations (what are labelled as the "dominant relations") function "directly and internally as a relation of production" (1978(c):765), for there is no easy correspondence between the exploiting and exploited classes and the various castes. Yet the upper castes do have a significant place in the social arrangements, and which is of political significance, despite their varying positions in the relations of production. Where Godelier advocates that the first task is to demonstrate that the general form is determined by the infrastructure, we find that it cannot be so demonstrated. If his methodological instructions were adhered to it would be to insist that the material must be amenable to this kind of analysis, but which would be tantamount to dubious methodology - that the theory is simply to be demonstrable but is not refutable.

1. Here I draw on his reply to the comments on his article because his case is summarized cogently there.
2. See also 1978(c):765.
3. As to be expected the same difficulty appears with Gough's analysis as indicated earlier.
Godelier's presentation of the argument is strangely couched for it is not simply a matter of indicating how these so-called "dominant relations" operate as relations of production but involves a more general problem, whether or not the Marxist theory itself is appropriate for a critical investigation of the pattern of relations as they obtain in the kinds of societies concerned, and in our case the Hindu kingdom and, if not, then the so-called "dominant" relations will have to be approached and categorized differently. In other words, if we do not find that the "general form of a society", as in the instance of caste relations, do not exactly function as relations of production, then it cannot provide the "methodological way to analyze" our data. To avoid any charge that I have misconstrued Godelier's argument, let me cite directly from his article. It will also provide the opportunity to indicate Godelier's curious approach.

The problem is stated by Godelier:

How can Marxists reconcile the hypothesis that it is the infrastructure which is determinant in the last analysis with the fact that in certain historical societies one finds a superstructure occupying a dominant position? (1978(c):765).

He depicts the antithesis to the Marxist approach:

One not infrequently comes across anthropologists and historians claiming that the facts falling within their speciality refute Marxism...Dumont (1966) sees this refutation as furnished by the blatant domination of religion in India and by the fact that the caste system takes the form of an ideological opposition between pure and impure (ibid:765).

While Godelier's own position states that

For a social activity - and with it its corresponding and organizing ideas and institutions - to play a dominant role in the functioning and evolution of society, and hence in the thought and action of the groups and individuals composing it, it is not enough for this activity to fulfil several functions; it must necessarily, in addition to its own ostensible purpose and its explicit functions, function directly and internally as a relation of production (ibid:765).

and,

that the dominant social relations within a society are those which (regardless of which they are) function as relations of production (ibid:766).
then, as Godelier says,

If we managed to verify that social relations dominate when they function as relations of production, then we should have worked our way back to Marx's hypothesis regarding the determinant role, in the last analysis, of infrastructure (ibid:765).

There are two disturbing proposals here. Firstly, the way Godelier poses the problem at the outset cannot but take one back to a Marxist categorization generated by the framework, for the problem is couched in that analytic mould phrasing "superstructural" relations (political, religious, legal) simply as "dominant" rather than allow for the possibility that they might be more significant than the model prescribes, and that the "determinant role" may be found in other forms of power. To a large extent, that possibility is not adequately confronted. In my view the controversy hinges on the hypothesis that other kinds of relations of power are simply to be relegated to mere "superstructure", are only secondary forces, merely "dominant", or whether, as with the Hindu kingdom, they have primacy and are critical. By beginning with the notion "dominant" Godelier thereby orients the course of the argument inasmuch as the relations of domination (or superstructure), according to Marxist stipulations, are in the final analysis determined by the mode of production. The channelling of the

1. As the summarized statement in his reply to the comments also indicated.
2. That is, are we to accept Marx's reaction to Hegel's stress on the relevance of the state and its particular powers? Are we to accept the unswerving idea of the primacy of relations of production and interpret destructive power as comparatively unimportant, a secondary kind of relation? (See Russell, 1961:753).
3. The relevant and oft-quoted passage reads,

The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, became the guiding principle of my studies can be summarised as follows. In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general processes of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or - this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms - with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto (Marx, 1970:20-21).
analysis is encapsulated in the heading of this section, "ECONOMIC DETERMINATION AND SUPERSTRUCTURAL DOMINATION" (see 1978(c):765). Thus the mould is set. The second difficulty is found in the statements in the third and fourth paragraph. By insisting that a dominant relation is only of the kind which functions as "infrastructure", Godelier again directs the course of the analysis inasmuch as he posits that only those relations which are around production are to be ceded any vital significance, thus retaining the materialist base for analysis. If caste relations do not function as relations of production, then how are we to handle these crucial relations?¹ Are we not prompted to regard the model as irrelevant since it cannot illuminate this significant social complex, the caste arrangement of the population and the nature of relations between them? In which case the applicability of Marxist conceptions might be queried, even though Godelier would insist that it is "impossible to attempt to refute Marxism by pointing to the dominance of superstructure" (ibid:765). I would not even suggest that "superstructure" is "dominant", but I would say that the Marxist allocation of certain relations to the superstructural category is simply to follow their line of conceptualizing the issues and handling the categories.² I would add, relations around land, and the arrangements of the caste order are oriented by political expediency regarding the conquering king's maintenance of autocratic power, and that the political factor is hardly secondary in the kind of society we are concerned with. Then how do task specializations fit into a situation where political power over the subjects constitutes the pivotal relation?

The interesting aspect about the positions in the relations of production, as we have had occasion to remark upon, again and again, is that they do not fit into a neat pattern and that some high caste people

¹. Even if Godelier's elaboration, that reference must be made to a "hierarchy of functions" (ibid:765), were followed, this would not change anything. If the categories regarding positions in the relations of production are formulated in terms of the state and the state-class corresponding to the king and his delegates, and the material shows that some of the twice-born constitute the "exploiting class", this would then leave the rest of the twice-born, who were not exploiters but producers of surplus, out on an analytic limb. Alternatively they could be allocated to the category, the "dominated", but in which case we are back with the initial difficulty, the lack of correspondence between classes and castes.

². When Dirks, echoing Cohn, suggests that for inquiry into the Hindu polity, we start with a "clean slate" (1979:172), the point is well taken.
are toilers in the fields, just like members of other castes, yet they do play a part in the relations of power through, e.g., actualizing the Hindu order. Earlier, from the cultural perspective, it was suggested that specialization is oriented around the nature of the tasks where the rationale for the particular person's appropriateness for a task is based on the idea of ontological commensurateness between the specific task and the nature of the person concerned. The most striking are the onerous tasks of the tamaś kind: the sweepers, the executioners of those criminals who have sinned, etc. In accounting for the situation, other castes evoke the idea that "it is alright for them" since their state is not affected by the performance of such tasks. The same principle of commensurateness would apply to the specializations performed by other castes in a traditional set-up. However, we also discern that the divisions between people are reinforced. Further it would seem that, the complex range of specializations takes shape in the organisation of the capital where there is a concentration of peoples and the space is arranged as the place for the king's residence, survival and protection and where the varying kinds of exertions of the citizens contribute to this end. To view specializations from this angle has some credibility since only at the capital are these developed to their fullest extent. Therefore if the fullest extent of the specializations are those found in the capital, it is there where one would understand its operation since what occurs in the village is partial and the partial cannot provide the focus for the investigation of the phenomenon. The weakest part of my argument is that I have not shown conclusively that the specializations do operate as a complex organization which ultimately revolves around the king's survival and retention of power, for this has only been sketched and would require a full investigation. Nevertheless I have attempted to show in abundant detail that the critical relations in this kind of society are political and that that kind of power is based on the effective use of destructive force. If the ethnographic material indicates that the crucial relations are of a political nature, then coercive power is not to be gainsaid.

(b) The Relevance of Consent and Coercion:

Godelier mutes the import of political relations in general and force as its venue in his handling of the issue of consent and the sharing of

1. But there is no exact correspondence between specialization and the correlating caste, since some castes (Brahmins and Chetri, for example) are involved in farming, and not, say, administration like some of their peers.
2. None of this to say that the ranked order of castes is to be understood as categories for job specializations, that castes derive from their functions but rather that caste divisions are utilized for various specializations according to the idea of commensurateness. Nor is it to say, critically speaking, that castes are to be viewed in terms of an economic frame like varying positions in the relations of production, for all castes, whether in the village or in the city, contribute to the effecting of the regime and ultimately to the cementing of the ruler's power.
ideas and ideology, alongside dissent and coercion. Since I have tried to indicate that violence plays a central role in the nature of social relations obtaining in a Hindu kingdom, do Godelier's observations of its role undermine the validity of my interpretation, regardless of what has already been said about Marxist theory in general?

In a dramatic manner, Godelier argues that the "power of domination" consists of two elements, consent and violence, and that the "consent of the dominated to their domination" is "stronger" than "the violence of the dominant" (1978(c):767). Ideas and ideologies not only interpret reality but organise it and thus, as he neatly phrases it, there are two facets, the "thinkable" and "the do-able" (ibid:766). The various orientations towards ideas and ideologies are to be understood as "force" in the "preservation or the transformation of societies" (ibid:767). This force is born not merely of the "content of these ideas, but also of the fact that they are shared". We could say that the gist of one part of his argument is that when ideologies are shared by the "dominant" and the "dominated" they have import as acts of interpretation and organisation of reality (see ibid:766) where, amongst other things, the sharing of the ideological stipulations make it impossible for the dominated to become aware of their situation and so prevent the emergence of "contradictions" between the dominant and dominated sections of society (ibid:768). As far as it goes, the argument cannot be refuted because it is cast that way, for where there is consent on the part of the dominated to their domination, it surely would be a "stronger force" than their acquiescence via coercion. Even so, Godelier's argument generates misgivings, for the important question is how likely is it to be the case of consent by the dominated to their domination. Against Godelier's suggestion, Bloch replies in the comments to Godelier's article (ibid:768), that there is evidence of "fundamental challenges of the very nature of domination by dominated groups in the types of societies Godelier describes". Although Godelier recognises and stresses the relevance of violence and its impelling role upon those who would cavil with the nature of the arrangements, he does say that "some consent" on the part of "the dominated to their domination" is necessary for an "durable society" (ibid:767).

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1. A range of possibilities from a member's acceptance to that of opposition to the system is elaborated by Godelier (ibid:767).
2. Though this point is developed with reference to the pre-capitalist formation as found in Athens, references are used illustratively by Godelier as he himself discloses (1979:110).
3. It is also to be inferred from the fact that Godelier says that the consent of the dominated to their domination is stronger than the violence of the dominant, in that "stronger" seems to refer to its effectiveness in the durability of a society.
This is how Godelier puts his point:

But it would be equally vain to try to imagine a durable power of domination and oppression based solely either on naked violence and terror or on the total consent of every member of society. These would be extreme cases, highly ephemeral and transitory in the evolution of history. Even societies founded upon conquest...end up, after a time, adopting an institutional pattern that demands at least some consent on the part of the dominated to their domination (ibid:767).

For persistence in a discriminatory system like that obtaining in a Hindu kingdom, a great deal would depend on the demographic proportions involved, and on the comparative technological sophistication of the destructive expertise of those in power. Such factors are not explored by Godelier with the focus on variations of consent, dissent and the general presence of force, for the point of his argument, in this part, seems to be to show the relevance of consent on the part of the dominated to their domination and the role this plays in the preservation of the system. Furthermore, in the conceptualisation of the problem, should not attention be directed at what are the details of the arrangements that the "dominated" are supposed to be consenting to? Rather than put the onus on what is regarded as the "stronger" conditions for the durability of a society (the variations and combinations of violence and consent including "some consent" by the "dominated"), instead we might look at the specifics of their situation, what is entailed by "domination", and from that glean whether it is likely that those most vitally concerned are more likely to be acquiescing and hold alternative views, or whether as Godelier suggests are consenting. There is always the analytic danger that the information at hand is the official version of the matter, and does not necessarily reflect the actual situation of acquiescence though seeming conformity of the "dominated" is visible. Moreover, should it so happen that "some consent" on the part of the "dominated" does appear as Godelier suggests, then the question is "consent" to what aspect of their so-called "domination", what generally is an extremely complex set of arrangements. With Godelier's discussion a lot hangs on the issue of "domination", yet I find it difficult to understand what is meant by the concept in this part of his exposition. Is it to refer to features of the straightforward "social order" (ibid:767); or are we supposed to bear in mind that "relations of domination" are only those relations which also "function as infrastructure"? Or are we to approach the phenomenon in terms of the different stress where superstructure

1. Or "transformation" when a situation of contradiction emerges.
refers to "the specific form of illusion", the specific form that the dominant relations assume in certain kinds of societies (ibid:768 footnote 4). More importantly, how are the complexities of the Hindu kingdom (where there is a set of arrangements in which some are materially advantaged; some more people are ontologically advantaged; others neither; but all are subject to absolute rule) to be accommodated by the two categories the "dominated" and the "dominant"?

If one bears in mind what, say, the Untouchable is supposed to consent to, a designation that he is the vilest of all humans and from this certain imperatives are to follow, \(^1\) then, Godelier's proposal about the disadvantaged consenting to their lot is likely not to apply and according to the data does not. Instead coercion pertains. Where consensus does occur, it relates to the position of the king which in turn arises, at least in part, as a reaction to the divisions between them, the subjects. From one angle, the material Godelier uses to illustrate his case could also be interpreted in this way.

Godelier cites that the African king parades through the streets of the conquered section of the population before he is enthroned and this suggests that they (the dominated) are indicating "some consent" to their dominated position (ibid:767). Rather, what it may indicate is that they are accepting the sovereignty of the king but not necessarily their own "domination" vis-a-vis the rest of the population. Though this might seem a quibble, it is important to distinguish what is at issue when general concepts like "domination" are being employed. When the variations of areas consented to are borne in mind, the resultant picture discloses a more complex affair than Godelier's framework would allow for, as we shall see. Then again, the example proferred as illustrating the consent of the dominated to their domination could be interpreted entirely differently, as the conquered people might simply be acquiescing to the king's sovereignty, conforming to the requirements, where an expression of dissent is not dared for it might provoke state retaliation. If that were the case, then what is imposed here as the "do-able" is not necessarily the same as the "thinkable". Though I am not suggesting that this interpretation would hold only that it might, and that such possibilities

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\(^1\) To remind the reader: there is the stricture that the Untouchable must live outside the city; that his touch pollutes water for others; that members of other castes must not have any kind of sexual liaison with him; that he may not enter the temples of the high gods; that he cannot have as priest a Brahmin to officiate at any of the rituals; that the work often allocated to him is what pollutes others; that he cannot wear gold (even if he could obtain it) nor touch a cow and; that there is no exit from this circumstance during this historic life.
need to be, but are not satisfactorily raised, by Godelier.\(^1\) This instance used by way of illustration, that "some consent" by the dominated occurs, introduces as many problems as it seeks to answer, since the problem itself is why or how the "defeated"\(^2\) end up accepting the situation and it is neither sufficient nor illuminating to suggest that with consent a society is durable. In the Hindu context, the problematic configuration entails the acceptance of divine kingship, but not necessarily one's inequitable position, even though this particular situation derives from the political power relations imposed by the divine king. Leaving aside the issue of the king's sovereignty for the moment, and staying with the dominated, the analysis in previous chapters has indicated that what is important is the espousing and acting upon official ideas by the twice-born, those who benefit most by the arrangements, and what the members of other castes think about their situation in the system is, to a large extent, irrelevant to its operation.

Though the acceptance of the official formulations is pertinent, it is with the special category, the twice-born, and it is their acceptance which plays the vital role in the workings of the Hindu society. Therefore, it is not in the area of caste relations that the "dominated" consent to their "domination".\(^3\) In the important area of caste definitions, the members of the lesser ranks do not accept the official formulations, but instead have their own version of the scheme, and also their own explanations, yet it does not much matter what they think and do in their reaction to their positions, because it does not have any significant effect beyond to the wider society.\(^4\)

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1. Here as in the earlier article, Godelier seems uncritically to accept what might very well be the official view, rather than that of the defeated, although it might not. Nevertheless, it is important not to lay oneself bare to the possibility of promulgating the official line in contexts like that of conquest, or of gross inequities.

2. Godelier does not specifically address himself to the problematic situation of conquest, instead he speculates on how relations of domination arose in the evolution from classless to class societies; as well as consider the origins of the state, which he strongly believes to have emerged "legitimately" rather than through "usurpation", "violence" etc. (ibid:767).

3. I retain Godelier's term "dominated" here for ease of exposition. Clearly all castes are "dominated" if they are subject to the absolute rule of the god-king.

4. To give just one reminder: though a high caste Newar, a Vajracharyya, might indulge in Tantric practices and impute that he is the embodiment of an emanation of a celestial Buddha, etc., etc., outside the Buddhist Newar community he is simply a Matwali and the laws will be imposed accordingly.
In such instances the "thinkable" might be the "do-able" but it is ineffectual in the political field. For the operation of this ranked and differentiated Nepalese society, what the people of the In-category think is significant, and as long as they are there, since they are the adherents and implementers of the official ideas, the Hindu order is to a large measure effected, irrespective of the nature of the orientations of the other castes. It is not so much the case that with the sharing of ideas "contradictions" do not emerge and the system is "preserved", "endures", as Godelier contends, but rather a case where the antithetical view of the official one may be rendered almost inaudible,\(^1\) blurred out by the ideas and practices of those closely affiliated to the centre of power, and thereby their particular ideas and practices can prevail. As long as there is this operational category which can effect a Hindu order, both pragmatically and ideationally, the system works and the ruler's regime is actualized. For the regime's purposes, it is imperative to have some people committed to the official cause, the particular Hindu order, for it could not employ force everywhere.\(^2\) Consequently, against dissenters, there are the twice-born to impose their definitions of the situation, though behind them stands the state to patrol and inflict punishment on those who would break the rules. If over time, the lower castes are not antipathetic, well and good, the order then becomes less heterogeneous in opinion, but at whatever stage of a state's development, the Untouchables are hardly likely to consent to their lot. While on the one hand Godelier would highlight the situation where there is the inhibition of the emergence of contradiction through the sharing of the same ideas, whereas on the other hand we find that the contrary viewpoint exists but cannot be widely expressed nor actualized, then we would have to acknowledge that in such instances coercion is highly relevant. Therefore in such cases, the "thinkable" alternative ideas cannot become the "do-able", simply because such people are powerless to implement their desires which go counter to the official system\(^3\).

\(^{1}\) It is surprising how little the Parbatya twice-born know about the alternative views of Newars, for example.

\(^{2}\) From this angle, Godelier's highlighting the import of consent in contrast to force is well-founded, though its location is not with those more disadvantaged by the arrangements.

\(^{3}\) For example, the police prevent Untouchables entry into certain temples, as noted earlier.
does not necessarily follow. It is primarily with the ideas and values of
the twice-born that the "thinkable" may also be the "do-able". Even though
the system can operate through the role they play as twice-born, I would not
say that it is through their "consent" that the society "endures", but
simply that it is effected and continues. In this kind of society, changes
come through dynastic overthrow,\(^1\) toppling the autocrat from his absolute
position. As we know, it is with ideas about his sovereignty that there is
a great deal of agreement.

Godelier seems to arrive at an important conclusion although the
conceptual route is different, in claiming that some consent on the part of
the "dominated" is necessary, but since the consent at issue is directed by
all castes alike at the omnipotence of the king which, in Godelier's
Marxist frame, would be treated as part of the superstructure, if I have
understood his argument, then within that view it would hold a different
kind of significance from the one I suggest.\(^2\) Nor should it be forgotten
that the consensus in this area is partly a reaction against the
disagreement between the castes regarding their different situations, and
where these different caste situations have arisen through the autocrat's
(or forebear's) use of force. It implies the same difficulties that were
mentioned before: the material is not only resistant to the formulations of
a Marxist framework, but to the basic conceptual approach of that framework.
To allocate the "political" to superstructure, determined by the mode of
production, as Godelier does,\(^3\) would be inapposite for a system of
autocratic rule as obtains in a Hindu kingdom, where it is the case that
the ruler's whim can direct the pattern of advantages and disadvantages.

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1. It should be clear that I am not suggesting that these changes
   entail a new kind of society, an evolution in the Marxist sense, for the new
   regime imposes its own version of a Hindu kingdom. Nevertheless, I am
   saying that the form of the Hindu kingdom has its locus in dynastic changes
   produced through conquest.

2. Godelier sums up his approach:
   On the subject of the thinkable and the do-able...The fact that
   kinship, for example, is dominant in a given society means that every
   problem or event is going to take the form of a problem of kinship...
   in order to become thinkable. Thus, depending on the locus and the
   form or relations of production, history's actors, on each occasion,
   develop a specific form of illusion regarding their own conditions of
   existence. Each mode of production thus spontaneously engenders a
   specific mode of screening, of occultation - in the \textit{spontaneous}
   consciousness of the members of a society - of the content and
   foundations of their social relations. Far from taking a society's own
   illusions about itself for reality, my theoretical approach seeks to
   lay these bare and to explain their existence (1978(c):768 footnote 4).

3. Godelier's general orientation towards the pre-capitalist formations can
   be discerned in his own statement:
   What Marx was really saying was that we ought to interpret these social
   differences by seeking the reasons for them in material factors and in
   relations of production and by shedding light on the oppressive
   character of relations of exploitation of men by men (ibid:768).
It is inapposite inasmuch as that analytic designation cannot bring to the fore either the import of the ruler's absolute power or the harsh realities of his powers in effecting a caste ordering of peoples and what that entails for them. The caste order is to be understood unequivocally as a system of discrimination of people into different species of beings, and according to kind, different requirements and exclusions follow. Anything as blatant as caste discrimination and as far reaching in its effect on the person's conditions of existence stands as an intrinsic part of the system of relations which is an outcome of the operation of political power.

Conclusion

It would seem that the Marxist framework does not adequately cater to the material, for the system of relations found in this kind of society is oriented by political factors. In all of this the relations around land can be understood as the direct production of wealth for the regime, or a resource by which that regime rewards and binds its agents. For the rest, the land is the means by which they survive if they exert themselves and make it generate a yield for the state and for themselves. Given the discriminatory nature of the system, discriminatory in more ways than one, force is pertinent in its operation, in establishing its legal apparatus for directing behaviour and punishing transgressions. Also important is the presence of the twice-born who simply by virtue of the requirements of their position, will effect a viable Hindu kind of existence where the regime's destructive forces are not directly implicated. Since they preponderate numerically, they indeed constitute an impressive mechanism in the actualizing of this kind of system. Even so, their close association with the regime and its destructive power in turn also means that their definitions can predominate. If these features obtain then the least that can be said is that the kind of entity we are dealing with is a state whose basis lies in its control of destructive power. Nevertheless, the suggestion that the social arrangements can be understood in terms of power and of the retention of power by the man who is an autocrat may only take us so far since this man may be ousted at any time. But in that eventuality, another version of the same system with the same set of institutions is effected, though with changes in the placement of ethnic stocks. What we appear to have is a tradition oriented around conquest of other polities (military
colonization) and the concomitant dynastic changes. This tradition or kind of society I have called a special kind of conquest state, where the idea of "conquest" sharpens out its essentially dynamic nature which comes with the incorporation of other polities; and where "state" denotes absolute power which, in our context, is located in one person, the ruler who has extensive control over an assortment of peoples; and "special kind " refers to the Hindu frame of social relations. For such a configuration of factors, I use the phrase "a special kind of conquest state". The term "state" alone would be inadequate since this merely refers to the magnitude of the ruler's power, and it would not satisfactorily indicate that many of the institutional arrangements are geared to orient the format of the changes that come through the defeat of other polities. The particular system of social relations obtaining in this kind of society can be understood in terms of the operation of, and mechanisms for, the retention of autocratic power which itself derives from success in the deployment of destructive force, but also keeping in mind that this system has, as its environment, neighbouring polities, like and unlike itself.

In the process of development, there is a penetration of the conqueror's ethnic peoples throughout the newly acquired domain, and therefore, it might be said that there is a conquerors' category and not just a conqueror's which I have stressed. I have not allocated them to the same category as the ruler for several reasons. Though undoubtedly the state's representatives have power to control those under their jurisdiction, nonetheless, that power is contingent to the ruler's pleasure and therefore his uniqueness cannot be ignored. Further, if it is not always the case that every member of the ruler's ethnic group who were advantaged by the arrangements, and certain members of the annexed territories (like the princes) were also ceded delegated power and therefore more than one kind of ethnic or national stock is involved, then these two points make it impossible to talk of a conquerors' category. In the arrangements, political expediency is notable since it orients the outcome. Similarly, a category of conquerors would not illuminate the caste categorization of the population. This follows because in the categorization of the population, various ethnic or national stocks were designated twice-born, and not just the Gorkhas. But from what can be gathered, those who were had belonged to that caste category under the prior Hindu regime. It appears that the important aspect is the establishment of a caste order, a citizenry divided as different species, rather than the imposition of a division simply in terms of conquerors/conquered. The ones selected, since they were twice-born (and descendants), would have been the exponents of a Hindu order and therefore able to put the order
into effect. No tribal was so designated, not even the Limbus. None of this is to imply that the features of conquest are to be underplayed but only that the relations are to be understood in terms of the conqueror's retention of autocratic power in a conquest state. When the defeated Newars are borne in mind, one finds that regardless of the prior Hindu arrangements, they are lumped as lesser, Matwālī and Untouchables, inferior people, but people whose territory constitutes the ruler's location for his residence and becomes the capital of his domain. While the positioning of the various stocks in the different caste levels can be rendered intelligible by reference to political factors, so may the ranked nature of the caste order.

Any framework which does not cater to the uniqueness of the ruler's position in the patterning of relations, is, I think, likely to prove inadequate and fail to identify that the significance of the ranked nature of the caste order is to be found in its relationship to absolute rule. These are the two remarkable characteristics of Hindu society and constitute the central issues. The caste order of peoples with its special system of ranked differentiation is of a kind which lends itself to the continuity of that system, unlike the presence of mere divisions, pluralistic differentiation, where an amalgamation might occur if no advantages were to be gained by the divisions' remaining separate. Whereas the continuity of divisions can be sustained when these take a graded format since those, advantaged by their position in the scheme of things, are the ones likely to effect and maintain the arrangements. The analysis of the Nepalese material shows that what is important within the vast complex of arrangements is the commitment of the twice-born, which stems from their various advantages in the caste arrangements, for, as long as that category's particular interest is served, its members have a stake in its operation and continuity. With the discriminatory form, divisions throughout the population are, to a large extent, ensured. But to keep the focus merely on this set of social relations would be to miss the point, for the pivot of the society is the absolute ruler. It would seem that these caste divisions play a vital role in the ruler's hold on power, for while there are such divisions among the subjects, the ruler may stand as the special being above such sections and above any sectional interest that is perceived to apply for the others. If the operation of absolute rule by an autocrat is facilitated when the population is divided in such a way that only some people are advantaged by the arrangements, when differentiation takes a discriminatory form, then, this would mean that the divisions and the rank order of divisions in the traditional Hindu context are a function of absolute autocratic rule. There
is a further repercussion arising from the play of ideas about the allocation to positions in the rank order of castes, although here we are concerned with the alternative versions to that of the official scheme.

The alternative versions of the caste order (coming from the members of the lower ranks) are both akin to, but also different from the official stipulations which are effective in practice: they are similar in so far as they provide a scheme, but different in as much as it entails a contrary rendition of placements. Despite this, they have no effect outside the circle of adherents and therefore these specific variations cannot prevail, all of which are points noted before. Since what is presented in the alternative account is also a scheme with divided ranks (and self is placed high in the scheme of things), that being so, the divisions are retained, and the idea of ranked differentiation sustained, though indeed the official caste system of application is disavowed. No challenge is brought by the alternative accounts, for it would come through some idea of a common situation or egalitarian notion. But instead, the idea of ontological excellence for self arises, and seems to have roots in the appeal of that designation. Now where earlier the political effectiveness of the idea was seen to reside in the allocation of certain peoples to a high position in the instance of the twice-born who then actualize the significant aspects of the Hindu order and thereby make the regime operative, in the case of the lower castes there are also beneficial consequences for the regime, although it arises from a disagreement with the official doctrine. By professing an alternative version of the application of the rank order, the members of the lower castes, nevertheless, also retain the idea of division, and it is this which ultimately has advantageous consequences for the person who links with each and every one of them. Of interest here is that, if all this follows, then one must recognize the potency of the idea of ontological excellence for oneself, an idea that is located in the important part of the parcel, the scheme of ranked discrimination, and has potency in appeal, whether the idea is held by those who benefit by the official delineations, or by those who assume an alternative version and consequently is efficacious in maintaining the divisions. This brings us back to a key issue.

1. Within the alternative formulations often hostility is directed at those people who stand high in the official scheme, at the Parbata twice-born in general and the Brahmin in particular. Even so, only the official version is the one which can predominate in its application.

2. The fact that some tribals are indifferent to caste classification does not negate the point, since the argument is about the alternative renditions of the caste scheme.
In the extremely complex set of arrangements found in this kind of society, it would seem that divisiveness features in different contexts and contributes to the ruler's position as absolute. While it is all very well to maintain that one man is an autocrat but unless it can be demonstrated how such a demographic imbalance of power works, the idea is likely to be laughed out of court. To the basic question how does it work, we might say that it works by a subtle system of relations but the most important of these, like caste ranking, appear to rely on the principle of divide the ruled. In a way, it must come back to the manipulation of people, otherwise the lop-sided situation would be incomprehensible for a ruler to be able to deploy force, establish a capital, set up an administration which accords with his will, all of which entail the utilization of people and therefore his power is based on people. While he is dependent on them, paradoxically, they end up being controlled by him. At this juncture, I would like to attempt to bring together the major points emerging from the exposition.

Where on the one hand, Marxists take it as axiomatic that control over the means of production (and the elaborations on this) is the relevant concept for understanding all human history, the material from one portion of that vast human history, the Hindu kingdom, seems to indicate that the critical concept (and all its elaborations) is control over people by one man whose absolute power means, in the final analysis, that they are all subjected to his absolute rule. 1 None of this is to say that some are not "exploited" by their positions in the relations of production but it is to say that this does not fall into neat caste categories. More importantly, if exploitation is broadly defined and not merely to be understood in terms of position in the relations of production, but also in other kinds of exertion like soldiering, administration, acting as state executioner etc. etc., then, from that point of view, the entire population is exploited by the autocratic ruler, for each in some way or other works to effect the running of his regime and worse, in all of this, he holds absolute power over all of them.

The ruler's power in the instance of war is patently obvious but to my mind truly staggering, for it happens that through propaganda, or whatever other means, he can con or coerce men to kill and get killed, for an eventuality where just one of them, himself, will gain inordinately and continue to hold inordinate power over the rest, should they win the struggle. These men become either predators for his self-aggrandisement despite their own gains or losses; or the defenders of his regime. Another way of viewing the state is as the social unit of warfare, both with offence and defence, but in either case, it operates for the dynasty concerned. In a way the other

1. It should be clear that, although I do not find the Marxist conceptual framework for analysis appropriate for the Nepalese material, this does not mean that I do not heed the "spirit" of that approach, the critical perspective.
dimensions to a ruler's power seem tepid in comparison with his capability to unleash destruction. Even so, what these involve are also remarkable given that there is only one of him.

Being one man in Kathmandu and being able to control the destiny of millions of people, that is power. One cannot but be struck by the numerical magnitude of the orbit of control. This would also distinguish the discrepancy between a ruler's sphere and that of his delegated agent, in this aspect. Power in the case of the absolute king therefore entails, amongst other things, a relationship where the proportions involved are totally comprehensive, one over the rest. Nor can one not be impressed by the extensiveness of its operation. The king (or his forebear) determines what kind of being a person is to be categorized as, and from this other significant regulations ensue. His power also ranges from control over the citizen in the form of forced labour, right up to the total control of his existence, demanding that the subject leaves himself open to death,¹ a subject's non-existence, not only in the advent of war, but also with the terrific punishments. With these come the terminations of caste, death and the irrevocable mutilations, and confiscation of all of a man's assets. Though more often, the state is involved in making decisions which are less extreme, these nonetheless also affect the general future conditions of the subjects' lives, as in the case of how much revenue the state takes, or whether, like him, they may obtain the tribute. To have the power to orient the future conditions of people's existence is surely a formidable power. There is also the related dimension of absolutism: what is absolute is unconditioned, which in the case of the Nepalese king means that within the kingdom, he has to obey no one, nor is accountable to any other person, whereas his edicts apply to everyone else. While the situation can be viewed from the direction of the king to the subjects, what of the other way round?

From the subject's position, it can be a matter of their willing or unthinking surrender of autonomy to the state, but which is ultimately the ruler's power. Then there can be involuntary acquiescence or flight. Or, alternatively, there can be direct resistance against him and an uprising. More generally, it is just sheer usurpation by another person. Thus, he remains god-king only for as long as another does not deploy force effectively

¹. Though the state itself does not directly kill a Brahmin or a woman, during warfare both can occur.
against him. And so success with force is an expression of his capacity and special nature. It also indicates that "political supremacy" determines "social function" and not the other way. Once in power the particular man designated god-king holds absolute sway.

It would seem that the man's imputed uniqueness as god-king reinforces his position and his retention of power. From every quarter of the population, whether Newar or tribal Matwali as well as the Parbatya, Nepalis proclaim that, given the assortment of peoples, it is only the king who can forge unity. Not surprisingly it is exactly what the official pronouncements broadcast. Yet ironically, the particular diversity found in the kingdom is itself a function of conquest, manoeuvred initially and violently by the king's ancestor. Put differently: conquest brings about the incorporation of diverse people under a dynasty, but the existence of this diversity is presented and perceived as necessitating the presence of the conqueror's successor to generate unity from that diversity. That being so, conquest does indeed serve the dynasty well.
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