THE KUI PEOPLE: CHANGES IN BELIEF

AND PRACTICE

by

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PREFACE

The material through which this study of the Konds began was collected during the decade 1950-1960 when as a district missionary of the Utkal (Orissa) Christian Church I was resident in the Kond Hills, and also on a visit in the cold season of 1965-1966 after five years' absence. This latter occasion was sponsored by the Selly Oak Colleges and the Survey Application Trust, and was preceded by brief visits to tribal peoples of Taiwan and the Philippines.

It was the wise policy of the Kui (Kond) Language Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society that every probationer missionary should study the Kui language for two years, and, in addition to the usual written examinations, should undergo an oral examination on Kond traditional religious beliefs and practices. This was conducted by a group of Kui people gathered from among those currently attending their relatives in the hospital nearby. The English language was unknown there at the time of my examination. Building upon this foundation, I was able to note down over the years a large collection of Kond beliefs and rituals in the vernacular as experiences, encounters and discussions gave opportunity. It is in this context that I believe it important to try to understand what brought large groups of Konds, at their own request, to seek to join the Church after forty years of almost total rejection of it.

Though the Konds are now thought to number close on a million, remarkably little has been documented about them except in the decade following the East India Company's first encounter with them in 1835 when the British first discovered the Konds' common and frequent practice of human sacrifice. Nor was anything known of the tribe's previous history. Hence they and their religious beliefs were accepted by the University of Edinburgh as warranting further study,
this to include the translation and classification of my collection of Kond rituals.

Almost all of the scanty references quoted by such authorities as Thurston and Dalton in the late nineteenth century proved to be based on that earlier decade of personal records made by Captain S.C. Macpherson of the East India Company; while accounts of the campaigns against the Konds and the Company's subsequent dealings with them were again largely from personal narratives by Captains Campbell and Macpherson or from occasional reports to their superiors in the Madras (British) government, in whose region much of the Kond Hills lay. Of more recent years, yet within the period ending 1966 which is the extent of this study, two anthropologists have made studies in depth of two particular fields: first, F.G. Bailey (then of Manchester) who between 1953 and 1957 made several visits to the north-east (Kondmals) region to study the socio-political inter-action of Oriyas upon the Konds in what is the most strongly Oriya-infiltrated area; and secondly, Hermann Niggemeyer (of Frankfurt) who in 1955-1956 spent a cold season with the Kuttia Konds in their most remote of all Kond hill-tracts on the western borders of Orissa. Neither of these anthropologists had the Kui language.

Two discoveries in the field of source-literature materially changed the subject of my thesis from its earlier and more limited intention, that of the documentation of Kui beliefs and values after fifty years of Christian mission. The first discovery was of several long and detailed articles written 'anonymously' by the Rev. Dr. Alexander Duff in the quarterly Calcutta Review between 1845-48, based not only on Macpherson's letters but on government records hitherto unpublished but then made available to Duff by Lord Hardinge,
the Governor-General of India, and later papers provided by Lord Dalhousie when he succeeded to that office. The second discovery - made during the writing of this thesis - was in an attic at the home in Malvern, Worcestershire, of a former missionary to the Konds; the finding of a manuscript notebook by one Kogera Pradhan. Investigation shows him to be almost certainly one of the earliest Konds to become literate as a result of the pioneer missionary, Oliver Millman's school under a tree in Mallikapori village. In this school exercise book, Kogera, a Kond it seems of priestly family, noted 26 of the rituals current in his time (c. 1910-1915). My own rituals collected half a century later had unknowingly been based on this same village. These two discoveries provided the necessary documentation for extending my research to include comparisons of ritual beliefs and practices at roughly half-century periods since the written history of the Konds began in 1835.

Insights into Kond values which arise from this comparison of rituals have led me to believe that it was their strong pride in being Konds, coupled with a remarkable ability to think out their theological problems and act corporately on their conclusions, that caused them to join the Christian Church. For in 1956 and the years following, they came to believe that the mystical force formerly employed for their well-being by their household gods and other deities had now been superseded by the certain presence, right in their midst, of the formerly vague, distant and impersonal Great God. It was, they believed, his much greater 'force', now effectively at hand for well-being (as clearly demonstrated already by the greatly improved position of Christian Fans, their former servant-race, as well as by all Europeans), that would provide them with the means to continue as Konds in the face of the now-unavoidable social change
breaking in upon their communities.

The piecing together of material showing these changing values - and therefore their changing ritual behaviour - over the period of their written history, when placed alongside fragments of evidence from earlier centuries and the known history of plains-Oriasa, has also led me to reconstruct in the final chapter a view of the possible pre-history of the Konds for many centuries back.

It will be noted that some of these documented rituals are to be found in the pocket at the back of Vol. I while the majority are in Appendix QME in Vol. II. The few in Vol. I are there not by reason of their greater importance (other than the Konds' central rite of human/buffalo sacrifice which comprises a separate discussion in Chapter III), but simply to represent the several classes of ritual belief held by the Konds. These few are thus typical examples of a suggested classification which considers Kond rituals under four main headings: first, as community response through rituals of ordered relationship between God, man and the land; secondly, rituals seeking the blessing and co-operation of the ancestors; thirdly, rituals seeking to guard against danger or diminishment due to pollution offences; and fourthly, rituals of protection in potentially life-destroying situations due either to disturbed deities or to man's ill-will experienced through evil eye, sorcery, etc.

Thus Kond rituals are recorded at the three historical periods (1835-1845, c. 1910-1915 and 1966) and also the latter two periods are classified under the four headings mentioned above. Those in the earliest period are gleaned from Macpherson's Memorials of Service in India, Chapter VI, and from early records of the Madras government, as previously mentioned, while the 112 ritual accounts of the middle
and latest periods had not until now been collected and made available in the English language. Where the same ritual is recorded in both the middle and latest period, cross-references are given to aid comparison; but where no such parallel exists, the single recording of a ritual bears the phrase: 'No other versions'.

All quotations without reference to their sources are my translations from verbal accounts taken down in the Kui language. The term 'Kond' is used to signify members of the Kond tribal people, while 'Kui' denotes all those, both Konds and Pans, for whom Kui is the mother-tongue and who follow the Kui pattern of culture. The term 'Church' is used in its wider connotation, and 'churches' to describe local communities of baptized believers in the villages. 'The Union' is the Kond Hills District Church Union and is part of the larger Church in Orissa and thus of the now united Church of North India.

The meanings of Kui words used in the text are to be found in the Glossary on p.586 of Vol. II. An occasional word in Kogera's prayers or in certain songs has, however, been left in the vernacular, for an accurate translation has so far proved unobtainable.

The collecting of the most recent set of rituals began with the help of Tupa Prodhan, headmaster of Mallikapori Primary School, who was my first 'pundit'. It continued through the warm friendship of innumerable Kui people in their own homes and villages; also of pastors, teachers and fellow-workers, especially the staff of the Moorshead Memorial Christian Hospital, Christian and non-Christian, Kond and Pan, who individually and in group discussions provided invaluable information. I am particularly indebted to the late Mokundo Prodhan, hospital clerk, to whose articulate explanations and teasing ability to remind me when I was looking at Kui situations
from a western viewpoint, I owe much. The interest and readiness to help of my European colleagues has provided much encouragement. I must also acknowledge my great debt to Professor Dr. Hermann Niggemeyer and his wife who most kindly invited me to join them for an unforgettable few days in their home in Westphalia, where we shared much discussion of things Kond and Kuttia Kond. The advice of Dr. Mohan K. Gautam of the India Section of the Rijksmuseum Voor Volkenkunde, Leiden, has also been of great help. Continuing interest has also been shown by the staff of the India Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum concerning the bronze lineage emblems described in Chapter V (d).

Finally I wish to thank my supervisors, Dr. Andrew Ross of New College, Edinburgh, and Dr. Anthony Jackson of the Department of Social Anthropology. Their guidance and encouragement not only puts me greatly in their debt but encourages me to continue to study more closely certain aspects for which there has been neither time nor opportunity in this present broad view. To Mrs. Joyce Miller who typed many of my first drafts, and to Mrs. Jean Thibault who has typed the final manuscript, I offer my grateful thanks.

St. Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak Colleges. Barbara M. Boal.
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CHAPTER I

THE KUI PEOPLE AND THEIR BACKGROUND
The Kui People

The Konds

"Our grandfathers have been here since long, long ago" say the Konds, using the rising inflection that denotes extremes of distance either in time or space. Indeed, opinions are as varied as they are vague concerning the origin, spelling and derivation of 'Kond' (Khond, Khand or Kondh, Kandh), the name by which both a tribal people and the hills inhabited by them are known to the plains people of Orissa, India. The most likely suggestion is that put forward by Captain Macpherson in his 'Original Report' submitted to the British Government in 1841 following two campaigns and surveys in the area: that the word "'Kond' (plural 'Kondulu') means 'mountaineer' from the Telugu word signifying a hill." Meanwhile with characteristic independence, these tribal people continue to refer to themselves in their own Kui language as 'Kui people' and their hills as the 'Kui country'. For purposes of this study, the term 'Kui people' will be used to refer to all those, of several origins, who commonly speak the Kui tongue; and the term 'Kond' when the reference is solely to members of the specific tribe.

The Konds are a Dravidian people but "No mythology or legend yet discovered furnishes any clue to their origin or place of descent. They believe themselves to have existed in Orissa 'from the beginning'". Their forebears were probably driven from their homes on the richer coastal plains of eastern India during the Aryan advance. Preferring

hardship to the loss of independence, it is thought that they were forced up into the wild hill-tracts of the Eastern Ghats many centuries ago. Captain Macpherson reported on his first visit that there were three principal classes of 'modern Konds' (1836): first, the completely subjugated Bettiah Konds, either labouring without hire on the level plains below the Ghats or scattered in hamlets where the land was too undesirable and insalubrious for the Hindu incomers. Secondly, along the rugged, forested lower slopes of the mountain chain, the Benniah Konds kept their freedom through the sheer physical advantages of their locality. By 1836 their descendants had been accepted as free subjects of the Hindu Oriya-speaking Rajah of Goomsur, whose domain stretched across the plain from these foothills almost to the Bay of Bengal in the east, and extensively from north to south. The third group, and by far the majority of the Kond people, dwelt up on the central tableland of the Ghats. None of these had ever come under foreign domination, Muslim, Hindu or British. Where the first two groups increasingly used the Oriya language, and recognised the superior social rank of the Hindu chiefs, though not their authority, the third had preserved its language, culture and independence down the ages. Self-governing, and loyal to the elder locally appointed over each village, yet ready fighters in raids on other villages, they remained in little or no contact with the outside world. They referred even to the Bettiah and Benniah groups as Sasi Konds - a word still used, with a slightly derogatory inflection, of all persons and things pertaining to the plains over against themselves as the true hillmen, or Maliah Konds. It is with this last group, the hill Konds, that this study is concerned, but in order to see them in context, other smaller groups of residents in the Kond Hills must
also be described briefly. These are the Pans (or Doms, as the Konds call them), several artisan groups who must formerly have been low-caste Hindus, and the Oriya Hindus, mainly involved in local administration, paddy cultivation or trading.

The Pans, or Doms

The Pans have occupied a peculiar position in relation to the tribes-people of Orissa since the days of pre-history. Wherever aboriginal tribes dwell in the Orissan highlands and elsewhere in Middle India, there a little group of Pans are to be found at one end of most villages. Nothing is known for certain regarding their origin. They are thought to have been Hindu but have totally adopted the beliefs, and thus the rituals, of their hosts and are socially unacceptable to Hindus today. Thus in the Kond Hills they have adopted the beliefs of the Konds. The majority have also adopted the Kui language, though often with some facility also in trading Oriya.

There are, however, pockets of totally Oriya-speaking Pans. The Konds for their part - being self-limited to the only honourable occupations of agriculture, hunting and war - have always found them quite indispensable for the proper carrying out of Kond ritual and in the provision of certain necessities for daily life. They also deal with carcasses, and at times of death in the village, they fulfil specific functions which are taboo to the Kond.

Macpherson's report of the Pan's duties and obligations in 1837 applies equally well 120 years later: to provide victims for sacrifice (though animal now instead of human); to carry messages, such as summons to councils or to field-work; to act as musician at ceremonies; and to supply the village with cloth - in those days the Konds allowed
themselves one tribal cloth yearly. Over the whole region their position ranged between near-servility and near-equality, but they are never quite equal nor ever totally in bondage. Their acquisition of land also varies from place to place. They may purchase some but until recent years the Konds have prevented them by one means or another from attaining the full status that possession of land indicates. Many hire themselves out as labourers, cultivating the land for a Kond land-lord, or else rent and work his fields, giving him half the crop at harvest-time. But their strongly developed business instinct is leading a few today to concentrate all their resources on becoming increasingly rich land-owners: this despite Government protection of Kond interests in land-tenure.

They have little cultural influence and no voice in Kond public councils, though sometimes they have strong private influence. Their occupations have been described by Konds, both in the last century and this, as weaving, trading and theft; the latter is, however, confined to certain villages. They certainly act as traders and middle men in all transactions between Konds and Hindus, and indeed until the 1960's have managed the whole commerce of the hills. Also, less visibly but more powerfully, they act as money-lenders to the Konds. Many of those on the outer borders of the Kond country have kin-connections as well as trading connection with Pans on the foothills. Their whole attitude to life does in fact make it easier for them to adapt to a different system of faith, viz. many centuries ago to Kond beliefs and later, for some, to Christianity; and certain of their number make no objection to acting as priests for the Konds in rituals that involve the sacrifice of a bullock or cow, and action taboo to the true Kond (as to the true Hindu) and yet, he feels, one
which is demanded by his ancestors. Thus regarding the Pans as culturally inferior, the Konds exercise enough discipline to keep the communities separate. Intermarriage between a Kond boy and a Pan girl has always been avoided, though occasionally a Kond girl may be given to a Pan man. Interdining has also been strongly taboo. Ritual cleansing of the whole kin group was necessary if such pollution occurred, either through marriage or eating, and similarly if a Kond girl, so married, wished to leave her husband and rejoin her own folk.

In character the Pans, or Doms, are very different from the Konds. Thinking especially of their role as procurers of human victims for sacrifice, Mr. Bannerman, Magistrate for the Ganjam District in the 1840's, described the Pans as: "a set of infamous wretches who carry on a trade in the blood of their fellow-men", and:

"these heartless miscreants whose guilt seems to be of an even deeper die (sic) than that of the African slave-traders, are actuated by the basest and most sordid motives in supplying the victims, and their infamous conduct does not admit of any palliation. The barbarous and ignorant Konds, on the other hand, are conscious of no sin in performing what they regard as a sacred duty in celebrating the Tonki festival." 1

Macpherson describes the two races, as he found them in those early days, in even more downright terms:

"The Konds are masters of the soil: bold, free, laborious mountain peasantry, with simple but not undignified manners, open, faithful and upright in their conduct, serious and sincere in their superstition, well-informed of their rights and resolute to defend them." 2

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1 Calcutta Review, Vol. VI, No. XII, p.68.
whereas the Pans are:

"excluded from property in land and from power to practice the only honourable art (farming); and depressed by a sense of social inferiority; a mean, false, mercenary and thievish race, who live chiefly upon the ignorance, the superstition, and the industry of the primitive (Konds) as low priests, brokers, pedlars, sycophants and cheats." 1

The following story, received from the Pan secretary of the Union of Churches in the Kond Hills, is current among Pans of the eastern area. Over the centuries their trading has taken members of this group down to the plains, so giving wider contacts with other peoples than is customary for Konds.

The Story of Nagala Bondela

"There were two Dravidian men, Nagala and Bondela by name on the banks of the Sindhu River in Northern India. When the Aryan people came to India, these two men moved off to a different place and dwell in caves because of their fear of them. Their food was simply jungle tubers. Nagala's and Bondela's sons were Prohti and Prohera. The exact names of Prohti's and Prohera's sons were Kulo and Dohu. Kulo said to Dohu: "(You) Domua!" Therefore because Dohu remained lying down, his descendants became "domenga". Dohu called Kulo: "Tuber-digger!" (that is, Doniha Khoulo in Oriya). And because he dug up tubers, his people became 'Konds' (Kondho in Oriya).

Kulo's wife was Sanjuli and Dohu's wife was Binjuli. + From them 17 Kond clans are descended, and 17 Dom clans similarly.


+ see Chapter II(b) for the origin of 'Sanjuli-Binjuli', the name given by the eastern Konds to the Earth Goddess, when she came in human form.

The Doms sacrificed a goat at the season of sacrifice for the ancestors; the Konds sacrificed a bullock at the season of sacrifice for the ancestors.

To make firm the marshy instability of the land, they sacrificed a human-being. They called this The Deliverance Festival (the Meriah Festival in Oriya)."

This story appears to be an attempt both to classify the many groups and peoples whom they have met or of whom they have heard in the course of their journeys and perhaps of their education, and also to align this information with their knowledge of the wide social difference between Konds and Fans as they experience it in everyday life in the hills. Their close interaction with the Konds would make some kind of definition much more necessary to them than would their relationship with the other groups of settlers whose roles are quite clearly defined.

**Other Settlers in the Kond Hills**

Alongside the Fans in some villages live small numbers of Sundi people. They are of the Hindu distiller caste but may engage in trading too. Some of them amass considerable wealth. Kui-speaking Blacksmiths and Potters are also found in the small numbers necessary to the community. All of these must once have been low-caste Hindus but long ago they adopted the language, beliefs and habits of the Konds.

The Oriya people are the inhabitants of the lowlands throughout the State of Orissa. With the exception of some Christians and a very few Muslims, they are practising Hindus. All speak the State language of Oriya. At least three hundred years ago the earliest infiltration of Oriya settlers into the Kond Hills seems to have taken place. In the Kondmals Sub-Division, their tradition maintains that they came in from the north over the Mahanadi (Great River) to serve the Rajah of Boud; then their descendants pushed up into the north-
east of the Kond Hills and gradually spread west and south as far as Tikaballi. Bailey¹ suggests that a line drawn from Tikaballi through Bondhogarh to Balandapara roughly represents the limit of Oriya colonies founded from Boad and stemming from north of the Mahanadi. According to their genealogies, he adds, this occurred between 250 to 300 years ago; but genealogies are often telescoped, so the date of invasion may be further back. Smaller groups of Oriyas similarly infiltrated from the south and south-east.

Far from fraternising with the Konds, the Oriyas established themselves in closely built settlements in many of the wider valleys, after seizing much of the best land and driving out the aboriginal owners whom they heartily despised. In every respect of religion, language and village life they have preserved their separate existence. There was no intermarriage, though Kond women may occasionally have been taken as concubines. Only in the political realm did they wield a limited control. ‘But the actual influence of the Oriya chiefs may have been exaggerated because the servants of the East India Company were able to speak the Oriya language and not the language of the Konds.’²

Sir W.W. Hunter, writing in 1877 about these Oriyas, believed that:

'Many years ago successive waves of Rajput adventurers, possibly on pilgrimage to Puri, had driven back the Konds, finding their loosely formed states and constant feuding made the chiefs' fortresses an easy prey — possession of which meant government of that area. Where no feud was in progress, they found it easy to stir up intrigues and take advantage of the dissension to seize power.'³

Thus, Hunter states, all the hill-states of Orissa gradually came under rulers who were, or claimed to be Rajputs.

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² Ibid.

Since the 1840's when the East India Company's Officers and administrators began to visit the hills, a second wave, this time of enterprising Oriya traders, has followed them. Most of these traders settled in the Oriya communities already firmly established by their predecessors; then by reason of their link with the lowlands, their strategic position in the hills, and the British policy of increasing the Kond's dependence on goods from the plains, they became rapidly successful as pioneer shop-keepers and merchants. Their descendants today have more ready money than the wealthiest Kond landowner or Pan trader.

Thus there are diverse elements among the Kui speaking people themselves and there are scattered and usually quite separate colonies of Orijas. The Konds are, of course, by far the largest single element in the population, especially in the wilder and more inaccessible parts where there is nothing to entice settlers and everything to discourage them. Recent population statistics are remarkably varied: the 1965 Census Commission for Assam states that of the 293 major tribal groups in India, the Konds are the seventh largest, with 845,981 members. This is doubtless more correct than the estimate of some who would put the number as low as 200,000 Konds and 60,000 Pans in the hill-tracts. W.W.Winfield's assessment from the 1921 census was probably close to the mark at that time: 450,000 Kui-speaking peoples (Kond, Pan, etc.) and 150,000 Kuvi-speaking Konds, Kuvi being a dialect of Konds in the extreme south-west tracts, politically within the Vizagapatam Agency and District of Andhra State. We consider now the languages spoken by these various groups.

Languages

Kui (and its closely related dialect, Kuvi), is a Dravidian language with considerable resemblance to Telegu, Tamil and Canarese in grammar; but not to Oriya, its nearest neighbour and infiltrator, which is of Indo-Aryan origin. Nevertheless, a number of Oriya words have been corrupted into common Kui usage through increasing commerce, administration and contact with the ever-growing number of Oriyas in both the old-established and newly formed settlements. This borrowing from Oriya vocabulary has however had remarkably little impact on Kui grammatical forms and idioms. Thus Kui remains a good example of a Dravidian language almost unaffected by non-Dravidian elements. It is characteristically Dravidian, for instance, that all its nouns denoting inanimate substances and irrational beings are neuter; and the distinction between male and female is only found in pronouns of the third person, in the third person of the verb and in adjectives formed by suffixing the pronominal terminations; in all other cases, the gender is marked by separate words signifying 'male' or 'female'.

Verbs are outstandingly important in Kui and possess great wealth of possible meaning.

'The Infinitive itself is frequently used as a noun, and sometimes as an adjective and adverb; while from the Verbal Participles adverbial and conjunctual expressions are formed, and the Relative Participles become the bases of adjectival, adverbial, relative, conditional, causative, appellative and hortative expressions.' 1

Kui is complicated by a number of characteristics: by constant agglutination, frequently several suffixes and infixes being attached to a single word without any change of root; by the exclusive and

inclusive first person plural; by an abundance of glottal stops; a negative as well as an affirmative voice; and - as it is entirely a vigorous, spoken language - by many contractions. It has a minutely detailed vocabulary for all practical objects but few abstract and theological terms, for these are not part of Kond religion. There is constant use of the most graphic metaphors and similes in everyday speech, also a gift for onomatopoeic expression, often showing keen observation and mimicry, and a love of balance-words, rhyming and rhythmically pleasing. This last, though common in ordinary speech, is a special mark of lyrics, dirges and priestly invocations. In story-telling, continuative participles are much preferred to the conjunctions of Indo-European languages. These, alongside the characteristic use of relative participial nouns instead of separate phrases introduced by relative pronouns, makes for colourful, flowing and altogether gripping narrative.

Kui has no indigenous literature, in the written sense. Only since the coming of westerners to the hills have parts of the Bible and simple stories been printed, first by Captain Frye and Dr. Cadenhead of the East India Company in the 1840's, using the Oriya script; then after a long interval, by Baptist missionaries, first using Roman script but more recently returning to Oriya. Though the Telegu script of Andhra State would meet the linguistic needs of Kui more readily, the Konds, being subject to the educational and political systems of Orissa State, find Oriya script less confusing.

The Oriya language is Sanskritic, closely linked to the other Indo-Aryan tongues of Northern India. Many Kui men today understand Oriya and those on the eastern side are usually able to speak it, though for the average villager it is with very limited vocabulary and impure
pronunciation. Few women speak it, though many near the administrative centres and lines of communication understand reasonably well. Most teachers and pastors and the young people in upper schools and training institutions are now bilingual. An occasional long-established Oriya may speak a little clipped Kui, but that is rare. Even the State's offer of extra pay to Government Officers who pass a test in Kui has not brought much response.

English is frequently used among the higher Oriya officials. Very few Kui people are proficient in it, and those mostly of recent years, but a rapidly growing number of college-educated young people now use it. The majority receiving such education have been Parsis, but that picture is also changing as more Konds now go beyond elementary schooling.

These language difficulties have caused great wariness and suspicion in the Kui people's attitude to the authorities.

An important factor in the unusual degree of isolation sustained by the Kui people over the centuries has been their geographical situation and the difficulties of communication from the plains. A brief description of this follows below.

(c) Geographical Location and Communications

The Kond Hills form that part of the Eastern Ghats which is bounded on the north by the Mahanadi and on the west by its large tributary, the River Tel. To the south and west the wild country continues into the area inhabited by the Saoras and other tribes, but in the east and north, the hills drop precipitously to the coastal plains of Orissa. Thus the area forms a rough rhombus consisting of a plateau about 2,000 feet above sea level broken by innumerab
mountain ranges rising generally to 3,500 feet and above 4,000 feet in the south-west. To stand at any point within that rhombus is to be surrounded on every side by a complexity of hills great and small, near and far, blocking the valleys and over-shadowing the footpaths which pass over saddles from one valley to another.

Dense mixed forest covers the eastern slopes to the plains. West and south, trees and hanging creepers reach great heights, while to the north mixed forest largely gives place to bamboo. Normal travel is by well-trodden foot-tracks where generations of Kui people carrying heavy loads of fire-wood, rice and other grains to village or market have sought the easiest path, for the terrain is rough with frequent ravines due to land erosion.

Owing to annual firing of the hills towards the end of the dry season (February-March), the forests have given way to scrub-jungle on the hills around certain more populated valleys. Never-ending expeditions to chop fire-wood and select tree-trunks for house building have reduced even this secondary growth in a number of places. Around Goomsur Udayagiri (G. Udayagiri) and increasingly around Balliguda, many steep hill slopes have been cleared and planted with pulses. This deforestation, if permitted to continue, could seriously affect the annual rainfall, but the Forestry Department is tightening its control.

The most common and valuable tree is the teak-like Sal (Shorea Robusta) whose hard timber is used for all main beams in building and for ploughs and similar implements. The Mahua tree (Bassia Latifolia), from whose fleshy corollas a powerful liquor is distilled, is also very plentiful. Simply sun-dried, the flowers make a sweet relish to be eaten with the daily rice, as does the mashed and dried fruit from the wild mango trees. A species of date palm peculiar to the
Kond Hills provides a never-ending supply of toddy with high nutritional value. In addition, the jungle yields grass for thatching, rushes for strong sleeping-mats, large leaves which are sewn together for plates and bowls, bark rope, and many edible roots, berries and leaf vegetables in their short seasons.

In his book *Caste and the Economic Frontier,* Dr. F.G. Bailey points out that the fauna of the Kond Hills is a liability rather than an asset. Wild boar in a single night can do much damage to root crops and maize. Jackals, hyenas and bears are also attracted by the maize crops, so that a high fence is necessary even though the maize garden adjoins the house. Ripening crops there and on the hills must be protected at night by the shouts, drumming and banging of tins by watchers in tree-top or platformed huts erected for the purpose. Bears are a particular danger on jungle paths and will attack if their cubs are with them or they are surprised by the silent-footed Konds at a bend in the track. Though fatality is more likely to be through blood-poisoning, to be scalped or to lose an eye from clawing is still a common injury. Leopards too take constant toll of cattle and goats or an occasional drunken, sleeping Kond. Tigers keep mainly to the deeply forested areas. Habitual man-eaters are not common but a herdsman may be carried off when trying to protect his cattle or goats, or someone straying too far from his jungle working-party. Herds of elephant occasionally come over from the high south-west and devastate the crops, the young bamboos and possibly even a house. Snakes are very common, cobras and kraits being the most dangerous. Death from snake-bite is, however, surprisingly rare. The whole area until the recent campaigns of the Health

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1 F.G. Bailey, *Caste and the Economic Frontier,* p. 17
authorities, has been seriously affected by the death-dealing anopheles mosquito, and the Kui people are chronic sufferers from malaria.

The rivers of the Kond Hills are also a liability in their natural state. They are not fit for navigation and, for four months of the rainy season, they seriously impede inter-village communication and may sweep away both cattle and men.

Dr. Bailey's description of the Salki River may be applied generally:

'In the rains they are torrents. In July at a point sixty yards from bank to bank, the Salki rose twenty feet overnight. During the dry season it is possible to walk over the river bed without getting one's feet wet, although water can always be found by digging holes in the sand. The same characteristics make the river useless for irrigation. When the river is in spate the water is not needed. When the water is needed, the river is all but dry and deep down below steep banks. However, the Salki is an important physical feature because its course provides a series of miniature alluvial plains, which are cultivated and thickly populated, and which provide the obvious route from the south.' 1

The larger rivers of the higher south and west often run in deep rocky ravines which defy cultivation and rarely provide easy foot-tracks for communication. These do not dry up completely in the hot season.

Road links with the plains are few. The most important is from Berhampur, a considerable town on the railway, seventy-eight miles south-east of G. Udayagiri. This road roughly follows the approach taken by the East India Company in the 1835-36 Goomsur Wars. The climb to the plateau is by a seven-mile ghat, or steep zig-zag section of road, rising from 500 feet to about 2,500 feet above sea level. This single-track all-weather road was greatly improved by being

This hillside approach was used by the East India Company's troops for 10 years before the making of this road began c. 1845.
surfaced in 1958. Reaching the plateau, the road branches. One route goes north to Phulbani, the administrative centre of the hills thirty-one miles away, while the other goes westward. After five miles it passes G. Udayagiri and the hospital, school, hostels and bungalows built by the Baptist Missionary Society, then continues to Balliguda forty-seven miles west of the junction. At that point the all-weather road terminated, but in the early 1960's the Public Works Department of Orissa completed its work on the many bridges (often over dry ravines) of a road to link Balliguda south-westward with the Vizianagaram-Baipur railway at Miniguda sixty-miles away. A daily bus now runs along this. A daily bus link is also maintained with Berhampur from both Balliguda and Phulbani. North of Phulbani the bus can only operate during the dry season down the steep descent to Boad Raj, the capital of the old Princely State of Boad. It links with the Mahanadi ferry and other bus routes; but during the rains, this ghat road is often impassable as rivers cross the road by 'Irish Bridges' which are temporarily flooded by heavy showers.

In addition to these main roads, there was once a system of 'Revenue roads', unsurfaced and with wooden bridges. Their upkeep was by local funds and forced labour. These have not been maintained over the years but here and there stretches are still practicable by bullock cart. Some are gradually being reconstructed now.

The great majority of Kui people travel by the vast network of narrow foot-paths, small groups walking in single file along the banks of paddy-fields or through the jungle. Owing to the danger of wild animals and the heaviness of the loads carried, these paths hold to the lower contours, only passing over the rocky cols when no other route is possible.
They ford all but the most swollen rivers in the same single file, hoisting their loads from shoulder to head if the depth demands it and linking an arm over a creeper-rope tied from one tree to another across the strong current - perhaps with the other hand pushing their smallest child before them in a large, floating earthenware pot, while the next youngest sits astride their shoulders. Only on the biggest rivers is a rough dug-out canoe paddled across, being carried at a sharp diagonal drift by the current.

The hill climate is more extreme than on the plains of Orissa. In May the shade temperature may rise to 105–110°F, yet may approach freezing point in the coldest nights of December and January, with ground frost in the early hours. The cold season ends in February, after which it is increasingly hot until the arrival of the heavy south-west monsoon lasting from mid-June until October. It may or may not be followed by a brief, light north-east monsoon. The average rainfall during this season is more than one inch per day. A delayed or scanty south-west monsoon rapidly causes famine conditions. Cyclonic conditions can also destroy the rice seedlings overnight. These difficulties and dangers both within the region itself and in its accessibility, coupled with poor cultivation and general lack of attraction to plainsfolk, have resulted in there being little contact with the outside world. However, in place of the one well-known lorry that used to venture up before the surfacing of the ghat road in 1958, there is now a small but steady flow as economic and cultural change comes to the Kui people.

With this brief background to the people and their setting in the Kond Hills, we look more closely now at the ways in which Kond communities are organised, at aspects of marriage and family life and the ways in which they use their natural resources.
Political Organisation

When British missionaries first settled in the Kond Hills in 1909, the Kui-speaking peoples were still under three separate authorities. The Kondmals sub-division in the north was administered by Angul, across the Mahanadi in Bengal; the Balliguda sub-division, three times the size of the Kondmals, was administered by an Indian Civilian Collector (i.e. British); and that part of Goomsur which was in the hill-tracts was administered by an Indian Deputy-Collector. These last two areas were within the Ganjam District and therefore part of the Madras Presidency. The whole Kond region, however, was commonly known as the Hill-Tracts Agency and these collectors exercised special powers as Agents to the Governor. (See Chapter II for the historical background to the Agency in 1845). The ordinary forms of justice and law continued to be inapplicable in the Agency and the Collectors were themselves both the civil and criminal tribunal, with further appeal possible to the High Court and Governor-in-Council.

By special grant, zemindars (Oriya chiefs) acted under the Collectors. They paid fees through them after receiving fixed amounts from the Oriya headmen of each Muta, the Muta being a small area with the villages it contained. For example, the Kondmals Sub-Division of only 779 square miles and an average density of population of 110 persons to the square mile, has 50 such Muta Heads. This is a hereditary office. The succession does not go out of the family though the next of kin is occasionally set aside in favour of a more competent relative. The administration holds them responsible for good order in the Muta, and the Konds seem to have obeyed willingly enough, if in rather an unrelated fashion, and to have provided them with the requisite tribute levied on each village.
To the Konds, these forms of administration were, and are, of course imposed from outside. Their own traditional system centres on the clan or *gossi*. These are exogamous groups, for the members of each *gossi* believe that they are descended from a common ancestor. The Imperial Gazetteer of 1908 states that it was the practice for them each to bear the name of an animal or plant common in the locality. This accords with Macpherson's much earlier findings in 1837:

'Kond names (of clans and branches) seem to be universally taken from natural objects, never expressing qualities. Thus, there is the 'Keenga', or Fish (clan); the Janinga, or Crab (clan); the Pochangla, or Owl; the Syalinga or Spotted Deer (clan); the Grango, or Nilgan.' 1

No totems or emblems of these animals were evidently observed nor their existence apparently realised by Macpherson or subsequent Europeans from 1837 until 1955. Stevenson, the Commissioner in Goomsur, had indeed learned of their existence when he made the very first tour of the Goomsur section of the Kond Hills between the two sessions of war in 1836. His sudden death, even before his notes were published in the Madras Journal, seems to have caused this aspect of Kond culture to be lost with him for well over a century. For, apart from that one mention by him, it seems that the Kond clans who used these emblems (i.e. the east-central area) took care to shroud them in a respectful privacy until the Konds suddenly turned to Christianity in the mid-1950's. The manner and significance of these bronze emblems will be discussed fully in Chapter V. Meanwhile so complete was the Kond silence regarding them that Verrier Elwin could write as late as 1951:

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'In India, totemism has failed, rather remarkably, to exercise any influence on tribal art. Many tribes are still totemic in a faded sort of way, and we might well have expected to find representations of the totem animal or plant on walls and pillars or at the very least in tattoo patterns. But this is not the case; you may go to a Gond house where the family totem is a dog or a Kond house where it is a peacock, but never a carving or a picture will you find. This sort of thing has long been a source of disappointment to anthropologists.

The only tribe which honours its totems artistically, so far as I know, is the Uraon....' 1

The clan, or goosi, head is representative of the common ancestor, but the succession may pass to whichever member of his house appears the most competent. This rejection of one and acceptance of another is not done in any formal way; one is quietly passed over or gradually superseded while the other comes into general acceptance. The direct ancient line is, however, remembered and restored when a suitable son appears. This office carries no outward trappings or rank nor does he receive tribute, for he is simply the first among equals, living by the cultivation of his ancestral land like his fellows. Nevertheless, his is the place of dignity on every ritual or public occasion. In the old days he led in war, and is still generally responsible for the relationship of his clan to other clans and to the Oriya zemindaries. He convenes any council of lineage heads, or even in an emergency, of the whole clan, by sending out Pan messengers to every village in the goosi; yet once he has gathered the required assembly at the place appointed - usually a time-consuming exercise with many loud-voiced explanations and apologies - his position during its session is of no more importance than that of the inner circle of lineage-heads. Behind these lineage heads

A Kond village elder with typical top-knot and beard-knot.
there is also a distinct organisation within every village, with a
Kond headman, a lay ritual officiant (darni keeper), possibly also
a priest, and a local council made up of the head of each family in
the village or hamlet. Priest and darni keeper are normal members
of this council which must indeed have functioned throughout many
centuries of Kond pre-history.

Bannerman, Magistrate for the whole of Ganjam District in the
early 1840's - whom history reveals as being far from sensitive to
Kond values (see Chapter II) - regarded the Konds as lawless savages
and saw no value in their decentralised and thoroughly democratic
principles. His report to the Madras Government dated 6th February,
1841, reads:

'... in my humble opinion (the Government) must be prepared
to authorize such measures as may become necessary for bringing
these tribes under subjection to their authority. Unfortunately
no Khond chiefs, possessing any power and influence with whom
to negotiate (sic) are to be found throughout the entire range.
Each Khond hamlet is separate and independent, and the circum-
stances of their being no authority among them, which could be
held responsible or be employed to influence or control the
acts of the rest, adds much to the difficulty of the task.'

With the Konds' predilection for warfare, led by the clan head
himself, their system must indeed have led to confusion when it
temporarily disorganised the government-imposed Muta system by sudden
feuds and clan wars. But Bannerman is conveniently forgetting that
only four years previously the East India Company's British officers
had systematically hanged every clan head in Goomsur who had survived
the two terrible campaigns of the Goomsur Wars. Macpherson's
letters of that period mention that the various clans (Deer, Owl,
Bear, etc.) suffered very extensive permanent disorganisation during
the wars and became much more intermingled, so that the clan

subsequently formed more of a social body with natural affinity as the chief bond. Thus would occur the rise in importance of the localized lineage sub-groups as found throughout the Kond Hills today. Certainly at local level the Konds' own village council has retained its useful function right down the years. It does not seek to distinguish between its judicial and its deliberative functions. It meets in exactly the same way whether to allocate the blame when a man's goats break through the fence to demolish a neighbour's produce - possibly fining both parties if it were known to be a poorly-made fence - or whether to debate an accusation of witchcraft, or even in the late 1950's and the 1960's, to come to a joint decision whether or not to reject the faith of their fathers and turn to Christianity. It is as true today as it was in Macpherson's time (1836-1847) that ordinary members of Kond society, women as well as men, have the free right to be present and to voice opinions, though heads of households probably make most of the ultimate decisions.

Thus gossi members usually live within their own boundaries, and certainly wish to die there. In Hunter's description of Dravidian ethnology, he maintains that:

'The Khond gochi (gossi) appears therefore to represent the nearest approach that has yet been discovered (i.e. 1885) to the local exogamous tribe ¹, believed.... to be the primitive unit of human society.' ²

Though the Oriya zemindars extorted more in taxes than they were required to pass on, the British administration gained little revenue from the Kond Hills throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. The Konds paid no land rent, but a tax of

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1 Hunter here uses 'tribe' where I use 'clan'.

three annas per plough was collected as a road fund, to which an equal amount was contributed by the administration. It was reported in the 1908 Gazetteer that 508 miles of 'road' existed in the Agency; but nearly half of it was not practicable even for ox-carts. Only 84 miles was metalled (and none, of course, tarred). The metalled stretches were from Kalingia to the Kondmals (Bengal) frontier, and the road westward from Kalingia, through G. Udayagiri to Balliguda. Had it been maintained, the old military road southwards, from Balliguda to Parlakimedi would have been a most useful link as it passed through the heart of the wildest area, but a series of steep ghats made it impracticable for ox-carts. By 1908 there were six routes up from the plains, only two or three of which were practicable for carts in the dry season though all were passable to the baggage elephants allocated to European officers, who themselves usually travelled on horseback.

The rural police in the Agency comprised chowkidars (i.e. the Watch) who were remunerated by service lands. The Kondmals (Bengal) had a separate sub-jail at Phulbani with accommodation for 14 prisoners, while Ganjam District had an Assistant Superintendent of Police on the plains at Russelkonda, with a small jail built there to save hill-convicts from the invariable fever-attacks they always contracted at the coast jail. Serious crime, however, was reported to be rare, and petty offences were dealt with by village headmen - the Konds having in 1908, as both earlier and later, a reputation for honesty and truthfulness, and some of the Pans being notorious thieves. Litigation was extremely rare (only 1:3,000 in the Agency at that time). Differences were settled in traditional fashion, for within the political system there have long been four ways of learning the 'truth' about a situation that has become disordered and therefore a danger
to the community: these are divination, trance, oaths and trials by ordeal. Only thus, the Konds felt, could they determine the necessary step to reintroduce 'order' and thus gain a fair chance of returning to a state of wellbeing, whether the situation by western definition were social, economic, medical or political. The following recent description of trial by ordeal shows the Goomsur Konds' implicit faith in their belief that Bura, the Supreme God, would see justice done but it also shows the overwhelming importance of the corporate identity within a lineage group. This is made explicit, for instance, in the prayer of the brother or cousin who unquestioningly stands in for the accused woman although she is now married into another (the accuser's) lineage. The tabulating of this trial by ordeal follows the format that will be found later in connection with all the Kond rituals quoted in this study and in its associated volume of appendices. This description of a trial was given during a discussion in 1966. Other forms of ordeal will be found in the Appendix.

TRIAL BY ORDEAL

KANDA TAKA - WALKING THE FIRE TRENCH

TIME: Following an accusation of witchcraft, sorcery or adultery, e.g. when a husband accused his wife of consistent adultery, to justify herself she asked him for trial by ordeal, "Walk the fiery trench", he said, and she replied: "All right, I will", and went off to her parents' home and told the whole story. Her parents said: "If you have not committed adultery we will undertake this ordeal". She declared strongly: "I have not become adulterous!"

SPECIALISTS & THEIR ACTIONS OTHERS INVOLVED

1. The head of the sick (betwitched) person's house or the father or kinsman of the adulterous woman gather the village for a council.

2. Then if the accuser says: "You must undergo trial by ordeal. I will scatter the rice-grains for you. If the fire doesn't burn you, I will give you a buffalo, rice, metal pots and rupees for my shame's sake; moreover I will bless you", - then, they prepare.
That evening:

3. One or perhaps two men of the accused's lineage collect some rice and an egg.

Next morning:

4. These two go up the hill (to the forest) and offer the rice and egg with invocation.

5. After standing up again (from squatting) they cut down a large dried up branch of a Sal (hardwood) tree.

6. They carry it back on their shoulders and join their kinsmen.

7. They put the wood down where the trench is to be dug on the panga just outside the accuser's village boundary.

8. One man provides a small and a large pickaxe and new winnowing tray.

9. They go to bathe and return in their damp clothes.

10. and begin to dig the fire-trench.

11. They pick up little bits of kindling and light the fire.

12. When the embers are red hot the people of both sides gather and listen intently twice over to the accuser's charge.

13. One of the woman's (or sorcerer's) kinsmen who has bathed ritually comes to stand near the trench.

14. Holding some rice over the trench and praying, he invokes Bura God 1

15. and scatters the rice.

16. He anoints his feet with castor oil.

17. and puts 7 Palal leaves under his feet, winding them round with new thread.

18. Then he lifts his battle axe to his shoulder

19. gives a Johari greeting on all 4 sides

20. and steps into the trench.

21. He walks through the fire 7 times,

22. while another man keeps on fanning it with the new winnowing tray.

23. If he can't manage 7 times he comes out quickly.

Then the people know that the woman (or sorcerer) has committed the misdeed! If she/he is innocent nothing will happen to him.

24. "She/he has done wrong. You accused without cause," they say,

25. and immediately make him give the promised buffalo and rice.

26. The woman goes to stay at her father's house for a while.

Afterwards her husband comes to take her back home.

Though traditional forms of trial by ordeal have been officially suppressed, they still occasionally take place. 2 On the other hand,

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1 Invocation: "O high Bura God!

We are undertaking this ordeal to justify our daughter.

If our daughter has sinned

May I be burned as I walk this trench.

If there is no sin, may I not be burned!"

2 Burned or scalded victims occasionally attend hospital for treatment; and an accusation of adultery was tested by the fiery trench ordeal in 1958 only a few hundred yards from the Baptist Mission, right beside the main road.
since their suppression, costly and lengthy litigation in Oriya courts has risen to remarkably high proportions for such an economically poor and backward people. Moreover, as these court cases often deteriorate into a test to see who can pay the most for his defence, the decision is rarely acceptable to the family of the loser. Thus a feud continues and grows, where under the traditional jurisdiction of the elders it would have ended, with adequate recompense from one party to the other, all sealed by shared drinking and feasting along with the elders' council.

The Goomsur Konds' ability to make a collective moral decision free from all outside interference or guidance, was evidenced in 1846 when they united to reject the evils of worshipping the Earth Goddess by human sacrifice and acknowledge Bura God to be not only the Source of all good but Supreme over all other gods (see Chapter II). In 1910 descendants of these same gossa showed themselves equally able to assess a situation, and then to make and uphold their own decision about it. In its desire to increase the Excise revenue, the Administration had banned home-stills in the Agency tracts forty years previously in favour of licensed drink-sellers' shops (Oriya) in the Oriya administrative centres. Now in 1910 when Millman, one of the B.M.S. missionaries, was passing through the wilds of the Phulbandi area:

"he came upon a never dreamed of sight - 200 headmen of villages and districts representing 46,000 Konds, in a circle, in an extraordinary Council. Presently one of them rose and, with a sweep of his arms round the horizon, said:

"Once these wooded hills were ours, as they were our fathers before us. But whose are they now? Are they not the drink-sellers, who hold them as payment for the drink which is our curse? Let us be done with it. Soon the annual sales of the licenses are to be held. Let us petition the Government to close them, and regain our freedom."
Then another rose and said:

"Look at our children without food and clothing in the cold weather! What is the cause of this? Is it not our love for the Mahua spirit?"

And another:

"Once our land was famed for its hunters and strong men. Now we are weaklings and slaves. Let us break the chains that destroy us."

Many another joined in similar confession and appeal, till at length an old chief came forward into the centre of the ring, where was a huge vessel full of the fiery spirit. He asked if all were in favour of the resolution, and the answer was unanimous. Then, taking a bamboo-staff, he smote the vessel, and the liquor was spilled, and he said:

"If any man break his vow solemnly taken this day, let his life be broken like this vessel, and come to naught, like the disappearance of this drink."

Within weeks in that year of 1910, this account came to be published in The Statesman, (Autumn, 1910) Calcutta's most important newspaper. Such interest was roused that the reluctant Revenue Department was obliged to bow to public demand by making a thorough investigation. They were so impressed with the Konds' sincerity that drink-shop licences were caused to lapse and prohibition came into force. Since prohibition special licence for distilling is, however, obtainable for all the Konds' major ritual purposes.

An important factor in any assessment of administration in the Agency is the attitude of the ordinary Oriya Government Officer. In 1908, L.S.S. O'Malley of the Bengal Secretariat, wrote:

'The tract is so unhealthy that outsiders fear to visit it, and it is reported that the ordinary Oriya of the plains regards service in it as almost equivalent to a death sentence.'

This same feeling has prevailed until very recent years. Many regard service there as a penalty from which one must attempt to be delivered by transfer as soon as, or even before, arrival from the plains; and

2 So much for Bannerman's indictment that there were no Kond chiefs possessing sufficient power and influence with whom one could 'negociate'.
this in spite of a special pay allowance in the Agency. This outlook, and the consequent rapid change in administrative personnel, is another disrupting factor in relations between the people of the hills and of the plains.

One of the greatest differences, however, between the Kui people and the Hindus of the plains is the fact that not caste but clan or lineage group is the most important social unit. We shall consider now the place of the family and some of those within it.

(e) **The Kui Family**

The devastation caused by the Goomsur Wars had changed the emphasis for the Konds, from loyalty to the whole clan to loyalty to their lineage sub-group or **kutum** (loosely translated as blood-kin). Each member's importance as an individual is subordinate to his position within this group; it is an inescapable duty to fulfil the role laid down by one's birth. The **gossi**, or clan, is made up of a number of these lineage groups; and in times past, when warfare was the common way of life, the **gossi** was the unit of greater practical importance. All lineage groups within a clan consider themselves to be descended from a common ancestor and therefore **agnatic kin**. They may not intermarry, and in former days were allies in war, never enemies. Being thus **exogamous**, each clan finds its marriage partners from non-related 'enemy' clans - or as the vernacular term indicates, 'bride-capturing-people' (seri alpa loku). Maqpherson highlighted one aspect of this in the mid-nineteenth century when he noted the peace-making role of wives following clan warfare, because they alone had roots in both sides (see Appendix: Ritual for Warfare).
Lineage groups observe the same institutions as the clan. Hence, as Bailey states, Kond migrants moving from one locality to another within the larger agnatic group are welcomed, given land for a house, and allowed freely to make fields for themselves from the clan's common waste-land. But he points to one significant difference: it is the localised group - not the entire dispersed clan - that is placed ritually in danger if anyone defiles the Earth, for instance, by incest committed on clan territory. Thus Bailey describes the agnatic kin group as being expressed in three institutions: warfare (now reduced simply to land-holding); exogamy; and the cult of the Earth, centred on the localised land-holding unit. Previously, he thinks, the cult of the Mountain was also important but this has died out, leaving simply some form of village cult. Bailey's analysis falls decidedly short on this third and cultic aspect. He states that the cult of the Earth is still alive, but only in its negative form, that of defilement, and then remarks:

'Among the vast array of gods and godlings presented by Macpherson, there must have been some that acted as ritual foci for the clan, but I have been able to get at no more than the fringe of this system.'

Bailey's concern was with the socio-political relationships between Oriyas and the groups of Oriya-influenced Konds found in the north-eastern Kondmals area: an interest which naturally led him to work in the Oriya language. Thus though his background material regarding the general economic and social structure of the Konds is valuable for this present study, his material on Kond religious beliefs is of more limited value for neither his purpose nor his

1 F.C. Bailey, Tribe, Caste and Nation, p.52.
linguistic equipment led him into this field. Though the cult of the Earth in its negative aspect continues through the Kedu-buffalo Sacrifice (replacing the human victim since the mid-nineteenth century) as well as in a host of pollution beliefs, positive rituals to promote the wellbeing of lineage group, household and village community are frequently and regularly addressed to the clan ancestors and to Bura God of Light, the Creator and Sustainer; and for many of these rituals the household head is officiant, without need of intermediary priest.

The word kutum may also mean simply the family group living in neighbouring houses within the same village until, in the case of the girls, marriage into their husband's home separates them. This system has a permanence greater than the individual and it provides households with group support and protection against all too frequent ill-fortune.

Patrilineal descent is the rule with all Kui people. It is usual for the wife to be chosen from another village but there is no law of territorial exogamy; so occasionally she may be from a different kutum in the same village-group. Incest taboos are extremely strong for incest defiles Teri Penu, the Earth Goddess, who would make fearful reprisals. Cousin marriage on either the maternal or paternal side is considered totally impossible, and the taboo includes everyone of any race who dwells in that gosai-area. In one case where there was an elopement of first-cousins, they were excommunicated from both the kutum and the village and were compelled to seek shelter many miles away. Many years later, after the marriage had repeatedly broken down and the woman was left with a ten-year old daughter to support, she was still not received into her own village. Though she returned in desperation to the district a number of times, she never achieved
more than a night or two's temporary resting place on the dried-mud verandah of a house in a nearby village, and that only by the remarkable compassion and independence of a Pan Christian housewife there. Subsequently the unhappy woman formed a liaison with an Oriya trader in a distant settlement. The value of this taboo against cousin marriage may be to decrease possible weaknesses in the kutum or to prevent sexual associations which would disrupt the kinship unit and make untenable certain positions of responsibility that are held not only by parents but by brothers and sisters of parents toward children of legitimate union. It is hard to say which of these reasons is uppermost, for the invariable reply to the query is simply and finally: 'It cannot be so!'

The whole of childhood is a preparation for marriage and community participation. The girl must prepare to function worthily within her husband's family and to continue his line by bearing and caring for his children. The boy must prepare for fully responsible behaviour toward his household and the wider community. Physically for the girl, preparation begins about the age of seven (i.e. 'when the teeth have fallen') with the piercing of many holes right round the lobes of the ears. Split-bamboo insertions keep these open until marriage, when her husband presents her with a dozen or more rings to fix in each lobe. At about ten years old, the upper half of her face is tattooed:

'First of all the girl's father goes to the duberi (an older woman-practitioner) and fixes the day. He calls the priest to perform a care-ritual for the girl. For some people the priest says that a chicken, and for others a piglet, must be sacrificed with the invocation: "May she not suffer from fevers!" On the appointed day her womenfolk prepare rice-'cakes', rice and curry and various food-stuffs for the girl, and give her it all to eat. Then mature girls and women gather together and take the girl (often several candidates together) to a secret place in the jungle to meet the duberi.
Then they feed the child on spirits, opium and hashish (ganje) to make her drunk so that she will not feel the pain. The dubari prepares her equipment and makes the girl lie down on her back. First she draws lines on the brow and both cheeks with wood-ash; then all the women press the child down and hold her. The dubari ties three needles together and pours her with them along the marked lines. (Verb used for pounding paddy). Then the girl makes a great outcry. When blood comes, the dubari wipes it with a bit of cloth, and pours in a little soot. She pounds in this manner until the brow and both cheeks are completed. Then they carry her pick-a-back to the dangeri-house (young people’s dormitory). This first time is known as “the forehead and nose tattooing”. The following day they bathe the girl’s faces with warm water and rub (Lit: “grind”) each with “tattooing grasses” which they have brought and thus anoint her sores for her. This is because they believe that if the tattoo markings do not produce sores and then drink (the grass-dye) well, the tattooing will not be well marked. They keep on anointing her in this way until they all heal up. Her face will be swollen for a full week. She won’t be able to eat properly. No vegetables nor relishes must be given to her; she only has water, powdered linseed and powdered mustard-seed for her meals. These girls are not allowed into the front street, only the back. The following year they do “the chin tattooing” in the same way. Any woman who has not been tattooed may never be a village shrine-keeper’s wife; also, so folk say, “such women know how to turn into tigers” — so for both reasons, potential husbands will not take them. So parents say to their reluctant daughters: “Would you refuse to be tattooed? Do you want to become a tiger-transformationist?” The men maintain that there was once a Rajah of Goomsur who had such an eye for Kond women that they had to start the practice of tattooing to make them less desirable to him and thus stop his raids.

Nowadays no schoolgirl would allow it, but some illiterate girls still desire it and will slip off with others of their age-group to a planned rendez-vous in the jungle. Nevertheless, the custom is dying out as many forms of change creep in and break up the fundamental unity of the Kui people. The design of the tattooing does not appear to vary among the clans. Only between east and west is there one slight variation: the circles each side of the mouth in the east are replaced by three lines in the western version; these are said to be in likeness to the tiger’s whiskers. As the facial skin of most ten year old girls is still comparatively pale, the new tattooing shows up with considerable effect and is considered a definite
enhancement to beauty as well as a happy sign of approaching maturity and thus the necessary fulfilment of marriage and children.

There is no tradition of sexual continence before marriage. The village dormitory system is traditionally the beginning of sex experience for young people.

'Behaviour in the dangari idu, the sleeping hut for maturing unmarried girls, varies slightly with the area; but to all, the young men came visiting from their dormitory in a neighbouring village. There is talking, singing, dancing and merry-making late into the night before settling to sleep. In some places a girl might then be chosen and carried off to the boy's home. Her parents may or may not know on that first occasion, but about a week after finding out, the girl's father and uncles visit the boy's home, receive a token gift, and settle the full amount to be given in due course. Only the rich would then go to the expense of a wedding, for the matter is already acceptably settled. In other dormitories, however, the young folk lie down boy and girl alternately. Any interested couple lie side by side, facing each other. During the night if the boy seeks intercourse with the girl, he will put his leg over her thigh. If she is unwilling, she simply pushes it back and he makes no more advances. If she is willing, they might repeat the act of intercourse twice or three times in the night. "There is no shame", they say, "for others are close by - and they will be fast asleep anyway!" If the girl becomes pregnant under these circumstances, the boy never refuses to marry her. Often no pregnancy results from this premarital freedom, yet children are readily born to the same girls after marriage."

In this latter form of dormitory visiting, a boy may wish to marry a girl he has met in this way, even though she has not become pregnant.

If so:

"He takes a friend to her village, reaching there by dusk. They walk up and down the street indulging in a little play-acting, while some of the villagers ask them what they are seeking. They make their request and are taken to the girl's house. She and a girl friend come into the house and the conversation proper begins. Questions are asked and answered, not by the young people who want each other, but by the two friends. If all goes well, the parents of the girl and (related) men of the village are called in. They in turn ask the boy what he wants; the answer comes from his friend. The girl is asked

1 From correspondence with Dr. S. F. Thomas, Medical Superintendent of the Moorshead Memorial Christian Hospital, Gudivadri, G. Udayagiri, following discussion with male and female hospital staff.
if she will go to him; the answer comes from her friend as a rhetorical question: "If you send her, how should she not go?". Next, they ask the girl herself and she makes the same reply. At this point the men of the village make a formal request to the two visitors for money to buy spirit, the siti (lit: "You have given") liquor. From that moment the two young people are regarded as married. The boy is hence-forward free to visit the house and lie with her as much as he pleases. The betrothal and wedding are arranged for convenient occasions in the future. Probably this will be around harvest time when rice is plentiful, for great numbers will gather at the two wedding feasts which are held on consecutive days in the bride's and groom's villages.

Marriage resulting from this dormitory system seems to be on the basis of mutual attraction, but only if it is within the requirement of Kond with Kond and Pan with Pan. As already mentioned, a Kond man will not take a Pan wife though occasionally Pan men have taken Kond women - probably through elopement in the first instance, followed later by partial recognition from the Kond family.

In a paper which he read to the Asiatic Society of Bengal on 7 September, 1899, J.E. Friend-Pereira said:

'To a people like the Khonds, among whom real courtship and a reciprocal feeling of affection form the preliminaries to marriage, (love) becomes the great topic of song. It is appropriate that a love-song should take the first place in a paper like this.

The Wooing

"Gladden my heart, (lit: 'liver')
Today is the (fateful) day.
Move your body in dance,
Here in this place.
Why do you decline, my darling,
For what reason do you decline?
My love, gladden my mind,
And shed lustre on your country.

With the happy eyes of a titeri bird
We shall see you dance;
With the happy eyes of a joseri bird
We shall watch you posture.
Move the joints of your body
Move both your arms.

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1 Dr. S.F. Thomas, ibid.
(Top) Unmarried girls and boys on their way to a festival. Note their traditional Kond cloths and silver head and neck-bands.

(Below) Unmarried girls dance for their drummer-guests.
Your mother having given birth to you,
Dance gracefully;
Your father having produced you,
Dance rhythmically,
Come, my beloved,
I shall tie up your kan-d woven cloth round your waist;
Come, my beloved,
I shall tie up your Kond-woven cloth round your waist;
On your account we have come in;
To fulfil your desire we have come;

... Your (intended) husband has come;
You are the millet-stalk, and I the grains you bear.
On your account I will take a great she-buffalo,
On your account I will take a great he-buffalo;
Both our people will go together.
On account of my great love (for you)
I cannot leave you....
(Then brass pots and other items of the bride-gift are offered)
I cannot, will not, leave ....
I will take you to my dwelling,
I will take you to my house.*

* The preliminary to a dance. The girls come forward bashfully and their sweethearts, if they have any, or their brothers or cousins, proceed to unwind the cloth from their shoulder and tie it round their waist, to leave a streamer floating behind, which wags about like a tail during the movements of the dance.

Some, however, who formed deep ties in the dormitory confine them to the pre-marital relationships which are still common in outlying villages. There is a solid awareness, even among young people that 'marriage is for keeps' and that:

'It involves a partnership both of kinship groups and of a man and woman prepared consistently to struggle together against the elements to provide adequate food and shelter for their young. So their elders say: 'Kui folk don't look for a beautiful woman; they look for an industrious housewife' and on that basis they seek suitable partners for their children. Nevertheless, early attachments may prove so deep that when the first son is born within this kin-arranged marriage, the young mother nostalgically names him after her previous lover - or the young father similarly names his daughter after his previous beloved. This is with the full knowledge and permission of the marriage partner. Perhaps in the very openness and unstrained acceptance of the situation lies not only healing but a positive deepening of the permanent marriage relationship.

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Thus marriage for the majority is a matter of group selection on a basis of permanence. It involves a re-arrangement of the social structure in four new areas or relationship: the husband's kin with the wife's kin; the husband's kin with the wife herself; the husband himself with the wife's kin; and the husband and wife's own partnership.  

Only comparatively recently has the right to refuse someone of the family's choice begun to be exercised by either partner.

Always, the bride enters the husband's family home. Then, if he be one of the elder sons, a separate house will be built near at hand when it becomes financially possible or when an increasing number of children make it imperative. The youngest son inherits the family house, along with the responsibility of caring for his widowed mother. His bride therefore brings up all her children there, becoming in her time, if widowed, dependent on her youngest son until death. Though her blood ties with her own family group remain very strong, and she and her husband and children share much social intercourse with the maternal family, the woman belongs to her husband's family from the time of her marriage. In the event of widowhood, even if she should sometimes return for long periods to her childhood home, she is nevertheless part of the husband's family unit. This is essentially so at the time of any family celebration, sacrifice or special occasion; moreover she has no rights over her children comparable with those held by the husband's family.

Throughout their life together, a husband and wife will never speak each other's names; they use more general terms such as 'the man/woman of our home' or 'our boy's father/mother'. Moreover, a

woman may not speak the name of any of her husband's younger brothers, for if she were widowed, she might have to marry one of them. Russell and Hira Lal mention this fact earlier in the century and the taboo still holds strongly today. Earlier still, in the 1840's, Macpherson had noted that when a bride comes to live with her bridgroom in the home of his parents, her husband's younger brothers are also permitted access to her until the time of their own marriage. Thus from the beginning husbands' younger brothers were viewed almost as 'little husbands'. It is not surprising, then, that these younger brothers used to come out to meet the bride on her arrival, symbolically yoke her with a cattle-yoke and drive her into the house!

Child betrothal (from the age of three or four) is steadily decreasing. A small sum of money or a buffalo is given initially. Later, the girl may come to live in the boy's home ready to become his wife as soon as she matures, and the bride-wealth is given. Bride-wealth is still common in both Christian and traditional marriages. It serves to legalise the union and stabilise the bride's position. Nowadays, increasingly high cash-transactions are replacing the former gifts of buffalo, brass vessels, etc. Situations now occur when a Pan father, after one offer, may receive a higher bid and return the first, with disastrous consequences in group relationships. More often the complication for Christian parents arises through the custom of giving and receiving liquor to seal the betrothal, and again at the marriage feasts. Many non-Christian guests are involved. These naturally expect full hospitality to include a plentiful distribution of liquor. Anything less is an

insult to the opposite kin-group. Liquor-drinking is forbidden by Church rule, but non-Christians can see no reason why abstaining Christian relatives should not at least pay their appointed share towards it. Indeed, at the wedding of one of the Union pastors, attended by several Union officers, non-Christians requested Rs. 25 from the Church for this purpose, as being *in loco parentis* to the pastor! It is still a social necessity to go to great expense for weddings. Often this 'prestige borrowing' amounts to a debt far beyond the household's yearly resources. Thus there is no fear that polygyny will be practised to a point that upsets the ratio of marriage-able men and women; for only the richest landowners can afford bride-wealth and a wedding for more than one wife. Rarely more than two men in any village possess two wives, and even more rarely, three wives.

After the very expensive initial outlay, these wives become an economic asset. They are essential for organising the husband's labour bands, and they themselves lead the way in many agricultural processes. In fact, they increase their husband's wealth in ways peculiar to the position of landowner's wife in the community pattern of work. So even though childless, they are not turned out as a poorer man's childless wife might be. On the other hand, the landowners need plenty of children to continue to possess the land in the future. Hence, to ensure this and to avoid the possibility of being left without heirs to rehabilitate one's spirit as an ancestor after death, a rich Kond in the south-west area may start down-payments for a second wife one year after marrying the first. Complications may arise later if the community becomes Christian but he and all his wives are baptised together, none taking precedence, and all become full church members. The function and responsibility of a wife, then, are two-fold: first, the reproduction and upbringing of both boy and girl
children; and second, the consistent shouldering of responsibility for all work that falls to her within the recognised pattern for the division of the sexes - the richer the husband, the greater the wife's share. This two-fold responsibility notwithstanding, she must always set her husband's welfare and wishes before all else. In marriages where no children or only girls are born, the wife may press for the adoption of a son of the husband's younger brother. 'otherwise my husband's name will be wiped out', she says. After the transaction, the child must not be given food in his old home, or in any way be treated as a son there. If a true son be born later, the inheritance goes to him, though usually the foster-parents continue to love and provide for the adopted son.

Prostitution appears to have been unknown in Kui village society but is found occasionally today on the fringes of Oriya settlements such as G. Udayagiri, Phulbani, etc. where there is an increasing number of trading and office personnel and a moving population of both Oriya and Kui people. In the villages, adultery is not uncommon and is considered to be a more serious act on the part of a wife than a husband. If she should elope with another man, the original marriage is annulled and the husband is free to look for another wife to care for his children. The return of the bride-wealth, probably doubled, or payment of some kind would be demanded from the first wife's family. If, on the other hand, the husband is the guilty party, the wife may simply return to her own home, with no return of bride-wealth. In such a case, young children go with their mother, but as they grow up, the husband's family may take free control over them at any time they wish.

Laws of inheritance are clear-cut and binding. At the death of the father, all his fields, draught animals and household possessions
are divided equally among the sons, except that the eldest son
receives an extra paddy field. The house, as already stated, must
go to the youngest son, however large or costly it is, and there
the widow dwells with him. Daughters share between them the family
jewellery but never inherit land, house, cattle, nor the family’s
wild fruit trees in the jungle. Until marriage, orphaned girls are
cared for by the nearest male relative, and after marriage an annual
share of all the family’s crops is due to them. Neither have they
the power to sell any of their father’s possessions, whereas the male
relatives may do so over the daughters’ heads – if they are prepared
to fly in the face of public opinion.

Thus, man in Kui society has meaning primarily as a member of a
group. His loyalty to, and place within, the kinship group goes
without question, and governs the life of traditional Kond or Christian
alike. His secondary involvement is in the village community where
similarly prescribed patterns are laid down for him. These regulate
both his community commitments and his personal behaviour. The two
groups give him that security against the predacious supernatural
world and the hardships of his natural surroundings which he could not
find alone. Thus, his greatest freedom is found within the discipline
of a corporate approach to both worlds, the natural and the supernatural.

Social Distinctions. Though there is no caste system as with Hindus,
an observance called bisa exists strongly among the Konds in some
villages. It arises from the religious idea of defilement and is,
therefore, most clearly observable in connection with cooking, eating
and marriage. Priests and shrine-keepers must keep themselves pure
from even the most strict Konds; the Konds from the highest group of
Fans; and so on through several degrees of Fans to the Gahi (sweeper)
group. No other group will mingle at the deepest social levels with this last group - very few in number in the hill-tracts - whose work for the community includes the disposal of animal carcases and the retrieving of gold ornaments, teeth fillings, etc. from corpses on the funeral pyre. (This service is performed by Pans in the absence of Sahis.) The Kond community is happy, however, to join in the liquor-drinking after these items are turned into cash - though the participants sit in separate groups.

Previously status was also closely identified with bisa, but new values are creeping in. Land ownership is everywhere a matter for prestige. Rich Konds of the western region increase their number of buffalo and other cattle but do not buy gold ornaments to raise their women above other women as do the Pans of the south-west and all peoples of the Udayagiri side. Larger and higher houses with carved doors and posts (costing as much as Rs. 50 per door in 1966) and the possession of large brass vessels are a similar sign of wealth throughout the hills. The largest size of brass cooking-pot is perhaps the supreme symbol, valued some years ago at about Rs. 120 (equal to more than three months pay for an ordinary worker). They are only used on festal occasions, yet every member of the village knows they are there, the hereditary possessions of one family, neither to be pawned nor sold except in an extremity of need.

In all these aspects of family life, in its births, marriages and deaths as in its daily toil, the Kui concept is of a membership that is as aware of the presence of the living-dead as it is of those living now; for one's ancestors are as deeply concerned as are their present representatives in all things, whether it be a bisa taboo or the ploughing of a hill-plot.
Descriptions of the rituals attendant upon family life will be found in the Appendix in Vol. II. These concern birth, the growing child, marriage, the taking of a second wife, 'normal' death and the rituals specially concerned with the dangers of the 'Unripe (unforseen) Deaths'.

Family units are also hand-working teams as they constantly seek to wrest a living from their often harsh environment. We look now at the nature and methods of their daily and seasonal work.

(f) The Konds and Their Natural Resources

Accounts of the physical features of the hills or of the language, administration or other structures of the Konds are of limited value without at least a brief discussion of how they use their environmental resources and conditions. The following account discusses the nature of Kond production and their attitudes and methods in relation to their resources. The focus is upon what it means to be a Kond in this environment.

The Nature of Kond Production

Macpherson's first impressions of the economy of the Konds in 1836-37 were that they maintained self-contained village communities; that they engaged in the cultivation of hill-plots and, in certain eastern areas, paddy fields; that they supplemented their food by hunting or gathering wild produce in season; but that they had very little traffic with the lowlands. By the middle of the 1840's he realised that there was considerably more traffic than he had supposed. Annually, he states, ¹ about 10,000 bullock loads of turmeric and about 4,000 loads of other products were sent down through the agency

of Pan middlemen. These products comprised fairly small quantities of tamarind, mustard seed, arrowroot, ginger, wadding from the wild silk-cotton tree, beeswax, wild honey, red and yellow dye, red peppers, sweet potatoes and pulses. In return, certain commodities were brought back from the lowlands for the Konds: salt, tiny salt-fish, iron, cattle, brass vessels and ornaments, coarse red and white cloth, cheap print cloth, beads etc. There were eight very steep and rought foot-tracks for these traders, at points spread along the eastern escarpment. Macpherson's general view was that of later British officers: that there was very little of value to be gained from the Kond hill-tracts.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the British administration began to exploit the timber potential in the foothills. The historian, Hunter, reported in the Gazetteer in 1885 \(^1\) that Sal (Shorea Robusta, a teak-like hardwood) was the most valuable tree in the extensive forests. The difficult terrain, however, made it impossible to move except from the eastern escarpment, whence it was floated down the rivers of the coastal plains. Other jungle products continued to be collected by the Kui people and sold to low-country merchants. These, Hunter states \(^2\), were beeswax, honey, turmeric and myrobalan (Terminalia). Contacts, however, remained minimal and were always through Pans, not by Konds. The climate, the shortage of arable land and the generally wild environment discouraged large scale immigration from the plains. As late as 1960 Bailey wrote, concerning the area of greatest Oriya infiltration in the north-east:

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1 W.W. Hunter, Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. V, 1885, p.199
2 Ibid. p.2.
Commerce must rely on a single road, which in fact is adequate, since the Kond mals is relatively poor and backward, has little to offer to the general economy of India, and consequently can take little from it. 1

Nowadays, in addition to the products of Pan weavers and basket makers, and small numbers of potters and iron workers whose trade is largely within the hills, certain cottage industries are being encouraged by the Indian Government. The strong reed sleeping-mats and soft grass sweeping brooms traditionally used by all Kui people find a ready market on the plains. Both are seasonal tasks in which men can engage during the slack season. Also the valuable Sal tree provides not only timber for local building but in season its leaves are collected by the women and children for the manufacture of cigarettes on the plains. (Konds grow their own tobacco and wrap their cigars in these leaves too). Women and girls also collect the large Paeri leaves and stitch them into leaf-plates and deep bowls by means of thinly shredded bamboo 'thread'. Supplies in excess of the year's home and ritual use are traded with the Oriyas. An increasing number of government 'go-downs' near improved cart-tracks aids the collection and sale of these commodities.

It is as a trader that the Pan comes into his own. These traders are of two types: first, men who carry their bundles of (plains) salt-fish and cheap cotton garments from one weekly market to another - for each market has its own day of the week; and secondly, men or women Pans who walk to their nearest market each week taking their village goods with them. If they are weavers these may be the short lengths of locally woven checked cloth used as the common working kilt for Kond and Pan women, or split-bamboo baskets and winnowing trays

1 F.G. Bailey, Caste and the Economic Frontier, p.31.
A new slash-and-burn plot 1,000 ft. above the village.
if from a basket-makers group, or else surplus rice, root-ginger, lentils, etc. Beside them on the ground, blacksmith-traders sell sickles and hoes in season and Oriyas sell cheap mill-made sarees, brass and aluminium cooking pots, sweetmeats and trinkets. The local potters carry in shoulder- poles laden with earthenware cooking pots, though these are also bought directly from the potters' village by Konds requiring them for the frequent ritual occasions when all the household's earthen pots must be renewed for reasons of purification.

In the south-west there are no market-centres, so a Pan man may walk thirty miles to Raikia or Balliguda market to stock up with all the small goods he can carry — soap, matches, small light aluminium eating dishes, hairpins and possibly one or two sarees or dhotis. After sleeping in the open market that night, he returns next day, spreads out his goods in his village for the local Konds and makes a tiny profit on all his effort.

Food resources and the resulting methods of production vary markedly between the eastern and western regions of the hill-tracts. Kalingando is a typical large village, or group of hamlets, with considerable paddy-land beside the road on the eastern side. It has a population of between three and four thousand but their food resources place them in four distinct categories: first, only two or three households have a full year's rice with a surplus for sale to their neighbours. Secondly, a slightly larger number are 'comfortably off' for, given a reasonable monsoon, they can produce on average just enough food for their own needs; that is, they possess about four months' best rice from the wet-fields but also have some dry-fields dependent on rainfall, where varieties of dry-rice, maize and lentils are harvested for about two months both before and after the main paddy crop. This leaves them with only a three-or-four-month hungry
season which can be met by selling their surplus lentils and growing small cash-crops of turmeric and linseed or mustard seed for oil, enabling them to buy rice with the cash so obtained. Thirdly, much the greatest proportion of the village ranks as 'poor ones', being able to raise only one or two month's food from their one or two paddy fields. These live precariously by hired labour, buying rice weekly, when they have the money, at the fluctuating market price. Fourthly, about a quarter of the village ranks as destitute, possessing no fields, thus entirely dependent on being hired for labour. Unless the annual harvest is very good, prices soar and the hungry season for these latter two groups probably stretches from March until mid-September when the maize ripens. Their plight is worsened because the hills in this region are clothed now in secondary scrub-jungle which provides them with less of the edible roots, leaves and fruits than formerly and less game to hunt.

In the western region, as already mentioned, paddy fields are fewer. Most Kond families live by the sweat of hill-plot cultivation, with every age-group playing its part. The men's work of felling the timber and moving the rocks takes place at the height of the hot season; only the strong and well-fed can therefore tackle much of it. After burning the dried brushwood, both men and women clear away the smaller stones and, on the steeper slopes, hand-hoe the hard ground. When the rains arrive hill-lentils are sown. The very young and elderly then guard the sprouting crops throughout each day against birds, monkeys and deer. The same plot can be used for millet or dry-rice the following year then the soil is exhausted. Constantly parallel work must therefore be started on a fresh plot elsewhere. Even the strongest and most hardworking Konds speak of this as immensely hard labour. It permits them no time to make
vegetable gardens behind their houses during the rains when irrigation is no problem. Thus their food has little variety. There is, however, some understanding of food values, for distinctions are made on a basis of labour-needs: men performing the two most exhausting tasks, hill-plot preparation (the majority) and the levelling of wet-paddy fields (the few), need additional maize and lentils; they say: "for these last a long time, whereas rice-soup goes and leaves no stamina".

In appointing a special officer for tribal development the government has sought to encourage paddy cultivation in this western region too.

'A small but slowly increasing number have cleared the jungle in the steep little ravines, then levelled and planted paddy-fields. In the highest area a few constant streams flow from the hills thus providing the previously unknown riches of a rice harvest during the hot season in addition to that at the end of the monsoon. Unfortunately, some of this is also elephant country. Herds of ten or a dozen come up from the forests of the steep ghat overlooking the plains. These eat the ripening paddy and destroy the embankments, so though work is put into raising two crops, the workers reckon on average to lose one or occasionally both of the harvests. Thus in a number of ways the people of this region are even more firmly dominated by their environment than are those of the eastern side.'

All, however, are equally at the mercy of prolonged drought or over-heavy rainfall, both of which destroy the cultivation; and all in times of desperation, when even the laboriously prepared flour from wild mango kernels has been used up, must dry, powder and eat 'cakes' made from the pith of palm-tree trunks. It is something to put in aching empty stomachs, if not to feed and strengthen the eater. The yeasty palm-toddy (very different from the spirits distilled from the mahua flowers) provides valuable sustenance for the men at this

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1 Boal, Fire is Easy, pp.82-83.
time, but it is not drunk by the women and children, nor officially permitted by Church rule.

Kond Attitudes and Methods of Dealing with their Resources

The British Officers who visited the hill-tracts in the mid-nineteenth century described how, for a Kond, the only honourable occupations were cultivating, hunting and warfare - the latter two being seasonal occupations whereas agricultural activities in one form or another continued throughout the year. The Kond has always considered hard labour far from dishonourable; in fact, the man who through excessive drinking (one or two in most villages) or through idleness (rare) fails to support his household, falls under public scorn. His neighbouring householder may appear to be in precisely the same indigent condition without receiving any such scorn, for a series of mishaps and probable ill-health - fully appreciated by the community - have decreased his household's living standards to an extent that renders his physique too poor to tackle the demands of hill-plot labour without repeated attacks of dizziness and fever; thus he sits, compulsorily idle, in the hot (hungry) season when his neighbours go off at dawn for the day's work. They will see that he and his family do not starve but all live too close to the poverty line to do more.

Kond relationship to their land is far more than economic. This will be seen more clearly in subsequent chapters regarding their central rite of the Meriah/Kedu (human/buffalo) sacrifice offered to the Earth Goddess. This and the great number of their agricultural rites concerned with fertility indicate both their outlook and their involvement in the land; for these rites not only incorporate petition to the deities but also express a sense of dependence on the land itself, linking each family almost sacramentally with its own fields and hill-plots.
This attitude has a direct result upon land tenure procedures.
For instance, when new ground is broken, even a small hill-plot, eggs as a fertility symbol are offered to the hill gods; and as year succeeds year, an ear of grain set aside from the previous crop is offered. This is distinct from offerings made to ancestor-spirits who constantly accompany one on such work-occasions. But beyond this, whoever makes a paddy field and wishes to retain it in perpetuity for his blood-descendants may take an oath safeguarding it: "If this be sold, may buyer or seller be smitten with leprosy!" he says as he beats on the ground the branch of a Tursika bush which has leprous-like nodules, or else he drags charred embers from the cremation-ground of a tiger-killed victim while swearing similar death for the purchaser. Sometimes the flat of the hand is simply clapped on the ground and the Plural Action form of the verb is used to embrace the purchaser's entire kin: "Let his whole line be completely destroyed!" (This same oath is used for safe-guarding produce from the wild fruit trees, or for an unusually well-built house when the father desires one son's household rather than another to inherit it.) In all cases people are still afraid to buy such fields or touch such possessions.

The Konds are regarded by the Indian Government as the traditional holders of the land with rights and privileges not given to other inhabitants. They are, however, permitted by law to sell fields among themselves. Where possible the authorities now demand the exchange of a stamped document, but the traditional method also continues. The former owner publicly takes a stalk of thatching grass and swears: "I have sold this field to ... and have received the sum of ... for it. In addition I have received the necessary pig 'for the embankments' and the brass vessel and extra money 'to settle the boundary'. Therefore no one may break this agreement; not my children, descendants,
nor any kinsman coming after me. If anyone annul it, may a tiger maul him and he be snapped in two like this straw!" (suiting the action to the words).

The seller only prockets the exact price for the field. Buyer, seller and their two supporting groups of kinsmen feast from the pig and spend the 'boundary money' on alcohol to conclude the deal. Nowadays money may replace the pig and a token of two or three rupees be given instead of costly brass vessels, thus providing for more liberal quantities of alcohol but not necessarily a feast.

There can be no secret sale of fields for all such transactions are between groups, never between individuals. Land tenure procedures not only of Konds but recently of newly-rich Pans may follow this traditional pattern, but transactions with Oriya settlers always require stamped documents.

The westward movement of paddy cultivation among the Konds following the immigration of Oriya cultivators to the north-east of the hill-tracts about three centuries ago has been slow. Thurston stated in 1909 that 'Konds cultivate paddy mainly in Goomsur only: elsewhere it is in the hands of Oriyas' 1, also that Kimedi (now Balliguda District) was only just beginning to follow the example of Goomsur. He also stated that 'much paddy land has passed to the Oriya distillers (sundi) and low-country money-lenders' 2 in payment for liquor.

Of recent years the Government has made strong efforts to restore these fields lost by Konds to Oriyas during the past generation or two in payment of debts or for cash to buy alcohol. Thus some Konds have been able to plant and harvest the essential rice crop from

1 E. Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, p.356.
2 Ibid.
recovered fields, but the question arises whether these drink-loving Konds retain them for long. Some resell very rapidly. One drunken Kond resold his for a pot of alcohol, to his own subsequent disgust. His friend did likewise for a few rupees: "because we were drunk and wanted another drink!" It is well understood that excessive spirit-drinking impoverishes indirectly as well as directly, not only by cutting down the householder's working days but by decreasing his mental and physical stamina for labouring on the land in the constant struggle to produce sufficient food for his family. Thus his household gradually sinks to the lowest level of Kond status in the village.

Land may also be lost to Oriyas, and now to Fans, through economic inability to build up reserves for times of great expense. A single misadventure perhaps with his ploughing cattle, or a series of costly family occasions during a bad growing season, finds the land-owner defencelessly falling into the hands of money-lenders. He then follows one of two main loan-systems: in one, actual cash is borrowed, and in the second, paddy or husked rice.

In the first, which is usually with Oriyas, a field is mortgaged for perhaps Rs. 100. Interest must be paid at 25% per annum (an improvement on an earlier 50%). If the borrower cannot repay both principal and interest at the year's end, the creditor cultivates the field and takes the harvest. The land, however, remains the property of the Kond and returns to his use if and when he repays the principal plus that first year's interest. Meanwhile, the creditor may have gained several hundred rupees through annually reaping the harvest.

By the other method, confined strictly to Kui people, paddy or rice is borrowed during the 'hungry season' (April or May to September). The borrower must then repay double the amount on the day he completes his threshing at the next harvest (see ritual D (ii) in the folder).
This so diminishes his store that he may well need to borrow twice as much at the following 'hungry season', thus needing to repay quadruple the amount at the subsequent harvest. Thus he may be driven to sell his ploughing oxen or even another field in order to buy rice.

No Kond would ever press his fellow for payment, but if the debt remains outstanding for perhaps ten years or so, the field becomes the property of the Kui creditor. Thus the borrower and his household sink to the level of "the hungry ones", the painfully descriptive term used for landless Konds, indicating a deprivation that goes much deeper even than the loss of assured food.

For these reasons and because in the Kui system of inheritance a share goes to every son, land-holdings are decreasing in size. Many more fans are legitimately buying land than was previously the case. The earlier Oriya settlers took the best and most level areas for their paddy fields, but since the surfacing of the ghat road in 1959 which heralded the arrival of Oriya traders and shop-keepers, these too are steadily buying up the more fertile Kond paddy fields reasonably near the lines of communication. This trend is likely to continue, for ownership of land is the sure sign of prestige as well as the safest form of 'banking' - the other chief banking system being the buying of gold ornaments for the women of the family to wear constantly and thus keep safely.

An important factor must be remembered alongside this reduction in the size of estates: the increasing rate of growth in the population. For example, the population density of the Kond mals Sub-Division (north-east tracts) illustrates this increase:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td>1931</td>
<td>103</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>120</td>
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</table>
Medical aid plays a large part in this increase. There is a cutting back of the death-rate, especially of infants, young children and women in childbirth. The widespread fight with insecticides against the Anopheles and other malaria-carrying mosquitoes, and the use of anti-biotics in the treatment of tuberculosis, typhoid fever, etc., mean not only fewer deaths but better general health and greater fecundity.

Russell and Hira Lal noted in 1916 that: 'In some villages individual ownership (of land) is unknown, and the land is cultivated on a system of temporary occupation subject to periodic redistribution under the orders of the headman or mallik.' Their use of the word mallik indicates that they are referring to the eastern side, majhi, being the western term for headman. This common ownership would be still more predominant in the west. They go on to quote Risley (1891): 'They (Konds) claim full rights in property in the soil in virtue of having cleared the jungle and prepared the land for cultivation.' Risley might have added here the Konds' own explanation of their attachment to the land, through their being given it by the Earth Goddess, their deity-founder (see Chapter III(c) and (d)), who had appointed them alone as her people - though as intermediaries for 'all the world' - and through whom she must be fed with human/buffalo flesh and held in high honour.

Around most Kond villages is an area of common land rising slightly above the paddy fields but below the steep jungled hill-slopes. This land, known as panga, may be just rich enough to raise a crop of dry-rice, maize or lentils every third year and is the property in

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2 Ibid., quoting H.H. Risley, The Tribes and Castes of Bengal.
those years of certain families. The boundaries are strictly defined though often invisible to the casual beholder, being formed, for example, by the point of intersection of a hypothetical line between a certain rock and tree on a distant hill side, with another line linking two natural objects in another direction. That these plots come under the constant surveillance of the God of Boundaries demonstrates not so much that the Konds add religious values to socio-economic situations; rather it proclaims in pragmatic fashion the indivisible nature of their view of the world and all things in it.

During the two years in which no crop can be raised, this land is common grazing ground for the village flocks and herds, the whole group having collective rights over it.

The Government scheme for soil conservation on some of this panga land has recently caused banks to be raised enclosing areas which bear relation to the contour of the land but not to long-established family boundaries. As this scheme increases, the areas concerned hope to produce an annual crop but consequent decrease of common grazing ground results, as well as confusion over long established boundaries.

Work groups are arranged not only for various stages in paddy cultivation, such as men’s groups for ploughing, women’s groups for planting and weeding, etc., but also for tasks which involve expeditions into the jungle or on to the hills. For women these might be for the seasonal gathering of the small wild mangoes, leaf vegetables, or mahua blooms (the latter to sell to the distillers) and for men, the cutting of jungle-creepers for rope-making, of great bundles of long grass for sweeping brooms, or of timber for house-building. Families will cut and collect firewood all the year round but larger work-parties go out in October to collect the winter supply for not only
will the cold season require all-night stoking of fires in lieu of blankets, but the whole community will soon be too fully occupied in paddy-harvesting to spare time for jungle work. So parties of men fell the trees and burn the brushwood, then after giving the sap time to dry out a little, the women pass the word round to "go tomorrow as soon as the 'fruit dawns'". It is a hard and sometimes dangerous task and to say the words 'tomorrow morning' in this context would be to invite a tiger-kill among the party. However, with these safeguards, there is something of the light-hearted holiday outing while both the men's and women's groups work at their arduous task.

Much more could be said, if there were time and space, about the Konda's whole attitude to work: the use of material gains, such as food, not only for nourishment but for reha, shared-joy; work done for economic reward or to display wealth; spending habits in relation to prestige; and more particularly, the relationship of landowner and labourer. When a large proportion of the community works for one landowner, the latter necessarily orders public opinion to some extent, but never does the Kond labourer give up his right of choice. However economically dependent he may be, he maintains - and exercises - the freedom to absent himself to attend to his own concerns or pleasures. Thus there is no constricting master-servant relationship between Konds, though naturally he is rewarded only for work done. Even the poorest homes exercise this privilege, though sometimes from the lethargy induced by malnutrition, not because they have other interests. The following are the three most common systems of co-operation for agricultural work and their attendant rewards:

**Buti** is the system most commonly used, whereby the same people are employed for planting, weeding, harvesting and threshing, and payment to workers is in sheaves of paddy. At harvest-time landowners set aside half a field (or a whole field if quite a large number are being worked) for the buti-workers to
reap for themselves. Alternatively, all fields are reaped for the landowner who then gives each worker a sheaf or more per field; each one thus receives equal recompense, whereas by the first method whoever reaps the quickest gains the most, and quarrels are frequent. Every village has its own rule regarding the provision of a rice meal on the first day of planting, both to the women planters and to the men who have ploughed and prepared the land. This matter is predetermined by tradition and is rigidly observed. One well-to-do landowner's wife, where the couple were both in the unusual position of earning professional salaries, said: "We're not so keen on buti now. It is so expensive in rice! If fifteen fields are reaped it means fifteen sheaves to each helper. It looks an awful lot! My husband would rather pay in money!" But for most, where money is in its customary short supply, buti still prevails and is much appreciated by the fieldless worker.

RIRA is voluntary aid from one member of each household at the request of any member of the community. It is traditionally for Konds only, though Kui Pans may very occasionally be invited to join. There is no direct payment in cash or kind. The person requiring rira-labour informs the village elder of his need and must then pay from Rs. 2 to Rs. 5 to the local shrine-keeper towards an animal for community sacrifice. (If no such sacrifice is required at that moment, the amount is mentally registered as "banked" by him and is "drawn" on at an appropriate occasion). That evening when the households are at their meal, the elder goes round the village calling, "Tomorrow let us all go as the rira for Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So." Next morning one from every household goes off, taking with them the necessary ploughs and yoke of oxen. No food is provided for services rendered during ploughing and planting, for that is during the hungry season, but during the days of harvesting there must be plentiful boiled rice (not just rice-soup, which would mean a serious loss of face), also tobacco, and cheap cigarettes where the latter are available. If the total task requires several days' labour from each household-representative, these days need not be offered consecutively; hence one's own work need not suffer.

MULIA involves payment for each day's work done, by either Konds or Pans. Nowadays in the eastern area it is necessary to give out part of the money beforehand if you wish to be assured of your mulia's services in the rush-period. The landowner may need to borrow money for this purpose - for example from an institution which will later buy some of his rice - so that he has sufficient cash to pay mulia to reap it. The day's work is divided into two parts; the first from early morning until near-morn, and the second until work is completed - probably 5 p.m. or a little later for a normal paddy-field with sufficient workers. The same wage is paid for each period of work although the afternoon is shorter. Food is not supplied but when the field is completed, a "rib-sheaf" is given as a bonus "for your backache!"
One other work-relationship must be mentioned. It is only in very recent years that Konds (with one or two notable exceptions who came into mission service) would work for salaries. This is far more the territory of the Pan, who are motivated not only by the urge for an immediate income but wish eventually to join the new land-owning Pan elite. Such Konds as do work for salaries find that working for a hospital or similar institution is preferable to working, say, in a household. The one confers some feeling of personal freedom in its larger structure whereas the other involves confined work, possibly even under the direct supervision of a woman. Both forms of salaried work rouse the mockery of the traditional Kond. Though appreciating the security of regular wages, the inability to choose one's hours, and even days, of work and the 'begging' necessary to obtain leave to attend highly important family or community occasions rouses the open taunt:

"All's well, is it? And what price peace of mind! Make the most of it, for you've had all the reward you will get!" More important, their mockery reflects the traditional viewpoint that for an individual to advance in money or status inevitably "decreases" his neighbours and must therefore be prevented, for it threatens the solidarity of the group." ¹

Though Kond traditional technology is of a limited nature, the simplest labour of the work-groups displays certain techniques. Much more than sheer strength and endurance is required in the clearing of a hill-plot: the lie of the slope in relation to the sun, rain, light and air, away from overshadowing trees that sap the earth and stifle growth must all be considered. In this land of rock-faces above and just below the surface, there must be observation of soil-pockets, and banking for small-scale soil-conservation. Apparently harmless dried-up water-courses must be laboriously deflected if a sudden deluge

¹ B.M. Boal, Fire Is Easy, p. 105.
is not to wipe out days of toil, taking the whole essential cash-crop with it. Correct firing of the slope beforehand is also an art - at the moment when leaf and brushwood sap have dried out yet timber needed for domestic firewood will not go up in the blaze, a blaze fanned by currents of air first studied carefully if neither life nor village property is to be lost. For lower slopes, the shaft of the plough must be adapted to the terrain; a right-angle will allow for much greater pressure to be exerted on the slopes in comparison with the diagonal shaft for the flat paddy field. If there are not too many immovable rocks, such a plough can be handled at an amazingly steep gradient before it finally gives way to the hand-pick pecking away at the soil on a slope of perhaps more than 45° to the horizontal.

Though the terraced paddy fields of the Kond hill-tracts have nothing of the height to be seen in eastern Asia nor do they approach the amazing engineering feats of the Ifugao of Luzon, they nevertheless represent considerable hydraulic ingenuity. Old fields need constant maintenance and new fields are being constructed wherever small seasonal watercourses make even a linked chain of single fields possible on the valley floor. Large flat wooden shovel 'bullock-dozers' do this heavy work, with the Kond adding his weight to the shovel while he prods his team on with song and goad. Not only must each new field retain exactly the correct level of water for good growth, but the owner must not monopolise his several neighbours' water supply. A social conscience is demanded of him as by right.

Exchange systems rather than a money currency still prevail in internal transactions within the villages or between villages; "only people living near the markets (at fairly wide-spaced Oriya Government centres) spend money regularly", said one village elder. "Normally a stock of rice, salt, lentils and a little cooking oil is kept in the
house; and wild vegetables are free in their season." The basis of this stock would be family produce or obtained through collecting-groups. Paradoxically it is the poorest who need the most ready cash, to buy rice.

Traditional Kui cooking is very plain, knowing nothing of the varieties of rich curries found elsewhere in India. Linseed oil is used only to grease the pot for vegetable-cooking, never mixed into the food. It is, however, used by all but the totally destitute for the skin and hair, and those who can afford it buy different kinds of oil at the market or Oriya shop (See the Table of Spending Habits).

In all money-dealings, illiterate villagers, whether Fans or Konds, are considered fair game by Fan and Oriya traders. (The majority would indeed be Fans, for comparatively few Konds have in the past attended markets.) There is little or no line of demarcation between good business and planned swindle. A Fan Christian trader explained:

"If anyone can get Rs. 5 for one rupee's worth of goods, he says: "I'm in luck today! This is the blessing of God!" He doesn't see it as theft and is not in the least ashamed. Usually shopkeepers deceive simple folk openly, for it doesn't show that way!"

Literate Fans agree that there is great profit in trading compared with labouring. The highest swindle-price is paid by backwoodsmen (and women) who can't speak Oriya and get flustered counting change. 'The next highest swindle-price' added one Fan with a smile, 'is gained from the Europeans (i.e. missionaries). Traders are filled with glee to see them approach!' (Though they may not be swindled quite so blatantly as the backwoodsmen they buy more articles).

Patterns of Work (See the Calendar in the backpocket)

The calendar of climate and work-seasons alongside the available

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SPENDING HABITS

There is no need to spend money in the village. Only the really poor need to buy daily when they are able. The following goods must be bought in markets: salt; oil by the well-off; others press and store a year's supply of castor-oil (no oil is used in Kui cooking but everyone uses it on their skin). Some now buy kerosene for lamps but most work by firelight in the evenings.

Clothing: Udayagiri area—few changes of clothing are kept; new garments are bought as occasion demands. The more expensive but durable Kui cloth, with its traditional symbolic patterns, has been superseded almost entirely by machine- made sarees from the plains. In the more remote areas, people are much less clothes-conscious.

Meat: a buffalo or goat may be slaughtered occasionally and portions paid for, or in season wild boar, deer and hares are hunted and shared free of charge. The flesh is cut in long strips, thoroughly dried in the hot sun, and stored in an earthenware pot. It keeps satisfactorily for three or four months except in the rainy season when maggots are shaken out before use. A morsel is cooked with the daily lentils occasionally.

Fish: a few tiny fish from the reaped paddy-fields are eaten fresh in January; it abundant, some are dried and can be kept up to two or three months. Those who can afford it buy a handful of tiny salt-fish at market and add one or two to their lentils occasionally.

Vegetables: some are seasonally available in markets but are not commonly afforded by Kui people. Wild leaf-vegetables are gathered in season and any surplus is dried, powdered, and stored.

Miscellaneous: Cooking pots, winnowing trays, baskets, sickles, etc. are treated with care and have a long life. They can be replaced at markets or in certain villages. In general men, not women, handle money. Gold and silver ornaments may be presented by husbands to wives in good times and this jewellery is regarded as an investment: it is less convertible and so more secure than money, yet it is available in case of great need. Jewellery is also essential for unmarried girls: the more she has, the greater her dowry. After marriage it may be exchanged in husband's home for land or ploughing cattle—a further instance of preference for land as security rather than gold which may be "eaten." Thus a poor man is prohibited from asking for a rich girl—and if occasionally he abducts her, both family groups are angry for an enduring quarrel results.

WOMEN

Kui women sell sacks of paddy-chaff to Oriya cattle-owners, or they may store a little rice or turmeric to sell for themselves. The profit, Rs. 2 or 3 wrapped in a rag, may be hoarded in the grain-jar six months or more before it is used to buy such things as coarse black toothpaste, oil or salt, a comb, mirror or cheap jewellery. Alternatively it may be kept hidden in case of need—for medicine in sickness or to celebrate a festival.

MEN

Kui men never save money if they are habitual drinkers. Non-drinkers buy tobacco, elderly men (and women) buy nuts to chew (dried tobacco) and sved and then beaten together with a little mustard and oil). Around Udayagiri, cigarettes and matches are bought. In many other districts men grow tobacco around their homes and store a year's supply, rolling it in old leaves to make cigars carried in the waist-cloth or hair-bun: a glowing ember is carried to the hill-plots to light these cigars during rest-breaks, or occasionally they rub a spark from two sticks of hardwood.

A rapidly increasing number of men buy clothing—shirts and dhotis or trousers for themselves, sarees and children's clothes for wife and family—to be worn when on visits, and for church, market, and festive occasions. These are stored away at other times. Shorter lengths of cheap local cloth are bought for daily use. All men try to buy a cotton sheet to cover the family at night during the cold season.

GIRLS

Teenage girls similarly store a small sum of money if possible. They may sell a little household rice given by their parents for pocket-money and spend it on cheap jewellery, rings, nose-ornaments, black hair to lengthen their own, highly scented oil, mirror, and comb. They too keep their money (from Rs. 0.50 to Rs. 3) very carefully even up to a year without spending it.

YOUTH

Kui youths living near markets or stores buy cigarettes and matches whenever money can be found. Increasing numbers want to buy scented oil for skin but it is available in case of need and in hair, and bright shirts, although these are costly. They also buy clandestine presents for their lovers (soap, scented oil, a blouse or blouselength of cheap cotton material) before either is betrothed to the permanent partner.
diet and the required rituals illustrates the work-peaks for those with sufficient food to give them stamina for it. Even so, every man and woman works out his own rhythm of labour and rest "like those who carry heavy loads on the shoulder-yoke; they rest in the shade every few miles." Only on occasions such as rice-planting must one necessarily keep abreast with the line of women; hence the invariable singing of the planting songs, by solo with echoing yodel-chorus, to cheer on the weary and keep each member within the rhythm of the work. It is significant that there is no Kui word for 'leisure', only a word indicating a brief physical rest-interval to enable for renewed activity. (See the Table: The Day's Work for the regular normal occupations of both men and women).

In all work, indoors or out of doors, men and women perform only such tasks as are permitted to their sex. This sex division of labour may arise from physical considerations, such as men's work of felling heavy timber and women's as nurturers of children, but cultural considerations are also present. For instance, though ploughing is heavy work naturally ascribed to men, it is in any case taboo for a woman to touch the plough-tip, that male symbol which penetrates the female Earth. Similarly, though threshing is a male occupation, the householder must temporarily cease threshing his family's paddy if the householder's wife should menstruate then. This would not be so in the case of junior women in the house, thus indicating that the householder (and therefore his wife in purifying their house) has been fulfilling the priestly function on the threshing floor but that his office is temporarily polluted. Behind both physical and cultural factors are social implications. As Levi-Strauss observed:

'When it is stated that one sex must perform certain tasks this also means that the other sex is forbidden to do them.'
The day's time-table, over against the seasonal one, goes roughly like this:

**THE DAY'S WORK: MEN** (Times are approximate)

03.00, 1st Cock Crow—05.30 "Visit the jungle": wash.

Tripel pounding of the day's paddy.

Do work in paddy-fields or dry-rice fields.

05.30-11.30 Plough: in later months, field maintenance work. Also prepare and plant garden: turmeric, ginger, maize, tobacco, chilli, etc. Harvest these and varieties of rice, in season.

11.00-13.00 Return to village with oxen and plough, bathe, eat, rest.

Lengthy care of animals; washing, removing ticks, treat sores, etc.

Maintain implements—replace creper lashings on ploughs, yokes, etc.

Carve handles for sickles and hoe.

Maintain homes and gardens against flood water and fence against domestic animals.

Attend to business dealings within and without the village.

Shave children's heads weekly.

**THE DAY'S WORK: WOMEN**

**Rice Growing Season (June-December)**

**"Later cockcrow" Rise**

04.30

Collect tools and oxen. Probably join neighbours or kin to walk to paddy-fields or dry-rice fields.

05.30-11.30 Plough: in later months, field maintenance work. Also prepare and plant garden: turmeric, ginger, maize, tobacco, chilli, etc. Harvest these and varieties of rice, in season.

12.00-13.00 Return to village with oxen and plough, bathe, eat, rest.

Lengthy care of animals; washing, remove ticks, treat sores, etc.

Maintain implements—replace creper lashings on ploughs, yokes, etc.

Carve handles for sickles and hoe.

Maintain homes and gardens against flood water and fence against domestic animals.

Attend to business dealings within and without the village.

Shave children's heads weekly.

**Dry Season**

05.00-05.30

Start for hill work with relatives and neighbours.

5.30-12.00 Clearing the jungle. Working hill plots.

12.00-13.00 Wife or daughter brings meal.

Rest, smoking or chewing tobacco, chatting; drink a little.

13.00—sun-down Work continues, with brief rest-breaks.

**Sun-down**

Drinking parties in jungle for some. (March-May)

**Sun-down and after**

Smoking and chatting around fire in house or street, occasionally making music, (cold season)

**Evening meal**

**Bed**
In that light, the sex division of labour is nothing else than a device to institute a reciprocal state of dependency between the sexes.**

Something of this careful balance is certainly seen in Kui life. It is through such expressions of conservatism that this tradition-bound society has held together against the rigours of its environment and has worked out a *modus vivendi* which only in very recent years has begun to be realised by the very few.

Not only have the Konds come to terms with their harsh environment but over the centuries they have withstood or adapted to pressures from immigrant or invading peoples. The results of this will be discussed in later chapters but first must be considered the consequences of their being 'discovered' by the British Officers of the East India Company's troops, and thus the beginning of their recorded history in 1835.

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CHAPTER II

THE DISCOVERY AND ABOLITION OF KOND HUMAN SACRIFICE
History of the Konds from 1835 to 1842

In 1835 it could be said of Rajah Bananjia of Goomsur, as of his father before him, that he 'was following his wanted vocation of fermenting all manner of seditious disturbances' against the British authorities as represented by the Collector for the Board of Revenue. He was failing to discharge the heavy arrears of tribute which had accumulated in his father's time. In 1832 the latter had fled from his responsibilities and for two years the son had paid in full his own high annual assessment of Rs. 40,333 as well as annual instalments of Rs. 10,000 demanded by the British in repayment of his father's debt. They made repeated attempts at conciliation and collection and finally issued a warrant for the Rajah's arrest. In September 1835, Mr. Stevenson, the Collector for Ganjam District, called in the troops and occupied Goomsur town. Open rebellion broke out and martial law was proclaimed, with the British assuming control over the Rajah's Zemindary (principality). The extremely high reward of Rs. 5,000 was offered for the Rajah himself, who, with his followers, was lurking in the fever-ridden foothills and constantly ambushing the British detachments. These eventually had to return empty-handed, depleted and sick.

At this time the whole region was part of the Madras Presidency and on 11th January 1836, the Hon. Mr. Russell, a member of the Madras Board of Revenue, arrived. He had been appointed as Special Commissioner, with greater powers over the area. The fugitive Rajah and his followers now dispersed, not only into the foothill hamlets of the Sasi Konds but up into the higher tracts of mountain and forest. There through the good offices of the Sasi Konds, the true hill Konds - of whom the British had no knowledge - gave them hospitality. The British-led troops followed and the Kond villagers who came out to meet

1 Calcutta Review, Vol. V, No. IX, 1846, p.10: Goomsur: The Late War There - the Khonds or Hill-Tribes.
them socially were greatly intrigued. There was an exchange of presents and these highly independent Konds were

'expressly assured that they had nothing to fear: no new duties would be imposed on them - only the general duty they had always owed the Sirkar (Supreme British Power), viz. obedience to the persons appointed by Government as ruler over them; attendance in arms when their services were required; the seizure and delivery of all offenders obnoxious to their authority, and a trifling annual nuzzur or offering in token of their allegiance.'

Traditional Kond hospitality had, however, already been offered by the Konds to the fugitive Rajah, so neither the very high cash rewards offered nor these rather naive 'assurances' made the desired impact. When some of the troops defied all Kond decencies by lagging behind the advancing army to steal fowls, etc. from the friendly villages, the importunities of the Goomsur fugitives carried the day with the Konds; that these invaders should be removed from the hills before they deprived the Konds of their liberty and privileges. Three months of bloodshed and devastation followed.

Rewards from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000 offered for the capture of the chief rebels, were all ignored by the Konds. In this respect, it was later found that the now dying Rajah, himself a Hindu but shrewd to the end, had made a hospitality pact before the Konds' great divinity to ensure the safety of all his family from the British. Thus whenever the troops approached a village, the inhabitants fled to the jungle and hill-slopes, taking their cattle, grain and portable property with them. If any Kond were compelled to act as guide, he led the troops into ambush in the network of valleys and narrow passes. There his kin and neighbours, with their axes, bows and arrows, conducted guerrilla warfare from the jungle-clad slopes.

Mr. Russell, reporting

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* See list of Titles of Rulers in hill-Urissa, 1835-1854.
on these three months, states that:

'numbers of Konds were shot like wild beasts. Some were seized and hung up on trees. Their villages were everywhere laid in ashes. The inhabitants were either dead, or fled to enter into fresh contests with the tiger and other lords of the forest.'

By June 1836, all was 'a universal scene of havoc and desolation'.

The insurgents from the plains had few places they could rely on for safe retreat, and a number of their leaders were dead or captured.

By mid-June, however, the monsoon arrived, making already hazardous communications totally impossible. The troops therefore returned to the plains, thus ending their first campaign of the Goomsur War.

By November the cool dry season was at hand and with it the second, and last, campaign of the Goomsur War - from November 1836, to early May 1837. This campaign closely resembled the first in destruction and devastation. At its close, every clan-head in Baro Muta had been executed with one exception. Only Dora Bisaye, the most influential leader of all, had escaped. His title 'Bisaye' indicated the two-fold nature of his authority: although a Hindu, he was regarded as hereditary patriarch of a loose federation of Kond clans yet at the same time as agent for Kond affairs to the Rajah of Goomsur. He fled right away to the Patna region in Cuttack principality, but later 'came in' more or less voluntarily and was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. Thus by force, peace and order were restored.

In his discussion of Lieutenant Macpherson's 'Original Report on the Konds', the anonymous writer of the series of articles in the Calcutta Review adds an apologetic footnote for the shocked members of British India and indeed of the whole Victorian Empire, at the belated discovery of this 'barbarous' tribe:

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2 Ibid.
This statement (concerning the flight of the Rajah to the Gadi and Maliah Konds) will serve to account for the extreme ignorance which previously existed respecting the Konds. These tribes have existed from a period of the remotest antiquity as they are seen at present, nearly isolated by manner, language and prejudices of race from the surrounding population; while they have been until recently completely cut off by the interposed Zamindary domains (Rajah's principality), from all contact, from all relations with the successive Governments - the Orissan, that of Delhi, the Mahratta, the British - which these have acknowledged .... The barrier by which they were thus separated .... was suddenly removed by our assumption of the Zamindary of Goomsur for arrears of tribute, which was followed by the rebellion of the Rajah, in the end of the year 1835'.

In the rainy season that separated the two campaigns, Mr. Russell submitted his First Report to the Madras Government, dated August 1836. His responsibility had been not so much to concern himself with Kond practices as to capture the fugitives and establish peace. Nevertheless he noted a few general traits: that not only every clan but every village has its own headman; that feuding is almost a way of life, on the principle of a head for a head; that the Konds have a great love of tobacco and liquor - both the strong spirit made from the mahua tree and toddy obtained from a palm tree peculiar to the area; that they do not milk their cattle yet they have no Hindu caste prejudice and that "they eat anything except dog, domestic cat, beasts of prey, vulture, kite and snake". But he also made what B.T. Dalton, the British army officer and ethnologist, described as

"the astounding discovery that we include among our fellow subjects a whole people who practised human sacrifice and female infanticide on a scale and with a cruelty which had never been surpassed by the most savage of nations." 3

These human sacrificial victims were of either sex in some places, but only males in others.

Returning to the subject of his chief responsibilities, he reported that after restoring order and allegiance to the British crown on the lower slopes of the Ghats, he had "inflicted terrible retribution on the hill-tribes who had screened the enemy, or risen in arms against us, or proved treacherous to their own engagements."

He therefore recommended that the whole area of the Goomsur principality should be forfeit to the Government "absolutely and for ever".

Mr. Russell's Second Report to the Madras Government dated 11th May, 1837, followed immediately after the close of the second campaign, when the settled situation allowed more details to be learned regarding Kond life. Using the first full account of the Meriah (human) sacrifice, provided by Mr. Stevenson, the District Collector, and published in the Madras Journal for July, 1837, he followed it with certain reflections and proposals:

'No one is more anxious for the discontinuance of the barbarous custom than myself; but I am strongly impressed with the belief that it can be accomplished only by slow and gradual means. We must not allow the cruelty of the practice to blind us to the consequence of too rash a zeal in our endeavours to suppress it. The superstition of ages cannot be eradicated in a day. The people with whom we have to deal have become known to us only within the last few months, and our intercourse has been confined to a very small proportion of a vast population, among the greater part of whom the same rites prevail, and of whose country and language we may be said to know almost nothing. We must not shut our eyes to the fact that... any measure of coercion would arouse the jealousy of a whole race professing the strongest feelings of clanship, and, whatever may be their dissensions in ordinary life, likely to make common cause in support of their common religion.'

Mr. Russell also pointed out that the climate was "too inimical to the constitution of strangers" and that: "It is not possible that the Mallahs generally could ever be brought to yield a revenue worth

2 Op. cit. p.50
having"; any revenue at all which was derived from the Konds by the Sasi Kond officials appointed by the East India Company would in fact belong to those officials and not to the British.

The Madras Government adopted these proposals, though recorded its regret that it would not be possible to put down the barbarous practice at once. On 24th November of that same year, 1837, Mr. Arbuthnot, the Acting Collector in the Vizagapatam District made the practical suggestion to the Madras Government that "if roads were made through the hills from the East India Company's into the Hyderabad and Nagpur territories, the inhabitants of the hill-tracts might be brought within the influences of civilisation and then this practice would soon be discontinued". ¹ His suggestion seems to have been overlooked until Lord Elphinstone raised it again in 1841.

Meanwhile victims continued to be rescued where possible. One such case led to an official trial as early as 11th December 1837. It concerned the rescue of Letchena, a man of Parla Kimedy who had been enticed from his home and sold to a Kond for Rs. 45 up in Subornogiri, the most remote and inaccessible area of Chinna Kimedy. The kidnapper was caught. There were several eye-witnesses and yet he had to be acquitted owing to a series of legal minutiae. As the Muslim legal system was still practised by the British on the plains of India, the East India Company had carried it into the Kond Hills. The acquittal of this kidnapper clearly proved the inapplicability of the formalities of the Law in such cases, and its inability to secure justice. Further horrors emerged at his trial. These indicated his involvement beyond all doubt for, on an earlier occasion, he had received part-payment from the same Kond chief for the procuring of a

Meriah and had given his daughter as surety. Unable to find a victim, he then sold the pledged daughter for sacrifice. Then in the trial it was learned that the release of the man, Letchena, had only been obtained by the procurer's giving up his second daughter in Letchena's place. The Konds saw no reason to release these two girls, who had been fairly and properly purchased, according to their custom and for a serious and necessary purpose. There was an attempt by the Government to bring the kidnapper-father to a new trial. He was a typical fan procurer of the time, not actuated by the religious values of the Konds, but simply by motives of gain. Mr. Bannerman the Magistrate of Ganjam, was requested to obtain all available evidence. His reply shows the clear impossibility of such a task, and indeed the general difficulties surrounding any such case at the time:

"The part of Suvernagberry (Subornogiri) Maliahs where these unfortunate persons (the two girls) are said to be detained, is the most remote and inaccessible of the hill-tracts, and the tribes who inhabit it remain in a state of savage independence." 1

No troops had ever penetrated to that part. Authority was a local matter of elders with a chief who was simply primus inter pares, all of them entirely hostile to interference. Mr. Bannerman not surprisingly considered it

"to be utterly impossible under existing circumstances to bring these uncivilised and barbarous men before the Court of Circuit as witnesses.... To proud and suspicious men like (the Chiefs) totally ignorant of everything relating to our Courts and Judicial forms of proceeding, a summons to appear before a Court of Circuit would not fail to excite much alarm and disgust; and I think would be calculated to have the worst effects in preventing the other chiefs from affording their assistance on similar occasions." 2

The Madras Government was compelled to agree, and reiterated that any

2 Ibid.
resort to violent measures to compel the restoration of captives and the abolition of the practice of human sacrifices must be avoided. Presumably the two children were added to the ranks of many hundreds still being sacrificed each year.

Despite advice to the contrary, force clearly was used by some of the East India Company's army officers. Mr. Russell's Second Report, quoted earlier, mentions that Captain Miller of the 43rd Regiment, N.I., "managed with much discretion to rescue no less than twelve victims." 1 Captain Miller's 'discretion' is, however, open to question, for his own report on 13th December 1837, states his view that "pure selfishness" influenced the Konds to sacrifice:

"Force and intimidation were the means that I employed, and I do not apprehend any danger from the exhibition of military force, provided the party employed be of such strength as to render any attempt at opposition utterly hopeless." 2

More conciliatory was the expedition made by Captain Campbell, Assistant Collector of Goomsur, in January 1838. With a military escort of fifty men of the 17th Regiment - and these for protection only - along with a considerable number of armed local auxiliaries and the stipulated commissariat baggage-wagons, he climbed the Ghat to the Kond Maliahs of Goomsur District, which were now under British control. January was always the high season for human sacrifice and, by his knowledge both of the district and of the chiefs, he gathered enough information to make them see the expediency of delivering up 100 Meriah children. Captain Campbell summed up the campaign optimistically but inaccurately, as it later proved:

"I have every reason to believe that the public performance of the Meriah Rujah in the Goomsur Maliahs is at an end; but if measures are not taken in the neighbouring Khond Maliahs for its suppression, it will be hard to maintain the ground we have now gained." 3

He had found out, too, that Konds themselves were not exempt from being sold for sacrifice. The victims could be of any race or caste, young or old, male or female, though naturally strangers were preferred. The problem had now arisen of providing for these released victims. The older ones could either return to their villages or else find some means of supporting themselves. A simple building was provided on the plains as a clearing house for the many children who had no means of livelihood but who, it was hoped, would find service in village homes and labour in the fields or elsewhere.

A report by Lieutenant Hill of the Survey Department, dated 2nd July 1838, confirmed that the Meriah was practised to an even greater extent than had been generally supposed; and this not only throughout the Kond country but to some extent involving members of the Gond tribe and other neighbours of the Konds. Lieut. Hill learned that there were 200 children kept for Meriah purposes in the Balliguda Muta alone, and many in Goomsur beyond the 100 who had been given up. Presuming that other areas were similarly provided for, the probable number of captive victims was, he said, "fearful to contemplate." He did find, however, that it was not the custom in the Saronogoda District, though some there may have attended in other districts. He made suggestions based on his considerable experience both of the extent and the nature of the country,

"its dense forests, the vast chain of mountains in the strong holds of which this superstitious rite is most firmly seated, the doubtful climate at the best season, and the decided insalubrity of the air for the remainder of the year, the general poverty of the country which will not support a large number of additional inhabitants." 2

1 Op. cit. p.64.
2 Ibid.
To use military force under these conditions would, he felt, simply be to sanction wholesale slaughter at vast expense

"without the prospect of entire and final abandonment of the custom by the Khonds under any less rigorous measure than the almost total extinction of the race." 1

Yet persuasion alone was unlikely to prove sufficient. He therefore suggested: first, that knowledge of the area be increased, along with personal acquaintance with individuals; then one effective Company of Regulars would be sufficient to back any order in any single Nata or District. But only a fully organised system over the whole area, conducted with great patience and perseverance, could hope to be successful.

On 18th October 1833, Mr. Bannerman, the Magistrate of Ganjam, planned another tour. The Madras Government not only approved but provided travelling facilities which included four elephants. He intended to be in the area just before the annual Tonki festival, when the greatest number of victims was offered, for he hoped that the appearance of a European would convince them of the determination of the Madras Government. Through lack of transport, and other practical difficulties, he was only able to reach the southern areas. His report, submitted immediately after his return and dated 2nd January 1839, said that the Tonki festival was normally regulated by the moon in early January, but in this case it was to take place on Sunday, 30th December. The village was Sikaraguda in the Womaniahs.

Mr. Bannerman took a strong company of more than 360 men in order to burst in with reasonable safety just as the ritual reached its climax. This he felt, would give the most public proof of the Govern-

1 Ibid.
ment's views. After what must have been an appalling journey in the darkness through dense forest "by a most difficult and narrow track, leading over several steep and very awkward ghats", they made a surprise appearance in the village soon after daybreak. All the villagers, both men and women, would of course be extremely drunk after many nights of drumming and dancing and at least one day's feasting, with the strong mahua liquor flowing freely.

Most of the villagers fled, but Mr. Bannerman managed to communicate with the elders and make them give up the victim, a young woman from the plains. Mr. Bannerman's argument to the Konds was two-fold:
1) the heinous nature of the crime of putting a fellow-creature to a cruel death;
2) the folly of supposing that any advantage could possibly come from so sinful an act.

The Konds gave five sound reasons in reply:
1) they paid no tribute and owed no allegiance to the British;
2) the Meriah had always been practised from time immemorial;
3) If the usual ceremonies were omitted, their fields would be unproductive;
4) the victims had been fairly purchased with a price;
5) they had a right to do what seemed to them fit in the matter.

Mr. Bannerman therefore reported in disgust that:

'to reason further with these rude and ignorant men would have been altogether unavailing, especially as many of them appeared to be under the influence of the potations in which they are in the habit of indulging on such occasions.'

With crowds of Konds from neighbouring villages arriving all the time for the final day of Meriah celebration - doubtless all equally drunk - and as the victim had been rescued, it was deemed highly necessary to

leave the area as soon as the guard were sufficiently rested to tackle the journey. They took several elders back with them, with a view to "more fully impressing on them the arguments which they did not appear to be then in a state of mind duly to appreciate." Also, more practically, these hostages might ensure their safe return to the plains.

Sikaraguda, typically of villages in that area, was in a little circular valley about 300 yards across, surrounded by steep rocky hills covered with heavy jungle. Numbers of Konds

"showed themselves in the hills in all directions, armed with bows and arrows and the battle axe, and appeared disposed to oppose our return, but fortunately no collision actually took place." 1

So far no journey had been completed which linked the wild southerly tracts with the slightly more open table-land of the Goomsur Maliahs.

Mr. Bannerman therefore suggested that if the Commissariat Department could provide sufficient aid to keep the troops independent of all other supplies, a detachment might move from the northward with this object. They should be "guided by circumstances as to the precise direction to be taken", and should travel only at the most favourable season climatically, which would in any case coincide with Kond preparations for the following year's Tonki festival.

Mr. Bannerman also reiterated earlier indictments of the Pans (or Dombango). As the agents through whom any trade with the lowlands was carried out, they bartered kidnapped captives along with salt and the very few articles necessary to the Kond in exchange for turmeric and other hill products. The circumstances surrounding the abduction and sale of these victims had already proved the impossibility of gaining the conviction of these kidnapper-Pans before ordinary judicial tribunals where all the niceties of Muslim Law were observed by the

East India Company. Hence Mr. Bannerman suggested to “the Right Honourable the Governor in Council” (Madras) that the superintending officer to whom the hill-tracts were eventually entrusted might be given the power to try summarily any persons charged with this offence. The Government of Madras gave its approval to Mr. Bannerman’s suggestions and also to his work in returning the older ex-Meriah victims to their homes or finding new homes for them. It granted a small sum for the continued provision for the remaining Kond children, principally little girls.

At the same time as Mr. Bannerman’s discomfiture in the southern area, Captain Campbell, as Assistant Surveyor General for Madras Presidency, had visited another part of the hill territories. He had walked across the breadth of the Goomsur Maliahs from Deegi to Bead, and "had great satisfaction" in reporting 1 - also in January 1839 - that the number of victims there had greatly decreased, "partly from the want of subjects and partly from a fear of infringing the order I had issued." But even while declaring that no victims had been offered in their territories, the local chiefs begged permission to offer one victim yearly in each Muta. They were refused. That region had formerly made the great Meriah sacrifices at full moon twice a year, with minor ones during the eight days following both these occasions, in addition they sacrificed at any season to avert some dreaded misfortune.

In this report, Captain Campbell stressed that the more he learned of the Konds the more he believed in the need to "address ourselves to their fears as well as to their better feelings." He makes no suggestion how this better understanding is to come about, rather his practical

proposition is for the building of a thatched house as a barrack for sixty persons, along with a small storehouse with other shelter, at the Oriya village of "Udiagerry" (Udayagiri). This resident force was necessary, he believed, because of the protracted nature of the sacrificing season in the Goomsur Maliah.

For two years Captain Hill and Major Campbell toured the Goomsur Maliahs. Meanwhile the proposed weekly markets had been established to encourage better relations between Konds and the Madras Government. These quickly proved popular, Konds freely coming to and fro, even from remoter parts. But as January 1841 approached, Major Campbell went up again into the Goomsur Hills in case of any intended Meriah sacrifice at the January full moon. He found that though none had been performed in the British-controlled Goomsur area as far as he could tell, some inhabitants had taken victims over into parts of Chinna Kimedy, west of Goomsur, and sacrificed them there. "Fawas" (Fans) had again supplied another 24 child-victims to Konds in Goomsur itself, though these had not yet been sacrificed and many were recovered. They found that children were sometimes sold by their parents for even Rs. 3 or 4, and occasionally to Konds as well as to Fans. This break with tradition was due to economic distress which had been greatly increased by the appalling devastation of land and property by the British troops in the Goomsur Wars of 1835-1837. The British preoccupation, however, was with the immediate problem of justice toward such Konds: to punish those who sold but not those who bought - the latter being the actual instigators of the sacrifice - did not appear just when both lived perhaps in the same village and believed equally in the need and efficacy of the rite. Thus the experiences of these two British officers regarding even the Goomsur Maliahs, and much more the wilder areas, strengthened their opinion expressed in Major Campbell's report:
"that unless more decided measures were adopted, the Meriah sacrifice will not cease, though it may not be performed openly." ¹

Captain Hill's work in the Survey Department took him repeatedly far beyond the Goomsur area. He reported to Madras that such "excitement" prevailed among the Konds as a result of Mr. Bannerman's attempted interference with the Meriah sacrifice that he himself thought it unsafe even to mention the topic. Mr. Bannerman's official reply on hearing of this - dated 6th February 1841 - insisted that the reference could only be to the Wommuniah Konds in the Kimedy region and not at all to Goomsur. He reminded Madras that he had been the first European officer to enter that hitherto unexplored area, and his expressed "wish" that the sacrifices be discontinued

"must unavoidably have excited some degree of suspicion and dissatisfaction. ... There is indeed no doubt from the spirit in which they received the communications made to them, that the Konds were displeased at my entering their country at all; they declared boldly that they were independent, paying tribute or owing obedience to none; and notwithstanding the large party I had with me, they showed a disposition to oppose our return." ²

It was later learned that within a very few days they had sacrificed another woman in the place of the victim so summarily taken from them. Nevertheless, he obviously doubted the authenticity of the charge that his action could have raised such "excitement" and considered that his shock-arrival at Sikaraguda village with his "large party" on the very morning that marked the climax of the year's ritual for them and their neighbours simply "showed their extreme jealousy of their independence and sensitiveness at the most remote degree of interference with their superstitious rites."

The Madras Government resolved to appoint Captain Hill to a new post as an officer to the Hill Maliha, responsible for relationships and negotiations with the Konds. He was to act under the immediate orders of Madras, thus enabling him to by-pass the chafing disadvantage of being able to hold no communication with Government except through his superior officer. His allowance was to be increased to Rs. 1166-10-8 per month and he was to be given an escort for personal protection. The Supreme Government of India, however, vetoed this, indicating its loss of confidence in conciliatory measures as the means whereby the Meriah sacrifice might be rapidly abolished. Its hope lay rather in facilitating commerce as a means of "civilising" the Konds, and through improved roads and local police.

In a masterly summary of the attempts and failures of the past few years, Lord Elphinstone, the Governor of Madras Presidency, pointed out how little real progress had been made in suppressing the Meriah sacrifice; that neither force nor conciliation had provided a lasting change in Kond practice. Indeed, Lieutenant Hill had estimated from his data that at the new moon feast of 8th January 1841, (nearly six years after the British discovery of the rite) 140 victims were to be put to death in the 40 Medas of Ganjam alone. Yet that was the one Kond area directly under British rule and where repeated promises had been given by chiefs and priests of the total abandonment of the practice. How much more then must it be continuing in the remote areas!

Lord Elphinstone therefore propounded a plan which selected certain from among the proposals made over the years. These "gradual and cautious measures ... without any attack upon national customs or religious prejudices" 1 were fully approved by the Secretary of the

1 Macpherson, Memorials of Service in India, p. 152.
Supreme Government of India on 3rd May 1841. They facilitated:

'(1) The opening of Routes and Passes through the wild tracts, more particularly between Aska and Gundaguddah; (i.e. from east to west).

(2) The encouraging of the commercial intercourse between the Hills and the plains by all available means, and the establishing of fairs and marts for that purpose" (as originally suggested by Mr. Russell in 1836)

'(3) The raising of a semi-military Police force from among the Hill men, upon a footing similar to that of the Paik Company of Cuttack."

(These were to man outposts such as Captain Campbell had suggested in 1839, to maintain the security of communications.) 1

In addition, this note from the Secretary of the Supreme Government to the Madras Government ratified the appointment of an officer who would negotiate with all the authorities necessary for the opening of the new lines of communication from east to west, right through the Kond Hills and beyond. This officer was also expected to 'improve' relationships with chiefs throughout the Hills, for clans and villages continued to assert their absolute independence, saying

"that they paid no tribute and owed no allegiance to any earthly power. It was therefore thought desirable to take every proper opportunity of removing this impression, and of accustoming the Hill Tribes to look to the British Government as the ruling power to whom obedience was due." 2

Always care was taken not to commit the Government in any way that it might be unable to enforce. The aim was rather to strengthen the influence of some chief until he became Paramount Chief, for this might at the same time strengthen the hold over all the clan chiefs. These clan chiefs would then prove invaluable if relations with Government were at the same time placed on an "improved" footing. This was not to be confused, they said, with subjugation. Rather, by "co-operation" the chiefs would help both the British and themselves by furthering the road-communication project, the establishment of markets, in supplying

1 Calcutta Review, Vol. VI, No. XII, p.79.
2 Ibid.
the garrisons at the military posts with provisions, etc. and by encouraging their clans and their neighbours' clans to enlist in British service.

These many duties notwithstanding, it was clearly laid down that this officer was only to act under the direct authority of the Commissioner of the region, sited down in Cuttack, and to be entirely dependent on his co-operation and goodwill, and of course bounded by his territory. This at once removed the wilder areas, such as the Kimmedy districts, from any attempt at reform. The officer was not even to be sent direct to the Konds, though he would pass through their areas, but rather to talk with the Orya Rajah of Gundaguddah, on the far west of the hills. There he was to discuss the proposed road communications and introduce his survey officer and team of draftsmen and sappers. He was not to take the initiative in referring to the practice of human sacrifice and only to continue an already opened conversation if the chief were both friendly and influential. Only then might he state the British authorities' "right and determination unrelentingly to punish every attempt to entrap or to steal British subjects for the purpose of immolation." ¹

So on 15th December 1841, following his new appointment as Assistant to the Commissioner, or better known as Governor's Agent in Ganjam, Lieutenant Macpherson set out for the Kond Country. Despite certain irksome restrictions and limitations, it marked the beginning of a new and more understanding approach to the Konds.

As that part of the hill-tracts which he had formerly visited lay to the north, in Goomsur and Boad, Captain Macpherson now ascended

¹ Op. cit. p.82.
the ghats from the south side - an area unvisited since Mr. Bannerman's unhappy expedition three years before. As his particular commission was to open up friendly relations in the area through which the proposed communications-route would pass, he intended to visit the two Kond districts of Pondacole (estimated at 6,000 inhabitants) and Bori (12-15,000 inhabitants). On the way, Konds came to meet him from the fertile district of Guladye (7-10,000); from the hill areas of Bodogoro; from Kinmedi, southward and westward to the boundaries of Jeypore and Kalahandi; and also from the wildest tracts to the west and north-west as far as "Shubernagherry" (Subornogiri). Unhappily, despite its being January and the finest touring weather, such a high proportion of his troops contracted malaria that an immediate withdrawal was necessary. After only twenty days' residence, 90% were affected and remained ill for months after returning to the plains. These included Captain Macpherson himself and greatly increased the dread of these highlands felt by all lowlanders - a dread that remained for well over a century.

Nevertheless, much new and valuable information was obtained. Moreover, in that brief period Captain Macpherson went a long way toward breaking down the suspicion and hostility naturally aroused by the 1835-37 wars, a hostility which subsequent encounters had done little to dispel. At first he found only deserted villages; all the people had fled in fear.

"I therefore halted in the first valley within the hills, until I felt quite satisfied that different ideas were both established there and had in some degree preceded me. The nearest hamlets soon gained confidence. Then a section of a (clan) ventured to come out from the forest, not rushing into my camp in wild and fantastic procession, armed and dancing, with shouts and stunning music, as is the fashion of these Khonds, but approaching without arms, in extreme fear and requiring much encouragement to come to my tents, while spies from all the (clan) around anxiously expected the result of this experiment. The alarm
of the first comers having been dispelled, other parties by
degrees but very cautiously, imitated their example; and I
then moved on." 1

Periodically pausing thus, he quickly gained so much co-operation
that he even had to choose each morning which clan should cut that
day's passage for his men through the jungled hills.

His route lay close to the irregular border between the human-
sacrificing clans and those who abominated it but who nevertheless
practised female infanticide. It was as usual, a cold-season
expedition, close to the January celebration involving the greatest
number of human victims. Macpherson quotes his verbatim notes of
the strong remarks made by one such group to the other:

"Poor uninstructed fools! said the sacrificiers; "they cannot
understand that through the virtue of this great rite all
mankind, and they themselves, live and prosper!" "Wretched
men!" said the others; "they destroy life and devour human
flesh without the apology of the tiger or the snake, and believe
they conciliate the gods!" The sacrificing (clans) retaliate
upon the non-sacrificing but infant-destroying Khonds, by
telling them "to take a lesson from the most savage beasts,
and spare their young!" The fields of the non-sacrificing (clans) were strictly guarded
by night and day lest an enemy should desecrate the soil by
introducing a shred of flesh.*2

Macpherson notes too that any Kond or Hindu present at a sacrifice
was polluted for seven days and must on no account whatever visit a
non-sacrificing village during that time, at risk of being put to
death. After that period, he was considered purified. Both groups,
however, had formed the view in the three-year interval since Banner-
man's visit, that the government had either kept away because it
realised it had no right to interfere with their rituals, however much
it disapproved; or else because it had become quite indifferent to
their practices - this view being substantiated when Lieutenant Hill's

1 Macpherson, Memorials, pp.165-166.
surveying party passed through a little further north in the previous cold season without even mentioning Meriah. (They had been, of course, under strict orders from the Madras Government not to raise the subject nor even discuss it if it were raised in their presence!) Despite the brevity of this tour, Captain Macpherson now had sufficient information to mark out the Kond Country into five tracts regarding their observance or non-observance of the Meriah sacrifice and female infanticide:

1. An area of about 2,500 square miles within the districts of Goomsur, Boad and Duspallah (except for a few clans on the southern boundary of Goomsur) where the Konds offer human sacrifice but do not practice female infanticide.

2. A strip of country of about 400 square miles connecting the districts of Karada and Surada, where neither rite is practised.

3. An irregular tract of about 2,000 square miles in the districts of Surada, Karada, Bodogar and Chinn Kameti, with a universal practice of female infanticide but no human sacrifice.

4. About 400 square miles in the district of Bodogar where neither rite is practised.

5. The remaining portion of the Ghats in the Ganjam District, an area from 2,000 to 3,000 square miles running from near the south-west frontier of Goomsur (Lat. 20°) to beyond the 19th parallel, peopled with Konds and Saoras, practising human sacrifice but not female infanticide.

The Northern Area (part of Bengal)

Meanwhile, a somewhat similar situation was to be found in the Raj of Boad and Raj of Duspalla to the north. These were nominally under the jurisdiction of their Oriya Rajahs, but much of the forested hill-areas were held by Sasi (Oriya-speaking) Konds of as independent an outlook as their Kui-speaking brother. Occasionally, under pressure, small numbers of Meriah victims were released, but in general, despite open assent to reform, these Sasi Kond leaders continued to sacrifice and to countenance sacrificing. Colonel Ousley, Agent to the Governor General of Bengal for the South-West Frontier, was moved

Approx. Areas of Human Sacrifice
+ Female Infanticide in the Kond Hill-Tracts in 1841

Area of human sacrifice
" " female infanticide
" where neither practice was followed.
to report on 9th January 1844, that: "among a barbarous people like the Khonds ... the only argument that they could understand is that supported by force." ¹ He issued a notice to all the Rajahs within his jurisdiction that not only were they to find and forward to him any Mariah victims in their Raj, but were to inform all Kond chiefs that if they allowed sacrifice, their lands would be confiscated and the person sacrificing would be subject to capital punishment.

The wisdom of his orders may well be doubted, for the deadly climate and unexplored territory made enforcement impossible; thus they could quickly lead to Kond contempt.

Lieutenant Hicks, the Assistant Superintendent of the Tributary Mehals, in Cuttack (i.e. Bengal Presidency) expressed himself forcibly on this subject:

"It is difficult to conceive that the mere act of marching a Regiment into the country and then marching it out again, will have the desired effect. It will not." ²

A line of military posts would have to be established and troops maintained there

"So as to worry and harrass the people into submission by not permitting them to cultivate their lands, and by keeping them confined to the (forest and mountain) fastnesses where they may take refuge .... The climate of Khondistan is so notorious for its insalubrity, and the baneful effects it has on the health and constitution of strangers .... that it will prove more destructive (to the army) than either the fire or sword of the enemy." ³

Nor would there be water for four months in the year. Altogether, if direct military force were to be the way to compel the Konds to abandon human sacrifice, then it must be:

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² Calcutta Review, Vol. VI, No. XII, p.94.
³ Ibid.
"an overwhelming force ... poured into the country from all sides simultaneously, viz. from Nagpur, Ranaghar, Cuttack, Russelkonda and Aska, to enforce instant submission." 1

A few weeks later, Lieutenant Hicks was appointed by the Bengal Government as "Assistant to the Superintendent of the Tributary Mehals (i.e. the Rajahs' States) for the purpose of suppressing the practice of human sacrifice among the Khonds." He was to work within the States ruled by the Hindu, Oriya-speaking Rajahs of Boad and Duspalla in much the same way that Captain Macpherson was at work in the adjoining tracts further south and west, among the highland Konis. One of the evils of the British governmental system in India grew steadily more obvious here. These two Agents, Captain Macpherson and Lieutenant Hicks, though working with the same purpose and within the same tribe, were nevertheless kept entirely separate by being servants of the two independent Governments of Madras and Bengal. True, there was a much higher proportion of Sasi Konis in the latter than the former, though many even of those clans showed the true Kond spirit of independence, ignoring both intimidation and allurement, and were liable to be found, as Lieutenant Hicks reported,

"in a state of beastly drunkenness and wild excitement, having also blocked up the passes leading to their fastnesses." 2

To such Konis as did obey his summons to attend on him for discussions, he repeatedly expressed his horror at their sacrifices and insisted on their "total ineffectuality towards either averting impending calamity or propitiating the Deity"; 3 but their invariable reply was simply that the sacrifice had been practised by their forefathers.

3 Op. cit. p.100
As early as the spring of 1844, Lieutenant Hicks declared that this "superstition of ages"

"cannot be wiped away from the ideas of the people in the space of a month, or a year, even at the point of the bayonet, but must be the work of time. It is intimately blended with their religion, and unhappily so deeply rooted an evil that, sooner or later, FORCE MUST BE RESORTED TO, as no other measures, except those of a coercive nature will effectually check its continuance." 1

Until such a time, he continued to persuade and conciliate with the aid of judicious presents to the Rajah of Boad and the Sasi-Kond chiefs' nominal leader. With the Bengal Government he continued to press for the making of a road and of a topographical survey of Boad and Duspalla. Mr. Mills, his immediate superior and Commissioner of the area, warmly recommended these suggestions to Bengal. He pressed them for "active and intelligent officers" 2 annually to be deputed to the improving of relations with the Konds and to expressing the British views on human sacrifice. In this way he hoped to induce the Konds to substitute animals and to sign agreements making human sacrifice a punishable crime. He too was convinced that force must eventually be used, but meanwhile:

"two or three seasons may be passed when, as circumstances justified, I would publicly proclaim the repression of the revolting practice, and vest the officers with power of punishing summarily the aggressors of the law". 3

So the remainder of 1844 and 1845 were passed in repeated forays to the hills. Fewer Meriah victims were rescued or, apparently, sacrificed; but there was a growing conviction that the practice had simply become a more private ritual in the place of its former noisy publicity. So, in the opinion of the Calcutta Review,

1 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
"not able from their skill at diagnosis to hit either the root of the disease, or suggest the appropriate moral remedy, they (Lieut. Hicks and Mr. Mills) were willing for a season to resort to sundry half-measures and mitigating palliatives." 1

Lieutenant Hicks had certainly realised, however, that the Konds' reluctance to abandon their practices of human sacrifice and female infanticide was because 'It is so intimately blended with their religion' as well as being 'unhappily so deeply rooted' (see above). Their reluctance will perhaps be better understood if the historical account pauses here so that the Konds' mythological sanctions for the two rites and also the actual mode of Kond human sacrifice may be briefly considered. This will be followed by a discussion of some of the divergent values of the Konds, the British and in a subsidiary but significant role, the Fans, at the time of this early encounter.

(b) The Konds' Mythological Foundation for These Practices
(as reported to Lieutenant Macpherson between 1837 and 1841) 2

Great Bura God is the Supreme Being. He is self-existing, Source of all Good, Creator of the Universe, Creator of Man, Creator of the Inferior Gods; and it came about like this:
Bura God created a consort for himself, Tari (or Tana) Penu, the Earth Goddess.
Bura God afterwards created the earth.
Bura God found Tari wanting in wifely attentions and affectionate compliance, so
Bura God created man from the earth's substance, to give him really devoted service.

1 Op. cit. p.106
2 Macpherson, Memorials, Chapter VI.
Bura God had intended first to create every variety of animal and vegetable life necessary for man's existence but Tari was so jealous that she tried to prevent him. However, she only succeeded in changing the order of creation. So the generally accepted creation myth goes like this:

Bura took a first handful of earth and threw it behind himself without looking. Tari caught it, cast it aside, and it became the trees, herbs, flowers and vegetables of all kinds.

Bura took a second handful of earth and threw it behind without looking. Tari caught it, cast it into the water and it became the fish and all water creatures.

Bura took a third handful of earth and threw it behind without looking. Tari caught it, cast it aside, and it became all the animals, wild and tame.

Bura took a fourth handful of earth and threw it behind without looking. Tari caught it and cast it up in the air, where it became all the creatures that fly.

Bura looked behind and saw.

Bura laid a firm hand on Tari's head to prevent further interference.

Bura took a fifth handful of earth and placed it on the ground behind, where it became the human race.

Tari said: "Let these exist, but create no more!"

But Bura exhaled sweat from his own body, collected it in his hand and threw it around: "To all that I have created!"

Thence arose love, sex, and the continuation of the species.

This created world was free from all evil:

men and the Creator were in free communication;

men lived on the spontaneous abundance of the earth;

men enjoyed everything in common;
men lived in harmony and peace;
men went unclothed;
men could move freely on earth and in air and water;
and all the animals were harmless.

Tari's jealousy then led her to open rebellion against Bura.
Therefore she introduced every form of moral and physical evil.
Into man she introduced moral evil; "sowing seeds of sin into mankind
as into a ploughed field"; and into the material creation she intro-
duced diseases, deadly poisons, every kind of disorder.

A few individuals rejected evil and remained sinless: Bura made
them tutelary gods: "Become gods and live for ever, having power
over man, who is no longer my immediate care!" The rest all yielded
and fell into a state of disobedience to the deity and fierce strife
against each other. And Bura entirely withdrew his face and his
guardianship from mankind. Also, because through Tari's interference,
everyone was now committing sin, they all became subject to death.
Moreover, throughout the natural world, some animals became savage,
the seasons could no longer be counted on with absolute regularity
and the earth became a wilderness of jungle, rocks and unstable mud;
at the same time, man lost his power of moving through air and water,
he knew suffering and degradation, and he went clothed.

At this time Bura God and Tari Goddess were themselves in fierce
conflict for superiority.

Up to this point that is the general Kond belief. But the Konds
say that long, long ago they divided into two sects directly opposed
regarding the result of this contest between Bura and Tari.

Bura's followers insist that Bura was triumphant, and as a sign, he
imposed the cares of childbirth on Tari's sex; while Tari remained
as hostile and malignant as ever toward man, though, because she was
under Bura's control, she was only allowed to strike as the instrument of Bura's moral rule — that is, Bura doesn't inflict the punishment, but he allows it where he desires to punish.

Tari's followers maintain that she remained unconquered, though Bura reigns supreme as Creator and Source of Good; but, they say, Bura's power is insufficient when Tari wants to inflict injury or destruction on man. They said, too, that though Tari is the source of evil, she has the power to give benefits by not stopping Bura in his good work — some even maintained that she was able to give benefits herself. As a result of these two points of view, two quite different forms of ritual arose within the same tribal people:

**Beliefs of Bura's Sect**

Bura decided that he must create inferior deities whose functions would be to regulate the powers of nature for the use of man; to instruct man in the arts necessary to life; to protect man against every form of evil; and in return, man must seek their favour through worshipping them with the food-offerings they desire. But Bura also made it understood that these inferior deities were only worshipped by the sanction of Bura and Tari — for worship was due of right to Bura and Tari alone, and therefore these two must continue to be the first names invoked at any ceremonial. (N.B. This was as true in 1966 as in 1836).

So three classes of inferior gods were created, corresponding to the primary wants of man, according to Kond values — that is, to fallen man who now has to labour in order to live.

1) The god of the village, of the hill, the stream, the family or house, the spring, the jungle, the ravine, the path, the new fruits on trees. All these gods, and more like them, know every human action, need and interest in their own particular locality,
where they alone preside.

2) Three gods with particular functions:
   i) The Rain God (Riju Penu)
   ii) God of the First fruits (Boorbi Penu)
   iii) God of Increase (Pitori Penu) to send grain of all varieties.

These three 'long, long ago' delivered (from Dura to man) the seeds of all useful plants; they taught him to clear the jungle by slash and burn methods; and they taught him how to make ploughs, to yoke oxen, and to know the seasons and also to suit the various seeds to the various soils and slopes.

3) Three more very useful deities:
   i) The God of Hunting (Plambu Penu), to show the Konds how to do it with slings, bows and arrows, and axe; also to lay down rules and ritual for it. This was a hilarious god, and the hunters were to rush joyously yelling 'Ho-ha' for hares; 'Irru!' for deer. (Still observed in 1966)
   
ii) The God of War (Loha Penu). As man was constantly warring, this god prescribed rules for going to war and for making peace; e.g. all boys were to be trained from their earliest days in the use of the three weapons; the whole village community was to attend a war-party: the old men to give advice and encouragement, and the women to follow with pots of water and food and to care for the wounded. Also because the women were considered to be neutral, between the clan of their husband and clan of their father (it being incest to marry within the clan), their intervention was necessary to bring about peace.
   
iii) The God of Boundaries (Sandii Penu) - very necessary when all the clans were hostile to each other yet all subsisted
by hill-agriculture and hunting.

Macpherson mentions one other deity, to whom, - unlike all the other gods - worship is not offered in more recent times, Dinga Penu, the judge of the Dead. This Kui word 'dinga' was still used in the 1920's for the principle or flame of life, life itself, spirit, soul. It has now dropped out of common usage except with a lengthened vowel 'i' being the verb describing a fire bursting into flame. Dinga Penu, Macpherson says, dwelt on a smooth and slippery rock, round which a dark, deep river flowed. There he recorded every man's actions. Immediately upon death, the soul makes desperate leaps to secure a footing on his rock before being sent to reward or restorative punishment. (for a number of reasons, discussed later, any belief in this god was very limited and probably was due to Hindu influence from the plains or by Oriya settlers, for the word was only known on the eastern edge of the Goomsur Ghats).

Beliefs of Tari's Sect

Tari's followers believe that it was she who taught man about agriculture, the arts of hunting and the arts of war; and that she permitted her followers to acknowledge Bura and all his creation. All their beliefs were, in fact, just like Bura's sect but with Tari supreme and Bura second, instead of the reverse. This however led to one major difference: Tari did all this for her followers on condition that she received their worship through human sacrifice, which was her proper food. She made this revelation to mankind, they said, by taking the form of the woman, Amali Baeli, about whom this myth is passed down the generations:

'At the time when the earth was hatched out, every place was simply a morass, so the whole countryside swayed and shook continually. But at this time there was a Kui house shaking in the morass. A woman and a man lived there. Her name was Sanjuli-Binjuli Amali-Baeli, and his name was Olang-Kuara Patang-Kuara Dari-Kuara Dumi-Kuara.
When he was out one day, she was peeling vegetables for the pot. She cut her little finger (or thumb) and the blood oozed out, not falling on the vegetables but being sprinkled on the ground. Then the swaying earth solidified and also became very fertile. And Amali-Baeli said: "Look what a good change! Cut up my body to complete it!" But the Konds refused. Thinking she was a Kond like themselves, they resolved not to sacrifice one another but to purchase victims from other people. Thus, saying that "without the falling of human blood on the ground there is no fertility," our forefathers sought a way of burying human flesh; and so began the Mrimi (Meriah) sacrifice.

Tari's followers added:

'Then also hunting began. A man brought (apparently to a priest) a cat, a snake and a lizard, and inquired if they were fit to eat. Tari rested on the priest and said to him: "Give names to all the wild animals distinguishing those that are fit and those that are unfit for use and let men go to the jungles and the hills, and kill sambur and all other game with arrows and with poison."' And men went to hunt.' 1

They had a long legend, too, concerning the way in which she taught men to fight. Macpherson states that this was repeated in full when worshipping the God of War, but he records only excerpts from it:

'Bura Penu in the beginning created the world and all that it contains, including the iron of weapons, but men did not know the use of weapons, fighting in womanish fashion and wounding one another with sword grass and spear grass, unable to inflict death... but Tari taught men to make bows and arrows and axes, but "so cruel" was the iron in which "the terrible goddess", when she introduced cruelty with other evils into the world, "hard mingled no drop of pity", that none who were wounded lived; but Tari, on the prayer of her children, taught men how to moderate the "cruelty of the first iron", and how to make war. 2

After a while, so the general Tari myth goes on, men complained that they were still poor and troubled in many ways, that they had "little wealth, much fear, but few children, deadly snakes and tigers, and thorns piercing the feet". Tari therefore prescribed an extension of her ritual for human sacrifice; these were to be performed on many more occasions, with new ceremonies added and new arrangements for the provision of victims. Moreover, Tari told them, where previously the

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1 Macpherson, Memorials, p.97.
2 Ibid.
value had been limited to the group performing the sacrifice; its value now would embrace all mankind. Thus the sect of Tari believed that responsibility for the wellbeing of the whole world (as they knew it) rested on them. They therefore practised the rite of human sacrifice in great numbers, both for community and family reasons. Community observances were as follows:

(1) Every household shared the blood of a human victim at the time when

   i. its principal crop was sown or planted;

   ii. as a harvest oblation,

   iii. additional human offerings throughout the growing season; (the number varied according to the needs of the year).

(2) If the health of the community were specially affected, or the flocks or herds suffered from diseases or wild beasts.

(3) If the clan-head's health or fortunes deemed it advisable, he being regarded as a mirror of how well or ill disposed the deity was towards the community over which he presided. Any sign of coming wrath was immediately countered by public atonement with human blood.

Private performance took place similarly when any unusual calamity marked the anger of the deity against a particular household, following the priest's diagnosis that it was due to neglect of worship.

Owing to the great expense falling on one kin group at such a time, a ritual concession was possible: if the head of the household couldn't immediately afford it, he took a goat to the place of sacrifice, cut off one ear and cast it down on the ground as a pledge that must be redeemed by a human life within one year, at whatever cost. Altogether the number of sacrifices in a district were dependent on circumstances too numerous and variable to estimate the annual average, but they were
certainly a very great number. Macpherson states for instance that at the head of a small valley, only three-quarters of a mile wide, seven victims were just about to be sacrificed when he arrived there.

Bura's followers had very strong feelings against human sacrifice, viewing it with the utmost abhorrence. They believed that the rite was adopted as the result of monstrous delusions thought up by Tari for the sheer destruction of her followers; and that they themselves were only preserved from falling into this sin by the special work of Bura on their behalf. On the other hand, Bura's sect had no such feelings about their own practice of female infanticide. (This custom was prevalent only in non-Meriah areas, not among Tari-worshippers). They alleged that Bura had sanctioned it by saying in exasperation to men: "Behold! From making one feminine being (Tari), what have I and the whole world suffered! You are at liberty to bring up only as many women as you can manage!"

A Description of the Meriah Rite

The two basic prerequisites for the Konds have already been stated: first, that the victim must have been bought with a full price by the freewill of the seller, whether middleman or parent; and secondly, that the sacrifice must be 'voluntary', that is, with the victim neither bound nor offering the least resistance. Child victims were usually unaware of their fate beforehand, for they were much loved and were brought up to be fed and petted in every home. Older children and adults might realise what lay ahead. Nevertheless, it seems that they tried to delude themselves that they were so greatly loved that when the time came, some other victim would be offered; or else they realised that they probably had no hope of escape, for there was a taboo on anyone outside the village offering any hospitality whatsoever to an intended
Meriah. The generally accepted belief in their beatification immediately following upon such a noble death for the good of mankind may have helped them to accept the inevitable. It is said that some even refused the freedom offered by the British, so great was their hope of supernatural recompense. It has already been mentioned too, that the only professions counted honourable to a Kond were agriculture, war and hunting, so Konds were unable to procure victims for themselves. They had to employ the Pans, who procured them either by purchase or by false pretences and abduction. These victims could be of either sex though in some places at least, the same sex was always sacrificed as had been used on earlier occasions. They could also be of any age, though children were preferred for convenience's sake. In fact, the Pans always tried to have a few children in reserve. All these practicalities of purchase seem to have been immaterial from a Kond point of view, so long as the victim was bought with a price.

The ritual took three days. During that period it was essential that the whole community remained 'of one heart'. All feuds must be forgotten and no one must be excluded from the festival. For the three days of festival, huge crowds gather of both sexes and all ages, most of them becoming increasingly intoxicated. The first day is spent in drinking, drumming, dancing and the performance of minor sacrifices, followed by a feast of the sacrificed animals that night. On the second day morning the victim remains fasting, having been fed on the previous evening; he is however given liquor. The household chiefly concerned carefully wash and dress him in a new garment, and lead him in solemn procession up to the top of the village and down to the bottom. Then with even greater drumming and dancing, they lead him from the village to the Meriah Grove. This is a deep clump of shady, sacred trees close to the village, probably near a stream.
A stake is fixed in the ground at the centre and the priest seats the victim at its foot, chained or bound and with his back to it. There the victim is anointed with oil and turmeric paste (probably by the household's womenfolk) and is adorned with flowers. By this time the crowd is very drunk and pays reverence to the victim throughout the day. They push and jostle for the slightest relic, such as a bit of the turmeric paste dropped from his brow or - of especially great virtue for the women - a drop of his spittle. Roughly-carved wooden peacock-clappers are held on short poles, their heads and tails being jerked up and down on strings. A high bamboo pole is raised aloft with a live cock depended from its tip, and a long rope reaching down with a number of small bells fastened to it. These are jerked and jangled as the Meriah Song is endlessly chanted. (See Chapter III (c)).

On the second night the priest and assistant elders probe the ground all around the Meriah with long sticks to find which bit is 'unstable' and is therefore causing the trouble. The first deep chink which the priest pierces is declared to be the spot indicated by Tari Fenu for the reception of the sacrificial blood. There they dig a hole and place in it a little chaff.

Third day: as the victim must neither suffer bound nor exhibit any sign of resistance, it is at this point that the bones of the arms, and if necessary the legs, are broken in several places. By thus becoming irresisting, the offering can evidently be classed as 'voluntary'. Next the priest and one or two elders take the cleft branch of a green tree, put the victim's neck (or sometimes his chest) within the cleft and try with all their might to close the two ends of the cleft branch with cords. That morning the exculpatory dialogue takes place between the priest, the headman and the victim's stand-in. (See Chapter III (c)).
About noon, as the incessant drumming rises to a frenzied crescendo, the priest gives the signal for sacrifice by slightly wounding the victim with his axe. Immediately, the heads of households rushed in with drunken fury on the victim, shouting: "We bought you with a price! No sin rests on us!" Rapidly they cut strips of flesh from the bones of the victim, whose blood drips into the prepared hole in the 'unstable' ground. That is the consummation of the rite. Each man takes his strip straight to his fields to bury it and then goes straight to his own home. There he and all his family, like every other family in the village, stay indoors for three days mourning at the death of one of their community.

Meanwhile, the head of the victim has remained untouched. It is watched over carefully all night through by the priest and the headman, aided by a constant supply of liquor. Next morning they make a funeral pyre and cremate the head and bones, or in some places they bury these there in the hole. At the same time they sacrifice a goat, casting away the body as a 'whole offering'.

When the three days' mourning is ended, a buffalo is slaughtered and the usual great third day funeral feast, the Mara, is held attended by all who participated in the Meriah celebration. Two other essential formalities remain: the Duli, or 'Final Instalment' buffalo is given to the agent or father who sold the Meriah victim to the Konds; and one year later, a pig is sacrificed and offered to complete the rite.

There are, of course, local adaptations and variations, but in essence the stages developing the ritual and the purpose behind it remain the same. This sacrifice will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.
Divergent Values: Kond, British and Pan

The brief but bloody Goomsur Wars in 1835-1837 show how wide was the divergence in values between Konds and British right from their first encounter. The anonymous author in the Calcutta Review sums it up in an article packed with the highest aspirations for the advancement of these poor barbarians who cannot grasp their good fortune in being part of a noble empire, God's gift to the less-enlightened world. While acknowledging that

"it was a rough way of forming a first acquaintance - the way of the sword, of fire, of bloodshed, of horrible devastation!" ¹

the article nevertheless claims that despite the wholesale slaughter of heads of families and the indiscriminate killing of lesser members and burning of their homes, crops and means of livelihood, this was the way in which providence, mysterious and overruling, was at work so that the Konds would be 'violently wrenched from the grasp of barbarism, and placed on the highway of ultimate civilisation and general prosperity.' ²

Macpherson's account gives a footnote clearly showing the incomprehension of the Kond survivors when they returned to their fields and villages only to find them destroyed:

"'They seemed astonished', said an eye witness, "at the strange men wearing red cloth (soldiers) breaking in amongst them; saying: 'Why did they come to us? We never saw these men before; we never gave them trouble; why give us pain and leave us hopeless!'" ³

Macpherson did, however, appreciate from the first the 'admirable constancy' of the Konds in refusing to accept the remarkably high bribes offered for information leading to the capture of either the fugitive

2 Ibid.
rajah and his people or their own Kond leaders. Though it was not at the time realised by the British, it was quite unthinkable to the Konds that the hospitality pact made between them and the rajah in the presence of their High God should be broken under any conditions or for any reward whatever. It was the Fans and a scattering of Hindus in the foothills among whom self-interest prevailed; their information led to the capture, and thus to the execution, of all leaders in the affected area. Moreover, the hospitality pact had been designed by the rajah to prevent at all costs the capture alive of any of his family, especially his female relatives, for he had in mind the degrading results of a former encounter with the British. In 1815 a Colonel Fletcher had divided the ladies and treasures of the rajah between himself and his officers. Though the Colonel was dismissed by Court Martial in 1817, this dishonourable incident was thought by the rajah to be typical of British behaviour. The tragic outcome of this misunderstanding was that the Konds - for the now dead rajah's sake - ambushed an army escort and killed the seven Uriya ladies of his kin who were being escorted to the plains as prisoners. This escort, as it happened, was acting against Macpherson's orders and greatly increased the gulf in understanding between the two sides.

Regarding early attempts to abolish the Kond practice of human sacrifice, the Hon. Mr. Russell felt it to be inconsistent with the principles of humanity to enforce on such a race the immediate abandonment of ceremonies interwoven with their religion. Instead he took the practical step of establishing weekly market centres in the more accessible Goomsur and Surada localities. This step arose from his observation that Konds were very fond of salt, salt-fish, brass vessels, scarlet and other cloths; and that they were entirely dependent on lowlanders for these, whether obtaining them by exchange or by force.
At markets, he reasoned, they could see all they desired and more, and
from wider areas than ever before. Beside promoting Kond-British
relations, this feeding into them of new tastes and new wants 'would
afford us the best possible hold on their fidelity as subjects, by
rendering them dependent on us for what might one day become necessities
of life.'  

A further inducement was the cancelling of tribute payments in
these areas for a number of years, along with a note to the Madras
Government that the terrain made it impossible in any case to collect
more than a negligible amount.

At this period there was a total failure to appreciate that the
Konds had any standard of values at all. Lieutenant Hill's extensive
work for the Survey Department led him in 1838 to the view that per¬
suasion alone was most unlikely to wean the Konds from their practice
of human sacrifice, for:

"The race, if not entitled to the name of savage, is on the very
lowest level of civilisation, and is not prepared to receive
rules and ordinances adapted to people of more cultivated under¬
standing. The disposition of the Kond partakes much of animal
suspicion and cunning, and it is to be recollected that the
varying ideas of his mind are more nearly allied to instinct
than to the powers of reasoning and perception between right and
wrong which are the result of civilisation and education.

Attempt to reason with a Khond and he refers to the customs
handed down by his ancestors; try to persuade him that his
ancestors were very wrong, he looks on you with dread and supposes
that you are trying to entrap him into compromising himself in
some fancied manner; but let him know that it is positively
ordered to do a thing, and let him see before his eyes power to
carry that order into effect, and he will obey."  

- surely hardly not a surprising conclusion only a year after the
devastations of the Goomsur Wars.


2 Calcutta Review, No. XII, Vol. VI, p.64.
The writer in the Calcutta Review, speaking as the voice of British India, finds (in the accounts of this period) that the whole subject of the Konds and their practices

"is one which furnishes fresh materials for the speculation and remarks of the philosophic inquirer into the causes that accelerate or retard the amelioration or degeneracy of different and widely scattered sections of the family of men." 1

In other words, were the Konds on the way up or the way down the sliding scale of the human race into which Early Victorian thought was attempting to position all peoples, far and near, whom they discovered to be dwelling in their rapidly expanding world? The question could not easily be determined, he decided, but the mere propounding of it was felt to be an honourable occupation for those who knew themselves to be the securely fixed 'Dominant' in this scale.

All through this period, all communications were made in the Oriya language of the plains - a language of Sanscritic origin akin to Hindi, Bengali, etc. and totally dissimilar to the Dravidian Kui language of these hill-people. During the two wars, Oriya messages had either been transmitted verbally through the Pans or written in letters which were placed in the fork of some prominent tree, thus still requiring interpretation by Pans or the fugitive Oriyas themselves. Language difficulties were thus an added barrier then as later to a true appreciation of values in either direction between the British and the Konds.

The sacrosanct nature of hospitality offered to guests has already been mentioned but take, also, the Kond insistence that right relationship between man and the deity demands and involves right relationship

with all one's fellow men. In all probability here lies the reason why Mr. Bannerman and his large military force were not wiped out by the great company of drunken Konds gathered for the final-day ritual of their Meriah sacrifice, in the wildly remote village of Sikeraguda; for if the sacrifice were to be acceptable to the deity, it was essential that all men preserve non-quarrelling relationships throughout the Meriah festivities. Hence, although the head of that valley formed an ideal situation for ambush from all sides, Mr. Bannerman lived to make that report that though they 'showed themselves in the hills in all directions', armed with the formidable weapons that make up any Kond's equipment, and loudly objected to the abduction of their already consecrated victim, 'fortunately no collision actually took place.'

Thus when Captain Hill later reported that this incident had aroused such 'excitement' that it was unsafe for a European even to mention the topic of human sacrifice, and also that in a very few days another woman had been sacrificed in the place of the victim so abruptly wrested from them, Mr. Bannerman's official reply obviously believed Lieut. Hill to be overstating the situation. Considering it 'astonishingly jealous' of the Konds to resent this 'remote degree of interference' he quite failed to enter into their motives.

The Konds on the other hand were convinced that they could not, with any degree of safety to their whole extended community, break off in the midst of their ritual, when the dreaded Earth Goddess and other deities were already present at the feast in the sure anticipation of receiving their required and properly purchased blood-food.

Nevertheless, there are a number of indications in the final day's

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Meryiah ritual that a serious dichotomy existed in the mind of the Konds. Tana Fenu, the Earth Goddess, must be given the demanded human 'food' yet that made them guilty of cold-blooded murder, an action taboo other than in warfare. Their feeling of guilt led to an elaboration of 'safeguards': first, the victim, if possible a non-Kond to satisfy tribal family feeling, must be truly their possession, being bought with a full price and the whole transaction being conducted by the headman or head of family according to the occasion; secondly, the victim must be made to be 'voluntary', not bound yet putting up no resistance whatsoever - hence just before the final act, his limbs were broken in addition to his being stupid with drink; thirdly, a long explanatory dialogue took place between the 'victim', priest and headman - a neighbour standing in for the victim, who was by now too far gone to conduct his own case. In this dialogue, the guilt for the killing was thrown by the 'victim' at the rest of the community who neatly passed the responsibility on to the victim's absent parents or the procurer. Thus they rationalised their own position even to the extent of self-identification with the victim in blaming and reviling the procurer or parents for their heartless act (see pp.223-227 giving the dialogue in full); fourthly, at the highest ritual moment of rushing in to cut away the living flesh, their frenzied shouts were concerned not with the victim but with themselves: "We bought you with a price! We bought you with a price! No sin rests on us!" And finally, came the full three days of community mourning for the death - as it would be for a member of their own family - and the Duli buffalo, paid as final instalment of the price of the victim, as for any important transaction, thus ensuring that all is satisfactorily squared up with the procurer and placing their innocence as responsible purchasers beyond all question. If by any remote chance a victim escaped, or if
he were snatched away by the rescuing British troops, he could never be offered again; a substitute had to be found and the whole purchase transaction repeated.

So both Konds and British pursued their own policies in mutual incomprehension. In 1841, ratifying Lieut. Macpherson's appointment as Agent to improve relationships with the clan-heads throughout the region, the Secretary of the Supreme Government in Calcutta was clearly surprised and pained that the Kond clans and village communities continued to assert their absolute independence of any earthly power. Lieut. Macpherson was to remove this erroneous impression and accustom the hill-tribes "to look to the British Government as the Ruling Power to whom obedience was due". 1

We return now to the administration's continuing attempts to persuade the Konds to abandon this ritual that was so deeply a part of their life. It will be seen that these attempts were also the cause of considerable rivalry and jealousy between the administrators.

(c) History of the Konds from 1842-1854: successful abolition of the two practices and replacement of human Meriah with animal substitute.

Before concluding the history of the abolition of human sacrifice among the Konds, brief mention must be made of a dispute by letter and in print that continued for two decades. The question under attack was whether Captain Macpherson or Captain Campbell had rendered the greater service in the suppression of the rite. Captain Macpherson's remarkable ability in gaining knowledge and insight concerning Kond customs following the Goomsur Wars, led to his being the one chosen in 1841 by

the East India Company as their first Agent for the Konds. Captain Campbell, having completed a five-year stint of service which had started with the Goomsur Wars, was at that point sent to Hong Kong, though he returned for further service with the Konds five years later. Captain Campbell was essentially a soldier (he later rose to the rank of Major-General) and in those early years hoped to achieve speedy results by advocating the stringent and equal punishment of both Fan sellers and Kond purchasers of Meriah victims, followed by their removal and imprisonment with hard labour. His other proposition, that all victims should be repurchased by the British at the price which they originally cost was considered dangerous and impolitic by the authorities. Nor can his statements always be reconciled with the true position at the time. For instance, his Report of 5th January 1842, at the close of his first Kond period, referring to the temporary cessation of most open sacrificing in Goomsur except for two in Kumbarakupa and Kurmingando (Baro Muta) says that fear of devastation on the scale of 1835-37 was keeping its performance secret all round the Goomsur area; but, he added, that fear was decreasing and it was hopeless to expect that the Konds of Goomsur would discontinue sacrificing by persuasion only. Yet when writing much later to discredit Captain Macpherson's work, ¹ he says: "In January 1842, the Meriah sacrifice was at an end among the Konds of Goomsur although I did not pretend to have eradicated all inclination for the rite from the minds of these wild people." ²

¹ in his Narrative by Major-General Campbell, C.B. of His Operations in the Hill-Tracts of Orissa, for the Suppression of Human Sacrifice and Female Infanticide, printed for private circulation only in 1861, but published later as A Personal Narrative of Thirteen Years' Service Among the Wild Tribes of Khondistan, for the Suppression of Human Sacrifice, by Major-General John Campbell, C.B, London 1864, p.78.

² Campbell, Personal Narrative, p.78.
Between these conflicting statements, the one written in a Government report at the time and the other twenty years later in memoirs slanted for a particular purpose, lies this long and vexed dispute with which it is unnecessary for us to deal in greater detail. The Supreme Government of India after clearing Macpherson and his Indian assistants of some quite unfounded allegations, mentions them in terms of highest honour and praise for the results they achieved among the Konds, the wise and peaceful methods by which they achieved them, and their deep insight into Kond values and customs. The long, scholarly articles which appeared in the Calcutta Review between January 1846 and October 1848, written "anonymously" by the famous missionary to Calcutta, Dr. Alexander Duff, and fully acceptable to the Editorial Board of that remarkable periodical, also accept Macpherson's bona fides against various indictments by Campbell. Five years later, the nineteenth century historian J.W.Kaye describes him as 'being naturally a man of a thoughtful enquiring nature, and of energetic benevolence of the best kind, he no sooner obtained a little general knowledge of the peculiarities of the Khond tribes than he formed the determination of pushing his investigation far beneath the surface, and of mastering the whole subject of the religious and social life of the strange people who had awakened such a kindly interest within him.' ¹ Macpherson's detailed knowledge of aspects of the Kond religion, as seen in the paper which he read to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1852, must rouse the deepest respect even today. Campbell, on the other hand, refers to it as the product of Macpherson's imagination. He quotes an officer who learned Kui later in the 1840's as 'giving four

¹ J.W.Kaye, The Administration of the East India Company; A History of Indian Progress, 1853, p.496.
short lines in the Koni language as the creed of the people and describing their ceremonial in half a page. Though Campbell himself describes it a little more fully than that, his material is of limited assistance in this present study.

One of Macpherson's first responsibilities on becoming Governor's Agent in 1841 had been to find the best approach for a road through the hills. His brief tour made from the south showed him such wild terrain that all hope of easier access that way was abandoned. He found, moreover, that the Konds there had no understanding of the Oriya language (in which he was fluent) and that even their Kui differed from that of the Goomsur Konds. For these reasons, added to their greater wildness and independence over and against the, at least nominal, authority of the British in Goomsur, he determined to concentrate first on the abolition of human sacrifice among the Goomsur clans, where Oriya was partially understood. He hoped too that the Goomsur area might prove to be a little less unhealthy than the south, which had had such a disastrous effect on his men in the previous cold season. "The few persons (i.e. officers) who then accompanied me to the hills to acquire experience, are dead or disabled for this service", he states simply when reporting on the difficulty of finding suitable leadership. He hoped therefore to train some more local, and better acclimatised men, Experience had also shown him that much could be done from camps at the nearest 'safe' points below the Ghats. Goomsur Kond leaders could come for discussion with him there though he could only return the visits during the cool, dry season between December and February.

His report on these matters, with its attendant recommendation, was given the most full and cordial reception by Lord Elphinstone and his

1 Campbell, op. cit. p.168.
2 Macpherson, Memorials, p.41.
Madras Government. As it concerned the unifying of the presently divided Kond population so that simultaneous action could be taken against the traffic in human victims across the borders of Madras and Bengal Presidencies, his Lordship sent it up to the Governor General of India in Calcutta with a strong recommendation for speedy ratification. Unfortunately it arrived there just as news of the 1842 massacres at Kabul shook the Indian Empire. The Konds, it was felt, might be barbarous but were not a political threat to British prestige - and so they could wait.

Captain Macpherson was still under direct government instruction not to introduce the topic of human sacrifice into his conversations with the Konds. Yet, as relations steadily improved through Kond visits to his camp on the Goomsur plains, so human sacrifices began again to be performed openly rather than in secret: "which is perhaps an improvement. Everyone is engaged in them - Sam Bisaye, of course, with the rest", he remarked. Captain Campbell had earlier laid down regulations regarding the rights of the clans, though without providing any means for their enforcement. This was entirely in Samo Bisaye's hands - and his hands were already fully occupied in squeezing payment and plunder from both sides in all disputes brought before him for arbitration. Thus in the first five years of their administration of the Goomsur Malishs, the British had, with the best of intentions, not only laid waste the villages and crops and executed the hereditary leaders, but after forbidding the traditional form of battle as the means of settling inter-clan disputes, they had quite unsuitably raised up this Oriya Hindu and officially recognised him as supreme throughout Goomsur. The Konds of course took quite a different view, but had

been put in a position where they were powerless to help themselves. Previously, Samo (or Sam as he is called in early records) had been the petty authority over the Hodzoghore Kond clans in this strangely mixed administration of proudly independent Konds and detached Hindu officials which had grown up through the centuries. During the First Goomsur War his behaviour was highly treacherous toward the British, but he was full of co-operation in the Second War a few months later. At the termination of hostilities, the Hon. Mr. Russell considered it essential that there should be one chief authority over all the Konds of Goomsur. So, not without misgiving, and in default of there being anyone else, he raised Samo with great pomp to the high - and previously hereditary - rank formerly held by the imprisoned Dora Bisaye. The following years steadily proved how misplaced was this trust in him. He used his new privileges for the most barefaced exacting of bribes from the Konds and constantly acted with treachery and cunning in turning the Meriah sacrificial system to his own advantage. Despite being the official representative of the British Government to further its abolition, he encouraged its continuance as widely as possible by the clever misuse of his authority, meanwhile exacting a 'present' from the bewildered Kond officiants on each occasion. Macpherson found many willing informants regarding this vital question of authority and realised that the Konds' greatest need was for the establishment of justice in a spirit and form intelligible and acceptable to them. Only so would they understand the Government's goodwill and would possibly become amenable to suggestion and guidance regarding their Meriah sacrifices. Any other way, he felt sure, would simply drive the practice underground.
"In other words, it may be possible for us, by force in the (Goomsur) tracts, to transfer the locale of the rite elsewhere, while we break down the truthfulness of the Kond character, which is its leading and its most hopeful feature, without preventing the sacrifice of a single victim." 1

The Konds knew only two forms of authority: Their own system of clan and family elders and the tyrannous incursions of these Hindu zemindars. Macpherson noted that:

"the patriarchal authority suffices for the maintenance of order and security within each (clan). But, without, all is discord and confusion. Betwixt (clans) are everywhere seen disagreements, conflicts, feuds without end and without remedy, and the zemindars are at once the allies and the chief enemies of each Kond society. Justice betwixt independent societies is, in a word, the great want which is deeply felt by all." 2

He stressed, however, that any new ideas must be always and only through their patriarchal heads; first by the Agent's personal influence - by his camping amongst each clan in turn until he gains their friendship, receives their confidence and learns what are their most important interests and insecurities, and secondly, by direct or indirect inducements, such as cash or cattle rewards and gifts, perhaps to a patriarch at his succession or in return for their yearly offerings of homage. It might even become possible, he considered, to meet the Kond passion for owning land by gifts of some of the near-valueless jungle tracts of the foothills.

The purpose of gaining this position of authority over the Konds was, of course, in order that it "should be mildly and gently exercised in inducing them to abandon the abhorrent rite of human sacrifice." 3

To this end it was essential to obtain influence over the priests.

This could only be done through gaining the deepest possible understand-

1 Macpherson, Memorials, p.179.
ing of their role and ritual practices in the community. The para-

priestly function of kin-group heads would need to be studied too.

Alongside this policy was the sheer practical necessity of bringing

the whole hill-Kond population under the same agency. To remain

split, by the British governmental pattern, between the Madras and

Bengal Presidencies caused discrepancies in timing and in policy not

only bewildering to intelligent Kond leaders, but laying every situa-

tion open to misinterpretation, delay and general loss of hard-won

confidence. For each Kond clan was continually anxious in matters

both spiritual and temporal: religiously, in the supernatural world’s

reaction to this enforced withholding of Tari-Fenu’s ‘food’, and in

the realm of Kond politics, that it should not submit as a clan to

some authoritative act of the British, which fellow-clans had not yet

acknowledged.

Thus it became increasingly obvious that if the administration

of justice along Kond lines, not British, was to be the means of

conciliation and of acquiring the necessary influence to bring about

the abolition of human sacrifice throughout the entire tribe, it must

be in the hands of one single agent.

Baba Khan, Macpherson’s able and trusted Muslim assistant, had

by now been joined by the Hindu Sundero Singh, the son of a rebel

Rajah of Surada who had kept his children among the Konds while he

fought the authorities. This young man’s fluent use of the Kui tongue

and full knowledge of the beliefs and practices of the Kond area of

his upbringing, was of inestimable value when added to Baba Khan’s

wisdom and experience. These two spent long days in discussion and

fact-finding, all of which was transmitted to Macpherson. ‘Cases’

and complaints were settled by the thousand, the more difficult ones

being reserved for Macpherson himself in his cool-season visits.
The break-through came in June 1842, when the clans of Baro Mutga (literally, Group of Twelve) offered him the following pledge: that if they could count on receiving justice as the British administered it in the lowlands, and could expect the severest punishment for any violation of the agreement, they on their side would sacrifice as substitutes for human victims:

'buffaloes, monkeys, etc. with all the ceremonies usual on occasions of human sacrifice'... and 'be permitted to denounce the Government to their gods upon all occasions as the cause of this relinquishment of their ancient worship, and the indication to those deities of Baba Khan in particular as the chief persuader - Baba willingly assuming the entire responsibility.'

At the same time the clan heads of Atharo Muta (lit. 'Group of Eighteen) voluntarily went home to try to persuade their kin to give up all the victims in that area too, on the same terms of receiving in return the administration of justice. They met with strong opposition from their out-spoken Kond families, but eventually all agreed save two tracts on the borders of Hodzogoro. Hodzogoro itself, Sano Bisaye's home territory, continued unabated to sacrifice human victims.

When Macpherson reported on the warmth with which his offer had been received and the resulting improved relationships, and that the sole source of his power was the just settlement of their many complaints, he went on to suggest that more authority should be given to local Kond leaders to administer their own laws and to deal immediately with procurers of victims. But at this point Lord Elphinstone resigned from the Governorship of Madras and the opportunity to obtain from the Central Government a clear policy for the treatment of India's tribal peoples was lost yet again. His successor, the Marquis of Tweeddale, uninformed in Kond affairs, wrote a well-intentioned but delaying Minute in autumn 1842, advising:

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1 Macpherson, Memorials, pp.179-180.
- the establishment of a police force, to be vigilant in districts bordering on Kond country, to prevent kidnapping and the sale of human victims;
- the trial of kidnappers by a special agent with large discretionary powers;
- fans, when out of the Kond country, to be under police surveillance and not to move without passports;
- all persons travelling into, passing out of, or lurking near Kond frontiers without good reason, to be apprehended and punished;
- also that he would appoint an Agent to the Konds who would work independently of everyone but the Governor. 1

This Minute proved the new Governor's goodwill better than it proved his grasp of the situation. Any patrolling police force such as he suggested, would be quite impossible to introduce as the regions adjoining Kond country belonged to independent Rajahs. Also it quite failed to give either the necessary authority for Macpherson to deal summarily with Samo Bisaye or to prevent the latter's cunning use of Mr. Bannerman's seniority and the embarrassingly unclear areas of authority between Bannerman and Macpherson.

When Macpherson reascended the Ghats for his regular visit in the cold season of 1842-43 he was encouraged to find that all the pledged clans of Baro Muta and Atharo Muta (fifteen clans out of the total of twenty-two) had kept their word. For the first time in the tribe's memory no human victims had been offered to the Earth Goddess in the whole of Baro Muta. Even the few unpledged tribes in Atharo Muta where Samo Bisaye's influence remained strong, had only offered five victims, and these under markedly changed circumstances: all five sacrifices had been representative of village-groups (replacing much more numerous kin-group celebrations); they had dispensed with the normal festival gatherings of visiting neighbours; and they had buried the five victims whole and unslashed. Their reasons were as follows:

one was for a sick man, one on account of tiger-ravages, and the other three for general propitiation. Macpherson wrote in his December letter home, 1842, with some asperity:

'Sam Bisaye, by whose permission the sacrifices were performed, is our great man, set up by Russell, and hitherto supposed to be engaged in putting them down. Bannerman, who knows nothing of the matter, is afraid to do anything, and looks on the whole Kond subject merely as a nuisance of the first magnitude; and what I am to do with the Government, him, and this Sam - the Konds being in this state of balance quivering upon the knife's edge - is far from an easy question. I have no power to act, not a single monosyllable of any sort whatever. It is a part of the only instruction I ever received - that I am not to speak of the human sacrifice as a Kond rite!' 1

His letter a month later, dated January 1843, is typical of his understanding approach to the Goomsur Konds at this critical point. He tells of the reasons the Baro Muta Konds gave him for yielding to the pressure of outside opinion: they now realised that all men except themselves (i.e. the followers of Tari Peny) abhorred the rite and that long reflection had convinced them that no god required it - for their fields were no richer nor their axes sharper than those of the non-sacrificing Konds. Therefore as the Government offered them the advantages of protection and peace, they would give up the Meriah sacrifice in the good faith that the gods would understand the strongly constraining influences laid upon them. Meanwhile, he commented, "having given up the vital point of their religion - in fact, its sum - they are necessarily utterly lost, bewildered and confused, turning everywhere to seek a resting point and finding none." 2 They discussed with him endlessly the possibility of substituting bullocks etc. It was the turn of two villages of Kurmingando and Kalingando in Baro Muta to celebrate the big public performance. Thus the tension was greatest

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1 Macpherson, Memorials, p. 185.
there due to the still strong fear of a deprived and angry Tari xenu, and some felt that the public sacrifice of a monkey would be the safest substitute; but no really satisfactory form could be devised. In this spirit of mental and spiritual revolution the Konds also talked surprisingly freely of overthrowing their priesthood - if one safeguard could be met: they said with their usual clear-sighted pragmatism:

"we can ourselves conduct with perfect efficiency every indispensable ceremony of our religion except the great rite we have given up; but the priests alone can enable us to cure our diseases and those of our wives and children, by informing us, when attacked, which god is offended and what is the expiation. Now, had we a doctor who could cure us without reference to the gods, as we learn that your doctors cure you, all would be well. If we remain dependent on the priests for cure, they will refer all our diseases to the Earth God unpropitiated by human blood, and we must sacrifice or die."

And at a discussion-gathering of the whole of Baro Muta:

"Send us a doctor and we will make him a god!" 2

After much searching Macpherson found for them an Oriya Brahmin who had inherited both medical knowledge and medical books from his father and had on one occasion successfully treated the Rajah of Chinna Kimedy, 'and who will, I hope, do in a way', he said. This man, however, rapidly succumbed to fever himself and came away.

Macpherson settled down again to his policy of administering justice, but only in such of the cases brought to him which were beyond the jurisdiction of the traditional Kond tribunals. In this way they were able to understand his intention of strengthening, not superseding, the existing law. He was struck by the fact that:

'In the investigation of 136 cases, which involved every conceivable interest of men well instructed in their rights and resolved to defend them, there did not occur a single instance of bad faith in the suitors or of falsehood in the witnesses, save occasionally on the part of the Panwas of the borders.' 3

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2 Ibid.
3 Calcutta Review, No. XX, Vol. X, p.277
His practical difficulties in persuading both defendants and witnesses to attend regularly throughout the hearing of their case proved greater than the actual implementation of the verdict, complicated and detailed though the apportioned settlement might be. His major task during that visit was to extend this form of jurisdiction, now acceptable within a clan, to cases involving both these hereditarily hostile clans of Baro and Atharo Mutas. Their leaders admitted it to be their only hope of permanent peace, yet at a practical level such measures went badly against the traditional inclinations of their war-hungry people. Compensation for wrongs came a poor second to the traditional values of immediate retaliation, a life for a life. A beginning was, however, made during that visit, and Macpherson’s local prestige and authority considerably enhanced. His summary of the 136 suits filed in Baro and Atharo Mutas that year are as follows: thirty-four had to remain undecided owing to the absence of evidence, but 102 were decided on their merits, forty-six of them being between members of the same clan and fifty-six between different clans. Of these, two were cases of murder; three related to victim children; fourteen to betrothed women; thirty-nine to land, sixty-three to cattle; six were cases of assault; and there were four cases of robbery.

At the same time he was energetically taking all possible measures against the procurers of victims, even drawing up a list of habitual Pan traders in victims. He discovered that almost all who supplied the Goomsur Konds were from the adjoining – but quite separate – seminaries of Nayager, Duspallah and Boad. These being in the Cuttack District, were in the Bengal Presidency and thus out-with his authority. Here was yet stronger proof of the necessity for the unification of administration.
After much delay, the Madras Government approved his plan for strengthening existing Kond institutions rather than introducing new laws, and of making the clan heads not only his successors but party with him in every decree. So he was now free to turn his rapidly growing influence among them to good use in strengthening and extending the number of clans pledged to the abolition of human sacrifice. In that January of 1843, 112 victims were voluntarily surrendered to him, of whom nearly two-thirds were from Atharo Muta, the others (for the first time) from Chokapad and Tentilghor; and one was rescued at the very point of sacrifice - with little advantage, for a substitute from Boad was as usual hastily bought to pacify the disappointed Tari Penu. Hodzoghoro, under Samo Bisaye, still held absolutely aloof, and beyond Goomsur, of course, the Meriah sacrifice continued quite unabated. Macpherson knew that in the village of Mahasinghi alone, just over the border into Chinna Kimedy, twenty-four victims suffered within a few days. Festivals of sacrifice were equally prolific over the Goomsur boundary into Boad, and he reports that "My camp was visited daily by agonised parents imploring me to rescue their children". He also comments in a letter that in addition to another 125 victims voluntarily surrendered to him in Goomsur:

'At a place not far from me, in Kimedy, I knew of seventy under the control of one man, who soon after sold thirty of them for between Rs. 100 and Rs. 200 apiece. But it were mere folly to attempt to operate on a larger field than we can command.'

Macpherson's wise identification of clan heads and other influential elders in Baro and Atharo Mutas with the joint authority of Government and of their own people had still not been able to reach out to the wily Samo Bisaye. He spread the news among the ignorant and highly credulous

2 Macpherson, Memorials, p. 188
Konds that the authority vested in him by the Government seven years earlier placed him beyond Macpherson's power and directly responsible to the distant Mr. Bannerman. It best suited his own ends to support, and indeed press for, cases of human sacrifice, but he took care to be down on the plains when Macpherson was up in the hills. Mr. Bannerman refused to believe any accusations brought against him by the British officers or the Kond leaders and was unwise enough to make this clear to Samo, who immediately put it to good use. On Macpherson's descent to the plains, he not only returned to the hills but announced there the false information that Mr. Bannerman had authorised the sacrifice of six more victims.

The despatch which Captain Macpherson wrote at the close of that third visit to the hills, in April 1843, not only stated the new situation regarding the administration of justice and peace, and the near-abolition of Meriah sacrifices in Goomsur, but it urged the need for the immediate discrediting and removal of Samo Bisaye and, temporarily, of his three eldest sons. This report concluded by repeating his earnest request of the previous year, that power should be invested in a single authority throughout the Kond territories so that it could be used in a straight-forward manner understandable to the Kond mind; for the present system left them at the mercy of the intrigues and deceptions of Samo Bisaye and other Hindu despots. If this were not done, the Konds - already perplexed - would quickly become first distrustful then likely to break their pledge and revert to an uncontrolurable state. As Macpherson, though in charge of Kond affairs, was still only head assistant to Mr. Bannerman, the report had of necessity to go through him to Madras. It became an increasing mystery and anxiety to Macpherson, as well as seriously retarding and endangering the whole project, that he received no acknowledgment or
advice from the Madras Government. After waiting anxiously from April until September, he took the unusual step of writing a second official representation, for he was in despair at the Government's silence at so critical a point in Kond affairs. He reminded them that it was almost time for his annual cold-season visit and that even on the previous year's visit, the pledged non-sacrificing elders had expected him to deal summarily with Samo and that he still had no power to do so, despite Samo's ever more flagrant defiance of Government orders; also that his apparent inactivity in this respect had not escaped the Kond elders' observation. One chief had remarked in the local idiom as Macpherson strongly pressed them to hold to their pledge yet did no more than denounce the violators: "Instead of cutting down the lofty tamarind tree in his path, he beats the shrubs which bend before him". In this second report he recapitulated all the events in the Goomsur Kond districts leading up to the crucial position of the moment. The shrewd Kond chiefs were rapidly losing confidence in the Government at his failure to act, for, he pointed out, these clans were placed in a most trying situation between the conflicting claims of their solemn pledge and those of traditional religious duty.

It was not until October - six months after his first urgent request to receive the necessary instructions without delay - that he learned that his earlier despatch had remained on the desk of his piqued superior, Mr. Bannerman. The latter, sick in mind and body, forwarded both together to the Madras Government, with a variety of excuses for their suppression. But the ill was done. The pledged Kond chiefs, quite unable to realise what it is to be under orders, saw only the British inability to oppose Samo Bisaye. They misread

1 Macpherson, Memorials, p.193.
Macpherson's six months' inactivity as his abandonment of them, thus freeing them from their side of the pledge too. Samo Bisaye seized his opportunity to sanction the supposed six Meriah sacrifices on his totally false 'personal authority from Mr. Bannerman'. Many defected to him in Hodzoghoro. Though there were only two sacrifices in Atharo Muta and none actually in Baro Muta, members of almost every kin-group took part elsewhere. The sense of guilt felt by some of the clan heads at the breaking of their pledges was as unfortunate as it was distressing; but the members of their clans were beyond control. There was even at this time an attempt by a woman presumed to be in the pay of Hodzoghoro, to poison Macpherson down on the plains, from which he fortunately recovered.

Before the end of the year a reply came from the Government. He was at last authorised to suspend Samo Bisaye from office and expel him from Hodzoghoro - which he did in January 1844, in so public and impressive a manner that it did much to regain the badly shaken confidence of the Konds. Also, despite Samo's being an Oriya Hindu and the champion of Tari worship for reasons of his own gain, his downfall was seen as a powerful religious symbol by the Konds.

Regarding their own broken pledges, the chiefs of Baro and Atharo Mutas held a hill council at which every chief gave his opinion, in the traditional manner. There was much open self-judgment, and the Council's decision was finally submitted to Macpherson:

'that the violation of the engagement by a few chiefs, and those who acted with them, although partly justifiable, was a crime against the Government and against the tribes - while the Gods had instantly marked its criminality by punishing the chief who first sacrificed by the deepest mark of their displeasure - the death of his wife in child-birth;' - 'that those who had violated the pledges and fallen, deceived by Sam Bisaye, were equally false to them and to the Government; - that the Government had, at its own time, done justice with respect to him, and made its will plain, and there could be no doubt as
to its future course; - that the three chiefs who sacrificed, confiding in Sam Bisaye, must, like him, be punished by the Government, or there would be no security against the recurrence of similar acts by individuals, involving all in crime and ruin. 1

Good relations were thus re-established. For the rest, the Government's orders were vague indeed; and to the disappointment of the British officers, no notice was taken of his request to start building the urgently needed road. Mr. Bannerman had been temporarily removed and had sailed for sick leave to the Cape, leaving Captain Macpherson in charge of the whole Ganjam District until his successor arrived.

During that same summer, Macpherson also began to build up a connection with the other section of the Kond tribe, whose worship of Bura as supreme above Tari had led them into the practice of female infanticide. To help to meet their shortage of wives and need of stable marriage partnerships, he gave them ex-Meriah girls in marriage, for 'he had received a sort of round robin from his female Meriah wards, to the effect that if he did not get them husbands forthwith, they would hang themselves from the trees.' 2

With Samo Bisaye's corrupting influence removed from Hodzogoro (if not from the rest of Goomsur) and the Konds of Baro Muta and Atharo Muta not only won over from human sacrifice but loud in their praise of the new form of justice which had replaced both their blood-feuds and private quarrels, the way seemed open for the winning of Hodzogoro and the other districts of Goomsur. This, however, was not achieved without continued underground opposition from Samo's five sons, two brothers and younger male kin. They skilfully whipped up the Konds of Hodzogoro into believing that Samo though a Hindu was

2 Macpherson, Memorials, footnote to p. 194.
a martyr for their Tari religion. By a prestigious move in restoring a village deity to its proper priest after Samo had stolen it several years before to add priestly influence to his own secular power, Samo’s family was finally discredited and the Konds of Hodzoghorro were won. All the clans of the remaining Goomsur districts rapidly followed, and many victim-children were voluntarily given up before Macpherson’s party descended to the plains in the early spring of 1844. Many more facts of Samo Bisaye’s oppression now came to light. For every sacrifice since the earliest days of British attempts to abolish the rite, he had levied the high price of two head of cattle on the purchaser of each victim and again at the time of the victim’s sacrifice, with an additional levy of two head for saving some from seizure by the officers.

There was no human sacrifice in the whole of the Goomsur area that January season. Indeed, the clans of Baro and Atharo Matas were determined that the gods should never again be in a position to find them breaking their pledged word. So when five men who had crossed the Bengal frontier to attend a sacrifice brought back some flesh and secretly buried it in their own fields, they instantly made them dig it up again and brought them with it to Macpherson’s assistant. They demanded civil punishment for this secret action which they declared to be not only false to the Government and to the clans but deeply criminal in the sight of the gods with whom the new contract had been made - a typical example of the Kond passion for fair dealing all round, even in the face of generations of traditional behaviour which had demanded exactly what the five men had done.

The Konds of Hodzoghorro did not sacrifice but, as was to be expected in this their first year, they brought flesh from elsewhere to bury in their fields. Tentilghoro and Chokaped remained almost
faithful to their elders' word. The kidnapping of children from the plains had now ceased and the 142 previously purchased victims who were handed in were almost entirely Konds, Fans and other permanent residents in the hills. The hereditary clan-head in Tentilghoro not only resumed office in his own area, but by public acclaim of all save those in the immediate vicinity of Samo Bisaye's kin, the district of Hodzoghorro which had previously belonged to his ancestors was restored to him. An able and loyal leader was also appointed over Baro and Atharo Mutas by their own public choice.

From all these results, Macpherson had high hopes that the untouched clans of Chinna Kimedy, Surada and Bodoghorro in the south and west might similarly be won through coming to desire the forms of justice and peace-making so much appreciated by the Coomsur Konds.

All these matters were included in his Report to the Madras Government dated 8th May 1844, along with a reminder that the building of the proposed road via the Kurmingando Ghat had not yet been confirmed though torrents had caused deterioration of the present track to such an extent that it was now impassable even on horseback. A recommendation was also included for the building of two rough bungalows like the one at Kurmingando, at other points in the hills. Macpherson's final suggestion in this Report was that a judicious mark of appreciation by the Government to his two invaluable Indian assistants, Baba Khan and Sundoro-Singh, might help to induce other men of character to overcome their fear and distaste of service in the hill-tracts.

This Report, unlike the previous one, moved with great swiftness through Ganjam to the Madras Governor, the Marquis of Tweeddale, and his reply came with equal promptitude and high commendation. At long last, authority was given for the permanent exclusion from all Kond country of Samo Bisaye and the three other leading members of his
family. The new Muta-heads received Government confirmation, along with news of the striking of suitable medals for the two Indian assistants. Moreover, the Report was forwarded from Madras to the Central Government of India on the very same day, along with these endorsements and recommendations. The unification of the hill zemindaries was especially pressed, and a reminder was given that Madras still awaited some statement showing the sentiments of the Central Government on past and future measures regarding human sacrifice and for some definite policy sanctioned by them, for which local officers were waiting with anxiety.

Meanwhile, the practice of female infanticide was also demanding the attention of the Governor's Agent.

**Measures for the Abolition of Female Infanticide**

The areas where this rite was certainly practised were in the Zemindaries of Surada, Korada and the borders of Chinna Kimedy and Bodoghor. These comprised the five districts of Pondakole, Guldi (Guladye), Deegi, Bori and Kundami, which were possessed by a few clans sub-divided into many branches. The population was roughly estimated at 60,000. In such areas all girl-babies, except in some places when the first-born was a girl, were taken out to the jungle and deserted. This was no sin, for all understood that these newborn infants were not yet ritually ratified members of the kin-group and thus were not fully persons. On his first visit early in 1842, Captain Macpherson had thought that possibly 1,000 female infants each year met their death in this way; his later and more careful estimate increased that number to between twelve and fifteen hundred. The proportion destroyed varied with each district: Bori and Guldi rarely reared a female child at all, Pondakole reared one or two per
village; but Deegi only destroyed them on its borders next to Guldi. Accurate information could not be obtained regarding Kundari, but it was known to follow the practice very widely indeed.

Macpherson's approach to the problem was the excellent one he had adopted regarding human sacrifice. In this he was considerably in advance of his time. As the concluding article on the Konds in the Calcutta Review points out:

"His first object always was, minutely to inspect the social malady for whose cure and removal he was expected to operate - to trace it, if possible, to its source or primary seat - to lay bare its roots - and to fix and define its originating or predisposing proximate causes." ¹

This led him to build up the following information and pre-disposing causes:

1. The clans practising female infanticide did not offer human sacrifice to Tari Penu, for they believed her to have become subordinate to Great Bura Penu in the cosmic struggle. Their allegiance is therefore to him and they saw no need to propitiate Tari's horrible hunger. At the same time, they fully entered into Bura's feelings as he saw the evil that this first feminine creation of his continued to wreak. Thus they were quite ready to receive his 'advice', handed down by the clans' forefathers: 'to bring up only as many females as they could restrain from producing evil to society'. ² Thus they considered female infanticide to be virtually a divine command.

2. Konds believe that almost all souls are reborn into the same kin-group, but they do not become full kin-members until the family ceremony on the seventh day. Though its not being fully a human being until then, its death prior to the ceremony terminates

its soul-life within the kin-group. This, they feel, is highly desirable as it diminishes by one the chances of future female births into the family. Sons being desired above all else, this belief acted powerfully in favour of infanticide.

But the practice also had the sanction of social belief regarding relations between the sexes, especially those of marriageable age. For a patrilineal and patrilocal tribe, the influence of Kond women is everywhere unusually great, but in the areas of female infanticide their voice was so powerful as to put them in the ascendancy over men at certain points. For instance, in these areas - though not elsewhere - male infidelity was not only highly dishonourable but resulted in the extreme punishment of exclusion from the village; whereas a woman could not only please herself entirely but might gain consequence through the number of lovers who had suffered penalties and fines on her behalf. They could leave their husbands and return home at any time except within a year of marriage, or when expecting a child, or for one year after its birth. But more than that, no man who was temporarily without a wife - as many of necessity were - could refuse to receive a woman if she simply walked into his home to become his mistress.

The Kond system of marriage settlements is through a highly complicated payment of cattle, brass vessels and money which the bride-groom gathers from his own family and pays to the bride's father. He then distributes it to senior members of his own male kin. The whole sum is reclaimed by the husband if his wife leaves him. In infanticide areas the girl's father was entitled to demand a similar sum from the new husband to whom his daughter has gone, whether she went by that husband's invitation or not. Thus the complications regarding bride-wealth, its payment after desertion, and new payments for the
new marriages, led to immeasurable confusion between deserted
husbands, fathers of the brides, and new involuntary husbands;
and in every case the payments and repayments involved not just
the individuals but the senior male members of their kin. The
same man might indeed be involved in several transactions at one
and the same time, for these often took years to pay. Macpherson
reports that throughout the Kond country two-thirds of the feuds
and clan warfare were the result of unresolved marriage disputes,
and the average must have been even higher in the clans practis-
ing infanticide. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that in
such areas, where a woman's whim was synonymous with her privileges,
that fathers looked on girl-babies as sheer trouble-in-store.
In their view, female infanticide was a lesser evil than endless
quarrelling and bloodshed for the whole family. The result was
that more than ever the privileged position of women was
guaranteed by their scarcity.

Macpherson saw that the greatest of their social needs which he
could supply if they would receive it, was for justice and peace,
just as it had been in the Tari-worshipping areas. But if this were
to change them sufficiently to bring about a change in their religion
and customs, his influence would have to reach out strongly enough to
touch their reason, their emotions and all their interests. He was
particularly careful at first to deal only with such matters of
importance to them in which he was quite certain that the benefit
would be both apparent and lasting: for his experience and skill in
administration made him realise the devastating effect of simply
weakening or breaking down the traditional Kond order if only partial
or temporary measures were to replace it. That, he considered, was
interference, not justice.
Between January 1843 and July 1844 he totally won over the clans of Pondakole and Deegi and had considerable effect on part of Guldi. The first two even came to request that they might receive the same justice and protection which they had heard prevailed now among the Goomsur clans. Guldi, on the other hand, was notorious for its superiority over all other Konds in both war and wealth. It comprised two hostile parties which had been split by a feud of many years' standing. The weaker party - those of Grundavadi - developed friendly connections with the British, while the stronger - those of Daringvadi - saw any suggestion of relinquishing infanticide as symbolic of subordination, an idea totally abhorrent to their all-conquering members. However, Macpherson began to reason with the co-operating clans on the three points by which they upheld the practice of female infanticide:

1. Bura's alleged permission, he maintained, was surely conditional for as long as the men of any clan should 'find themselves unequal to maintaining the peace of society undisturbed through their women - unequal, that is, to the first duties of manhood' - hence to admit the need of such a practice placed them in a position of inferiority to all the rest of mankind, who could manage the whims of their womenfolk without needing to destroy them in infancy.

2. Careful enquiry would prove to them that the number of male births was not increased by the practice.

3. He pointed out the vicious circle of cause and effect.

'Infanticide produces a scarcity of women, which raises marriage payments so high that clans are easily induced to contest the adjustment when dissolutions of the tie occur; meanwhile these dissolutions are plainly promoted by the scarcity which prevents every man from having a wife.

1 Macpherson, Memorials, p. 221.
On the cessation of infanticide, women would become abundant and the marriage payment would become small. Every man would have a wife in these districts as elsewhere; women would have less power to change, and when they did, there would be no difficulty in making the requisite adjustment of property.1

Indeed the authorities were even now removing that entire difficulty by adjudicating in these matters, as in Goomsur.

Far from arbitrarily denouncing the practice in all these conversations, Macpherson spoke of similar sacrifices in time past among the forefathers of the Europeans, and of how the latter had advanced to their present high position after being delivered from it - just as he hoped the Konds would similarly advance. He had used this same point regarding human sacrifice in the Tari-worshipping areas. In both places it had considerable effect. In fact, the force of all these arguments was understood and acknowledged by the two clans of Pondakole and Deegi districts and the Grundavadi section of Guldi. In particular the aspersions case on their manhood found their mark. Even though the practice might begin to diminish, there would naturally be a scarcity of marriageable women for many years to come. In partial answer to this need, but also in the hope that closer relations with the Government would be an added incentive to the discontinuance of the rite, Captain Macpherson had taken the bold step already mentioned, of marrying fifty-three of his female Kond Meriah wards to Kond chiefs in these areas twelve months before. This was only done after much discussion with both sides and alongside his usual practice of settling local disputes by strengthening their own judicial system under the clan-elders. His habit of analysing the total situation had led him to realise that as Kond society was organised on the principle of

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family, each ruled by its own patriarch, marriage contracts were not so much the concern of individuals as important undertakings between clans. They were, in fact, second only to religion in being the important connecting links in Kond society. Therefore, working along the lines of establishing 'family' as well as civil connections between Konds and the authorities, he reported after this preliminary year that:

'The degree of influence which has been acquired through the gradual development of this measure has surpassed my expectations. Slight differences in manners and feelings respecting persons devoted as victims, rendered both parties at first averse to marriage; but an entire change of feeling on this point took place. When it was found that the bestowal of a ward of the Government denoted its favour and confidence, and was the beginning of a new beneficial relationship to it - that the interests of the Government followed its children undiminished into their new families and (clans) giving to these special claims to consideration - there arose the strongest desire to obtain these wards in marriage.' 1

Not only did this involve close and friendly contacts with all fifty-three families but Macpherson realised the need for his relationship to be correct to all the Kond observances and vocabulary which were proper to the wife's paternal relations. Thus ideas of family connection and of authority 'analogous to those which rise from natural affinity, have become blended in the minds of these people, to a certain extent, with their existing ideas of civil connection with the Government.' 2

This whole experiment proved fruitful far beyond expectation for not only did the fifty-three families concerned cease to practice female infanticide but owing to the wide-spreading kin-ties of the Kond system, Macpherson found that he had gained in a comparatively short time more authority - both direct and indirect - than any other

aspect of Kond life could have given him. One final step in the
process was important not just for the records, but as a visible
symbol of the Government's concern. This was the careful amassing
of correct statistical returns of the number of female children born
and preserved in the two districts of Fondakole and Deegi and the
contracted half of Guldi. The clan, the kin-branch, the village and
the father's name were noted. These proved that 170 children had
been saved: 70 in Fondakole, 45 in Deegi, and 55 in the linked half
of Guldi. Each month was, in fact, seeing an increased tendency to
relinquish the practice.

These successful efforts resulted not only in further commendations
from the Madras Government but appeared also in a General
Letter from the Council of Directors (of the East India Company) in
England, written to the Government of Madras and dated 2nd April 1845.
At long last formal approval was given for the extension of the
authority of the Kond Agent so that all Konds, whether in Madras or
Bengal Presidencies, should be under the same officer. Following
this approval, an act of the Supreme Legislature was required to with¬
draw the Kond territories from their two separate presidencies and
place them under one paramount authority. In October 1844, Captain
Macpherson therefore went to Calcutta, partly to assist in the formu¬
lation of this act and partly for health reasons. Dr. John Cadenhead
was put in temporary charge of affairs during his absence.

Cadenhead's first act was to attempt to mediate between the two
feuding parties within the great Guldi clan in Surada District.
The Grundavadi branch, along with chiefs from Fondakole and Deegi,
put in strong requests for more Meriah wives. In addition to supply¬
ing their needs, eight were reserved hopefully for the warrior-
Daringbadi branch. Much patient, and at times unsuccessful, negotie—
tion ensued before the two sides yielded - and that only after their plea had been turned down for one final year's war, or at the very least, one grand pitched battle which was to be waged in Cadenhead's presence!

Instead, a final war dance, complete with the foulest abuses yelled at each other by the opposing sides, only narrowly escaped becoming a battle but eventually gave way to a united - and unifying - drinking party. This was followed by Meriah-bride marriages with the chiefs or their sons and thus more 'family ties' with the Government; though even here the unforeseen occurred, as Cadenhead wrote in a letter to Macpherson:

"The marriages went off with great éclat but were attended by an unexpected difficulty. The hussies absolutely pretended to have a right of choice! One little vixen unconditionally refused to accept the one chosen for her - a fellow of herculean mould, about forty-five years old, and a man of wealth - and, forsooth, because she said he was too old for her! We were absolutely obliged to give her to another somewhat younger. Hercules, however, was not disappointed: we gave him another!"

Birth of the Hill-Tracts Agency

Dr. Cadenhead next visited the Goomsur Tari-worshipping tracts. There he found that Samo Bisaye's family were continuing disturbances against all forms of authority, though so far the administration of justice was proceeding satisfactorily. But he also found that human sacrifices were still being celebrated in Boad (i.e. in the Bengal Presidency) and were proving a sore temptation to all the Goomsur Konds. If famine or serious epidemic were to occur, being seen as an expression of the deity's wrath, the likelihood of Goomsur's resuming the practice was very great indeed; for again they would consider that

1 Macpherson, Memorials, p. 227.
the Government had failed to keep its side of the contract, which thus
was no longer binding upon them. Indeed, the Goomsur chiefs declared
that unless it were suppressed among their neighbours they must again
return to the practice. All Dr. Cadenehead could do was to write
pressing again for speeding the unification of authority over the
entire Kond peoples. He continued thus in the hill-tracts for fifteen
months while Captain Macpherson was communicating personally with the
Supreme Government on the matter. The new Agency, it was eventually
decided, was to comprise all the Kond tracts, both hill-Kond and
Sasi-Kond, and to be temporarily separated from the political divisions
to which they had previously belonged. When the work of abolition
was completed, these Kond tracts would be restored to their former
authorities. That was the plan; but in practice, pressure at every
level was exerted by British officials and their Hindu employees as
the two Presidencies tried to retain 'their' districts under 'their'
authority. At the same time, the Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge,
who had adopted the measure in principle, left Southern and Eastern
India for the North-West Frontier without making the necessary ratifi-
cation. It was not until November 1845, after well over a year's delay,
that Captain Macpherson returned to Ganjam as 'Governor General's
Agent for the Suppression of Meriah Sacrifice and Female Infanticide
in the Hill-Tracts of Orissa'; and even then, though he had the title,
the necessary legal powers had not been granted.

These eventually followed but by some unfortunate accident, the
whole Zemindary of Suradah had been omitted from his mandate - the
very region of his influence and 'family relationships' among the
infanticidal clans. Mr. Bannerman assured him that it would speedily
be rectified, and that he was free to visit there meanwhile. He found
such continued success there that he pushed on to start dealing with
the infanticidal clans over the boundary into Chinna Kimedy. There, too, the way ahead seemed most promising through the administration of justice alongside sound marriages with ex-Keriah victims. However, nearly a year after the mistaken omission of Suradah from the new Kond Agency the correction had not been made. Mr. Bannerman had performed another volte face and demanded of the Madras Government not only that Suradah remain in his hands but that more territory from the Agency be returned to him. All the Hindu revenue officials and petty clerks scattered throughout his territory took up the cause for their own reasons. Not only did they spread the 'news' that Macpherson never had, and never would have, any authority in Suradah, but they invited the clans to resume the practice of female infanticide, telling them that the authorities were not as averse to it, nor to human sacrifice as Macpherson and his officers had maintained. Defection to the practice rapidly followed. Thus these Hindu employees hoped to gain prestige with Madras and with Mr. Bannerman, of whom Macpherson wrote:

'Bannerman's eccentricity is well known. He has always regarded the Khond work as a high personal impertinence to himself, making it impossible for him to listen to one word connected with it.'

Suradah was eventually placed within the Agency, but not until the damage was done.

Boad was the next great concern. It would have been his first priority but he could only enter it after communicating personally with the Rajah, who purposely kept out of reach until February, when the 'safe' season for Europeans and plainsmen was past. This year, however, they determined to stay on. Boad was a little-known tract, about ninety miles long by thirty broad, and very difficult of access.

1 Macpherson, Memorials, p.259.
At the time, the Rajah's (Hindu) Court was the centre of conflict between two families each striving for position. For Macpherson to negotiate with either set immediately led to violent opposition from the other. The Boad Konds themselves had learned from the effective persuasions of their Goomsur neighbours, some of whom had accompanied Macpherson's men, that abandonment of human sacrifice did not bring immediate death nor disaster. They were deeply impressed by this, underlined as it was by bumper harvests that year and a noticeable freedom from epidemic disease. (March is the smallpox season — Tari's disease). They openly called the British 'Bura's People', believing that the God of Light had given them such superhuman power that the wrath of Tari could not prevail against it. Macpherson used his argument that other nations, including the British, had practised the rite but since abandoning it, had become Kings on the earth. The historian, Kaye, records from the East India Company's MSS:

"But the Konds were by no means wanting in polemic adroitness, for they contended that it were not impossible that, by reason of their sacrifices, all the world had been saved."

While accepting the same facts as the Goomsur Konds, these Boad Konds drew from them a different theological interpretation. They declared that they had not previously been in error, nor their Tari-worship false, but that a change was now imposed on them by the new triumph of the God of Light.

This led them to a terrible act of worship:

"They took farewell of the great distinctive doctrine of their sect by a stupendous act of immolation — 120 victims were slaughtered as a valedictory offering to the Earth Goddess." 2

Macpherson records that the victims sacrificed numbered 125: 'which

1 Kaye, History of the Administration of the East India Company, p.514.
2 Kaye, op. cit. p.515.
might have been prevented if the Government of India had acted with more alacrity in giving powers to the Agent.  

Then gathering at the village of Bisipara, they voluntarily handed over 172 more victims and the first British-led court of justice began to settle the resulting cases in a manner highly impressive to the Boad Kond chiefs. One of them remarked: 'Now I see the magic by which Goomsur has been conquered!' But suddenly the friendly mood changed. The Rajah's illegitimate uncle, Kurtivas, being something of the same stamp as Hodzogoro's Samo Bisaye, saw an end to the 'fees' he levied for permitting each Meriah sacrifice. He therefore spread the rumour that the delivering up of the Meriah victims was a pledge of their subjugation to forced labour, taxation and general servitude to the authorities. He and his Hindu cronies strengthened their position by involving the Rajah, who preferred to stay under Guttack jurisdiction (Bengal Presidency). He, like all the Boad Konds, firmly believed that Guttack did not require the total abolition of human sacrifice as long as Boad annually delivered up to them a certain number of victims. Such conclusions were the result of a policy that had concentrated on saving victims from the axe without getting at the root cause and needs of Kond religion and society; for in every case throughout Kond territory, rescued victims had quickly been replaced by the purchase and sacrifice of one or more fresh victims.

The Boad Konds were at first dismayed, then highly excited by this rumour of servitude. They rushed to reclaim the victims. Macpherson's escort had orders to fire to protect these if violence broke out. However, in an attempt to recover from his deeply compromised position in this affair, the Rajah took delivery of the victims.

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1 Macpherson, Memorials, p.245.
and gave his personal pledge for their safety. In any case, their
efficacy as offerings had been destroyed by their delivery to the
Agent, though this religious aspect was no longer the nub of the
matter. All were recovered safely and in due course became wards
of the British.

If this had been considered as a rebel rising and their clan-
elders executed or exiled, the Konds would have inferred that Tari's
power was again in the supremacy, for the British authorities, being
associated with Bura, were consequently aligned with benevolence.
Macpherson's mildness at this point was thus read as a victory for
Bura. Bura's omnipotence was now recognised in true Kond fashion,
by experience: it was true that they need no longer engage themselves
in the costly business of obtaining human victims to meet Tari's
demands.

The chief purpose for which the Kond Agency had been set up was
now attained. Unfortunately, Kurtivas' false rumour continued to
inflame the delusion among the Boad Konds regarding loss of liberty.
The Rajah had returned to his Palace on the plains but Kurtivas' group
was joined by more of Samo Bisaye's sons at Sangrimendi in Boad.

On March 19th, 1846, these led an excited mob of Konds on the British
camp only a few miles away at Kunjeur just over the Goomsur border.
A few shots were fired to disperse the mob and pursuit was forbidden.
Macpherson moved over into Boad accompanied by its legitimate heads
and, on their advice, arrested five partisans of Samo's sons, who
were inciting the mob to rebellion and providing it with supplies.
One of Samo's sons gave himself up but the other two led 1,000 men
on 1st April to demand the release of the prisoners. Again a small
show of arms led to their dispersal. Konds accompanying Macpherson's
men set fire to the rebels' well-provisioned headquarters, from which
they had planned to keep the British camp in a state of siege. These
rebels were only a small part of one clan of Hodzoghor, and the
strong advice of all the Kond and Hindu heads was for Macpherson to
take the traditional form of compelling submission - that of the
widespread destruction of rebel villages, for in the Kond view,
defeat is only admitted on those terms. This method had been adopted
by both the Hon. Mr. Russell and Major Campbell in disturbances else¬
where among the Kondas.

By this time the rebels had transferred themselves and their
portable property into the jungled hills, but they would need to
return by June if their paddy-fields were to be cultivated that year.
Macpherson was reluctant to inflict such destruction. Yet if the
loss of their wooden houses, which could be rebuilt within a month
or six weeks, meant that the rebels must make peace with the loyal
members of their clan in order to obtain shelter during the paddy¬
planting, it was a much lighter punishment than losing a whole year's
crop in addition to remaining apart. Moreover, the great increase
in fever among his men in this hot season demanded his immediate
return to the plains. He therefore gave the order for burning,
though reducing the suggested number from 'all' to the five villages
of the chief rebels. He had ordered them to spare the absent Samo
Bisaye's village, but it was none-the-less burned 'by accident'.

The effect was instantaneous. The authority both of the British
and of the legitimate chiefs was re-established, though Samo's two
remaining rebellious sons fled to Boad. Kuvitas was taken prisoner
and removed to the coast amid general satisfaction. Then, while the
Rajah of Boad was visiting the British camp down on the plains and
good relations were being strengthened, a great part of the previously
rebellious Boad hill-chiefs arrived to ask for pardon and to pay
allegiance. The Rajah went back with them as emissary to the hill-tracts with the result that two-thirds of Boad was soon on a friendly footing.

That October 1846, a most significant act of worship took place in Goomsur when the entire body of Goomsur clans performed a simultaneous celebration, each in their own village. Without further human sacrifice they finally abjured Mariah worship and adopted the religion of Bura, that is, worship of the God of Light as being Supreme and in whom there is no evil. This astonishing act of unification throughout the whole extensive area brought the erstwhile Tari Sect into full brotherhood with the Bura Sect. The latter accepted them and declared themselves to be no longer polluted by drinking the same water and using the same fire.

It seemed now that even the politically (but no longer religiously) dissident third of Boad must soon be won. Just then the Rajah of Angul on the far side of the Mahanadi, skilfully fomented their disaffection as part of his own policy against the British of the Bengal Presidency.

At the close of the Goomsur wars seven years before, Chokro Bisaye, the nephew of the imprisoned Hindu chief, Dora Bisaye, had taken refuge in Angul along with other members of the family. This able but frustrated young man now teamed up with the much less worthy rebel, Bir Khonro, a discredited son of the chief patriarch of Boad, whose family had been dispossessed by a younger branch. For years now Bir Khonro had followed a general policy of insurrection wherever it best suited him. During that cold season of 1846-47 these two leaders, strongly supported by men and provisions from Angul and by the notable intrigues in Ganjam of a Hindu, Soorah Narain, carried out a number of closely related uprisings on the plains and passes to the hills. Owing to
Mr. Bannerman's failure to co-operate yet again, even within his own plains Agency, Macpherson's two British Assistants, Dr. Cadenhead and Lieutenant Pinkney, had to remain there dispersing the insurgents while Macpherson himself regained order on the Boid hill-approaches. So great was the support from Angul that several rebel strongholds had to be destroyed before the rebels submitted and resistance was at an end. Chokro Bisaye hid as a fugitive in the Kond country, but his speedy capture and permanent expulsion from the Ganjam District was considered to be only a matter of days.

With this disturbance ended, Captain Macpherson came down the Ghats in March 1847, to meet and reassure Brigadier-General Dyce, commander of the Northern Division of the Madras Army. By mischief or mischance, news of the Angul-perpetrated rebellion had been magnified to such an extent that he had been sent to restore peace. His orders were solely to co-operate with Captain Macpherson if the rising were past its height, or to take charge of the Agency if the contrary were the case.

But the Brigadier had first interviewed Mr. Bannerman, following which he took as his interpreter and guide the recent Ganjam intriguer, Sooriah Narain - whom Mr. Bannerman himself had earlier dismissed from his office of Tahsildar (Tax-Collector) of Goomsur District. Within a few days the 'guidance' of these two led Brigadier Dyce, still totally ignorant of Kond affairs and without even visiting the Konds, to report to the Madras Government in the strongest terms against the Hill Agency. He assumed charge himself, summarily dismissed Macpherson's Indian assistants from all Government service, and requested Captain Macpherson and his British assistant-officers to withdraw from the Kond Agency without further pay. His action roused the missionary, Dr. Alexander Duff, in Calcutta to write in his full account
The said General, on his arrival in Goomsur, utterly mistaking the real spirit and intention of his commission, began officiously, gratuitously and arbitrarily, to intermeddle with matters which in no way whatever belonged to him. His sole and exclusive vocation was to put down "the tempest in a teapot" rebellion... And though with (Maepherson's abolition movement) he had nothing conceivable to do, he took it upon himself not only unwarrantably to assume directive control over the agency, but actually in a way the most summary, insulting and despotic, to order it, without any inquiry and in disgrace, out of the country... Nor did the gratuitous indignity end even here.... The General followed his monstrous decree of banishment, by a string of alleged charges against the agency - on the principle, it may be summed, of what is popularly known in Scotland under the designation of "Cupar justice"; which simply consists in hanging the accused first and trying them afterwards!

The Madras Government briefly informed the Agency officers that their removal was 'a measure necessary for the restoration of tranquility' and that Colonel (previously Captain) Campbell had been appointed to the Agency. Sir Herbert Maddock, Deputy-Governor of Bengal and President of Council, ratified the dismissal of Maepherson and all his assistants, down to the least servant. From his banishment in Calcutta, Maepherson promptly asked the Supreme Government of India for a searching inquiry to be conducted in the Kori Hills. They instantly agreed and commissioned one of the ablest of the Company's Civil Servants for the task. The exhaustive investigation led to a 2,500 page report which took a full twelve months to compile. It covered all the alleged charges and proved them to be - to quote Dr. Duff again: 'the sheer inventions of some malicious and interested parties, who must have imposed on the General's profound ignorance and all-devouring credulity.'

This report totally vindicated Maepherson and his two European Assistants, Dr. Cadenhead and Lieutenant Pinkney. As proof of the

2 Maepherson, Memorials, p.278.
Supreme Government's renewed confidence, Dr. Cadenhead was raised to a staff appointment, and Governor-General Lord Dalhousie sent at once for Captain Macpherson to offer the Government's deepest apology along with the promise of high future employment when his health — now so broken as to demand European leave — would permit his return to India.

In succeeding cold season tours, Captain Campbell pushed on into unvisited areas. His attitude to the Konds was very different:

'I found them just what I expected barbarians to be — sunk in the depths of ignorance, superstition and sensuality... Like all savages, and, I might add, all Orientals, they require to be dealt with much more of the fortiter in re than the suaviter in modo. If a chief... was very refractory and would listen to no reason, I found out his quarters and quietly surrounded his village with troops. This kind of argument was quite irresistible; there was no means of escape...we speedily became good friends again. This simple demonstration of force was sufficient to overcome his scruples...Thus it was imperative at times to threaten and at times to coax them into submission.'

The whole of this Personal Narrative being written twenty years after the events as an attack on Macpherson's work just after the latter's death, belittled it in comparison with his own. With high sarcasm he refuses to believe in a Kond pantheon 'in which there are deities of varying degrees of power, in a kind of railway classification', nor in a form of ritual for each god, nor in a priesthood able to carry out that ritual, for, he says, 'the Konds are a most irreligious people', and 'In the course of my long inquiries and researches, I found nothing in the hill-districts resembling the array of deities referred to in this report.' The fact that precisely the same 'array of deities' is worshipped with the same ritual today, 135 years after Macpherson noted it down, is comment enough on his remarkable accuracy. Campbell continues in the Narrative regarding his first encounter with the still sacrificing Chirna Kennedy clans, taking

credit for Macpherson's work as well as his own:

'I related to them at length how I marched through Goomsur and Bood, and had swept away every Meriah from those countries, utterly abolishing the revolting rite.' 1

Thus by various methods, as Campbell and his assistant, McVicar, continued their tours, victims were given up and the chiefs pledged themselves and their clans to obedience. Many used their own traditional form:

'Seated on tiger-skins, they held in their hands a little earth, rice and water, repeating as follows:
"May the earth refuse its produce, rice choke me, water drown me, and tiger devour me and my children, If I break the oath which I now take for myself and my people, to abstain for ever from the sacrifice of human beings."' 2

Campbell sees this success as the result of the stronger line now taken by the authorities than in the early years, when they had failed to give Agency officers any clear guidance.

'There was no cautious inquisition recommended as formerly, but the glaring fact was dealt with as an enormity which the Government neither could nor would suffer longer to exist.... a firmer, bolder and more decided line of policy than was deemed prudent in the days of our earlier encounter.' 3

He firmly believed that 'moral persuasion alone' could have no such results; that the Konds' declared motives for abstaining were through seeing the futility of resistance - and that was all one could expect from 'these poor savages'.

The same policy was pursued in the infanticide areas. 'I knew, with savage tribes like these, fear at first must ever be our weapon.' 4

The heads of families then perforce signed an agreement, but fled to the jungle when he tried to register their names - in their belief that to number them meant certain death. This method of course gave

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no assurance of permanent abolition, nor could evidence usually be procured leading to the conviction of even the most flagrantly disobedient. Captain Moore also reported the unusual fact of male infanticide in the very remote hills of Chinna Kimedy, performed by Kond priests in the two districts of Korakah Puthu and Thoomkah. This ritual was probably borrowed from the non-Kond peoples of Jeypore and carried out with Kond modifications.

By 1849 infanticide had been limited to a few districts of Suradah and Jeypore; also the long-awaited road up the Kurmingando Pass was being built. In that same year both Captain Moore and Colonel Campbell were compelled to retreat to the Cape of Good Hope to recover from persistent bouts of fever.

The young Captain Frye who continued the work in their absence, was an oriental scholar and linguist and a committed Christian. Already fluent in Hindustani, Oriya and Telegu, and with a knowledge of Persian and Sanscrit, he now learned Kui, the Kond language, and became the first to write it down, using the Oriya script. As he continued the work of saving Meria victims only to hear of others hastily sacrificed in their stead, his hope lay in providing schools for young Konds—much to the scorn and derision of their elders. His first translation was the story of Joseph, then he began to print small books for his schools on a lithographic press. His tremendous keenness to serve the Konds in this way overcame opposition sufficiently for him to have 50 scholars in four schools by the end of 1850 with several ex-Meria sufficiently trained to teach them. His translation of Psalm 67 was the first passage of Scripture to be published in Kui, for the Great Exhibition in 1851. Though refusing an invitation from the Baptist Missionary Society to become fully one of their number, he maintained close ties with the Berhampur mission-
aries and continued his remarkable service to the Konds until his tragic death from blackwater fever in April 1855. "The Government' it was said, 'never had a more zealous servant nor a more accomplished scholar, nor the Konds a truer friend.'

In these early 1850's, though actual Meriah sacrifices were much fewer in number, human flesh was constantly brought over the Jeypore frontier to be buried in Chinna Kimedy's paddy-fields. To be efficacious, the flesh must be buried before sunset and Campbell reports that pieces were carried incredible distances in a few hours by relays of men-runners. Successive cold-season tours over the wildest of terrain continued, as did the capture of many instigators and procurers of victims, until the last intractant clan in the Subornogiri district of Chinna Kimedy was overcome; and this not until they had attacked Campbell's camp and been repelled only by direct gunfire and the burning of their villages.

In March of 1853, after a four-months' tour of heroic proportions, beyond the borders of Chinna Kimedy to the wilds of Kalahandi (in Nagpore) and Bundari (in Jeypore), Campbell returned with his fever-ridden troops to the plains. He had not only ensured the near-cessation of Meriah sacrifice and received many victims, but on his return journey via Boad he had seen with satisfaction the work progressing on a further stretch of road, between Goomur and Sohmura on the Mahanadi. About thirty rescued victims found employment in its construction.

Such ex-victims as were not settled into farming families or married into the previous infanticidal areas, had been apprenticed to a trade or, in the case of 120 little ones, placed in the care of

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1 S.Pearse Carey, *Dawn on the Kond Hills*, p.25.
B.M.S. missionaries in Berhampur or Cuttack at Government expense. An 'asylum' had also been opened some years before at Suradah (town) for very young children and some of the teenage girls, who helped to care for them before their own marriage arrangements were made. On April 12th, 1852, Colonel Campbell had also reported to the Supreme Government that several Keriah families who had been settled in Goomsur on land granted to them by the Madras Government, had been able to pay rent from their January harvest for the first time. He anticipated that by the following year's harvest nearly all such families would be able to support themselves. In 1853, Kaye, the historian for the East India Company, summed up:

'The good work is going on, under diminished difficulties, towards a prosperous conclusion. It was obviously, indeed, a work of which the beginning may almost be said to be also the middle and the end...The premier pas was everything in such a case.'

By the end of 1853 the Supreme Government decided that the work of abolition had been sufficiently completed for the Agency to be dissolved and the whole Kond area to be handed back to its former Presidencies of Madras and Bengal.

Despite occasions of unrest in certain localities of the hill-tracts, the next half-century was to be a time of more settled administration during which the Konds became accustomed to their buffalo substitute-victim, and the first Baptist missionary entered the hills by the same route that Macpherson and his colleagues had pioneered.

(d) Developments from 1855 to 1910

With the return to Presidency rule came the restoration of most of the hill-tracts to the overlordship of the Rajahs. Road was such

1 Kaye, History, footnote to p.521.
In 1855, however, the leaders of an abortive rebellion on the Goomsur Plains fled up to the hills of Boad. Following the Boad Rajah's patent inability to control this Kond tract, the British annexed it to the Bengal Presidency in February 1855—this despite its contiguity with the previously annexed Goomsur District in Madras Presidency.

This British tendency to remove the Rajah and annex his territory is woven into modern oral tradition current among the Pans around G. Udayagiri, although their story purports to be an explanation of how there came to be an Oriya rajah in Kui territory at all. This particular version was related by the hospital clerk, a Pan, in 1966.

How the Kui People Explain the Presence and Rule of Rajahs from the Early Days Until the Arrival of the British.

'Long, long ago a man from Mukingando village (at the top of one of the main foot-tracks to the plains) found a peacock's egg in the jungle. He took it home and put it in a new earthenware pot. Some days later, when the egg hatched out, a boy child was born. The couple nursed him very, very carefully and so reared him. They gave him the name of Medarabonjo (meda = peacock), saying that he had hatched out of a peacock's egg. He became a rajah in the Kui Country.

When he had grown up to young manhood and the time had come for him to go forth from that place, he said to the man of Mukingando (whom he always called 'maternal uncle'): "Uncle, I am going away. Whatever favour you folk request of me, ask it of me now!"

So the Mukingando men consulted among themselves; and because they were slightly prone to thieving, they asked thus: "When we go thieving, so that the people in the house will sleep soundly and know nothing of the theft, give us a sharply pointed stick." And he gave it to them.

That same Medarabonjo built palaces on top of Doda Mountain (near Udayagiri) and Bopla Mountain above Rotongando (about 5 miles from Udayagiri) and on Borimunda Mountain (about 12 miles away) and he lived there as King of the Kui Country. Also down on the plains in the village of Kulari (5 miles from Bhanjanagar—the former 'Russellkonda') they built Kulari palace,

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1 This is a Pan story; there are no Kond thieves' villages.
2 Presumably the 'sharply pointed stick' was for ease and quietness in breaking an opening through mud-and-wattle walls.
for he was there too. There is said to be a secret passage still from Bhanjanagar Hill to this village.

And they also built rest houses for him at Andjarakuti, halfway up the ghaut - or 'Roaring Ghaut' as it is known in the Kui language, because of its waterfalls. Traces can still be seen there of his bathing places, and his gardens with fruit trees like lemon, custard apples and *botasi* (like grapefruit); while up on Doda Mountain you may still find fine red sweet-potatoes from his garden.

Kobi Upendro, who later became rajah, was a man of his lineage. He was a knowledgeable man and an evil one! It was from his time onwards that Kui women's faces were tattooed (to make them unattractive to him) - for he used to come up to ruin our women.

When the British government arrived, it was again a man of his lineage that a Mutia headman on the plains caused to be captured. The government officers took him away. His rule was ended!

It is impossible to say how long this story has been current in the area, but it gives some indication of how they imagined society to have been organised before the arrival of the British. It then gives almost incidentally their comment upon the British administration's removal of the current rajah at the earliest opportunity. The story does in fact attempt to classify to their own satisfaction the two sets of 'outside' administration and put them in order of priority to each other.

When these rajahs were thus removed, an official called the Tahsildar was put in authority by the British. Their selection was not always a happy one. After the annexation of Boad for instance, Bailey states that the appointed Tahsildar, Dinabandu Patnaik, ruled this area (known as the Kondmals) for twenty-five years with 'unexampled ferocity' virtually as king, for his British Superintendent was three weeks' posting away in Cuttack. 'Not surprisingly, no records or statistics survive!' 1 to tell of his looting of crops and precious

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1 Bailey, *Caste and the Economic Frontier*, p.29.
metals to the great advantage of his family fortunes. His tyranny was made possible by the small staff of the establishment, which as late as 1888 consisted of two clerks, two peons and a sweeper, in addition to a small number of local police. In 1891, Bailey continues, the Kondmals became a sub-division of the totally non-Kond Angul District although separated from it by the rest of Boad and the wide Mahanadi. Almost another fifty years were to pass before it became administered again with the other Kond areas. Throughout the whole Kond region, Tahsildars appointed by the British ruled through the local Oriya chiefs. This continued to add to the latter's political superiority in addition to their linguistic advantage over the Konds. It quickly increased the disparity in wealth as well as power.

Thus for the second half of the nineteenth century the Konds continued to have only the lightest of relationships with their British overlords, except for occasional punitive police expeditions following local rebellions. A typical example was that in 1882 when the Kalahandi Konds rose against the Oriyas and murdered several hundreds of them. The invitation to neighbouring Kond groups to join them, conveyed in traditional fashion by the circulation of the head, fingers and hair of an early victim, was not generally accepted and the rising was quelled by surrounding police forces.

During this period a new song grew up in the Konds' repertoire, their commentary on the events that had befallen them. Its setting is the place just outside every Kond village, where convivial groups gather to pass round the liquor-gourd. The village patriarch is very conscious of his lineage direct from Maliko Kuaro, one of the two brothers from whom the clans in the Kondmals sub-division trace their

'At the liquor place the old men are discussing events that happened in the days gone by. The twelve brothers, having sat down, are talking of olden times, and they are bantering each other on matrimonial affairs. Thereafter having drunk liquor the old patriarch is talking big. "I, and I alone, am the greatest in the land," thus speaks the patriarch of the Maliko Kuaro...'

(An imaginary dialogue follows between the original Kuaro and those who represent all his progenitors; he reminds them of the types and methods of cultivation he taught them, work which even the successive patriarchs must continue in obedience. Then follows their impression of the two East India Company's Captains, 'Kiabon' (Campbell) and 'Mokodella' (Macpherson):

'At the time of the great Kiabon Saheb's coming the country was in darkness; it was enveloped in mist. And how was the country enveloped in mist? - there was murder and bloodshed; conflagration of villages; destruction of rice and crops. Brothers and uncles sat together and deliberated how they were to act. While they were discussing whether they would live or die the Great Kiabon Saheb came. All the people fled in terror; the Saheb said, "Brothers, uncles, fear not; Maliko Kuaro, come to me." Having sent militiamen to collect the people of the land, They, having surrounded them, caught the Meriah sacrificers. Having caught the Meriah sacrificers, they brought them; and again they went and caught the evil councillors (who supplied victims). Having seen the chains and shackles, the people were afraid; murder and bloodshed were quelled. Then the land became beautiful; and a certain Mokodella Saheb came. He destroyed the lairs of the tigers and bears in the hills and rocks, and taught wisdom to the people. After the lapse of a moon, he built bungalows and schools; They learnt wisdom and reading; they acquired silver and gold; then all the people became wealthy.'

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1 Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. LXVIII, Part III, Anthropology and Cognate Subjects, No. 1, 1899, I, Some Kond Songs - by J.E. Friend-Fereira. Communicated by the Anthropological Secretary. (Received Oct. 14th; Read 7th Dec. 1898).
Meanwhile the General Baptist Missionary Society's (G.B.M.S.) interest had been roused by the many child heriah victims put into the care of the Orissa Baptist Mission in Berhampur and Cuttack. A typical case was that of Ootama, a girl rescued in 1851 by Colonel Campbell after the sacrifice had commenced. She was already tied to the stake and her leg had just been gashed. The carved wooden bird-shaped clapper was in position to give the signal and the excited mob had assembled. The Konda were taken by surprise when the troops arrived and so gave Ootama up without resistance. Her nervous state was extreme for a long time afterwards because she fancied that she heard the bird-clapper give its signal for her death. She had been sold by her father to be sacrificed.

At the Annual Meeting of the G.B.M.S. in 1862, John Orissa Goadby was appointed to Russellkonda, named after Commissioner Russell of the Goomsur Wars. The mission already established there, twelve miles from the foot of the hills, was to be his base for serving these 'long neglected mountain tribes'. After cold season tours between 1862 and 1865, he made reports on the land, language and beliefs of the people and explored possible routes into the hills. Of these, the accepted approach continued to be by the steep ghat to Kurmingando, from whose slopes the present Kalingando motor-road was built.

It is noteworthy that on one of these tours Goadby entered by the Baminagem route. This took him from a point due south of the hills up into the wildest region in a steadily northward direction to Balliguda - the furthest point generally visited by Europeans at that time. In 1959, after almost one hundred years of neglect, this route has become the spearhead of a great advance by the Church in the Kond Hills working southward from Balliguda. In the Society's
Annual Report in June 1868, Goadby pointed out that the police and magistrate’s headquarters were moving from the plains to Balliguda, fifty miles into the interior of the hills, and ‘the next time operations are commenced, the Mission headquarters may have to be at Balliguda too’. It is an interesting speculation that had Goadby lived to continue his work, the movement toward Christianity might for a century have been among the Kond tribe rather than among the Pans, who made up the great majority of its membership until the present Kond movement started in 1956. However, the terrible famine throughout Orissa in 1866 necessitated Goadby’s transfer to the plains, though he went much against his own desire. Two years of strenuous relief work there, following nine years spent largely in the malarial hill-tracts, resulted in his sudden death at Cuttack in 1868, just one month after his making the above report to the Annual Meeting.

Throughout these journeys Goadby found that groups of Konds gathered round him, the more closely as he learned to speak a little Kui with the help of a rescued Kond Meriah who accompanied him. In the cold season of 1864-65 he first mentioned ‘Goomoracoopa’ (Kumbarikupa village), whose hillock could be the ideal site for a church: ‘a house of God should stand there, and the hardy mountaineers ascend week by week to the hill of the Lord.’ (This indeed became the site of the first church fifty-five years later). On that occasion the people’s interest gave way to suspicion that he and his party were government spies.

For twenty-one years after Goadby’s death there were no missionary visits to the Konds. This surprising gap is perhaps a reflection of the change in western attitudes to the non-white races during the second half of the nineteenth century. At the close of the eighteenth century, educated Europeans commonly believed that all creation had
been arranged in a Great Chain of Being, with man as the highest classification in the hierarchy. This theory demanded that some attempt also be made to classify the varieties within mankind. As 'man in God's image' was obviously - to them - both white and European, other varieties were seen as degenerations from the original and intended stock. But it was believed that as these people had degenerated so rapidly (it not being thought very long since God created man), they might equally rapidly 'improve'. Meanwhile they served the happy purpose of providing their western patrons with the romantic and literary figure of 'the noble savage' - a 'savage' for whose 'improvement' revivalist Christians of the period felt a personal accountability to God. The new century at first brought little change of view, but gradually 'the idea grew that civilisation meant Westernisation'.

The 'lower races' were to be transformed through informal moral influence - and this indeed was Macpherson's aim and pride in his method of abolishing human sacrifice and female infanticide in the Kond Hills. The fact that trusteeship of these 'lower races' necessitated the annexation of their territory was so apparent to most western 'trustees' that any opposition from the astounded inhabitants of the territories was simply further proof of their 'barbarism' and need. Nor would the tide flow one way only. It would lead to unimaginable economic wealth to Europe, 'and that, too, purchased not with the blood and tears of the miserable but by the moral elevation and happiness of countless tribes.'

As Dr. Alexander Duff declared in 1848 in concluding his final article on the abolition of Kond

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2 Curtin, op. cit. pp.420-421.
Meriah sacrifice and female infanticide:

'Tis past. Too long oppression's tyrant race
Have ground her children with their iron mace:
Too long has silence heard her whisper'd fears,
And glens impervious drank her flowing tears:
'Tis past. Her bosom stung with conscious shame,
Awaken'd Albion re-asserts her fame,
Inclines in pity to a groaning land,
Wrests the foul sceptre from the spoiler's hand;
And greatly lavish in the glorious cause,
Grants with her Jones, her science and her laws.
But chief Religion, venerable maid,
Raptured repairs where first her footsteps stray'd.
When down to earth she came, an angel guest;

Her banner'd cross victorious Albion waves,
Beneath that symbol strikes,
Beneath that symbol saves.
O Beaufituous queen! O dear-loved mother isle!
Thine is each gallant aim, each generous toil.
For thee, where fame her wreath of am'ranth twines,
And with her palm thy native oak combines,
The succour'd orphan lisms his little prayer
And the slave's shackles crumble in thine air.

O Haste your tardy coming, days of gold,
Long by prophet's minstrelsy foretold;
Where your bright purple streaks the orient skies
Rise Science, Freedom, Peace, Religion, rise!
Till from Tanjore to farthest Samarcand,
In one wide lustre bask the glowing land;
And (Brahma from his guilty greatness hurl'd
With Mecca's Lord) Messiah rule the world!

Leaders of the two main racial theories in the west hardened in
their beliefs by the mid-century. The monogenists - believing that
all mankind stemmed from a single couple, Adam and Eve, and that not
more than 6,000 years ago - could go no further than an admission
that the non-white races 'had a right to the consolations of religion';
while the polygenists - believing in separate origins for the different
races - denied that they were fully people at all, and therefore

any missionary endeavour was wasted on them. By the 1850's, many would have agreed with Thomas Carlyle (speaking of Africa):

'They were not inferior by chance or for the time being. They had been created inferior in order to serve their European masters.' 1

There was, however, an inevitable time-lag in the thinking of the older administrators and missionaries. These continued to act along lines following the earlier more liberal beliefs. If Noah and his sons had been able to keep together after the flood, Dr. Alexander Duff declared in 1848,

'as the depositories of all the arts and sciences, all the civilisations and revelations, of the ante-deluvian world.... all these treasures and endowments would have been preserved in a state of comparative integrity.' 2

Unfortunately population pressure forced them apart, and;

'In proportion to the distance and wideness of the dispersion would the process of decline.....be accelerated; - till, in numberless instances, the downward career must, and actually did, terminate in all the ferocities of savage barbarism.' 3

Thus on the evidence, Duff assessed the Konds socially as:

'considerably more than half-way down from Nacchie civilisation to the lowest depths of the more ferocious type of barbarism'; 4

and religiously;

'the ethnographical position of the Konds on the great chart of fallen, dispersed humanity (is in) the first grand epoch of the natural history of idolatory';

that is, worshipping aboriginal divinities 'chiefly consisting of the powers, and objects of visible nature'. 5 Even so, he maintained, were the old Germanic and Celtic tribes in time past. But now for the Konds, too, retrogression has been halted and Imperial Britain can 'hail with unmingled satisfaction' measures to bring the Konds

3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
within the pale of civilisation:

'Be these thy trophies, Queen of many isles! 
On these high heaven shall shed indulgent smiles. 
First by thy guardian voice to India led, 
Shall truth divine her tearless victories spread; 
Wide and more wide the heaven-born light shall stream, 
New realms from thee shall catch the blissful theme, 
Unwonted warmth the softened savage feel, 
Strange chief's admire and turban'd warriors kneel, 
The prostrate East submit her jewell'd pride, 
And swarthy kings adore the Crucified. 
Yes, it shall come! Ev'n now my eyes behold, 
In distant view, the wish'd for age unfold.'

Soon after Goadby's death in the Kond Hills came the great age of imperialism in the 1870's and 1880's. By then westerners believed in all good faith that though 'the lower races' could not hope to equal the great heights of western achievement, their inferiority entitled them to paternal protection. All through this period there were no missionary visits to the Konds, but the hundreds of village communities must have been working out the implications of that revolutionary change in their most fundamental form of worship - the substitution of buffaloes for human victims. Here and there situations evidently arose which convinced small localised groups that Tari's power was neither totally suppressed nor totally appeased by buffalo sacrifice. Thus, to the turn of the century and beyond, human victims were sporadically offered, far from the administration's eye but not always far enough from its ear.

A revised version of the Beriah song of invocation grew up to fit the new situation. The translation by J.E. Friend-Pereira of the administration, in 1898, indicates the Konds' self-exoneration regarding the substitute and shows how they had adapted certain ritual elements which might otherwise have become ludicrous: the exculpatory dialogue between headman, priest and victim (or his actor-substitute)

could no longer be maintained with a buffalo, and in any case their feeling of guilt had been removed by the use of an animal; also gold and silver ear-rings, necklaces and other human ornaments were neither applicable nor would they fit a buffalo, as they had in some areas fitted a monkey-substitute until the supply of monkeys diminished. Decorated wooden yokes were made instead, though the practice of garlanding was retained.

The following version of the invocation, addressed both to the victim and the Earth Goddess, thus dates from the time of buffalo-substitution:

"Thou hast come, thou hast come, O curved-horn buffalo,
To thy death thou hast come.
This is the long wished for day, thou hast come,
There is no leaf-baked popcorn cake for thee.
Today is the fateful day, thou hast come,
There is no treacle popcorn for thee.
In the days that have gone by
Thou wouldst have known arka-millet liquor;
In the days that will not come again
Thou wouldst have seen kueri-millet liquor.
O buffalo, in the days of thy youth
Thou wast yoked to a plough.
Thou hast rendered an account of the stream-irrigated paddy-field,
Thou hast rendered an account of the rain-irrigated paddy-field,
Of all the paddy-fields that thou hast wandered in.
At present through fear of the sehib sons (Europeans)
From thy shoulder we take the flesh;
Through fear of the pathan sons (North Indian Muslim soldiers)
From thy cheek we take the flesh.
In the country of former times
We used to bury a human being.
Do not cry out to me, O beautiful buffalo,
Do not cry out to me, O curved-horn buffalo.
As the tears stream from thine eyes
So may the rain pour down in Asar (season of gentle rain);
As the mucus trickles from thy nostrils
So may it drizzle at intervals;
As the blood gushes forth
So may the vegetation sprout;
As thy gore falls in drops
So may the grains of rice form.
For the large granaries
Let a profusion of rice come in;
For the large store-baskets
Let them be full to overflowing."
We have decked thee out in trappings,
A hard-red-wood yoke for thee,
For thee we have made;
A mutanga wood yoke for thee
For thee we have made.
Alongside of the front door
The termites eat the yoke,
The yoke of hard-red-wood;
The tutur eats the yoke, (balance word)
Thy yoke of mutanga wood.
O demon of the refuse heap, (Turki Penu)
O demon of the dung-hill, (Pinga Penu)
Go you to sleep, go you to sleep,
For twenty years sleep thou,
O demon of the refuse heap;
For twelve years sleep thou,
O demon of the dung-hill. +
Keep illness away, keep fever away,
To you will I sacrifice a beautiful buffalo.
Do not touch the children,
Be as one dead, 0 earth-god;
Do not touch the little ones,
0 earth-god, 0 deaf, unhending earth-god.
Holding the clappers of curved wood, (bent upwards like horns)
Holding the clappers of tili wood,
I cry over thy withers, 0 buffalo.
The green parakeet wheel in dance overhead on thy account;
The green parakeet wheel in dance overhead on thy account. (balance)
For thee have I constructed a roof of knotted bamboos,
For thee have I constructed a roof of cubit long bamboos.
Go away from today,
Go away to where the sun sets.
Farewell, I have made thee go,
I have forced thee to depart. !

+ Friend-Pereira adds: 'There seems to be some confusion here.
The principal demons are invoked at the sacrifice to the earth-god;
but it is the earth-god who is implored to go to sleep for 15 or
20 years.'

It was a non-Christian Telugu Sub-Magistrate of G.Udayagiri, a
Hindu by faith, who eventually took the surprising step in 1889 of
urging the establishment of a mission station there. At that time
the G.B.M.S. was deeply involved in negotiations with the older and
larger Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.) and felt unable to enter

1 J.E. Friend-Pereira, Some Khond Songs, p.10.
into fresh commitments. An undenominational committee was therefore formed to support three men of Cliff College, Derbyshire - Abiathar Wilkinson, Arthur Long and Tom Wood - for they had been fired with zeal to carry the Gospel to the Konds.

The three men spent the following cold season in touring the hills, profiting both in advice and practical help from the friendly Sub-Magistrate. All were repeatedly struck down with malaria, and within a few months of his arrival, Wood died. For the next few years Wilkinson and Long made intermittent tours from a base on the plains - Wilkinson completing a Kui translation of the Gospel of Mark in 1893, the same year that he and Long were adopted by the Baptist Missionary Society. Wilkinson's great gifts as a pioneer were used to the full, though his strong individualism led to difficulties in relationships with his colleagues. In 1897 one of the extensive preaching tours in the hills, for which he was physically and mentally so well equipped, was cut short by his death from smallpox. The urgency to reach the Konds seems all through this period to have been the driving force of a very few individuals rather than a direct policy of the Society. In Africa earlier in the century the problem had been to co-ordinate the highly individualist pioneer missionaries of the time - each carrying his own interpretation of the Light to heathendom's dark places - and thus to form the mission as a functioning unit. This was now the problem in the Kond Hills; but Arthur Long, the surviving member of the trio, lived to form the bridge between these two attitudes. He served in various parts of Orissa but returned again and again as health and work permitted to tour among the Konds, also to translate Hebelet's Way of Salvation into the Kui language. Untiringly he set before leaders in India and Europe 'the loud emphatic call from these hills'. After many
bouts of illness, he died of blackwater fever in 1909, but not before he had motivated John Biswas, a Telugu-speaking student at Cuttack Theological College, to become the first Indian volunteer to work in the Kond Hills (See Chapter V (a).

Another aspect of Arthur Long's work had far-reaching consequences. He provided the necessary data and impetus that led to the Arthington Committee's financing work among the Konds. He himself did not live to share in this advance, but the team who followed - A.B. Grimes, P. Horsburgh, C.J. Millman and Edward M. Evans - were able to build accommodation for missionaries near G. Udayagiri in 1909-10 and to serve there during the birth of the Church in the Kond Hills.

Before considering the way in which the Church was established in the Kond Hills, we must look more closely at the traditional religious beliefs and practices of the people before and after the coming of the Church. With the aid not only of Macpherson's (et al.) descriptions from the mid-nineteenth century, but through the unexpected discovery of Kogra Prodhan's handwritten school exercise book filled with Kond rituals and dating somewhere between 1910 and 1915, the ritual background can be reconstructed in a manner that reveals far more of Kond values and beliefs - and of the changes in them - than was first expected. The writer's own collection, made between 1950 and 1966, is the widest in number and scope, but depth would be sadly lacking without the insights of the earlier two writers, each reflecting his own historical period.

The next two chapters and the related collection of rituals in the Appendix will therefore concern Kond sacrifice and ritual, its officiants, practices, hopes and fears. A few of the narrated rituals will extend over the whole century and a half of the known history of
the Konds, while a greater number will go back only the half century to Kogera's time. Changing patterns will constantly be noted, whether these be superficial and simply to accommodate outward circumstances, or, in a few cases, where they reflect a deeper and more abiding conviction.
CHAPTER III

KOND RITUAL AND SACRIFICE
From information gleaned by Macpherson it appears that the Kond priesthood, like most other priesthoods, lays claim to divine institution. After man 'fell' from his earliest close relationship with Bura God, so the myth says, the inferior deities were created. At first these alone mediated between man, Bura and Tari, but the need arose for a few men to be in more intimate communion with the deity and better instructed in their requirements than was practicable for mankind in general. Each deity therefore appointed his own set of ministers

'by calling into his presence the third or moveable soul of the persons selected, and instructing them in their duties. The first priests taught their sons or other pupils the mysteries of the gods they served, and the deities have since kept up their priesthoods by selecting for them either persons so initiated or others at pleasure.'

Thus the priesthood is open to anyone of either sex — though normally within a former priest's family — who authenticates his claim by a brief lapse into semi-consciousness or else into a confused and dreamy state for a longer period of days. Both these conditions are evidence that the deity has summoned his third soul for instruction. A century and a quarter after Macpherson noted them, these same conditions for entering the priesthood obtain though without the precise naming of a third soul (terminology which in any case might have been due to Hindu influence in Macpherson's informants). For instance, a group of young men from Konobageri village were up on the hill-slopes in the very hot season, engaged in felling timber to clear a hill-plot. One of them passed into a swoon which led the others, and thus the village, to see in it the spirits' choice of him as a person capable

1 Macpherson, Memorials, pp.102-107.
2 Ibid. p.103.
and worthy of spirit possession. "He knows the state of trance", they said, using the verb meaning genuine dissociation as opposed to the verb meaning institutionalized trance. Some develop this capacity to a remarkable degree while at the same time gaining the necessary esoteric knowledge in an informal way from an older priest. Therein lies their authority to pronounce and carry out the ritual requirements of the spirit world.

In Macpherson's time the priesthood was divided into two classes: the 'great priests', who were devoted exclusively to religious offices, and others operating as shamans who were permitted to engage in every occupation except war. Though the great priests maintained that they alone were qualified to perform the rites of the major deities, the distinction between the two classes was often blurred except in the rite of human sacrifice and those in connection with the God of War. Also the latter deity demanded the total allegiance of his priests whereas all other deities permitted divided service from their priesthood.

Macpherson describes the great priest or Janid as giving up the world entirely:

"He can possess no property of any kind, nor marry, nor according to his rules even look upon a woman; and he must generally appear and act as unlike other men as possible. He must live in a filthy hut, a wonder of abomination. He must not wash but with spittle; nor leave his door, save when sent for; except perhaps when he wanders to draw liquor from some neglected palm-tree in his neighbourhood, at the foot of which he may be found, if required, lying half drunk. He scarcely ever wears a decent cloth or blanket. He commonly carries in his hand a broken axe or bow, and has an excited, sottish, sleepy look; but his ready wit never fails him in his office. He eats such choice morsels as a piece of the grilled skin and the feet of the sacrificed buffaloes, and the heads of the sacrificed fowls; and when a deer is cut up he gets for his share, perhaps, half the skin of the head with an ear on, and some of the hairy skimmings of the pot." 1

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1 Ibid. p.104.
Unlike the Jani, the second class of diviner-priests then, as today, have land, a wife and family. Fulfiling a positive role of some status in the community they are in a position to accumulate comparative wealth.

In 1846, and after Macpherson's departure, it seems likely that a major change took place in the function of the priesthood in the eastern half of the hills. The previous year had seen the cessation of human sacrifice and the people's acceptance of buffalo substitutes. This had led to the remarkable proclamation by the Goomsur Konds regarding Bura God's victory over their former deity, the Earth Goddess, and to their act of worship unifying their new theology with that of the clans of Surada and Bodogoro, always Bura-worshippers but who now had ceased practising female infanticide. In the ensuing year these Goomsur Konds observed that the office of Jani was becoming less relevant to the community now that their main professional tasks of human sacrifice and of war rituals no longer obtained. So lineage heads, doubtless with questions of economy as well as theology in mind, asked themselves: "With no human M eri ahe now, why have such a powerful priesthood? We can perform all the regular rituals amongst ourselves!" (i.e. retaining diviner-priests as before for all problematic situations and those of special pollution-danger).

Probably the number of great priests in the eastern area declined from that time and those in the first category, the 'wonders of abomination' living in filthy isolation from community life, died out without replacement.

Along with the practical substitution of monkeys or buffalo the eastern Konda not only acknowledged their beneficent Bura God of Light's victory over the malignant demands of the Earth Goddess, but they identified him, as source of all good, with the supreme and purely
beneficent Creator whom the victorious Europeans were known to worship. Macpherson quotes the Kond leaders of the Goomsur clans in the important discussions of that summer of 1844:

"The Circar (British Government) is a present power, and can visibily do more for our good than the Earth Goddess can do for our injury: therefore the God which it serves must be the more powerful. The pressure of the Government must excuse us to the Earth Goddess: it is irresistible, for it is beneficent, but to be irresistible it must be beneficent." 1

This philosophy was to be repeated some five generations later by lineage heads casting out their household gods and requesting Christian teaching.

Meanwhile the second class of diviner-priests continued their work. Through trance and divination their function is still to diagnose situations of unknown cause or uncertain outcome, or where a known cause places the group or individual in a situation of pollution-danger beyond the normal restorative powers of a lay celebrant. There is considerable variation in status within this class but it appears to rest on efficacy and personality, not on ascribed rank. Whether the situation be one of doubt or of realised pollution, the village's concern is simply to employ the person best able to tap or handle mystical power to the greatest good of the community; and the fee - settled between officiant and elders before beginning the ritual - is in accord with his local status and the gravity of the situation. Payment is made by households, not by individuals. In addition to a flow of liquor and (usually) a share of the sacrificial meat, the diviner-priest receives rice, paddy or millet immediately following his 'treatment' or else at harvest time. Verrier Elwin's description of the officiant in the neighbouring Saora tribe applies

1 Ibid. p.213.
equally to the Konds:

'He has the power not only to diagnose the source of the trouble or disease, but to cure it. He is doctor as well as priest, psychologist as well as magician, the repository of tradition, the source of sacred knowledge. His primary duty is that of divination; in case of sickness he seeks the cause in trance or dream.'

Thus certain diviner-priests work their way into the consultant class for specific situations. For example, when a local 'general practitioner' declares through trance that the Earth Goddess is responsible for a certain patient's sickness, that patient's kinsmen and the village elders prepare the necessary elements for a Kedu festival then go to summon a probably more distant celebrant who has become known as the one "best able to trample the Earth Goddess". Thus they pass right over the instigating diviner-priest, limiting his function to divination on this occasion. It is noteworthy that the word Jani for priest still persists among the isolated Kuttia Konds in the extreme west for the celebrant in the great Buffalo Sacrifice and the two or three other rituals of first importance to the Kuttia. But the Kuttia Jani today is no longer isolated from village life. He too is married and works the hill-plots like his neighbours. The Kuttia Jani owes his appointment to dreams. The Earth Goddess (who is still supreme in the Kuttia pantheon) comes to him and discloses, for instance, that he must 'marry' her daughter and remain in close contact with the goddess herself. As with all Konds, the Kuttia priesthood remains in one family devolving upon whichever descendant the goddess - with public approval - may choose from the next generation. The Kuttia Jani not only makes the great buffalo sacrifice to the Earth Goddess but performs all agrarian rituals from the opening

1 Elwin, The Religion of An Indian Tribe, p.130.
of a new field to harvesting, all first fruit ceremonies and such occasions as the calling up of the ancestors at the child-naming ritual to determine which one has been reborn into the living kin. Thus he presides at all regular rituals and normal occasions of village and family life, but is not called in for unusual happenings nor illness; like their fellow-Konds, the Kuttia require the services of a diviner-priest for these. By granting the diviner the gift of going into trance and of divination, the god or goddess makes his wishes known to the community; thus this officiant’s profession depends on his calling by the deity. As with their Jandi, this Kuttia office is particular to certain lineage groups; never is a new family of diviner-priests begun nowadays but there is not necessarily one in every generation. Thus every Kuttia village has a Jandi, but not every village has a diviner, though some may have two or three, depending on their divine call and ability to go into trance.

Throughout Kond country neither the Jandi nor the diviner-priest enjoys special privileges of office, nor does the headman of a village (Maji in the west; Maliko in the east); these are simply special functions pertaining through heredity to certain individuals in each community.

Among the eastern villages only in the position of Keeper of the Iron God is there apparently a remnant of that earlier highly important priest to the Iron God of War described by Macpherson. Since inter-clan war became a punishable offence even this office is dying out, for the Iron God ritual has become extremely rare – perhaps once in twenty years. It is now performed only in time of exceptional drought as a desperate bid to make the monsoon rains come. Thus it no longer signals warfare, though as tradition demands, an ancient small-sized battle-axe or bow and arrow still symbolise the Iron God’s presence and are sacred possessions of the Keeper of the Iron God.
Macpherson points out that at the height of its use, the grove sacred to this god was only found above certain villages which acted as centres for that group's war ritual. Certainly not every village has such a grove now.

There also seems to be some integration of this now rare ritual with the more frequent ritual for local hill gods. These groves—known now simply as "God's Trees"—all have their own custodians (see Appendix: the rituals for the sacred grove) but they are now devoted to the safeguarding of that particular village against witches and all forms of incoming evil. Just one act of war ritual is still incorporated: immediately after blood sacrifice has been offered there a band of unmarried lads, wearing red cloths and carrying their battle-axes on their shoulders, run yelling and leaping for three or four miles along the track in mock attack on some village beyond their muta. This ritual has always been performed each hot season (May), they say, for it marked the beginning of the war season. Certainly the keeper of this grove observes the strict food-taboos of a priest, or as the people describe it: "He is not able to be free and easy in his eating habits; he must not eat anything away from his own home"—and this although his religious duties are now so light and widely spaced. This argues for his identification with the custodian of the War God, who in time past was not only kept very busy indeed but was a high-ranking officiant on whose keeping of the taboos (i.e. his right relationship with the deity) the lives of all in the area were felt to depend, whereas the god of each local hill was then a comparatively insignificant divinity.

The diviner-priest today may be of either sex though is more often male. The Kui word for priest now is simply kuta gatanju/gatari, divining man/woman. This is so even when the officiant passes
beyond the stage of divining the cause of a situation and becomes the celebrant in the required rite. His office makes his person sacred as long as he also exercises constant personal discipline: he too may not eat food away from home, however distant the village to which he is called; also before any important ritual he must observe a prescribed fast and abstain from sexual intercourse. In addition to ritual responsibilities he or she is expected to have a knowledge of herbal remedies and to spend considerable time in domiciliary visits to the sick, for every case of sickness is an acknowledgment of unseen aspects beyond the physical. His sense of involvement must preclude all rushed or impersonal dealings, tacitly acknowledging a breakdown in relationship either between man and the spirit world, or, in cases of witchcraft, sorcery and evil eye, between man and man. Today these 'general practitioners' each cover two or three closely related villages and are not only the divining agent but often the one through whom the necessary sacrifice is later offered. Many of them seem genuinely to try to fulfill their responsibilities to the community but the pull toward living by trickery or by using unfair methods of revenge on helpless villagers is strong. This tendency is to some extent curbed by the system of "No cure, no pay", though the priest is not directly blamed for failure to cure; rather it is said that other gods must have been involved beyond those with whom this priest is normally in touch. Local Christians suggest that this "face saver" covers fear of his power to harm his accusers; but certainly there is widespread belief that some gods and spirits may join forces as and when they please, thus increasing their power to cause sickness and harm to man or beast.

Though a diviner-priest may not eat the food of even the purest Kond household, he may always join in the liquor drinking. In fact
he can turn this to his own advantage by demanding more liquor during a lengthy ritual than was in his original bargain. A typical example of this occurred at Lokebadi village's Kedu Buffalo sacrifice when an already drunken but still keen-witted priest shouted to the writer, passing nearby, to wait for him. Accompanying her along the track he explained with a chuckle that he had walked out on them on the all-important third day in order to get a better quota of liquor; "for they'll be far too frightened (of the spirits already gathered and waiting for that afternoon's blood sacrifice) to let me go!" Sure enough we had not walked - or in his case, reeled - more than fifty yards before he was called back and appeased.

In dress the diviner-priest, male or female, appears like any traditionally dressed Kond, though for the man it is the dress only of elder Konds now - just a loin-cloth and with his long uncut hair knotted up on the top of his head slightly to the right (as a convenient nest or 'purse' for tobacco and other oddments).

In most of his work he is accompanied by local Pan musicians: one or else two sango-drummers and a wood-wind player. Also an elderly Pan usually acts as acolyte to carry the required materials for the ritual.

The definitive insignia of Kond priesthood is the triple-split bamboo clapper held in the right hand and a small black chicken in the left. The ritual language of their prayers may have slight individual variations but is markedly similar and often uses archaic forms of the Kui language. It can be more or less understood by the community, with the exception of occasional phrases now obsolete, but is intoned with such speed and repetition that it is difficult for any hearer to comprehend.
Kond priest, with split-bamboo rattle in right hand and tiny chick in left, 'sweeps' the sickness into the Foha basket.
(See Foha ritual, Vol. II, pp. 467-454)
There are two quite dissimilar words to describe the state of trance through which the priest mediates the will of the supernatural world. The first, uba ahpa, indicates that the gods have seized him and put him into trance - as they do especially quickly when they know that there are spirits of the 'Unripe Deaths' around (see Chapter IV(c)); as already mentioned, this form of possession is also a public sign that a person has been chosen by the supernatural powers to become a priest. The other verb used regarding trance is maderi ava/maderi giva, when he/she intentionally induces, or is made to induce, trance through recognised ritual devices:

"After first washing his own feet at the spring, a boy must fill a brass pot (muta) with spring-water - and he must fill it in one single scooping action - then take it to the priest, who washes his feet with it. They also give the priest a small quantity of rice on a winnowing tray. Wearing only a loincloth he goes to the sick person's house carrying the tray. There he squats down with a split-bamboo rattle in his right hand and a black chicken in his left hand and calls the names of all the divinities to whom the Konds pay homage, meanwhile incessantly strumming his bamboo rattle. His incantation rises and falls with increasing intensity - though not necessarily very loudly - until the second stage is reached. He suddenly changes from squatting to sitting on the ground, and continuously rocks his body and head round and round so that his long, uncut hair becomes unkotted and swings round his shoulders. Then he becomes fully possessed (i.e. in a state of dissociation) and the spirits come and start to speak or to argue or direct him. Afterwards the priest takes the patient's hand and sucks from it, (probably 'sucking out' a brightly coloured beetle or small stone, etc.) He says which god has afflicted him (Lit. 'touched him'). After that, the sacrifice which the priest has diagnosed as necessary for the sick man can be performed. It is believed that the sick man will recover speedily as a result. They pay the priest in both money and rice."

For slightly less tense situations, the priest finds out the will of the god by divination, thus:

"When a man falls sick of recurring fevers, he asks: "Why have I got these fevers?" or "What kind of illness have I got?"
To find out the answer they call in the priest to employ divination."
He makes loops at both ends of a piece of twine. He rests the handle and tip of a sickle in these, the whole sickle hanging by the twine from his extended finger. He places grains of rice on the blade of the sickle (or sacrificial knife) as he chants:

"One bit...two bits...
Three bits...four bits...
Dance to me! Swim to me!
But if the answer is "No!"
Keep it.....terly silent, and
Stand still for me!"

Whichever god's name causes the paddy to swing a little (because the god has come and sat on the sickle) leads to their making the required sacrifice in that god's name. If the sick man recovers by that means, they believe in it.

Each household in the village keeps special paddy for divining purposes, prepared as follows:

1. The darni-keeper, wearing wet clothes (i.e. having just bathed), bathes his yoke of ploughing cattle.
2. He then brings a little dry-rice (Kondia paddy) and after offering it along with Padeli leaves, on the darni, he suspends the leaf-package of it over the darni. Inside his home he suspends some similarly over back and front doors.
3. Every householder in the village does the same, performing the ritual privately. Thus, after a little while, if there should be any fever in the home - or else when the year is up - they take it down, throw away the straw and place this divining paddy carefully in its special gourd.

The Darni and its Keeper

In the earliest account of Kond ritual submitted in the spring of 1837 by Mr. Stevenson, Commissioner of Goomsur, the deity at the centre of each village was called the Jakaree Penoo and was represented by three stones. Goomsur is of course in the eastern area of hill-tracts but the same formation of three darni stones is still the central shrine of every Kuttia village in the west. Also, in Stevenson's list of Kond gods and the manner of their worship, he says:

To represent the local deity, they fix three or four stones, and near to these representatives they place dressed dolls, artificial figures of birds on sticks. On the beginning of anything, or any affair, or any particular occasion, they call for the Jani, and slaying fowls and hogs, they bring liquor and making bali (feast), eat. ¹

Mr. Arbuthnot, the Collector of Vizagapatam, states later that same year ² that the human victim is presented to the Jakeri God.

The word jakeri means 'village founder' or 'village patriarch'. Thus there is a close link between these stones and the ancestors or founding members of each village, a link that has perhaps some connection with the megalithic culture of other central Indian tribal peoples. Burial megaliths such as are found on tombs of the Gonds play no part in Kond funerary rites; the connection for the Konds seems rather to lie in the close association of the Earth Goddess with the dami.

This was noted by the Rev. Mr. Brown of the General Baptist Missionary Society of Orissa when he accompanied the troops for a brief tour in the second winter of the Goomsur Wars (1836-37): 'They appear to consider the Earth a Deity, whom they sometimes call Deirue, or some such name.' ³

She is in fact addressed in the Kuttia Kond Meriah/Buffalo prayer not only as Banga Pinna (her personal name) and Earth Goddess but in fourfold greeting as: Banga Goddess, Earth Goddess, Founding-member

¹ Madras Journal of Literature and Science, No.16 (July 1837), p.41.
² Variously spelt in the 1837 Reports as Zakarree, Jenkery, Zacari and Jakara. Also Mr. Arbuthnot made the mistake (understandably when viewed from his extreme south-west situation in Vizagapatam) of calling all the hill-Konds by the term 'Ottia' (Kuttia). The Kuttia Konds are in fact only one very small section of the hill-Konds, dwelling on isolated hill-slopes near the boundary of the Districts of Vizagapatam and Kalahandi with the Balliguda Sub-Division.
³ Two papers by the Rev. Mr. Brown of the General Baptist Mission in Orissa were published in the Calcutta Christian Observer, April and July 1837, following a short tour in the preceding cold-season; information gathered from his own observations and from accompanying British officers.
Goddess (Jakeri Finn), Darni Goddess!" Remembering that for the Eastern Konds at least, in her human manifestation as Amali-Baeli Sanjuli-Binjuli she was not only the first woman on earth but that at her own request she became the first human sacrifice; and that ever since then, as the Earth Goddess again, she has received regular offerings of human blood, she appears indeed to be the symbolic founder of the entire Kond people, the one whom all clans and lineage groups acknowledge. Even the words 'Amali-Baeli' prefixing her proper name Sanjuli-Binjuli are an archaic form of the nouns meaning: 'Father's elder sister - Ego's elder sister'. Thus the darni stones may have some burial-megalithic association with her representative death for the wellbeing of all mankind, as would also the thousands of human Meriah victims whose blood and strips of flesh have been buried with the greatest possible ceremony at countless village darni stones down the ages.

This belief in lineal descent from the Earth Goddess would also account for the Konds' unshakeable conviction throughout their entire territory that they are the true owners of the earth, possessing not only rights but obligations toward it. All others are orenaka ('outside people') whom the Konds may allow to cultivate limited areas, like the Gonds and Fans of Belagad (see the second account of Kuttia Kond Buffalo Sacrifice); or like the British missionaries' patch of land given for houses, hospital and school; or even the - to the Kond, inexplicable - 'seizing' of certain well-wooded hills by the Forestry Commission and similar governmental bodies without any reference to themselves as true owners responsible to the Earth Goddess.

Both Stevenson and Macpherson refer to the importance of village boundaries and of ritual procession to both bottom and top of the village. These points are nowadays marked in eastern Kond villages
by additional small cairns of darni-stones freestanding at the point where the main tracks enter the village, one just below the lowermost and one just above the uppermost house in the main raha. In former times the two entrances through the stockade surrounding each village would be at these points, as they are still in Kuttia villages. In the eighteenth century increasing paddy-production where the terrain was suitable round some of the eastern villages, resulted in the land's supporting a rather greater concentration of population, so the simple double row of houses gave way to groupings of several terraces; and at the same time the permanent clearing of trees and scrub for paddy-fields instead of the two-year slash-and-burn plots decreased the need of stockaded protection from wild animals seeking to enter the village. When after another century or so the arrival of regular British administration resulted in the cessation of inter-clan wars with their accompanying bride-seizing raids, there was even less need for each village in the east to be bounded by a heavy stockade. Some other form would become necessary to mark the village boundaries, however, for these play an important part in both religious and inter-village social ritual. Possibly for these reasons the upper and lower darni cairns - in no way rivalling in importance the central darni - may have come into being. The name Paga Darni is given to the upper one, paga significantly meaning to swoop down upon, or attack - though whether this refers to the action of spirits and witches or still to unfriendly clans, or both, is unclear. The lower one is named the Kota Darni. Kota commonly means the inner wall linking one terraced house to the next. Perhaps there is some idea here that the lower darni forms a 'wall' linking not two houses but the village as a whole to its own good paddy land terraced down to the valley floor; certainly all that is evil and 'outer' is
thought of as coming from the jungled hill-slopes above the village while their own good land, symbolising all that speaks of fruitful well-being, is a vital part of the village itself. A more accurate translation perhaps than simply saying 'upper' and 'lower' darni might be the 'Attack Darni' and the 'Linking Darni'.

Another important ritual change seems to have resulted from the Goomsur Konds' decision in 1846 that as Dura God was Supreme and the Earth Goddess could be placated without human victims, they could henceforward dispense with the services of a Jandi. For in this resolve most probably lies the origin of the lay office of the darni-keeping couple at least in the Goomsur, Surada and Bodoghoro region. This likelihood is increased by the fact that in areas far outside their influence - for example, the Kuttia Konds - where the Earth Goddess remains supreme and Dura God is only acknowledged in the most vague way, the office of Jandi continues with no lay office of darni-keeper. It is also significant that the eastern Konds named this couple the darni aha gatai, the couple who 'keep' or 'hold' the darni, but when describing them by the rather less common phrase of jakeri gatai, no word is included for keeper or holder; they are the 'founders' in a representative way. Linked with this, perhaps, is the clue as to why the Kuttia name two of their three darni stones, planted upright in the ground, pondri riari or 'married couple' and the third stone, also upright beside them, ronde mila or 'only child'. This may also be another expression of the sexual ambivalence in the darni mentioned by Russell and Hira Lal in 1916. They state that though originally female, the darni is addressed (at least in the area of their informants) by the terminology for a male god. 1

1 R.V. Russell and R.B. Hira Lal, The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India, Vol. III, p.473. Their informants, however, (probably Oriyas) gave the name darni a Hindu suffix and there may be syncretism here. (1916)
This office of darni-keeper does not depend on seniority or ascribed status; it is held by choice of the spirits mediated by the priest through trance. The village folk nevertheless initiate the proceedings:

'First they call the priest and make him go into trance. Only the person he then names would ever take on this office. But if the man's wife has not been tattooed, or if she "has been to more than one husband", she is not considered a fit person to be the joint custodian. The couple who become the darni keepers are known as the jakeri ones ('patricarchs' or founder-members' representatives). It is essential that they be extremely holy (i.e., ritually clean beyond all reproach). If during office they offend in some way or if a tiger comes into the village street and carries off a bullock, buffalo, goat or pig, thus "destroying the darni", then immediately the priest is called, to go into trance. He says: "No, indeed! These two have become polluted." Then his trance leads him to a certain man and so he selects that particular couple (to take office). The villagers then collect money and change the darni by sacrificing a goat or pig. That is to say, they remove it to the house of the selected man.'

The darni stones are placed against the front wall of his house. Reputedly there are twelve of these in Goomsur: 'six for the darni, three for the cooked rice and three for the meat', i.e. for making two hearths. (See Appendix: Changing The Darni). Ritual objects are not necessarily given permanent shelter there, but often the bones of some animal sacrifice are kept on, or hanging above, the stones of this central darni.

Thus no special personal gifts are required for this office, though a boy can never become a darni keeper if he were born facing the back (impure side) of the house no more than can the untattooed girl. The couple retain the position for as long as the well-being of the village proclaims the spirits' continued approval. The withdrawal of their approval is signified not only by the fact of a tiger or leopard's walking right down the reha (i.e., past the central darni) but also by any case of Unripe Death or a steady succession of smaller setbacks - and this whether or not the couple is conscious of having
Darni keeper beside the Kedu stake outside his house, and the darni stones to the left of it. (His bundle of brushwood for fencing is incidental).
broken a taboo or of failing in some way to maintain the household's obligatory standard of pollution-free living, for instance, by quarrelling. As with the priesthood:

'The darni-keeper must not eat rice or even drink rice-soup anywhere else (than at home). Even if they go to distant places, they do not drink rice-soup or water. The men can manage by drinking wine and eating popcorn until they return home. In the olden days they made them become darni-keepers immediately after marriage. For when a young wife was not living harmoniously with her husband - that is, she was not doing all in her power to live unitedly with him (literally: "she did not sit or stand on the side of caring love") then they quickly tied her to her husband by making them darni-keepers. And if the woman quarrelled with him or his father or mother, and ran off to her home in a huff, her friends and relations would drive her back again to her husband's home without even giving her rice-soup to drink. By this means the young woman dwelt peaceably with her husband!

Fans do the same thing if a newly wedded couple are not living together "with one heart"; they quickly make them custodians of the Darni God (their name for Darni God). Like Kond women she also must be holy, without pollution; and if the wife quarrels and goes home, they too send her back without rice-soup to eat. Then the husband and wife live together "with one heart".

Nowadays the choice seems rather to fall on worthy and dependable couples not in their first youth.

Official ritual observances performed by the darni-keeping couple are entirely directed towards maintaining an ordered relationship between Dara God, their own community, the village land and all things on it. Always the darni-keeper represents the total village community comprising several lineage groups; he never officiates in matters particular to one lineage (other than his own normal participation as householder, parent and field-owner within his own particular kin-group). Usually some or all of the community are involved in the darni-keeper's rituals and everyone is familiar with the symbols, the actions and the prayers which accompany each situation - though these again may use archaic language. Thus there is a minimum of mystery and a maximum of objectivity in the rituals undertaken by them.
Despite lengthy duties, and unvarying personal discipline, there is no suggestion of payment to darni keepers any more than there would be to a householder acting on behalf of his household. The darni keeper is simply regarded as one member of the village community with a particular task to perform for the others. Also in any ritual involving a diviner-priest, the darni keeper's presence, and often assistance, is required; this is especially so in each annual stage of the Kedu Buffalo Festival. But whatever the occasion, his 'perks' only take the form of abundant opportunity for liquor-drinking and some sacrificial meat-eating, and even in this he is usually joined by the village elders and probably most male members. He is of course as fully occupied in cultivation as any other member of the community.

Other Lay celebrants

In addition to this temporary office of darni keeper by election of the spirits, mediated through the diviner-priest and with the approval of the village community, there are two other forms of lay celebrant. First, the owners of certain traditionally selected fields or hill-plots; and secondly, the heads of lineage groups and households. In both cases the office rests on ascribed status regardless of age or character and can never be laid aside. The first group's responsibilities are light: Kogera reports that in the rainy season when paddy planting is completed the owners (household heads) of certain traditionally selected paddy fields and all owners of the few Buda fields that permanently hold water must each offer a chicken and an egg with prayer for every form of well-being for the growing crop (see Appendix: Griha Ritual). There is similar ritual action today in traditionally selected fields when the rice grain begins to form in the ear (See Appendix: Bori Ritual), and again in order to begin to
reap these representative fields (See Vol. I back pocket, A(i) & A(ii)).

All heads of lineage groups and heads of households, however, more frequently enact the priestly role toward God and their family—living and dead—and their family’s land and possessions. Thus the dami keeper as founder-representative of the village is concerned with community well-being of the people and their land and therefore with their preservation from the depredations of the spirit-world; but the lineage and household heads, being nearest to the ancestors by age and status, are concerned with the well-being of their living family, its right relationship with those who have gone before, and the fulfilment of its obligation to continue strongly into future generations. It is these lineage heads who officiate at what are probably the most ancient of all Kond religious sites—going back beyond the era of human sacrifice to the days when the clan was all in all: this is the little shelf or pen in the dark angle behind the front door, connecting the main room with the small cooking area. This corner, simply referred to as ‘the Middle Room’, houses the clan emblems and family bronzes— or among the junior households, a sacred stone as the ancestor-emblem. It is an area sacred to the family, not for public viewing. The ritual use of this Middle Room will be discussed in Chapter IV in association with the Bullock Sacrifice to the ancestors, and the significance of the bronze emblems in Chapter V.

Wherever lay officiants perform ritual sacrifice, whether inside the house or out, and whether for ancestors or for Bura God, they prepare a goti, or sacred spot, by levelling a small area with gruhka ‘cement’. Some may be permanent, for instance at the foot of certain trees or rocks, or some site particularly connected with that family’s ancestors; but many are temporary in the sense that they are prepared or renewed afresh on each ritual occasion.
Finally one other sacred site must be mentioned. In this every member of the community is concerned, performing his own particular role at the appointed times: this is the *barri*, an area just outside and behind the village, with heavy uncut shade-trees round. There the *kedu* buffalo is slaughtered at the spot where the priest finds the ground still to be 'shaking' and 'unfirm'. In time past it was the sacrificial spot of the human *Meriah* - and the buffalo-victims today in the Goomsur area are usually of the same sex as the folk-memory of some particular victim at each *barri*.

All these religious sites, like the officiants who make sacrifice or offering at them, play a regular part in the ritual life of all Kond communities. The Table below, of Rituals and their Chief Officiants, lists the occasions covered by the various specialists. The form and extent of the Konds' total ritual pattern will be discussed in the following section.
Rituals performed:
(a) By KUTA GATAN'JI PRIEST
(b) by DARNI KEEPER

1. (Meriah Sacrifice) ....................................... 1. (Meriah Sacrifice)
   Kedu Buffalo Sac.
   Year
   I
   II
   III
   IV
2. Moving Village to new site ................................ 2. Moving village to new site
3. Constructing new Darni .................................. 3. Assisting as new incumbent
4. All changes of D.Keeper ................................... 4. Assisting as new incumbent
5. Bullock Sacrifice ........................................... 5. Casting out the Hoos
6. Divination for
   Clan Gods' Ritual
7. Setting up ancestor-shrine in new house
8. Smallpox ritual
9. Sickness ritual
10. Witchcraft removal
11. Evil Eye removal
12. Correction of child's birth-position
13. Before tattooing
14. Purification after marrying outside the tribe
15. Pregnancy rites (I-IV)
17. Unrap Deaths
   tiger-mail
   childbirth
   hanging
   drowning
   falling fr.tree
   leprosy?

18. Ordeals:
   'Cutting to fragments
   Slaying the lizard
   swinging a tiger-brand

(e) by OTHER LAY CELEBRANTS
1. Paddy grain-forming Ritual
   (owners of fields in that group)
2. Hill-lentil Ritual (owners of certain hill plots)
3. Harvest Ritual (senior male — in status, not age)
4. Threshing-floor Ritual
   (owners of the heaps of paddy)
5. Cowbyre Ritual (householder)
6. Clan Gods' Ritual (householder after priest's divination)
7. Fly-Sitting (Maggot) Ritual
   (head of lineage group)
8. Plastering the house-floor — (housewife)
9. Casting Out Pots (household womenfolk/ occasionally men)

(d) by LOHA VENIU (IRON-WAR GOD) KEEPER
1. The Iron Ritual

HILL GOD KEEPER
1. Hill Ritual

N.B. Priest performs no calendrical rituals for the growing of paddy, or of other grains on hill-plots.
Darni keeper performs no rites de passage or other personal rituals but is responsible for all calendrical rites.
(b) The Kond Ritual Background

This study has been mainly concerned so far with the rite of human sacrifice and its suppression. This is but one - albeit the most important - of the richly varied ritual practices of the Konds and will be considered in more detail after the wider conspectus of Kond ritual has been discussed.

It is clear from the rituals described by Macpherson between 1837 and 1845 that the public recitation of the appropriate myth was a necessary prelude to all major Kond rituals. This is still the case among the isolated Kuttla Konds, but is much less in evidence now in the eastern region. Even that most basic of all Kond myths, accounting for human sacrificial blood as the Earth Goddess' necessary food-supply, has become comparatively brief in the east. The myth places the origin of the rite, basing it firmly even further back than the "Long, long ago" of folk tales, right into the events connected with the earliest days of Kond creation and the arrival or presence of the folk-heroes.

Through the recounting of myth in the midst of the community, both priest and hearers become linked anew not only with each other but through the power of the spoken word they re-involve themselves as the living representatives of their ancestors who down the ages have worshipped each particular deity in the manner laid down 'in the earliest days'. Thus through right performance prepared in the right way by descendants seeking right relationship with their deities, living activated remembrance takes place. This is of like kind, though not of like content, to the ἀναμνησία or 'recalling', in Christian Communion which follows from the Words of Institution (1 Corinthians 11, 23ff.) From this re-enactment Konds hope for an increase in that mystical power which alone, they believe, can
result in group well-being - whether by blessing given through the calendrical rites or through ritual removal of the cause of sickness or other disturbance. But ritual is far more than group enactment of a myth. In fact the myth may even have grown out of the ritual; for as Turner sees it, performances of ritual are 'distinct phases in the social processes whereby groups become adjusted to internal changes and adapted to the external environment.' 1 And so it is with Kond rituals for Kond society cannot remain static and 'safe' in the presence of inevitable pressures. Thus their rituals cannot be studied in isolation but only against a background of continuity and solidarity within and around which change is nevertheless taking place. And like that of the Ndemba, the Kond social process is, to quote Turner again, 'based on their assumption that certain values and norms, imperatives and prohibitions are ultimately binding on the group'. 2 At all costs the group must hold together, and it is the particular function of the ritual process to achieve and maintain that; for however much Kond society may still be the centre of its own universe, with powers at hand to act either beneficently or dangerously, external pressures constantly surround it and - being 'outside' - are regarded as potential enemies.

For later analysis I have classed Kond rituals under four main headings: first, response through rituals of ordered relationship between God, man and the land. These are calendrical, about two dozen in number, most of them being performed annually. Secondly, response through rituals seeking the blessing and co-operation of the ancestors in their three sub-groups: the clan or village's founding

1 V. Turner, The Forest of Symbols, p. 20.
fathers, who would 'oversee' matters like the removal of a village or
the changing of the dami shrine-keeper; each clan's own recent living-
dead who make their personal as well as ritual demands on the living;
and the totality of a clan's ancestors in matters involving certain
other clans. In former times inter-clan warfare was the frequent
context for this latter set of ancestors for it also involved 'bride-
seizing'. Now the context is simply betrothal and marriage and their
concomitant occasions such as the presentation of the offspring to
the maternal uncles and grandparents or perhaps taking a second wife,
with the resulting interaction of three different clans. The third
group comprises response through rituals that seek to guard against
trouble or diminishment due to pollution, whether on inevitable
occasions in the life-cycle - such as menstruation, birth, death and
especially the dangers of violent untimely deaths - or through willed
offences such as marriage outside the Kond tribe. The fourth and
final main category comprises rituals of protection in potentially
life-destroying situations. These again sub-divide, being due either
to disturbed spirits such as the small-pox goddess or else due to
man's illwill which results in evil eye, sorcery, witchcraft and tiger
transformation.

Certain sub-ceremonies also have their place within many of the
larger rituals. For instance, libation to the village founders and
other attendant ancestors precedes most rituals: also the bitali
token-portion of cooked sacrificial food is offered by the celebrant
in a particular way before the community may share in the feast.
But six other sub-ceremonies more peculiar to the Konds are closely
concerned with their pollution beliefs. These are Gruhka, the
cleansing of the house-floor with cowdung plaster; Tekinga Maupa,
the ritual casting out of used cooking pots and replacement with new
ones; *Boha,* the driving out of the troublesome spirit(s) at the close of some major rituals, often involving the use of a 'scape-chick' and the total destroying of any ritual objects which had been fashioned or at least made 'holy' and set apart for that period; *Niju Taja,* the symbolic wiping of hand and forehead with oil in birth and death rituals; *Pita Siru,* the use of so-called 'Bitter Water' after a cremation; and *Veska,* the sucking out by the priest of some form of impurity, (e.g. gravel, red beetles, etc.) sent into the patient by witchcraft or sorcery.

Since the cessation of human sacrifice and the avowal in 1845, in the Goomsur district at least, of Bura God’s supremacy over the Earth Goddess, Kond views of the ritual requirements of man’s relationship with God must have undergone a great change. In the days of the Earth Goddess’ supremacy and her unending desire for human blood, mediated by her special priesthood, Bura was still considered to be the Creator but there must have been considerable ambivalence in their minds about his powers of maintaining the well-being of his creatures. By the turn of the twentieth century, as Kogera Frodhan’s account of current rituals shows, Bura God was both Creator and Sustainer of all things within the cosmic unity as Konds understood it. Nor did they feel any need of priest or diviner for regular rituals that declared their dependence on him for the well-being of the land, despite its comparatively recent connection with the Earth Goddess. It had become perfectly in order for the *damk* keeper as lay celebrant on behalf of the village, or the head of a household celebrating in relation to his family’s fields, to fulfill these ritual obligations in secure expectation of God’s blessing of fruitfulness. Such blessings do not always arrive, however, and it is in the other three groups of rituals listed above that the services of a priest are
required; for these are areas where relationships are no longer straightforward. There are queries to be answered by this ritual detector's use of divination and trance, then live issues to be settled through the prescribed sacrifice, offering or other means. These require the healing of broken relationships between men and either his ancestors, his deities or some ill-wishing fellow member of the community. Thus the ritual world of the priest is one of urgent practical concerns in order to restore unity and stability, whereas that of the lay celebrant is to keep in good repair an already established and utterly fundamental unity which is cosmic in its implications but homely enough to be handled with complete safety by the duly authorised person.

I suggest that there is a structure by which each major Kond ritual passes through a series of stages or movements necessary for its right performance and thus for its activating power within its total context. These stages may be grouped under five headings which again bear a close resemblance to the normal movement of the Christian liturgy, or Communion (See Table below: Ritual Progression in Worship: Kond and Christian). As with Communion, there may be variations in the order of performance, but broadly speaking the pattern is as follows: first, the Preparation: this is of a practical nature which involves group decision regarding the need for the ritual, if necessary by means of the priest's divination or trance. His services are then booked in advance if the ritual requires that he celebrate, also the necessary elements are collected together, including the animal in cases of blood sacrifice. Usually drumming begins at least in the evenings and continues until the close of the whole rite. The purpose is to inform all the deities concerned of the whereabouts of the host-village and quite literally to whet their appetite for the
RITUAL PROGRESSION IN WORSHIP:

KOND

(a) PREPARATION
1. Group decision re date and provision of necessities (including employment of priest if required)
2. Drumming-proclamation to the deity & the people

(b) THE APPROACH
1. Purification; probably fasting
2. Specialized preparation of the elements by those elected
3. Libation, recognizing the presence of the ancestors
4. The reciting of the myth instituting that particular ritual

(c) THE OFFERING
1. Symbols and symbolic actions
2. Anointing of victim and celebrant with turmeric
3. Sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood
   (N.B. If not a blood sacrifice, nos.2 & 4 are omitted)

(d) THE SHARED MEAL
1. Special bitali portion cooked and offered by celebrant
2. Celebrant eats his bitali portion
3. Drinking and community feast

(e) RETURN TO THE NORM
1. Poha (on certain occasions only, to drive out any remaining source of evil)
2. Disposal of remaindered sacred elements
3. (Cleansing bath - if evil driven out)
4. Payment of the priest and his dismissal by elders.

AND CHRISTIAN

(a) PREPARATION
1. Session/Church Meeting settles the date & allocates duties re provision of necessities (they have already settled 'priest's' payment)
2. Prior intimation to the people

(b) THE APPROACH
1. Specialized preparation of elements by those elected
2. Purification through confession and absolution
3. Recognition of presence of Communion of Saints
4. Reciting of Words of Institution recalling the Last Supper (which itself recalled the Hebrew Passover)

(c) THE OFFERING
1. Symbols and symbolic actions: bread, wine
2. Setting them apart from common use for holy purpose
3. Invocation & thanksgiving (not petition, because done once for all)
4. (Thus no need of repeated sacrifices)

(d) THE SHARED MEAL
1. (Nor does God require food from man; he provides it for man)
2. Celebrant eats his communion portion
3. All eat & drink their symbolic feast

(e) RETURN TO THE NORM
1. No need for Poha; instead, Intercession
2. Suitable disposal of remaining elements
3. (Not required; see (e) 1)
4. Session meeting of elders (priest's salary already settled on a more permanent basis)!
offerings or sacrifice soon to be made. The particular rhythm informs them of the precise nature of the ritual, and they are believed to be as keen as any Kond to share in the opportunity of a meat meal, afterwards paying for it as it were, by granting their blessing or removing the trouble attributed to them. Libation to village founders and ancestors then takes place near the central dami shrine. This is followed by communal drinking in great quantities and is kept up until the end of the ritual. As it is often accompanied by fasting, the effect is fairly rapid.

Secondly is the Approach, when some or many forms of purification take place. These always include ritual bathing but may also involve hair-washing with potter's clay, cowdung purification of floors, casting out of used cooking pots and so on by some or all of the participants, according to the believed level of pollution. Also any specialised preparation takes place now: the cutting and placing of sacrificial stakes, the making of any containers, models or other objects or the gathering into one composite symbol of a number of smaller symbolic objects.

The Offering then follows. On the many occasions of blood sacrifice, there are four sub-stages. These involve, first, the use of symbols and symbolic actions such as the priest's sweeping movements while violently shaking his rattle as he drives the evil smallpox spirit out of every home in the village, or the dami keeper's wife's symbolic sprinkling of the group with water held in her winnowing fan, to encourage the drought to end, rain and fertility to come and the paddy to grow and need winnowing. Anointing of the victim, and often of the celebrant, with turmeric is the second sub-stage, soon followed by the invocations and petitions. To these the act of slaughter with its rapid sprinkling of blood all accompanied by double-tempo
drum beats, forms the 'Amen' or final sub-stage of the Offering. If the ritual be one which does not require blood sacrifice, only the first and third sub-stages take place: that is, the use of the symbols and symbolic actions, and the invocations and petitions.

The fourth movement of the ritual is the **Shared Meal**. The special bitali portion of the sacrificed animal's liver is cooked and offered to the deity by the celebrant except in a very few cases felt to be of such special danger that the carcase is cast out as a whole offering. The community cooks and eats its feast only after this token meal has taken place between the deity and celebrant. The latter does not join in the feast nor may he eat at all during even a three-day ritual, but he is a key member of the constant drinking parties.

The closing movement of the ritual may be termed the **Return to the Norm**. On some occasions this involves a *Fohe* sub-ceremony, when priest and elders turn out a troublesome spirit or deity well beyond the village boundary. This may include the releasing of a scape-chick which runs off into the jungle from the chosen point on the track. The disposal of any remaining sacred symbols takes place there too before the small group returns to the village. Then the final act is to pay the still-fasting priest his prearranged fee, usually in rice, and accompany him at least well on his way home.

If from several miles away, he may need to stay an extra night to recover sufficiently to reach home without the dangers of dropping into a drunken sleep beside the jungle path.

Using this framework, every ritual large or small, moves towards its own quite distinct goal and by its right performance brings about some restatement of the group's values. These in their turn renew the ties that bind Kond society more closely together.
Pollution

As Professor Douglas has stated, blessing is seen as the source of all good things - the blessing of God makes the land possible to live in - and withdrawal of blessing is the source of all danger. So it is with the Konds; the deity's blessing, they believe, creates that order in which man's right relationship with both deity and fellow men results in wholeness and prosperity. The withdrawal of blessing, on the other hand, leaves a vacuum which is immediately filled by the dangerous powers of disorder. Broken relationship, disunity and fragmentation inevitably follow; in fact a situation of pollution which endangers tribe, clan, family and all others within the area of pollution. So real is the apprehension of danger that the Konds, like many other tribal peoples, have almost unconsciously built up a strongly integrated system of expected behaviour. Within it any deviant is not simply condemned but is provided with a corrective sub-system to restore the necessary wholeness. Doubtful or confusing situations are equally intolerable to the required social harmony. Transmuted into terms of uncleanness, these too must be subjected to the same restorative treatment. Thus pollution beliefs serve to reinforce the tribe's social structure and the rituals connected with them may also serve to clarify ambiguous situations in social behaviour. For instance, menstrual blood is considered to be polluting, yet menstruation is a sign of the blessing of fecundity. Similarly, giving birth is a highly 'dangerous' time of uncleanness to the household and to the husband's female relations, yet it is the most clear sign of God's good pleasure in this unclean woman, her husband, his family and his clan. By detailed observance of

1 M. Douglas, Purity and Danger, pp. 202-203.
pollution rituals, such anomalies can at least be purged of danger and so find their rightful place in the pattern of living. Seen from this point of view of its effect on others, the conscious breaking of the tribe's moral precepts by a deviant may be subject to just the same treatment as the breaking of some ritual avoidance, either consciously or unconsciously. The Konds' supreme example of this is in employing the same cleansing ritual for an errant Kond girl who excommunicated herself by marrying outside the tribe but who now wishes to return (alone) and for the unfortunate Kond who gets bluebottle maggots in a wound or sore. Yet through the right performance of this ritual, as in others, a harmonious world is recreated whereby 'disordered' and separated individuals are drawn in again to play anew their rightful part in the group.

The Konds have indeed such a clearly defined structure of ideas concerning both the supernatural world in relation to man-in-society and man in relation to his fellow men that anyone who crosses the boundary lines, however inadvertently, immediately becomes a danger to his fellows and therefore morally a wrong-doer; for to be a source of danger to another is a cardinal sin in the Kui code. Thus the moral code - and pollution dangers as part of it - can again be seen to support and strengthen the social structure.

The strongest of all Kond examples of the upholding of the social structure by pollution beliefs is in regard to incest, for the whole social system rests on right patterns of marriage and the integrity of the exogamous patrilineal clan or lineage group. Liaisons within the forbidden relationships call out the strongest of all emotional reactions from all Konds. Thus not surprisingly they are said to pollute the land and endanger not only the couple but the entire society of Konds and all others living within their clan boundaries,
for they evoke the fiercest disapproval of the Earth Goddess. She must be appeased by blood sacrifice while the couple must be expelled and excommunicated (though no longer killed) for only thus can the Earth Goddess' most fearful reprisals be averted from the entire population dwelling within the boundaries of the polluted clans. Thus the strongest possible moral disapproval is whipped up and the rules of clan exogamy are unforgettably underlined by this pollution danger to the whole group, making it impossible for the offenders to remain part of it.

In addition to their permanent expulsion beyond the clan's territory, blood sacrifice must be offered by the offending (though equally offended and fearful) lineage group. In Kond thought, so closely united is each group's land with those living and working on it that it is expressed by these strongest possible sanctions regarding the continual sensitivity of the Earth Goddess to this major form of pollution. Rains will fail, crops will shrivel, children already born will fall ill and die and new infants will not be born, they say, if she is roused to action through the polluting of the land.

Even the breaking of certain strong taboos can rouse her wrath in the same way. For instance, a woman must never handle a plough - probably an example of sex symbolism whereby the male plough penetrates the female earth, and a reversal of the dominant male role would be unthinkable. I was however told of one such occasion in one of the villages of the north-eastern region (i.e. the area in closest contact with Oriyas and therefore, one would have thought, under greater pressure to forget these beliefs than are Konds further west). I later found that Professor Bailey, who had been in this area, relates the same account of this serious defilement:
'195. (1955) This year a widow was watching her twelve year old son plough a field. "Fool!" she said, "that's not the way to plough. Here! Do it like this!" She took the plough away and drove it across the field. When the rain failed the men of the village seized this woman and put her in a yoke with a bullock. She was driven along, ploughing a furrow, and a sharp goad was stuck into her so that her blood dripped on the Earth. Later she provided a goat for sacrifice.'

Three Christian heads of households took me outside the village to tell me this. They showed me the field but then continued in low voices to indicate that the woman's blood and the goat's blood was evidently insufficient, for a well-grown girl of their village (whom I judged to be seventeen or eighteen years old) was proving abnormal and unmarriageable because she had not yet begun menstruation. It was inferred that the Earth Goddess must still be making reprisals on the village through this girl's obvious infertility. The three men went on anxiously and secretly to say that the village was now insisting that she be thrown out of the area, presumably as a sign to the goddess of the community's dissociation with her - for to live cut off from one's people is a form of death to a Kond, and is in effect the only way of 'sacrificing' her that is still open to them. However, it was arranged that her uncles should bring her in to the hospital's sterility clinic in five days' time, and that she should stay for any necessary treatment in the schoolgirls' hostel. My alarm when she failed to arrive changed to relief at the news that she had in fact 'seen her first period' during those intervening days. The Earth Goddess had, in the eyes of the non-Christians, at last removed her ban on the fertility of both land and village. In the eyes of the Christians:

"See! Our God has blessed us!" they said.

Disorder also breaks into the Konds' sense of unity and wholeness through the Sidi Sari forms of sudden premature death. These are felt

1 F.C. Bailey, Tribe, Caste and Nation, p.51.
to endanger the whole community and even beyond, for the pollution emanating from such deaths is considered to be contagious to anyone in contact with the beleaguered village until the many days of elaborate purification ritual are over. In this group of untimely deaths, the most mystically dangerous of all is tiger-kill. Second only to this is death in childbirth. Three more forms come together in the next class: death by hanging - whether by murder or suicide makes little difference; death by falling from a tree - usually when tapping sago-palm wine; and death by drowning. The living death of separation by reason of leprosy occurs in some areas and is only a little less fearful. Behind both the shock of these happenings and the understandable dread of the manner of them is a much greater horror: the Sidi Saki deaths are seen as homicide within the family. "The Blood jumps", they say, from recent members of a family's living-dead who have died by the same means and who now cause it to settle on some member of the living kin. He or she is then pre-disposed to become quite inevitably the victim of a tiger-kill or a 'murderer', 'drownee' or maternity victim. By this way of thinking, the last ancestor to die that way in one's own family is the real murderer. Similarly there is an inherited disposition in the family of the living agent-murderer for "the blood to jump" to someone in his next generation thus causing him in turn to be the instrument of murder by employing one of these forms of violent death. This is even applied to the unfortunate husband of a woman who dies in childbirth, so that girls constantly refuse to become his second wife, for "He would make the loan of it to me too!"

Dr. Douglas maintains that in any social system there may be strongly held moral norms whose breach cannot be adequately punished because it is committed within the group. Murder within a family in the local group is just such an occasion, even when the murderer is
believed to be a recently dead ancestor, so closely is he still part of the family. Strong indignation to some extent brands this 'delinquent' but further sanctions become apparent through the pollution rules that govern Kond behaviour on these *sidi Saki* occasions. For though pollution danger encompasses the whole village, it falls most strongly on the men of the bereaved family: only they must touch the highly 'contagious' corpse of the tiger's victim and give it the required cremation on the hillside - without which courtesy-observance it would be even more dangerous to them in the future. This danger is enhanced by their knowledge that anyone dying in this way and receiving this abbreviated funeral is totally unacceptable to the ancestors' group; yet no Kond, alive or dead, can conceive of a life of solitariness; hence the sheer need of company will drive the dead victim to unceasing attempts to draw one of his living kin to join him.

In this fashion the varying levels of pollution danger imposed through these deaths are transformed by the entire group's elaborate and lengthy ritual into experiences which not only act as shock-absorbers for sudden and unwelcome change in their midst, but by imposing sanctions against the family involved, they immediately strengthen the moral attitudes of the whole group. Thus again pollution rituals undergird the unity of the social order by bringing strong pressures to bear on the 'deviants' and so enforcing conformity.

**Witchcraft, Sorcery, Evil Eye and Curses**

It has been pointed out that to cross the boundary line between 'order' and 'disorder', even inadvertently, is dangerous enough and brings whole sets of purification rituals to bear on the polluted situation. How much more to be feared then are those who set out to cross these boundaries by turning their backs on the accepted norms of Kond
society. With evil intent they manipulate that mystical power present in the universe which the rest of the community is seeking to turn to good ends. Their anti-social repudiation of accepted Kond norms is in direct opposition to the rest of the community's search for well-being through positive and conscious alliance with the life-force believed to be inherent in their society.

The Kond practitioner of sorcery largely follows the classic pattern, obtaining the necessary *aso* (literally translated as 'medicine' in hospital use also) such as bodily waste-products or closely personal possessions of his victim. With these he secretly activates with evil intent that mystical power which is then believed to go out and sap the victim's life-force to the point of death unless it is ritually reversed by a yet stronger manipulation of the mystical power which causes the evil to rebound on the sender.

The most commonly believed form of this anti-social behaviour among the Konds is in the practice of Evil Eye. This has the same motivation as sorcery but without any use of material *aso*. It becomes effective simply through the direct, though usually unobserved, glance. There is much less secrecy in speaking of Evil Eye than in using the Kui words for sorcery and witchcraft - for which incidentally a balance-phrase of two words: *kepa-klepa* are used separately or together apparently allowing the particular context and description of each case to discriminate between the forms, though reference to the classic type of witchcraft without the use of any material means is rarely heard in daily conversation. In general, it is not discussed but silence does not mean that it is rarely in the thoughts of the Konds. "Everyone in the Kond Hills, Christians and non-Christians alike, believes in witchcraft", declared the highly qualified male Theatre Charge-Nurse at the Christian hospital. They hold the classic belief
that witches work during sleep at night. While one's body remains on
the sleeping mat the soul wanders in dreams and encounters situations,
pleasant or of a nightmare quality when escape seems impossible. The
sleeping witch, however, sends out his or her soul with evil intent to
catch innocently wandering souls desired by tutelary-witches.

'Whoever practices witchcraft chews up a man or woman right inside
so that the person falls ill and dies. If a witch doesn't
manage to catch anyone for a really long time to give to these
spiritual witch-partners, they say to them: "I'll eat my own
household, either my children or my wife"; and so their home-
folk die. This is what we Kui people believe.'

For a person to be so warped as thus to destroy his own kin who are in
a real sense part of himself, is the ultimate in shocking behaviour to
all Konds.

'The souls of those caught in this way may be collected together
in a certain place, in a house or a thicket or up a jungled hill. They might even be put under a stone nearby, or else in store
covered by a basket or a cooking pot, or even tied up. This is
only while the victim is dying; once he is dead, the transaction
is complete. Even though the community is sure that a man has
died through witchcraft, his actual body is not feared, for
witches destroy the soul only. The corpse would therefore be cremated....On the third day the new ancestor-spirit is sought
at the cremation ground and, in traditional spider form, brought
safely home. Thus it appears that the part of one's soul which
goes on as an ancestral member of the kin group is indestructible
even by witches. There is no separate terminology for these
parts of the soul: the difference appears to be one of function.'

Thus witchcraft only comes to the surface in everyday affairs
when a situation arises which provides both practical evidence in the
form of a death or disaster with a background of known jealousy, hatred
or greed from someone in close everyday contact with the victim, either
among kin or close neighbourhood. The Kond principle that for one
member of the group to rise high in good fortune means that other
members are necessarily diminished by his rise provides endless possibil-
ities, even likelihood, of the underdog's seeking to redress the balance

1 Boal, Fire Is Easy, pp.150-151.
in this way. In fact, situations of daily tension, if not friction, within the close daily circle form the background to all Kond forms of magic committed with evil intent. Though these are entirely negative forms within themselves, by causing the more successful members of society to tread delicately rather than boastfully they too help to maintain that equality which is such a basic element in the Kond social structure. Perhaps their witchcraft belief is due to some extent to the rapidity with which death and disaster can frequently strike at the very heart of one's family in the Kond way of life, regardless of that family's previous well-being. As Evans-Pritchard states of the Azande:

'The concept of witchcraft provides them with a natural philosophy by which the relations between men and unfortunate events are explained and (also with) a ready and stereotyped means of reacting to such events'.

Parallels to Zande or Kond attempts to explain the inexplicable and to control the uncontrollable are found in many societies with a similarly limited technology and who dwell in a frequently hostile environment. Once formed, these irrational witchcraft beliefs feed back into the social process, generating tensions as often as reflecting them. Suspects may be social misfits, conspicuously boastful or greedy persons or deformed ancients, or anyone who shows one of the two physical signs: a redness in the eyes 'like a red cataract', said the hospital worker, or simply that very rare sight, a fat Kui man.

Particular to the Kond context is the belief that certain evil-intentioned persons have the power to transform themselves into a tiger or leopard, Kradi Mliva, with intent to cause bodily harm or death to others. This belief is rooted in the myths of the Earth Goddess, herself the first practitioner of the magic art and teacher of the Konds.

of the Tari Sect in the earliest days. Nowadays, at least in the eastern area, this origin story is forgotten but the belief is in no way diminished, there being no lack of willing witnesses to recount occasions of 'proof'. Moreover it is only a Kordi-Miya tiger or leopard that becomes a man-eater, so they say - doubtless a rationalization of the fact that only a limited number are man-eaters while others may be encountered harmlessly, for it is only the wounded or very old among these animals, no longer able to catch the swifter game in the jungle, who will attack man.

All these anti-social acts have their accompanying rituals of disorder and, except in the case of tiger-transformation or of 'pure' witchcraft without the use of any material medium they have their complementary rituals to redress the wrong and restore the situation - if that term may also be applied to such invocations as counter-curses which return the evil to its malignant sender. These reversals are regarded in the same light as the socially acceptable manipulation of objects (and thus of mystical power) to safeguard possessions against theft. As these do not fall into the category of dangers to the established social order but only to the erring individual, they are part of normal and healthy living, not at all to be confused with the abnormal, unhealthy chaos of witchcraft and destructive magic which do quite literally breed death.

Any discussion of the Kond ritual background cannot omit mention of their vast network of symbols and symbolic systems. These are best studied within the context of the rite (see Chapter IV) for they may be capable of various meanings of which only knowledge of the context can lead to right selection. In Turner's phrase regarding the Ndenbu, symbols form observable units: objects, activities,
relationships, events, gestures and special units. He indicates that when the emotions surrounding these symbols are compared with the same group's normal expression of emotion, the observer is able to separate certain 'dominant symbols' which as 'condensed forms of substitutive behaviour' tend to be ends in themselves. Over against these is the whole system of 'instrumental symbols' which may vary in meaning according to the particular goal of their ritual context.

The symbol that has dominated the Kond universe for many centuries is blood - first human blood then through outside pressure, buffalo blood.

Around that the Kongs concentrate the highest points of their symbolic activity, through myth, language and religious practice. The blood-sacrifice of any smaller animal on any subsidiary occasion is indefinably strengthened and deepened by its part in the whole symbolic understanding of the need and purpose of the Kongs in shedding blood. 'It is essential', they say, 'for the furtherance of the greatest possible well-being for the greatest possible number.' Even, they claimed in Macpherson's time, it was laid upon the Kongs alone to offer human blood 'for all the world'.

'Instrumental symbols' on the other hand have a much more limited and immediate goal: there is for example the gourd-seed necklace tied on to the barren or newly-pregnant woman so that this most prolific of all seed-bearing fruit may bring her great fruitfulness; or the sorcerer's carefully collected sand from his victim's footprint so that he obtains power over that victim's precious life-force. These and many more have become the common coinage of ritual practices. But whether 'dominant' or 'instrumental', when rightly used within its own context, the symbol becomes charged with that same mystical power or dynamism that is activating the whole ritual process. Thus, being essential to the
right performance of ritual, it too plays its part in stating the
people's values and so furthers the ultimate stability of the group's
social life.

Other aspects of Kond ritual symbols - such as colour symbolism,
or the apparently contradictory use of gruhka cowdung plastering not
to contaminate but to purify, or the symbolic importance of cooked and
uncooked food-offerings - will be considered later within their
specific ritual framework. Here the aim of this broad outline is
simply to show how closely integrated is the whole ritual process
into the determined unity of the Kond social order; for Kond ritual
seeks constantly to buttress vulnerable areas against possible break¬
down by creating or re-creating order, and to draw Kond society into
continuing celebration of a unity that can absorb all necessary
adjustments to change.

Perhaps the greatest of all these 'necessary adjustments to change'
has been for the Konds the substitution of an animal for the human
victim in their central rite, the Meriah/Kedu. The possible origin
of this ritual and its relation to the whole ritual pattern of the
Konds will now be discussed. Then the transition from human to
buffalo victim will be traced from 1836 - when the sacrifice was first
noted by the Europeans - up to the Konds' present-day form of celebra¬
tion. The extent and depth of the apparent changes will be examined.

(c) The Meriah (human)/Kedu (buffalo) Rite

Pressure from better co-ordinated groups of Aryan invaders many
centuries ago had pushed the Konds from the safety of the fertile
plains into dangerously wild and jungled hills. Climbing the steep
ghats from the north, the east and the south-east, the various groups
would be faced with a two-fold task - a task whose two strands at first sight seem mutually exclusive: first, to ensure the safety and continuance of their own clan over against other equally warlike clans; and secondly, to find some way of co-operation with these clans against outsiders.

The first task must have absorbed all their physical and mental energy in the early years as they sought to establish well defended settlements for their lineage groups and so provide for this safe continuance each of their own clans in a manner that would restore their numbers, probably depleted by the unequal struggle against the Aryans and now against an adverse environment. Co-operation would be almost entirely confined to persons of that same localized clan. Those with the greatest capacity for in-group co-operation would achieve the greatest well-being, maintaining themselves the longest in the most desirable areas and producing more offspring by virtue of their menfolk being less often defeated and therefore killed, both in warfare and in hunting.

An informant of the northern area quoted by Bailey in 1959 describes what was probably the earliest pattern of inter-clan co-operation, with social implications which have been retained right down the centuries. If there had been war for several generations, he said, the weaker side formed a war-making brotherhood, kala-prohpa tore, with people of a different community. When the war was ended and won, they gave land to these 'war-brothers' and remained in brotherhood with them in perpetuity. This was a deep and binding tie. If the group were already 'in-laws', they ceased to intermarry thenceforward;

1 Bailey, Tribe, Caste and Nation, pp.49-50.
2 Bailey writes the word tone here, which is probably a mis-spelling of tore, meaning a very close companion.
for they were now as agnatic kin, with whom one does not marry and against whom one does not go to war.

The second task, to develop some form of co-operation between clans against outsiders, would probably arise from bitter experience, again beginning from the time of the Aryan invaders who doubtless were no more courageous than the Konds but were much more skilled in co-operative action for warfare. If, as seems likely, these enforcedly migrant Dravidian groups were unknowingly approaching each other from several directions and were all endowed with the same overriding determination to remain independent and the same fierce pride of clan, this second task was indeed formidable. Inter-clan war was an inevitable duty for which each settlement trained its boys to fight proudly to the death. (This was still the case when the East India Company arrived in 1835). Yet it was alongside these fierce conflicts that there must have developed the complicated socio-ritual involvements of the Meish human sacrifice. The interdependent and binding nature of this ritual firmly linked the clans in what were otherwise unnatural associations. In constantly recurring three-year cycles, all villages and homes took part at least annually - and apparently very much more frequently - in temporary associations for which strictly observed peace-pacts were a necessary prelude. Indeed, so temporary were these pacts that they had to be renewed for each phase of the ritual; only for the few specified days did they ensure the deepest possible co-operation. As all was done for the sake of the powerful Earth Goddess from whose favour all fertility sprang, there was an added incentive for the participants in the hope of increased birth-and-child-survival rates to balance the negative effects of inter-clan wars and environment.
Proliferation of connections through war-making-brotherhoods have given way more recently to similar alliances for less warlike purposes, resulting in considerable variety in the make-up of most Kond villages. Larger villages - necessarily sited in those areas fertile enough to support their greater population - usually comprise members of several major clans as well as less dominant groups and occasional migrant households from other clans. But all these, as again Bailey stresses, are held together not only by rules of clan (and allied clan) exogamy, with its reciprocal social and economic responsibilities, but also by common allegiance to the Earth Goddess and her worship through the Meriah/Kedu celebration. This is shared by all kin-groups and villages within each specific Muta territory, and is expected to relate indeed not only to Konds but to all persons within that boundary.

When the government put a stop to the fierce and frequent inter-clan warfare, they quite unknowingly lessened the need for alliances between weak and strong clans. This was one more reason why the extended clan as the major political unit declined in favour of the lineage, Muta or village group. It is in this area that the Meriah/Kedu ritual therefore became most active. I suggest that study of the available texts of this ritual sheds light on the ways in which this conflict-co-operation theme has developed among the Konds since the practice was made known one and a half centuries ago.

Of the two outstanding changes which have taken place in this ritual within the time of its written history, one has already been described earlier: the substitution of a buffalo for a human victim. The other becomes apparent in the chronologically arranged accounts in this section: the lengthening of the ritual in the Goomsur District - where Bura God is now supreme - from the 3-year Meriah to four and
then five years in the Kedu, though with the 3-day climax retained in the middle year. These annual stages continue to dovetail in a most ingenious manner into the Kedu cycles of other village communities so that the whole continues as a never-ending celebration. In no year is the Earth Goddess left unattended or unfed in one or other village of every locality throughout the Kond Hills. Nevertheless, this raises the question of whether the purpose has changed for the Goomsur Konds or has remained the same despite the externally imposed animal substitute and their own lengthening of the whole rite. The question does not arise for the Kuttia Konds, however. Continuing their devotion to the Earth Goddess, they have maintained the 3-year cycle, though necessarily with a buffalo victim.

One fact immediately becomes clear: the Meriah/Kedu does not fit exclusively under any single one of the four headings in the classification of Kond rituals made in the preceding section (Chapter III (b)). As human sacrifice it appears to have straddled all four types. Remembering that the Earth Goddess and not Bura, the Creator God, was believed in the sacrificial areas to be supreme, it can be classed in its regular January harvest-time celebration as being a ritual of response through ordered relationship between the Goddess, man and the land. Repeatedly the early reports of the East India Company speak of the great numbers sacrificed throughout the villages at that particular season. Macpherson and others also record that there were equally regular human sacrifices at the planting season, first-fruits and so on; occasions which in the now Bura-worshiping Goomsur District have no longer a direct association with the Meriah/Kedu but have their own seasonal rituals where the darni-keeper or head of household sacrifices a small animal or chicken to Bura God, and where the services of a priest are not required.
The Meriah festival can also be linked with the second ritual classification where response is made through rituals seeking the blessing and co-operation of the village's founder-members. It has been mentioned earlier (III (a)) that alternative names for the Earth Goddess are Darni Goddess and Jakeri (Founder) Goddess, and that the central darni shrine-stones may also be called Jakeri or Founder-stones and the shrine-keepers the Jakeri or Founder-Ones. The Kuttia Konds address her not only by their personal name for her, Bengu Goddess, but balance this in their invocations by the terms:

'Bengu Goddess, Earth Goddess, Jakeri Goddess, Darni Goddess, wants a sacrifice!'

Moreover, the cult centre for Meriah celebrations was right at the darni shrine in all areas - even though the actual slaughter took place in the sacred grove just outside the village - and such myths as remain regarding the origin of the rite clearly portray her as both the rapacious goddess desiring human blood and, in her human form, as founder of the tribe who nevertheless became the first human victim. Indeed, the myth affirms, she was the one who commanded her Kond sons to forget she was their mother and so make the essential living sacrifice of her flesh. By perceiving its efficacy for fertility and well-being, she said they would then continue human sacrifice as a permanent practice. In all areas the song which is still chanted incessantly to any victim from before dawn until the time of sacrifice (afternoon) on the final day recalls this aspect repeatedly and makes each victim - even the Kedu buffalo now - into her living representative:

'As our father's sister's kin you came!
As our elder sister's kin you came!'

The rite continues by offering her (or her visible agent) the specially good food prepared for her out of their gratitude; and indeed all human victims received the best of Kond hospitality and fare, despite
their bondage and their fate, just as the buffalo-substitute is still fed with exactly the same human-style food. Only thus can the blessing of this first of all founder-members be expected.

The third class, rituals to guard against troubles due to pollution offences, is also closely linked with the Earth Goddess and therefore with the Merih. The most significant ritual aspect of Kond life which Bailey observed even in the north-eastern Oriya-influenced area was this negative aspect of the Earth cult 1; how much more strongly is this so in the more isolated Kond areas. It can be observed on occasions in the life-cycle, even at a 'normal' death from old age and much more at Sidi Said (violent) deaths; also in the breaking of taboos close-linked with the land, such as the widow Bailey mentions who ploughed a furrow to teach her son and whose blood - as a near-Merih - had therefore to be shed on that same land for the satisfaction of the Earth Goddess.

The Earth Goddess is also concerned in the final class of rituals, those of response to life-destroying situations due either to disturbed spirits or to man's ill-will. Simply for the priest to diagnose that 'the Earth Goddess has touched' a certain person, causing their illness or some dire trouble, shows her dissatisfaction with the group - whether household, clan or village - which has failed to keep her well enough supplied with blood, her required food. Only the immediate celebration of a Kedu will restore the relationship. Also in her ability to transform herself into a man-eating tiger and literally devour her victim, or equally in her gift to certain persons providing them with the same power, it is the Earth Goddess who is causing the disorder and who must be placated.

1 Bailey F.G., Tribe, Caste and Nation, p.51.
It is clear from the early records of the East India Company's officers that on these and probably many other occasions human Meriah victims were offered. It is equally clear that in certain areas significant ritual changes took place which resulted in the new pattern's emergence in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The available evidence of change falls into four groups. First, the earliest records of Stevenson, Macpherson and others during the campaign to abolish human sacrifice. Secondly, the situation fifty years later when buffalo-substitutes were in regular use by the Konds, but except in the Bura-worshipping area of Goomsur, the revised version of the Meriah song not only included apologies to the Earth Goddess for the lack of human blood, but told her to place the blame squarely on the Europeans. Thirdly, there is an account written between about 1910 and 1915 by Kogera Prodhan, the newly-literate Kond of priestly family who has already been mentioned. He lived in Mallikapori group of villages about a mile from Goomsur-Udayagiri, the area where Bura-God's supremacy had long been affirmed yet where the Earth Goddess still made her demands for blood and flesh. By that time, and probably for some considerable time previously, celebrations in Goomsur District had been elaborated into a four-year cycle by the preliminary 'Showing of the Buffalo' and final r...
third year in each Kuttia village, with the required interaction with other villages in the intervening two years; and the song of apology to the Earth Goddess - almost identical with that recorded in the previous century shifting the blame on to the European officers - is still sung. The earlier (1898) version of this song (quoted in Chapter II (d)) was noted in Boad District on quite the opposite side of the hills from Kuttia country, thus it appears to have formed a regular part of the ritual in all areas where the Earth Goddess was still considered supreme and therefore likely to be frustrated and angry at the lack of human flesh. The final account is from the Mallikapori group of villages (Goomsur District) where I attended the celebration among these Bura-worshipping Konds, descendants of those whom Kogera Prodhan recorded fifty years earlier. It will be noted that by this time the celebration had been elaborated yet again by the addition of another ritual: 'The Washing of the Buffalo's Feet'. This takes place any time from four months to a year after the first 'Showing of the Buffalo', thus lengthening the total celebration to approximately five years.

Below is a summary of material concerning the Meriah/Kedu. It is in chronological order from 1835, when the Meriah ritual was first discovered by the East India Company, and passes through 130 years of change and development until 1966. The relevant material follows this summary.

I Human Sacrifice, a 3-year cycle

(i) 1835-1837 - Observations made during the Goomsur Wars by the Hon. Mr. Russell of the Madras Civil Service and Mr. Arbuthnot, Acting Collector of Vizagapatam.
(ii) 1837 May 11th - The earliest description * reported to the Madras Government by the Hon. Mr. Russell.

(iii) 1837 Nov. 24th - Additions by Mr. Arbutnot. +

(iv) 1837-1845 - Variations in the precise manner in which the Meriah was put to death, noted by Capt. John Campbell and Capt. S.C. Macpherson. +

(v) 1841, June - Full report by Capt. S.C. Macpherson + to the Supreme Government of India; later given in an address to the Royal Asiatic Society, London.

(vi) 1841, June - Prayers at the Meriah sacrifice, collected by Capt. S.C. Macpherson.

(vii) 1841, June - Exculpatory dialogue between headman, priest and victim-substitute.

(viii) c. 1846 - A rhymed version of the Kond hymn of invocation sung as the Meriah is led from the village to the sacrificial grove. (Translated by 'D.L.R'; it appeared in the Calcutta magazine: Hurkaru).

(ix) - Diagram illustrating inter-village co-operation for Meriah celebrations.

II Buffalo Substitutes

(x) 1894 - Eyewitness account (the first?) of a buffalo-substitute Kedu sacrifice in the Ganjam Malisah, reported in the Madras Mail.

(xi) 1899 (a) - The revised hymn after the enforced substitution of a buffalo, with apologies to the Earth Goddess for the lack of human blood.

(b) - Traditional song recounting the arrival and activities of the East India Company in the Kond Hills 60 years previously.

(xii) 1909 - Legendary account of the origin of the Konds and of their practice of human sacrifice, collected by A.B.J. Moodaliar.

+ All the starred tables in these Sections I - IV had of necessity to be reduced in size in order to meet the requirements of the University. The numbers in the right hand column of these tables show the order in which persons or groups take part in the stages of the ritual.
III Early Twentieth Century, a 4-year cycle (in Goomsur)

(xiii) c.1910-1915 - Kogera Prodhan's account †, with the stages of the Kedu now extended over four years (from three); as practised in Mallikapori group of villages near G. Udayagiri.

IV Mid-Twentieth Century, a 5-year cycle (in Goomsur)

(xiv) 1952 - Some pan reflections on the Meriah sacrifice (Mallikapori).

(xv) 1956 - The Biha (i.e. Kedu) in two Kuttia Kond villages, from discussion with Professor Hermann Kiggemeyer (Frankfurt). +

(xvi) 1950-1966 - The Kedu in Mallikapori village-group, the writer's account. +

I Human Sacrifice - a 3-year cycle

(i) Observations made during the Goomsur Wars 1

In his report on the practice of human sacrifice in the Kond Hills, submitted to the Madras Government and dated 11th May, 1837, the Hon. Mr. Russell of the Madras Civil Service stated that the following points 1 relate to the Goomsur Maliha: there were local variations in some of the other areas.

1. Human sacrifice is offered annually to 'Thadha Pem' (the Earth Goddess) under the effigy of a bird intended to represent a peacock, to propitiate the deity to grant favourable seasons and crops.

2. It is performed at the expense of, and in rotation by, certain Mutas (districts) composing a community and connected together by local circumstances.

3. These sacrifices are understood to be very numerous.

4. In addition to these periodical sacrifices, others are made by individual Mutas and even by individuals, to avert any threatening calamity from sickness, murrain or other cause.

1 Notes taken from Selections from the Records of the Government of India (Home Department) No.V; Calcutta, 1854, History of the Rise and Progress of Operations for the Suppression of Human Sacrifice and Female Infanticide in the Hill Tracts of Orissa. (Compiled from Official Correspondence from the years 1836 to 1854).
5. He understood that the victim could be of any sex, caste or age; that grown men are the most esteemed as the most costly; that children are purchased and reared for years with the family of the person who ultimately devotes them to a cruel death; and that Meriahs are treated with kindness, not under constraint if young, but placed in fetters and guarded when old enough to realize their fate.

6. Apparently there is no difficulty in procuring victims. These are sold by their parents or nearest relatives, or older persons are kidnapped.

7. The victim must always be purchased. Criminals or prisoners of war are not fitting subjects.

8. The price is paid in brass utensils, cattle or corn.

9. The Jialiikos (village heads) purchase the victims, and house them in their own homes.

10. The Jandi (priest), who may be of any 'caste', officiates, but he performs the ritual offerings of incense, flowers etc. through the medium of the Toomba, who must be a Kond child under seven years old. This Toomba is fed and clothed at public expense, eats alone, and is subjected to no act deemed impure.

In a report to the same authority, dated 24th November 1837, Mr. Arbuthnot, the Acting Collector of Vizagapatam, added the following information:

1. There are said to be two distinct classes of Konds: Kuttia Konds and Jathapoo Konds.

2. It is the Kuttia Konds, dwelling in the most inaccessible hills, who habitually offer human sacrifice to 'the god called Jenkery' (Jakeri) in order to secure good crops.

3. The ritual generally takes place on the Sunday either preceding or following the 'Pongal' feast (early January?).

4. The victim is procured by purchase, and there is a fixed price for each person, consisting of forty articles such as a bullock, a male buffalo, a cow, a goat, a piece of cloth, a silk cloth, a brass pot, a large plate, a bunch of plantains, etc.

5. 'A sacrifice is never offered in one village more often than once in twelve years. Nor is there ever more than one victim - though this is not the case in Buster (?) where twenty persons have frequently been sacrificed at a time.'

(ii), (iii) and (iv) Early Descriptions of a Meriah Sacrifice

In the period of the Goomsur Wars, 1835-37, the British officers were not in a position to inquire into the ritual or social actions which led up to the sacrifice of a victim. Rather, their informants were concerned to describe the climax of what was later found to be a much more protracted ritual.

1. The extreme southern border of Kond territory, closely associated with the Telugu-speaking people of the plains. (Now part of Andhra State)
2. Here he confuses the Kuttia Konds with the much larger (hill) Konds.
3. I.e. on the Telugu-Kond fringe to the south.
The Harih is a holiday (or festival) in which a pit is dug beside the post. The village deity, Jakari Pani, is represented by Jakeri stones and little bits on the boundaries. The Harih’s head and face remain untouched and the bones, when bare, are buried with them in the pit.

After the horrid ceremony has been completed (still Day 2) they bring a buffalo calf in front of the post and cut off its forelegs. It is left there until the following day. Then they dress in male attire, and are themselves as men; then drink, dance and sing round the spot. The calf is killed, cooked, and eaten. When the Harih is dismissed with a present of rice, and a hog or calf.
Local Variations in the Manner of the Weriah's Death, though the stages of the ritual and the purpose behind it remain the same:

(a) 'One of the most common ways of offering the sacrifice in Chitena Kinked is to the effigy of an elephant, made of wood, placed on the top of a stout post, on which it is made to revolve. After the performance of the usual ceremonies, the intended victim is fastened to the proboscis of the elephant, and amid the shouts and yells of the excited multitude of Khonds, is rapidly whirled round, when at a given signal by the officiating pandi, or priest, the crowd rush in, seize the Weriah, and with their knives, cut the flesh off the shrieking wretch as long as life remains. He is then cut down, the skeleton burnt, and the horrid copies are over.

In several villages I counted as many as fourteen effigies of elephants which had been used in former sacrifices.'

John Campbell, Personal Narrative, p.126

(b) 'A low stage is formed, sloping on either side like a roof; upon it the victim is placed, his limbs wound round with cords, so as to suffocate but not prevent his struggles. Fire is lighted and hot brands are applied, so as to make the victim roll alternately up and down the slopes of the stage. He is thus tortured as long as he is capable of moving or uttering cries; and, being believed that the favour of the earth goddess, especially in respect of the supply of rain, will be in proportion to the quantity of tears which may be extracted. The victim is next day cut to pieces.'

C.C.Macpherson, Memories of Service in India, p.130
(v) **Macpherson's description**

There was peace between the Konds and the British by the time this was compiled, even though inter-clan warfare abounded. In gaining more detailed knowledge he had as one of his informants, Sundoro Singh, who, it will be remembered, had been raised among the Konds from his childhood.

In all the following accounts of the *Keriah/Kedu* the numbers in the right hand column, if followed consecutively and checked with the description at the head of each column, indicate the persons involved in the actions of the rite. This is an aid to understanding these events and also opens the way for further study and classification, e.g. of consecutive acts that occur repeatedly in this ritual, or of the persons so engaged, the symbolism they use, whether this is parallel to or different from that in other Kond rituals, etc.
The priest sacrifices her to the deities. A solemn procession begins with music and dancing. The priest makes his way to the feet of the posts and his hair is trimmed. He is assisted by helpers, marking the entrance to the sanctuary. The victim is kept fasting from that morning. They are careful to wash and dress in new garments. The victim is placed in the temenos; all proceed with solemn chants and pacing. There is a gentle ritual of invocations; legends & dialogue between victim, headman & priest (see appended text) - i.e. a semi-dramatic impersonation of the victim is given by the best actor; occasionally of the other too also.

After the priest is seated, the headman or 2 elders takes the branch of a tree, Celt several feet down the centre. They insert the victim between the rift - in some districts, round his chest, in other districts at his throat. They beat on his head until he is dead. The priest takes the victim's axe. The crowd throws itself on the sacrifice & strip the flesh from the bones. Head & intestines are left untouched.

Most careful precautions are taken to avoid desecration by the touch or even near-approach of any persons except Tarli-worshippers, or any animal.

Priest & all the headmen burn all the remains along with a post on a funeral pyre. They scatter the ashes over the fields (V.1) or lay them on a bale over the houses & granaries.

Ten formalities indispensable to the victim of the sacrifice:

1. The "Holy" buffalo is presented to the worship of the victim (i.e. the father or seller) or his representative in final satisfaction of all his payment-demands.

2. The priest sacrifices a buffalo with prayer to Tarli, after the victim's axe has been recovered by a representative. All join in the feast.
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Action at other villages in the Zata</th>
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<tr>
<td>Previously</td>
<td>Villages (2)(3)(4) had selected representatives to go to (V.1) to bring a share of the flesh house.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Priest of V. (2)(3)(4) etc. stayed at home.</td>
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<td>Priest &amp; people all fasted rigidly.</td>
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<td>Their reps. go to (V.1) led by their hand.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They receive a strip of flesh at the sacrifice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roll it in leaves of the goshnut tree &amp; bear it home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When they approach their own village, they lay it on a cushion of a handful of grass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A deposit it in the place of public meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The fasting headed families &amp; priest go to meet the reps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The priest receives the flesh &amp; divides it into 2 equal portions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He subdivides 1 portion into the not of household heads present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He says to Tari:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Then he seats himself on the ground &amp; prepares a hole in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With his back turned &amp; without looking.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He places the half portion of flesh in the hole.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each head of house adds a little earth to bury it.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The priest pours water on the spot from a hill round.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each head of house rolls his shred of flesh in leaves.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All raise a shout of exultation at work done.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A wild excited battle takes place with stones &amp; mud - at which a considerable number of hoods are broken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All go to the young men's dormitory &amp; remove the fight.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They knock down the walls or part of the dormitory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finally each man goes alone &amp; buries his particle of flesh in his favourite field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placing it in the earth behind his back without locking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All return home to drink &amp; eat -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In some places there is a common feast; in others each family eats apart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st day</td>
<td>No house is kept; (V.1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire may not be given;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wood may not be cut;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strangers may not be received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(In one district, strict silence is observed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All go to reasonable at the place of sacrifice in (V.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The priest slaughters a buffalo.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All feast on it, A leave the inedible portions on the spirit of the flesh (victim).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The priest offers a horn to the earth goddess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He prays that no Tari (earth goddess)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. From information gained by S. C. Macpherson during his employment with his Regiment. & on survey under the orders of the Government of India. After addidtions & corrections during further service with the hoods, he presented the fullest account presently available of Hood religious beliefs & practices in the paper read before the Royal Asiatic Society of London in the year 1932. (S. C. Macpherson, pp. 117-131)
(vi) **Prayers at the Meriah Sacrifice**, collected by Macpherson.

1. **Bring a prayer**

**Time:** When participating neighbour-villages receive notice from the celebrating clan or group of the day fixed for a Meriah sacrifice, heads of these households safeguard their women and children during their forthcoming absence in this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIALIST &amp; HIS ACTIONS</th>
<th>OTHERS INVOLVED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. All who intend to take part and have been deputed to bring a portion of human flesh for the Earth Goddess, immediately wash their clothes.</td>
<td>Other heads of households remain fasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Then they go out of their village</td>
<td>while the deputation goes to join the celebrating village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. with their priest</td>
<td>(For their subsequent activities see 'Bringing the Portion of Flesh' in the tables of Meriah sacrifice).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. who invokes all the deities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. then address the Earth Goddess:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. and all heads of households remain fasting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. "0 Tari Fene!

You may have thought that we forgot your commands after sacrificing (name of last victim); but we forgot you not. We shall now leave our homes in your service, regardless of our enemies, of the good or the ill-will of the gods beyond our boundary, of danger for those who by magical art become Misepa * tigers, & of danger to our women from other men. We shall go forth on your service. Do you save us from suffering evil while engaged in it? We go to perform your rites; & if anything shall befall us, men will hereafter distrust you, & say you care not for your votaries. We are not satisfied with our wealth; But what we do possess we owe to you, & for the future, we hope for the fulfilment of our desires. We intend to go on such a day to such a village, to bring human flesh for you. We trust to attain our desires through this service. Forget not the oblation."

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* See Chapter IV (d) II, Rituals in Life-Destroying Situations due to Man's Ill-Will.
2. *Prayer immediately preceding the legends and dialogue as the climax of the sacrifice approaches:*

"*O Tari Penu!*

When we omitted to gratify you with your desired food,
You forgot kindness to us.
We possess but little and uncertain wealth.
Increase it and we shall be able often to repeat this rite.
We do not excuse our fault.
Do you forgive it & prevent it in future by giving us increased wealth.

We here present to you your food.
Let our houses be so filled with the noise of children,
that our voices cannot be heard by those without!
Let our cattle be so numerous
that neither fish, frog nor worm may live in the drinking ponds beneath the trampling feet!
Let our cattle so crowd our pastures that no vacant spot shall be visible to those who look at them from afar.
Let our fields be so filled with the soil of our sheep that we may dig in them as deep as a man's height without meeting a stone!
Let our swine so abound that our home fields shall need no plough but their rooting snouts!
Let our poultry be so numerous as to hide the thatch of our houses!
Let the stones at our fountains be worn hollow by the multitude of our brass vessels!
Let our children have it but for a tradition that in the days of their forefathers there were tigers & snakes!
Let us have but one care, the yearly enlargement of our houses to store our increasing wealth!
Then we shall multiply your rites.
We know that this is your desire.

Give us increase of wealth,
And we will give you increase of worship!"

3. *Prayer at the close of the human sacrifice, when the priest slaughters a buffalo for the shared feast:*

"*O Tari Penu!*

You have afflicted us greatly;
You have brought death to our children & our bullocks, & failure to our corn

You have afflicted us in every way
But we do not complain of this.
It is your desire only to compel us to perform your due rites, and then to raise up & enrich us.

We were anciently enriched by this rite;
all around us are great from it;
Therefore, by our cattle, our flocks, our pigs & our grain we procured a victim and offered a sacrifice.

Do you now enrich us!"
Let our herds be so numerous that they cannot be housed!
Let children so abound that the care of them shall overcome their parents—
as shall be seen by their burned hands!
Let our heads ever strike against brass pots innumerable hanging from
our roofs!
Let the rats form their nests of shreds of scarlet cloth and silk!
Let all the kites in the country be seen in the trees of our village,
from beasts being killed there every day!
We are ignorant of what it is good to ask for.
You know what is good for us
Give it to us!"

4. Prayer offered by the priests of the flesh-taking villages
when their delegates return to their own dunr with their portion
of flesh. This prayer is an apology to the Earth Goddess because
she is not receiving her full food (i.e. a whole victim) from
their village this year as she did on the previous year. It
assures her that the division of the flesh and the interaction
of the villages has been carried out on a strictly fair basis,
leaving her no cause for complaint and therefore for trouble-
making.

"O Tari Penu:
Our village offered (name) as a sacrifice,
And divided the flesh among all the people, in honour of the gods.
Now (name of village (1)) has offered (name)
And has sent us flesh for you.
Be not displeased with the quantity,
We could only give them as much.
If you will give us wealth,
We will repeat the rite.

5. The benediction that completes each 3-year cycle of Neriah
ritual observance:

"O Tari Penu:
Up to this time we have been engaged in your worship,
which we commenced a year ago.
Now the rites are completed.
Let us receive the benefit!"

(vii) Exculpatory Dialogue between headman, priest and victim-
substitute preceding the slaughter of the Neriah Victim.

'After the preparations which have been described, the following remark-
able invocations, legends, and dialogues are gone through - the part of
the victim in the latter, and occasionally also the parts of the chief
and the priest, being sustained in a semi-dramatic way by the best
impersonators of the characters that may be found. The form of words

1 From material gathered by Macpherson between 1837 and 1852 and read
before the Royal Asiatic Society in London 1852; quoted in
Memorials of Service in India, pp.119-127.
in this long ritual, as in all other Khond rituals, it need scarcely be repeated, is not fixed, but admits of endless variation. I give the fullest one in my possession, exactly as it was told me.

The Priest having called upon the earth goddess, and upon all the other deities by name, first recites his invocation:

'O Tari Pennul,
when we omitted to gratify you with your desired food,
you forgot kindness to us.' ... etc.

(See p.221 above for this prayer).

Now every man and woman asks for what each wishes. One asks for a good husband, another for a good wife, another that his arrows may be made sure, etc.

Then the (Priest) says:

"Umbally Bylee (i.e. Amali Be-eli) went to cut vegetables with a hook. She cut her finger. The earth was then soft mud, but when the blood-drops fell it became firm. She said, 'Behold the good change! cut up my body to complete it.' The people answered, 'If we spill our own blood, we shall have no descendants. We will obtain victims elsewhere. Will not the Dombo (Pan) and the Gahi (Sweepers) sell their children when in distress? and shall we not give our wealth for them,'

And they prayed thus:

'May the gods send the exhausted Dombo,
his feet pierced with thorns,
to our door!
May the gods give us wealth!'

"Their prayer was answered. They procured and sacrificed a victim. The whole earth became firm, and they obtained increase of wealth. The next year many victims came for sale, and the people thanked the gods, saying - 'You have sent us victims and given us wealth.' Thenceforward the world has been happy and rich, both in the portion which belongs to the Khonds, and the portion which belongs to the rajahs.

"And society, with its relations of father and mother, and wife and child, and the bonds between ruler and subject, arose. And there came into use cows, bullocks, and buffaloes, sheep and poultry. Then also came into use the trees and the hills and the valleys, and iron and ploughshares, and arrows and axes, and the juice of the palm-tree, and love between the sons and daughters of the
people, making new households. In this manner did the necessity for the rite of sacrifice arise.

"Then also did hunting begin... (See Appendix Vol. II for the myth concerning the origin of hunting)...

"While hunting, they one day found the people of Darungbadi and Laddabarri (clans) of the Souradah zemindary, adjacent to Goomsur, which do not offer human sacrifice) offering sacrifice. Their many-curved axes opened the bowels of the victims, which flowed out. They who went to the hunt said, "This ceremony is ill-performed. The goddess will not remain with you"'. And the goddess left these awkward sacrificers and came with our ancestors. These people now cut trees only. The deity preferred the sacrifice at the hands of our forefathers, and thenceforward the whole worship of the world has lain upon us, and we now discharge it. 

"Tari Pennu in this way came with our ancestors. But they at first knew only the form of worship necessary for themselves, not that necessary for the whole world. And there was still much fear; and there were but few children, and there were deadly snakes and tigers, and thorns piercing the feet. Then they called upon the (priest), to enquire the will of the goddess, by the suspended sickle. He said, 'We practise the rite as it was first instituted, worshipping the first gods. What fault, what sin is ours? The goddess replied - 'In a certain month wash your garments with ashes or with stones; make kenna (liquor); purchase a child; feed him in every house; pour oil on him and on his garments, and ask for his spittle; take him into the plain (i.e. the panga-land close to the village), when the goddess demands him; let the priest set him up; call all the world; let friendship reign; call upon the names of the first people; cut the victim to pieces; let each man place a shred of the flesh in his fields, in his grain-store, and in his yard, and then kill a buffalo for food, and give a feast, with drinking and dancing to all. Then see how many children will be born to you, how much game will be yours, what crops, and how few shall die. All things will become right.'

"We obeyed the goddess and assembled the people. Then the victim child wept, and reviled, and uttered curses. All the people rejoiced, except those with whom the child had dwelt, and the priest. They were overwhelmed with grief; their sorrows prevailed entirely over their expectations of benefit, and they did not give either their minds or their faith to the gods. 'The world', said they, 'rejoices - we are filled with despair;' and they demanded of the deity, 'Why have you instituted this miserable heartrending rite?' Then the earth goddess came again and rested on the priest, and said, 'Away with this grief! Your answer is this: when the victim child weep, say to him, 'Blame not us, blame your parents who sold you. What fault is ours? The earth goddess demands a sacrifice. It is necessary for the world. The tiger begins to rage, the snake to poison, fevers and every pain afflict people - shall you alone be exempt from evil? When you shall have given repose to the world, you will become a god, by the will of the gods.'

Then the Victim answers - "Have you no enemies, no vile and useless child, no debtor to another clan, who compels you for his debts to sell your lands; no coward, who in time of battle skulks with another clan? Have you none of these to seek out and sacrifice?"
The Priest replies - "We have acted upon quite different views. We did not kidnap you on the road, nor while gathering sticks in the jungle, nor when at play. The souls of those whom you would have us sacrifice can never become gods. They are only fit to perish by epilepsy, falling in the fire, or by ulcers, or other dreadful diseases. Such sacrifices would be of no avail. To obtain you, we cleared the hill and the jungle, fearless of the tiger and the snake. We stunted ourselves to fill your parents, and gave them our brass vessels; and they gave to us as freely as one gives light from a fire! Blame them! Blame them!"

The Victim - "And did I share the price which my parents received? Did I agree to the sale? You now tell me this. No one remembers his mother's womb, nor the taste of his mother's milk; and I considered you my parents. Where there was delicate food in the village, I was fed. When the child of anyone suffered, he grieved; but if I suffered, the whole village grieved. When did you conceive this fraud, this wickedness to destroy me? You, O my father, and you, - and you, - and you, - O my fathers! do not destroy me!"

The Mullicko, or chief of the village in which the victim was kept, or his representative, now says - "This usage is delivered down to us from the first people of the first time. They practised it. The people of the middle time omitted it. The earth became soft. An order re-established the rite. 0 child! we must destroy you. Forgive us. You will become a god."

The Victim - "Of this your intention I knew nothing; I thought I was to pass my life with you. I assisted to build houses, and to clear fields for my children. See! there are the palm-trees I planted - there is the mohwa-tree (liquor-fruit) I planted - there is the public building on which I laboured - its palings still white in your sight. I planted the tobacco which you are now eating. Look behind you! The cows and sheep which I have tended look lovingly at me. All this time you gave me no hint of my intended fate. I toiled with you at every work with my whole mind. Had I known of this doom, I had still toiled, but with different feelings. Let the whole burden of my soul's grief, as I remember the past, lie upon you."

The chief - "You are about to become a god. We shall profit by your fate. We cannot argue with you. Do you not recollect that, when your father came to claim your uncompleted price, you snatched up a shining brass vessel: that we said, 'That is your father's!', and you threw it at him and ran away amongst the sheep? Do you not recollect the day on which we cut your hair, devoting you to sacrifice? And do you not recollect that when many were sick, and the priest brought the divining sickle, he declared 'The earth demands a victim!'"

Then several persons around say - "I should have told you, - and I, - and I and several give answers such as - "I thought of our hard labour to acquire you, which had been wasted, had you escaped from us"; and - "You might have known all well."

The Victim - "It is true I did observe something of this; but your aged mothers, and your wives, and your beautiful children, my brothers and sisters, assured me that you were humane, and would never kill one so useful and so beautiful as I. 'They will rather', said your mothers and your children, 'remembering your acts and your ways, sell these fields and these trees, and that tobacco, to procure a substitute.' This I believed, and I was happy and laboured with you."
The Chief - "We cannot satisfy you. Ask your father, who is present.
I satisfied him with my favourite cattle, my valuable brass vessels,
and my sheep, and with silken and woollen cloths, and axes. A
bow and arrows, not four days old, I gave to his fancy. Your
parents, forgetting your beauty, forgetting the pleasure of cherishing
you, turned their hearts to my cattle, and my brass vessels,
gave you away. Uproad them. Heap imprecations upon them.
We will curse them with you, imprecating upon them - that all their
children may be similarly sacrificed - that they may lose, within
the year, the price for which they sold you - that they may have
a miserable and forlorn old age, lingering childless and unfed -
that when they die in their empty house, there may be no one to
inform the village for two days, so that, when they are carried out
to be burned, all shall hold their nostrils - that their own souls
may afterwards animate victims given to hardhearted men, who will
not even answer their death-plaints consolingly. Curse them thus,
and we will curse them with you."

The Victim will now turn to the priest, saying - "And why did you
conceal my fate? When I dwell with the Mullicko, like a flower,
were you blind, or dumb, or how were you possessed, that you never
said, 'Why do you cherish, so lovingly, this child - this child
who must die for the world?' Then had I known my doom and leapt
from a precipice and died. Your reason for concealment - living
as you do apart from men, is - that you thought of yourself, 'I
am great. The whole world attends on my ministrations. But,
world, look upon him! What miscreant eyes! What a villainous
head with hair like a sumbilly tree! And see how enraged he is!
What a jabber he makes! What a body he has got, starved upon
worship which depends upon men's griefs! - A body anointed with
spittle for oil! Look, O world - look, and tell! See, how he
comes at me, leaping like a toad!"

The Priest replies - "Child! Why speak thus? I am the friend of the
gods; the first in their sight. Listen to me. I did not persuade
your father or your mother to sell you. I did not desire the
Mullickos to sell their fields to acquire your price. Your parents
sold you. These Mullickos bought you. They consulted me, inquir¬
ing, 'How may this child become blessed?' The hour is not yet
over. When it is past, how grateful will you be to me? You, as a
god, will gratefully approve and honour me."

The Victim - "My father begot me; the Mullickos bought me, my life is
devoted, and all will profit by my death. But you, O Priest! who
make nothing of my sufferings, take to yourself all the virtue of
my sacrifice. You shall, however, in no respect profit by it."

The Priest - "The deity created the world, and everything that lives;
and I am his minister and representative. God made you, the
Mullicko bought you, and I sacrifice you. The virtue of your
death is not yours, but mine; but it will be attributed to you
through me."

The Victim - "My curse be upon the man who, while he did not share in
my price, is first at my death. Let the world ever be upon one
side while he is on the other. Let him, destitute and without
stored food, hope to live only through the distresses of others.
Let him be the poorest wretch alive. Let his wife and children
think him foul. I am dying. I call upon all - upon those who
bought me, on those whose food I have eaten, on those who are
strangers here, on all who will now share my flesh - let all curse
the Priest to the gods!"
The Priest - "Dying creature, do you contend with me? I shall not allow you a place among the gods."

The Victim - "In dying I shall become a god, then will you know whom you serve. Now do your will on me."

(The priest, the chief and one or two of the elders then proceed to insert the victim in the cleft branch of a green tree, as described above, and the priest wounds the victim slightly with his axe as a sign to the crowd which then hurls itself upon the victim to obtain strips of his flesh).

(viii) A Rhymed version of the Hymn of Invocation sung as the Keriah victim, bathed and new-dressed, is led from the village to the Keriah Grove on the 2nd day. Translated by D.L.R., this appeared 'recently' (in 1846) in the columns of a Calcutta magazine: Hurkaru, and was quoted by Alexander Duff in a footnote to his article on the Konds in the Calcutta Review, Vol. V, No. IX.

1

Goddess of earth, dread source of ill,
They just revenge o'erwhelms us still
For rites unpaid;
But oh, forgive, our stores are small,
Our lessened means uncertain all
Denied thine aid.

2

Goddess, that taught mankind to feel
Poison in plants, and death in steel
A fearful lore,
Forgive, forgive and ne'er again
Shall we neglect thy shrine to stain
With human gore.

3

Let plenty all our land o'erspread,
Make green the ground with living bread,
Our pastures fill
So close with cattle, side by side,
That no bare spot may be descried
From distant hill.

4

And when unto the broadflat pool
Their thirst to quench, their sides to cool,
Our herds are led.
So numerous make them that no form
Of fish or frog, or toad or worm
Survive their tread.
So fill with sheep each ample fold
That he who digs man-deep the mould,
Their compost rare,
Meet not a stone. May swine abound,
until their plough-like snouts the ground
For seed prepare.

So fill our cots with childhood’s din
The voice be rarely heard within
And ne’er without.
Each thatch with crowded poultry hide,
Give jugs that bruise the fountain’s side
With metal stout.

Oh, Bura Pennu! Once again
Protect us, with the grove and plain
From beasts of prey.
Nor let sly snake nor tiger bold
Fright children save in stories old
Of fathers grey.

Oh, make it each man’s only care
Yearly to build a store-room fair
For goods god-sent.
And wealthy rites we’ll duly pay:
Lo, one bought victim now we slay,
One life present.

(ix) Key to the diagram following, which illustrates inter-village co-operation for Meriah celebrations. The actions of seven hypothetical Kond villages show the manner of temporary alliances set up in order to perform the 3-year cycle in the days of human victims. After the buffalo was substituted, an additional ritual one year before the beginning of the 3-year cycle, and yet another, one year after the end of the cycle, doubled the religious and social interaction in the Goomsur area (not illustrated here).

1st year of 3-year ritual:
Flesh-bearing groups start their cycle:

2nd year of 3-year ritual:
They perform the human sacrifice:

3rd year of 3-year ritual:
Their Valka sacrifice ends the cycle:
Though other regions were prevailed upon eventually to accept the buffalo as substitute, only the Goomsur Konds it appears made the significant theological change in 1846 of declaring that Puru God, the Creator, was indeed supreme, and not the Earth Goddess as they had previously thought. They therefore were able to join freely and fully with the Konds in the contiguous region on Goomsur's southern border, the latter having upheld Puru's supremacy all along. In the rest of the Kond hills, where this did not take place, there was much greater reluctance to believe that the Earth Goddess would be satisfied with buffalo blood. Thus though they compulsorily replaced the human Meriah ritual by the buffalo Kedu, they also tried to insure themselves against reprisals from the frustrated Earth Goddess in two ways: one, publicly recognised, was the addition to the ritual of a new song which laid the blame for the lack of human flesh squarely on the powerful incomer Europeans; the other was by an 'accidental' axe-cut to cause just a little human blood to flow from the priest or a worshipper in the intoxicated and excited group scrambling to cut their slice of flesh with their razor-sharp axes before the buffalo actually breathed its last.

(x) The Meriah Sacrifice with a Buffalo Substitute: held at Dhuttiegaum in the Ganjam Maliahs and reported in the Madras Mail, 1894. 1

TIME: The eyewitness's party was touring in the Ganjam Maliahs when the unexpected encounter took place, therefore it was probably the cold dry season early in 1894.

1. A number of Konds were carrying an immensely long bamboo, about 50 ft., surmounted by a gorgeous 'balloon' of red and white cloth stretched on a bamboo frame.
2. To it they had attached strips of dried pig's flesh.

and a huge plume of peacock's feathers waved on top of the whole.

Others carried another shorter bamboo, slung all over with iron bells.

They had been presenting these structures to a forest deity close by and were now hastening to the Kond hamlet of Dhuttiegaum ½ mile away in a dense grove of trees.

In the middle of the village the placid sacrificial buffalo was tied to a curiously fluted and carved wooden post, its body glistening with the oil of many anointings.

The comparative quiet was suddenly rent by a succession of shrieks and the beating of Maliah drums and blowing of buffalo horns as a party of Konds came madly dancing and rushing down the steep hillside from a neighbouring village.

They rushed up to the buffalo and, along with the host-villagers, began a frantic dance round and round the animal.

Each man carried a green bough of some tree, a sharp knife and a tāndi (ceremonial axe).

All were dressed in holiday attire, their hair combed and knotted on the forehead and profusely decorated with waving feathers.

With bands of cloth some had tied on to their heads the horns of buffaloes, or brass imitation-horns of the spotted deer. Their long black curly hair hung down and gave them a startling appearance. One man wore an old blue police overcoat inside out, with a number of what looked like striped tent carpets gathered round his waist as a stiff ballet skirt or kilt. He leapt and spun round the buffalo flourishing a kitchen chopper. Another man wore very little but had daubed his body profusely with black and white spots and swathed his head in yards of cloth, with a cascade of cock's feathers at the back. He waved an ancient rusty umbrella with streamers of white cloth attached to the top.

All were more or less intoxicated.

Parties from other villages began to arrive thick and fast in the same manner, flourishing their boughs and knives with loud yells.

Each party was led by the headman (Malika) of its village. The dancing now became more general, circling faster round the buffalo.

The woman, who had followed at a distance, stood in a group well groomed and oiled, and took little part in the revels.

The hitherto quiet buffalo, which had been without food and water for nearly 2 days, now plunged and butted at the dancers, catching one man on the nose so that the blood flowed copiously.

The Konds continued circling round and round the maddened brute, singing and blowing horns in its ears and beating drums.

Occasionally they offered it cakes brought from their villages and then laid them on top of the stake as offerings.

They danced thus for quite 2 hours waiting for the arrival of the Patro before concluding the ceremony, meanwhile refreshing themselves copiously with specially made bākuri (grain) beer.

At last the Patro arrived, preceded by his dancing deafening retinue headed by an ancient and withered hag carrying on her shoulders a Maliah drum of cow-hide stretched tightly over an iron hoop. This was vigorously beaten from behind her by a Kond, with stiff thongs of dried leather.

The great man walked sedately last, followed by his extraordinarily caparisoned but broken-kneed pony led by a small boy dressed only in an antiquated faded red drummer's coat.
25. The Patro seated himself on a log near the dance.

26. A change immediately came over the scene:

The crowd stopped their shouting gyrations round the now exhausted beast and fell on its neck and body, smothering it with caresses and endearments.

27. To a low plaintive air they crooned over it the dirge that tradition says they sang, with slight variations, over their human victim.

28. After chanting thus for some time, they untied the buffalo from the carved post and led it, with singing, dancing and shouting, to a sacred grove a few hundred yards away. There they tied it to a stake.

29. The hands then threw off all their surplus clothing to the large crowd of women waiting near and stood round the animal holding their sharp knives poised in their uplifted hands.

30. The Jani, who did not differ outwardly from the others, gave the buffalo a slight tap on the head with a small axe (tenci).

31. An indescribable scene followed. The hands fell on the animal and in an amazingly short time tore the living victim to shreds with their knives, leaving nothing but the head, bones and stomach. Every particle of skin and flesh had been stripped off during the few minutes they fought and struggled over the buffalo.

32. As soon as a man secured a piece of flesh, he rushed away as fast as he could to his fields to bury it there, according to the ancient custom, before the sun had set. As some had long distances to cover it was imperative that they ran very fast.

33. A curious scene now took place for which we could obtain no explanation: as the men ran, the women flung clods of earth after them, some taking very good effect.

34. The sacred grove was clear of people except a few that guarded the remnants of the buffalo, which were taken and burnt with ceremony at the foot of the stake.

1. **Dirge:**

   'Blame us not, O buffalo!
   Thus for sacrificing thee,
   For our fathers have ordained
   This ancient mystery.

   We have bought thee with a price,
   Have paid for thee all thy worth,
   What blame can rest upon us,
   Who save our land from death?

   Famine stares us in the face,
   Parched are our fields, and dry,
   Death looks in at ev'ry door,
   For food our young ones cry.

   Thadi (Tari) Penoo veils her face,
   Propitiate me, she cries,
   Give to me of flesh and blood
   A willing sacrifice.
That where'er its blood is shed,
On land or field or hill,
There the gen'rous grain may spring,
So ye may eat your fill.

Then be glad, O buffalo!
Willing sacrifice to be,
Soon in Thadi's meadows green
Thou shalt browse eternally.'

(xi) As already mentioned, the two songs collected by Friend-Pereira in 1858 have been quoted previously. These are:
(a) the processional song for the Meriah, revised to accommodate the buffalo-substitute and to explain the situation to the Earth Goddess. It is to be found in Chapter II (d) p.p.159-160.
and (b) a traditional song recounting the arrival and activities of Campbell and Macpherson, the two most memorable of the East India Company's officers, sixty years previously. This is to be found in Chapter II (d) p.152.

(xii) A Legendary Account of the Origin of Kond Human Sacrifice

This account was quoted by Thurston in 1909 though collected some time previously by Mr. A.B. Jayaram Moodaliar, who was presumably a government officer from the plains. Elements in the story suggest that it refers to the eastern Konds. The second paragraph, for instance, concerning the cut finger, is very similar to the fragments still remembered by them. It must however have related to an area just outside the Goomsur boundary for the word Jani is used not only relating to former days but in the final song concerning the contemporary buffalo sacrifice. We know from Kogera's account (xiii) that in the Goomsur area the priest was called kuta gatanju, diviner-priest, by that time.

'Once upon a time the ground was all wet, and there were only two females on the earth, named Kasarodi and Tharthaboodi, each of whom was blessed with a single male child. The names of the children were Kasarodi and Singarodi. All these individuals sprang from the interior of the earth, together with two small plants called nangakoocha and bado-koocha, on which they depended for subsistence.

One day when Karaboodi was cutting these plants for cooking, she accidentally cut the little finger of her left hand, and the blood dropped on the ground. Instantly the wet soft earth on which it fell became dry and hard. The woman then cooked the food and gave some of it to her son, who asked her why it tasted so much sweeter than usual. She replied that she might have a dream that night and if so, would let him know.

Next morning the woman told him that if he would act on her advice, he would prosper in this world, that he was not to think of her as his mother, and was to cut away the flesh of her back, dig several holes in the ground bury the flesh, and cover the holes with stones. This her son did and the rest of the body was cremated. The wet soil dried up and became hard, and all kinds of animals and trees came into existence. A partridge scratched the ground with its feet, and rang (millet), maize, dhal (lentil), and rice sprung forth from it. The two brothers argued that as the sacrifice of their mother brought forth such abundance, they must sacrifice their brothers, sisters and others once a year in future. A god, by name Boora Panoo, came, with his wife and children, to Tharthaboodi and the two young men, to whom Boora Panoo's daughters were married. They begat children, who were equally divided between Boora Panoo the grandfather and their fathers. Tharthaboodi objected to this division on the grounds that Boora Panoo's son would stand in the relation of I'amoo to the children of Kasarodi and Singarodi; that, if the child were a female, when she got married, she would have to give a rupee to her I'amoo; and that if it were a male that Boora Panoo's daughter brought forth, the boy when he grew up would have to give the head of any animal he shot to Mamoo (Boora Panoo's son). Then Boora Panoo built a house, and Kasarodi and Singarodi built two houses. All lived happily for two years.

Then Karaboodi appeared in a dream and told Kasarodi and Singarodi that if they offered another victim, their lands would be very fertile and their cattle would flourish. In the absence of a suitable being, they sacrificed a monkey. Then Karaboodi appeared once more, and said that she was not pleased with the substitution of the monkey, and that a human being must be sacrificed. The two men, with their eight children, sought for a victim for twelve years. At the end of that time, they found a poor man who had a son four years old, and found him, his wife and child good food, clothing and shelter for a year. They then asked permission to sacrifice the son in return for their kindness, and the father gave his assent. The boy was fettered and handcuffed to prevent his running away, and taken good care of. Liquor was prepared from grains, and a bamboo with a flag hoisted on it, planted in the ground.

Next day a pig was sacrificed near this post, and a feast was held. It was proclaimed that the boy would be tied to a post on the following day and sacrificed on the third day. On the night previous
to the sacrifice, the Janni (priest) took a reed and poked it into the ground in several places. When it entered to a depth of about eight inches, it was believed that the god and the goddess Tadapanoo and Dasapanoo were there. Round the spot, seven pieces of wood were arranged lengthways and crossways, and an egg was placed in the centre of the structure.

The Khonds arrived from the various villages and indulged in drink. The boy was teased, and told he had been sold to them, that his sorrow would affect his parents only, and that he was to be sacrificed for the prosperity of the people.

He was conducted to the spot where the god and goddess had been found, tied with ropes and held fast by the Khonds. He was made to lie on his stomach on the wooden structure and held there. Pieces of flesh were removed from his back, arms and legs, and portions thereof buried at the Khonds place of worship. Portions were also set up near a well of drinking water, and placed around the villages. The remainder of the sacrificed corpse was cremated on a pyre set alight with fire produced by the friction of two pieces of wood.

On the following day a buffalo was sacrificed, and a feast partaken of. Next day the bamboo post was removed outside the village, and a fowl and eggs were offered to the deity. The following stanza is still recited by the Janni at the buffalo sacrifice, which has been substituted for that of a human victim:-

'O! come, male slave; come, female slave.
What do you say? What do you call out for?
You have been bought, ensnared by the Haddi (outcaste)
You have been called, ensnared by the Domba (Pan)
What can I do, even if you are my child?
You are sold for a pot of food.'

III Early Twentieth Century, a 4-year cycle
(in Goomsur)

(xiii) The Kedu as noted by Kogera Prodhan

This is the first account in which the word Kedu is used for the ritual sacrifice of the buffalo-substitute. The Kui word kedu means in broader terms a large celebration or festival. The word Heriah (as used by government officers and other non-Kui speaking people) or Irimi in the Kui language, is thus confined in meaning to the sacrifice of a human victim.

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1 Balance word (all = goddess)
This account from the recently discovered notebook of Kogera Prodhan, is the first to mention an extension of the rite from three years to four, i.e. through the inclusion of a preliminary ritual for 'The Showing of the Buffalo' and the addition of 'The Burial of the Secret Flesh' at the end. All available evidence indicates that his home was in the Mallikapori cluster of villages, roughly one mile from Goomsur-Udayagiri.
It takes 4 years to complete all the steps in a Khej:
1. A year to 'Show the Buffalo' & bury a piece of flesh (from another group's buffalo);
2. The next year the buffalo 'Falls' in the Meriah Grove where it was shown;
3. The third year they buy a buffalo, but they perform the Poya for 'The Strip of Flesh Safari';
4. One year later still they bury 'The Secret Flesh'.

In 4 years the entire Khej is brought to an end.
They perform a great number of Khej rituals in January.

WED 1

THE SHOWING OF THE BUFFALO' at the Meriah Grove.

Actions

Prep: All the men round the Meriah Grove collect money together to buy a buffalo. They write any householders (h.m.) among their number.
A 'show' the buffalo from his house.
All members of the selected household must bathe daily in their clothes, pouring the water over their heads, before they cook food.
Under no circumstances will they go to the house, nor cook, nor eat without bathing.
The priest must behave likewise.

Day of 'Showing the Buffalo':
The household washes all its clothing.
A Brahika - plasters the main room.
All the men fasten the buffalo in the byre-portion of that house.
They keep the buffalo in the water & bathe it. Then they take it back to the Meriah Grove.
Where they moisten it with turmeric to give it a particular colour round its threat.
Neither a little rice in their hands.
Washing the buffalo stands in the grove.
They scatter the rice while invoking various names:
'Producer' they 'Show the Buffalo' & light it up free.

The men put the buffalo into that household to sleep at nights but it belongs to the Meriah Grove. They do not break it to the plough; but priest & dwarf keeper go & sacrifice a pig & chicken at the Meriah.
They take a little of the pig's liver & chicken's liver, & a male buffalo, a male buffalo, a male buffalo, a male buffalo.
An invitation to the relatives (i.e. from other villages).
The priest returns to his home, but without washing their hands, the men seek out another buffalo, in V.2 another Khej village (further on in the ritual).
They then plough the other buffalo the next day with their oxen or 5 men, later that they fetch some flesh from the 'fallen' buffalo in the other Grove & bury it at their Meriah.
And they do not go back afterwards to attend the Poya (funeral celebration at that 2nd village). They do no more for the time being.

1. Invocation:

'Great Goddess! Land Goddess!
Goddess of hardship! Goddess of punishment!' Take this grain of rice! Take this bit of flour! A male buffalo, a male buffalo I am setting apart for you - Don't give us fever; don't give us malaria! Don't swear with your hand, don't play with your arm, on the labour of cultivating that we have done!
Don't destroy it! Don't! And from the cultivation we have done, the farming we have done. You gods, go! from the community, go! So let it come one here upon another! And let that be doubled! And let the food being cooked, the provender being cooked Exceed the cooking pot, exceed the vessels!

And from now onwards
Let all our farming go well, & all our children remain fit & well!"

Translated by R.H. Neo.
DAY 2

'THE FALL OF THE BUFFALO' at the Meriah Grove

TASK 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre.:</td>
<td>They buy a different male buffalo (the Dali Buffalo; see later)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In order to buy it, with drum beating, they dance the ritual dance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>For the burial of the (Keda) buffalo, they only dance at night.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They seek for tobacco, a steep tree in the earthy pot.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A steep rice-liquor in large earthy pot or cooking pot.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Then they go to call the priest from his house</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If they visit relatives (from the steeped tobacco).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They procure rice, chickens &amp; prepare all things needed for the ritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They all remain fasting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priests &amp; men go out &amp; cut the long bamboo pole</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They tie it to a rice-bail in new earthen cooking pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They 'ripin' the long bamboo pole.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At cockcrow at night, singing, they set up the Kenda &amp; the sacred post.</td>
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<tr>
<td>They still tie up the buffalo in the cowbyre.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A washing of the buffalo's skin, it is called the 'karda.'</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They hang the buffalo's skin on a bamboo pole</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The buffalo only dance the sacred post.</td>
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<tr>
<td>They 'ripin' the long bamboo pole.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dancing bells are set against the post at the foot of each village from which men will come carrying their striped flesh (rati) to get their strip of flesh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Then the sacred post is set up for a week or more the rice-liquor is procured from the Kenda;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They also scrape smooth the bamboo pole &amp; 'thatch' their kateri.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They have a live chicken from it &amp; tie a rope to the top of the pole.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They suspend dancing bells a small bells down the rope.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>The buffalo's skin is kept fasting before the evening time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Night</td>
<td>They build a little wooden pen beside the kanda.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Then they tie a cloth round the buffalo's throat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; take that buffalo &amp; the karta to the water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After bathing the buffalo &amp; washing the karta, they bring them home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They set up the karta again (on top of the long bamboo)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; make the buffalo enter its pen. There they tie it, still fasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Then come men &amp; assisting it with termite &amp; oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; feeding the 'thakaya' a rice-bail in new earthen cooking pot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| They | They still dance 
| | dancing bell to the water. |
| | Till they all fast till they 'ripen' it; |
| | Then they tie a cloth round the buffalo's throat |
| | & take that buffalo & the karta to the water. |
| | After bathing the buffalo & washing the karta, they bring them home. |
| | Then they set up the karta again (on top of the long bamboo) |
| | & make the buffalo enter its pen. There they tie it, still fasting. |
| | They then come men & assisting it with termite & oil |
| | & feeding the 'thakaya' a rice-bail in new earthen cooking pot. |
| | After they have all finished feeding that buffalo on cakes & cooked rice, they lead it there, with the drummers & karta, to the Meriah Grove. |
| | There they set up the karta & make invocation over the buffalo. |
| | Speaking like that, they pray at great length. |
| | Then they take the buffalo, the priests cut into its flank & from the buffalo's stand there, |
| | they cut out a little of its liver & a little of its long. |
| | Next, causing it to stretch out at full length on the ground, |
| | a piece only, the tail, one ear, a little skin from its lower lip, a little flesh from its shoulder-blade & a bit of its tongue. |
| | He cuts these when it is still alive & buries them all, along with some chaff, in the hole dug in the ground of the Meriah Grove. |
| | After they have cut off the flesh, they give a little to the men from other villages who carry it away. |
| | & the buffalo is drugged away (Pana/Govis) & thrown out. |
| | But they themselves (bands of V.) all come back here, carrying their karta which they set up as before, beside their kanda. |
| | After which (the priest) sacrifices a pig or chicken there. |
| | Then they cut rice & curry & tie down for the night. |
| | They offer the other buffalo, called the Dali Buffalo. |
| | They don't eat it with much good assanning. |
| | They give some to the people from other villages to eat too. |

307.
1. Song - Invocation:

"What did you come for a sight of, dear? What did you come to see, dear?"

Take these cakes baked in leaves: Take these roasted cakes!

As our younger sister's kin-in-law you came;

As our elder sister's kin-in-law you came;

Then you were sitting right up to the knee,

When you were sitting right up to the hollows behind the knee,

When you were eating wild leaf - vegetables,

When you were eating wild herb - vegetables,

Then you cut your ring finger,

Then you cut your forefinger.

The land became still! The country became still!

2. Invocation:

"Earth Goddess, Land Goddess, Goddess of the Heria Grove:

Goddess of punishment, Goddess of distress:

Take a whisker! Take a bristle! Take blood! Take gore!

Don't turn our cultivation into wild forest!

Don't turn our produce into thorn bushes!

Don't give us malaria, don't give us fever!

You gods pol. From the community, pol. So let it be!"

RITUAL FOR THE STRIP OF FLESH SATARI

A ceremony of the 'Fall of the buffalo' in another village (V.5),

in order to bring back some of the V.5 flesh.

AFTERNOON

DAY 1

On the day before V.3's sacrifice, V.1 bring in a long bamboo pole.

V.3's 'Fall' day: V.1 rod & smoothen their bamboo pole.

They cover this 'strip of flesh satari' with the same clothes used earlier on.

The 'satari' in their own buffalo's fall

Then they erect a post near the Heria Grove

& set up the 'strip of flesh satari' on it.

There, with bamboo & bamboo drums, they perform the Brah Dance.

Then, V.1 cut the satari off a little flesh

& give it to these V.1 men who have the 'strip of flesh satari'.

V.1 men take it to their prove & untie their 'Flesh Satari',

come home & set it up at their doors.

There the priest offers the flesh with the same invocation as before & buries it there with chaff.

That day they sacrifice a chicken & a pig,

then cook rice & the meat & have a feast.

The drums lead then they take the satari away alone the track.

There they sacrifice one chicken & set another free (chah)

They take the clothes off the satari & bring them back.

They themselves 'bathe right over their heads' & come home.

After eating rice & curry they are the priest, homeless & give him his rice maintenance fee.

DAY 2

"THE SECOND FLESH!

Then they hear of the coming! 'Fall of a Buffalo' in yet another place(V.4),

then say: "Let us go as their friends."

So they take liquor with them & go & drink it there.

After 'nothing right over their heads' they sacrifice one rice & off a little from their friends' (buffalo) flesh

& bring it home for burial at their own doors.

They sacrifice a pig & a chicken

then cook & eat rice & the meat.

They rise the whole amount of money they had promised

then go off with him to see him home.

DAY 3

"THE NEXT FLESH!

Every day sacrifice a little of their friends' (buffalo) flesh

& bring it home for burial at their own doors.

They sacrifice a pig & a chicken

then cook & eat rice & the meat.

They rise the whole amount of money they had promised

then go off with him to see him home.
IV Mid-Twentieth Century

Despite an interval of well over a century since the official cessation of the Meriah Sacrifice in Goomsur District, the continuing memory of the rite remains vividly with the Kond and Pan descendants of those Meriah-slaughtering clans. The following account was given to me by a Pan Christian school teacher. After seeking to dissociate himself from such customs through his scornful opening remarks, he rapidly became absorbed in his narrative. He does in fact provide the only account of the brief interval in which there was an attempt to replace human victims by bim, small brown monkeys, whose expressions and actions are so close to those of man, and who can be bathed, oiled and clothed like man and then decked with man's ornaments. I was told by some Konds that these monkeys, never very plentiful, became too scarce to be easily available for capture, hence the adoption of the government's suggested victim, the buffalo.

There was probably an additional reason for adopting this domesticated animal rather than a wild creature. One of the basic tenets of the Meriah/Kedu is that the victim must be purchased and the full price paid, so making it totally the property of the purchasing group. Thus though the monkey so much more closely resembled the human victim, it was freely available to its hunters, the men of sacrificing group, whereas the buffalo, like the human victim, was bought with a price. This perhaps underlies the narrator's statement below:

"Because the priests rose up, monkey burial now ceased and they introduced the ritual of buffalo burial."
"Folk of the olden days were an ignorant lot! They acted entirely on their belief in the things they habitually saw and knew, whatever these were.

One day a young wife was cutting vegetables for the pot. Just then, while she was chopping, her little finger received a cut and when blood came, she oozed it on to the ground. After that the earth yielded good cultivation. Moreover, observing it, men believed that without the shedding of human blood on the ground there will be no fertility. So from that day they sought a way of burying human beings. Sometimes they bought them by giving rupees to avaricious people; on other occasions they secretly abducted them then brought them up in their own homes. Just as one buys a new bullock or buffalo and yokes it with a domesticated beast until it settles down, in the same way they brought them home and took steps to prevent their running back secretly to their own homes: that is, the village folk kept them by putting enormously heavy anklets on their feet, both for the men and women victims. Thus they couldn't possibly run away.

When the time came for the 'burial', they made rice cakes and cooked rice then fed these to the men or woman and anointed them with castsor oil. Then they put the victim in the midst and while jangling the bird-clappers they continuously belted him and inflicted terrible suffering on him. Later, in the middle of the village a strong man lifted him or her on to his shoulders, carried him to the village boundary and then to the Meriah Grove. There they buried him, still alive.

In the groves where a male was buried this year a female would be buried two or three years later. Because of this habit of pounding on people with such force (to abduct them) the people of former times were quite unable to move about, visit other villages or go trading just as they might wish.

At this time government people came to the Kui Country and when they saw this practice they did their utmost to end it. But our fore-fathers did not heed their words and carried on as before. Then when a certain victim was buried in this manner, they arrested both the Kond headman and the Fans' headman and also the village elders (Konds) and brought them to Udayagiri. There beside the pond they put up posts, and before the eyes of everyone they hung them until they were dead. Only then did they stop this practice and replace it with monkey burial. (**Biru** - the small brown monkey; not the larger grey one from the foothills and plains).

**Burial of a Monkey Victim**

When it was the time for a monkey burial, the villagers and priest took rice and curry and went off to hunt for a monkey. For two or three days they hunted it, sleeping outside, then came back bringing their captive. When they reached the main track, they spread a cloth on the path and started begging.

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1 The word 'burial' here means the total act of stripping the victim of flesh (which is carried off to the various groves and damds) and the subsequent burial of his head and bones at the presiding village.
Then whoever goes along the path at that time throws money down. If they are women and haven't money they give rings, hair-pins and bead necklaces. After begging thus, when the day arrives for the monkey's burial they put flowers in its ears and nose (i.e. piercing them as for women's ornaments) and deck it with jewellery by putting on it the bead necklaces, hair-pins and rings which the women have given. Then after carrying it round the boundary and after the priest's ritual offering of it, they bury the monkey. Next day they perform the Mara funeral festival for the monkey (as though for a human Meriah). Then after that, when all the women and children go home, the men take a pig, slay it and cook rice and the flesh and have a meal. After it they perform the spider ritual (to rehabilitate the new 'ancestor' - see Appendix Vol. II: ritual for a normal death). Thus it takes a week to observe the monkey burial. Because the priests rose up, monkey burial has now ceased and they introduced the ritual of buffalo burial. So nowadays a buffalo is buried - though in some villages they still bury a monkey alternately with a buffalo; that is, once it will be a buffalo then four or five years later, a monkey - on the priest's advice."

1964 - Additional note from Anamchandra Naik of Konchageri village, also in Baro Muta.

"The place where a male or female had formerly been sacrificed is known as a barri (Meriah Grove). Afterwards the kinfolk of the buried person cultivate it in a variety of ways and eat the resulting crops. When these people fall ill after cultivating and eating from such places, they call in the priest to find out about their sickness and suffering. The priest says: "Long ago a person has been buried in this place. It has now touched you (plural). That is why you are receiving this suffering. To quieten it a monkey must be sacrificed."

When he says that, the people go and bring a monkey from the jungle and sacrifice it in the name of the Darni God. The kin group remains fasting at the time of sacrifice......(ritual as described above).... By this means the Barri God will keep quiet and will not trouble them with suffering.

After some time the government put an end to this sacrifice too. From then they (Konds) began to sacrifice buffalo and this sacrifice remains to this day."

(xv) The two eye-witness accounts by Professor Hermann Niggemeyer, which are to be found in the Appendix following this chapter, are of the Buffalo Sacrifice as performed every third year in all Kuttia Kond villages. The Kuttia are a sub-tribe of the Konds, dwelling in over 100 small villages, each with little more than 50 inhabitants, in the far south-west of the Balliguda Sub-division of Phulbani District just
east of its junction with Koraput and Kalahandi Districts. These 5,000 or so Kuttia, practising slash-and-burn cultivation of millet (no paddy) in their thickly jungled hills, have remained relatively undisturbed by outside influences and hold themselves aloof even from the mainstream of Konds. Their dialect is intelligible with difficulty to the rest of the Kui-speaking people and their myths and traditions, though overlapping in many respects, use different names for the same gods and goddesses and similar cult heroes. Their stockaded villages in the mid-twentieth century closely resemble Macpherson and Campbell's descriptions of Kond villages much further east 120 years before.

The darni stones are the ritual centre for the Kuttia as for all Konds, but whereas the latter heap their darni stones against the house-wall of the current darni keeper, the Kuttia never erect a darni now. Their sets of three darni stones were created for each village and placed there irrevocably "in the first days" by Niritanti-Kapantali, the bringer of Kuttia culture. She was the first person to emerge out of the earth and the creation of darnis and of ritual implements for human sacrifice (mala duo) were only a part of her many creative activities. Nevertheless, Professor Niggemeyer considers that she is regarded as the first and greatest cult hero rather than a true creator God.

There are two types of Kuttia darni: first, the village darnis, usually between two and five in number, marking the present and past sites of that particular village. When disease or ill-fortune indicates that a move is necessary, a Kuttia village rebuilds around one of these darnis a few hundred yards away; thus each village stays always within the territory marked by the sum of its darnis. Secondly, each village has several field-darnis. These are sacred spots of less ritual significance than the village darni: for instance, they can
never be the site of the 3-yearly Buffalo Sacrifice.

In the first of the two accounts, the Biha (i.e. Kuttia word for Kedu) Buffalo Sacrifice takes place in the typically Kuttia village of Batipadar with very few non-Kuttia present. A handful of Fans who regularly traded with these Kuttia came over from Belagad, the settlement of Gond and Fan 'outsiders'. Also from Belagad came a Gond representing the Patro, or Head of the Muta-area to which Batipadar belongs. Far more numerous were Kuttia guests from the neighbouring villages of Sodengi, Rangaparu, Gulimaska and Kumudi. Batipadar was in a close relationship of reciprocal rights and duties with these in order that each village in the group should become triennially a centre for the Buffalo Sacrifice and host to others in the group.

The situation in the second account is more complex. Though performed in the 'foreign' settlement of Belagad, the true celebrants are in fact the Kuttia of Burlabaru village a mile away; for though the Gonds and Fans cultivate the fields of Belagad, the earth itself belongs traditionally to the Kuttia Konds of Burlabaru. Believing as they do that the Earth Goddess and her demand for blood is supreme (buffalo blood only because human blood is no longer permitted), these Kuttia make it abundantly clear to all comers that the darni at Belagad, given to them by Nirantali in the first days, is present proof of their ownership of the earth there and of their responsibility to offer the required blood. Yet another darni in some Fan-worked fields half a mile away also signified ownership by the Kuttia of Burlabaru and their responsibility there. This dominant position of the Konds not only over Fans but even over the Gonds (Belagad being the most easterly settlement of Gonds) is firmly upheld in all matters relating to religion. In this second account the interplay of the Kuttia Jari (priest) with the Gond priest and Gond Patro (Muta Head) as well as
with the Pans brings out very clearly this unquestioned and unquestioning religious superiority of Konds to all their neighbours.

(xvi) Along with these accounts of the Kuttia Buffalo Sacrifice in the Appendix to this chapter is the writer's account of a typical Buffalo Sacrifice (Kedu) as celebrated between 1950 and 1966 in Mallikapori, the village in the Goomsur District where Kogera Prodhan had written his account fifty years previously. The celebration has been lengthened by the addition of yet another preliminary ritual: 'The Washing of the Buffalo's Feet'. This takes place 'exactly at the dry-rice harvest' - that is, anything between four months and one year after the 'Showing of the Buffalo' - and it precedes the first carrying away of a piece of flesh from a neighbouring village. Thus it all takes place before Year One of the old 3-year cycle. The whole ritual cannot now be completed in much under five years and may be protracted up to six or even seven years.

Thus both change and development have taken place in the Meriah/Kedu over the 130 years of its known history. The resulting differences will now be discussed in relation to the earlier purpose of the ritual in its 3-year cycle and with its human victims.

(a) Analysis and Discussion of the Meriah/Kedu

Study of the foregoing accounts of the Meriah/Kedu reveals a number of discrepancies which indicate underlying differences due both to the localities of the groups described and to the span of well over a century that encompasses them - for great changes have broken in on the Konds during that period. I believe that these differences are peripheral and that no real change of meaning has taken place, not
even among the Goomsur Konds. To test this assumption I have drawn up two hypothetical versions, one of the Meriah and the other of the Kedu, which include all the basic elements and actions in these rituals as practised c.1840 and 1960. (See Vol. II Appendix for the full script of these two models). Next I listed the important features under the headings Key Actions and Key Elements (see below) i.e. those actions and elements without which the Meriah or Kedu would not be correctly or fully performed. These Actions and Elements are compared by checking as follows: those which are the same in both Meriah and Kedu; those probably the same but impossible to check owing to insufficient detail in early accounts; those where differences are due to non-Kond pressures from the administration; and those where there are apparent discrepancies. Ten such discrepancies emerge. Each is briefly discussed and found to provide no real change in the Konds' basic purpose in the ritual. Finally some observations are made which arise particularly from the Kuttia Kond celebration and from Kogera Prodhan's account, neither of which has been translated into English previously.

**KEY to the Meriah Summary following:**

- ✓ = Same in both Meriah and Kedu.
- ? ✓ = Probably the same; no early account recorded.
- √ = Differences due to non-Kond pressures - buffalo in place of human victim.
- × = Discrepancy.
A TYPICAL MERIAH IN THE GOOMSUR DISTRICT as celebrated by V.1

**KEY ACTIONS**

### YEAR 1 - BRINGING A PIECE OF FLESH

- V.1 hears of forthcoming sac. in V.2
- Selects representative flesh-bringers with Maliko (headman) as leader
- Pays full price for a human victim
- Drumming to inform Earth Goddess
- Make satari, with pig sacrifice
- Reps. perform Bringa ritual
- Reps. go to celebrate with V.2 & bring away a strip of flesh; while V.2 women throw stones & clods.
- At V.1, priest divides flesh:
  - \( \frac{1}{3} \) for Tari at darni
  - \( \frac{2}{3} \) divided between each household head for his family fields
- Wild battle in V.1 destroying their lads' dormitory
- Each buries flesh in hole with his back turned.
- Normal 3-day mourning taboos kept.
- Pohu to destroy satari.
- All flesh-bringers attend funeral feast at V.2

### YEAR 2 - THE MERIAH SACRIFICE AT V.1

- V.1 notifies associated villages.
- Buys Duli buffalo & a 3rd buffalo for Feast.
- Victim treated with great kindness
- Victim's hair shaved 12 days before sacrifice.
- Felling & carving of Meriah stake.
- Cutting of other required stakes.
- V.1 make their new satari

**KEY ELEMENTS**

- Human victim
- Drumming
- Satari: red & white cloths, strips of pig-flesh, peacock feathers, all on bamboo pole.
- Strip of V.2's flesh
- Mock battle
- Battle within V.1
- Destruction of lads' dormitory
- Ritual mourning
- Destruction of satari
- Funeral feast
- Human victim 'Voluntary' by intoxication.
- Duli buffalo.
- Carved & fluted Meriah stake.
- Satari: red & white cloths, strips of pig-flesh, peacock feathers, all on bamboo pole.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ACTIONS</th>
<th>KEY ELEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome reps from associated villages.</td>
<td>Jakeri stones as worship centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1st day &amp; night) Tari-inspired revelry round victim; impious to resist</td>
<td>(+ bronze 'peacock')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>her. (2nd morn.) Procession round V.1, with drums, horns &amp; dancing;</td>
<td>Tari-inspired revelry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>then to grove, singing Meriah Song.</td>
<td>Procession round V.1 boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash victim &amp; dress in new cloth;</td>
<td>Meriah Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anoint with oil- &amp; turmeric paste;</td>
<td>Meriah grove as place of sac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toomba garlands victim.</td>
<td>Purification of victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nijin Taja sub-ceremony Feed with specially prepared 'cakes' (2nd night)</td>
<td>New cloth for victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground probed for 'unstable' chink (Meriah Day)</td>
<td>Cooked oil- &amp; turmeric paste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endearments crooned Singing of Meriah Song while jerking bird-clappers;</td>
<td>Toomba (Kond boy under 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wild-buffalo horns blown Breaking of victim's limbs.</td>
<td>'Cakes' (festival food)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recital of legends re Earth Goddess Invocations to her</td>
<td>'Unstable' ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exculpatory dialogue by headman, priest &amp; victim's representative. Insertion of victim in cleft branch (or other form of holding victim). Priest slightly wounds victim. All men leap in &amp; strip off flesh Priest rushes to bury flesh at V.1 danni Buries it with back turned. Reps. of V.3, 4, 5, etc. rush off with flesh. (Women of) V.1 pelt them with clods &amp; stones. Duli buffalo paid to provider of victim. Victim's head &amp; intestines guarded.</td>
<td>Meriah Song Bird/Beast clappers of wood/clay Wild-buffalo horns 'Voluntary' victim Exculpatory dialogue Strips of human flesh Holes in ground for burial of flesh Mock battle Duli buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY ACTIONS</td>
<td>KEY ELEMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ (Next morn.) Priest &amp; all the headmen burn all remains, along with a goat, on a funeral pyre; scatter the ashes over V.1 fields or paste them on houses &amp; granaries. 3 days' mourning taboos observed.</td>
<td>✔️ Funeral observances &amp; normal ritual mourning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ All participants reassemble for normal 4th day feast; Priest invokes Earth Goddess &amp; all deities, then sacrifices the 3rd buffalo. All join in feast. Inedible remains left for new Meriah spirit.</td>
<td>✗ 3rd buffalo for feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Poha to destroy satari</td>
<td>✔️ Feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEAR 3 - THE VALKA OFFERING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ (1 year later) Make Valka satari (?) V.1 send flesh-bringers to an associated village's Meriah sacrifice. Priest offers &amp; buries it at darni with invocation to Earth Goddess to recognise the inter-village reciprocity &amp; accept this flesh as concluding the ritual; while praying he sacrifices a pig. V.1 feast</td>
<td>✔️ (?) Valka satari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ (? ) Poha to destroy Valka satari</td>
<td>✗ Valka flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️猪. Feast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☮️猪. Feast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A TYPICAL KEDU IN THE GOOMSUR DISTRICT as celebrated by V.1

KEY ACTIONS

YEAR 1 - THE SHOWING OF THE BUFFALO

Patient's kin select the day
Notify associated villages
Buy poor grade buffalo-victim
Summon priest 'best able to trample the Earth Goddess'.
Priest selects new darni keeper (dk)
Drumming for one month, dancing, drinking.
Priest & d.k. perform gruhka & tekinga maspa
Selection & prep. of 3 stakes
Erection of stakes at the 3 darnis
Priest & dk put on new cloths
Tie new cloth round buffalo's neck
Anoint buffalo with turmeric paste
Liquor constantly fed to buffalo
Priest rushes from darni to Meriah grove
Priest probes ground for 'unstable' spot,
Priest & dk. did hole at that spot,
offer & put eggs & rice in hole, cover & put large stone on top (as mark)
Pig sacrificed for Shared Meal
Drunken buffalo freed for next year.

YEAR 2(i) - WASHING THE BUFFALO'S FEET

Drumming for 1 month
Summon same priest
(Previous posts used)
Priest & dk. put on new cloths
Put new cloth round buffalo's neck
& tie thread necklace round buffalo's neck
Anoint buffalo with turmeric paste
Priest & dk. bury egg at foot of all posts

KEY ELEMENTS

Poor grade buffalo
Drumming + 'oboe'
Gruhka & tekinga maspa
Buffalo kept drunk
Eyelet holes made near top of each stake.
Victim's new cloth
Oil & turmeric paste
Egg in each eyelet hole

'Unstable' ground in grove
Hole made there
Eggs & rice offered there
Buffalo free but 'belongs to the Meriah grove'.

Buffalo's new cloth
" thread necklace
Turmeric paste
Egg at foot of darni posts
### Key Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2 (21)</th>
<th><strong>Bringing a Piece of Flesh</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V.1 is notified of V.2's approaching sacrificial event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drumming for 1 month to tell Earth Goddess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V.1's peoples perform gruhka while invoking the Earth Goddess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V.1's priests bathe and wash their satari.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priest offers eggs &amp; rice at Three times for each satari. All dance with satari, carrying tangi or sack-knife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priest's wife &amp; friends take turmeric paste for cakes, rice with lentil relish. Desirable food (to human tastes) cooked for victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priest &amp; dk. bury flesh in Meriah grove while invoking the Earth Goddess.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(chicken)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strip of V.2's flesh</td>
<td>Rice, pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turmeric paste for victim</td>
<td>Desirable food (to human tastes) cooked for victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangi or sack-knife</td>
<td>Brass pot (prev. left)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three times three times</td>
<td>Meriah Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drumming + 'ohoe'</td>
<td>(chicken)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes
- Drive dressed & cleansed & back to upper & lower darni; priest quickly offers eggs, rice & pig (sometimes + chicken) to Bura God. Shared meal of the flesh.
KEY ACTIONS

Priest sacrifices a pig for
Shared Meal
Poha chicken offered on path
Red & white cloths removed from
satari
Satari & pole chopped to bits

YEAR 3 - THE FALL OF THE
BUFFALO in V.1

V.1 notify associated villages
1 month's drumming
Liquor licence, & distilling &
drinking
Buy the 'Dili' buffalo (larger)
Receive reps. of other villages
coming to make peace pacts.
Ex-patient's household perform
gruhka & tekinga maspa.
Bamboo selected & cut for satari
pole
All fast
Constant drinking shared with
buffalo
Sub-sacs. for minor feast each
evening.
Selection & felling of tree for
stakes, two largest carved
One carved stake erected at
darni
One carved stake erected in
Meriah grove
Lesser ones back & front of
dk's house,
top & bottom of village, etc.
Pen built at darni for buffalo
Wooden bird-clappers made.

Make satari last, cover with red
& white cloths & fix to tip of
smooth bamboo
Wash buffalo, satari & pole at
spring
Back at darni, priest offers eggs
& cock &
Ties (living) cock beneath satari
Wheel
Priest sacs pig, ties entrails to
long rope
Satari pole & rope bound to darni
stake

KEY ELEMENTS

Pig
Chicken sacrifice &
scape-chick?
Destroyal of satari
Keeping of red & white
cloths for next stage.

Large 'Dili' buffalo
Peace pacts
Gruhka & tekinga maspa
Victim kept drunk
Eating only after dark
2 tall carved stakes
6 or 7 smaller ones

Buffalo pen (protection
v. pollution from out¬
siders)
Bird-clappers (pea¬
cocks)
Satari made last
Red & white cloths

Living cock suspended
(? in lieu of peacock
feathers)
Rope with bells &
entrails
Satari raised high
Buffalo fasts
**KEY ACTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kedu Eve men feast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedu Day total fast; all drink (inc.women)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire V.1 crowd round pen; bait buffalo, pull bell-rope &amp; jerk bird-clappers, all singing Meriah Song continuously from daybreak until sac.(aft.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest offers eggs &amp; rice at lower &amp; upper darni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.1 men hold conference to insist that:-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no quarrels occur among selves &amp; esp.not with visiting flesh-takers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.1 dk's wife anoints buffalo in pen &amp; feeds it with tasty food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.1 priest, dk. &amp; some men also in pen offer eggs &amp; rice at darni.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting flesh-takers arrive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their dk.'s wives anoint &amp; feed buffalo in turn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>then remain in pen baiting buffalo jerking bell-rope, clappers &amp; singing Meriah Song.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procession with drums, satari, victim &amp; entire crowd go to upper &amp; lower darni 3 times over &amp; offer eggs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>then to Meriah grove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebind satari to stake there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest &amp; dk. dig hole at foot of stake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest invokes Bura God &amp; makes offering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drumming doubles in tempo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest plunges snc.knife into ribs &amp; cuts out portion of liver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drops it into hole, invoking Earth Goddess to drink blood; then cuts &amp; adds the other parts: Rapidly slashes flesh from living victim &amp; gives it to visiting flesh-takers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They drop it in their brass pots, stop it up with leaves &amp; rush away while V.1 women stone them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest &amp; dk. fill up hole.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All V.1 return to their darni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest offers pig &amp; chicken for eve.meal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY ELEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo fasts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriah Song</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential nature of peace pacts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil &amp; turmeric paste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final tasty meal for victim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs &amp; rice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg offerings (3 x 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriah Grove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo Grove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion of liver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoof, ear, horn, tail, tip of tongue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strips of flesh for other villages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mock quarrel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY ACTIONS

(Next day)
Priest sacrifices the 'Duli' buffalo
Every household receives a share
All reps. from other villages attend
Even Pans & Gahis receive meat
(Following day)
Priest unties satari from the stake
All V.1 take it to lower & upper darni
Priest performs Bitter Water ritual
Priest & men perform Poha sub-ceremony to destroy satari
but retain red & white cloths

YEAR 4 - VALKA (Strip of Flesh) SATARI

Another associated village (V.4) announces the forthcoming Fall of its buffalo
V.1 sac. a pig & make new satari (as previously)
Cover it with former red & white cloths
Set it up on former stake at darni
V.1 reps. bring flesh from V.4's sacrifice
V.1 priest offers it at darni
& buries it with same invocation as before.
V.1 priest sacs. pig & chicken for feast.
Poha to dispose of satari
Red & white cloths kept for future use.

YEAR 5 - THE SECRET (or Stolen) FLESH

V.1 hear of forthcoming 'Fall' in V.5
V.1 do not make satari but select men to "go as friends" to V.5 taking liquor to drink there on Kedu morn.
After V.5's sac. when official flesh-bearers leave for own villages,

KEY ELEMENTS

'Duli' buffalo (so called)

'Bitter Water' sub-ceremony
Poha sub-ceremony & destroying of satari
Red & white cloths kept

Pig sac.
New satari
Prev. red & white cloths

Strip of flesh from V.4

Pig & chicken sac.
Satari destroyed
Red & white cloths kept

Visit as 'friends'
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ACTIONS</th>
<th>KEY ELEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cont'd</td>
<td>Secret strip of flesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.1 men secretly slash off a little flesh</td>
<td>Pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.1 priest buries it at darni.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.1 priest slays pig for feast.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.1 pay final instalment to priest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I shall now comment on the points of apparent discrepancy that are disclosed by the foregoing comparison of the Meriah and Kedu rituals in the Goomsur District, i.e., discrepancies additional to the practical adaptations made necessary by the change from a human to a buffalo victim, and the recent requirements that a government licence be obtained for distilling liquor:

1. In the Kedu the 3-year Meriah cycle has been lengthened by the addition of two preliminary stages, the Showing of the Buffalo and the Washing of the Buffalo's Feet, and one concluding stage, the Secret Flesh. Thus full ritual observance of the Kedu now occupies approximately 5 years.

2. The groups of Meriah flesh-bringers who visit associated villages to carry out their ritual duties were each led by their Maliko (headman) but are now led by their dami keeper.

3. These flesh-bringing groups now spend a shorter time in the sacrificing village. Arriving about noon on the day of sacrifice, they leave (with their flesh) about mid-afternoon. Previously they were guests of the sacrificing village for the full 3-day climactic period. Also they do not perform the Bringa sub-ceremony before setting out from their own village.

4. In the Meriah, flesh-bringers buried half their portion of flesh at their Jakari (dami) and divided the other half among household-heads' fields. In the Kedu the flesh is offered at the dami and buried either there or at the Meriah grove.

5. Flesh-bringers do not follow this with a wild battle amongst themselves within their own villages, neither beside their dami nor continued in the destruction of their lads' dormitory as was the case in the Meriah.

6. The Toomba, an unpolluted boy-child, no longer garlands the victim on the morning of the sacrificial day. The dami-keeper does this now.

7. In the Meriah the whole group shouldered their tangis and processed with drums and dancing round the full extent of the village (i.e., from top to bottom within the stockade). In the present Kedu they process three times to the upper and lower dami, where the priest offers an egg and rice each time.

8. Two important and lengthy items immediately before the human sacrifice are now omitted. These were:
   (a) recital of the legends concerning the Earth Goddess and her requirements;
   (b) the exculpatory dialogue between the headman and the priest with the 'victim'-representative.
A 'flesh-taker' ready with knife and pot attends Mallikapori Kedu. Note Fan musician.
9. All normal mourning taboos were observed in all the associated villages after the death of the Keriah victim, and all flesh-bringers went back to attend the Mara, 3rd day funeral feast. This is reduced to a token mourning period in the Kedu ritual with the Mara feast on the day following the sacrifice.

10. The Duli buffalo was given to the Man procurer of the late victim on the day following the Keriah sacrifice in token of the satisfactory completion of the transaction. A third buffalo bought earlier, was then slain for the feast. In the Kedu the name Duli remains for the second buffalo purchased by the sacrificing village but this same one is eaten at the feast.

Some of the ten discrepancies listed above would seem to indicate that a radical change took place in Kond philosophy after the enforced replacement of human victims by buffaloes. I suggest that this is not so, and that the Kond social process rested on the same values and norms although certain practical adaptations in ritual were made to meet outside pressures and to adjust the tribe to certain resulting changes - especially the Goomsur District to its new acknowledgment of Jura God's supremacy over the Earth Goddess. These new imperatives and prohibitions were just as binding on the worshipping group for they were indeed woven into an unchanged framework. In fact, the apparent discrepancies may be seen as further proof that no real change took place. Thus:

1. A 3-year Keriah cycle was observed in Goomsur District as elsewhere before that area made its united decision relegating the Earth Goddess to second place and decreeing that her human 'food' could therefore be stopped with impunity. The religious reason for the ritual was no longer of first importance. The social need for the ritual - that of binding the Konds together as a whole people, beyond even their strong clan loyalties - had however been increased by the traumatic break-in of authoritative strangers, both white and 'foreign' - Indian. Thus a buffalo-replacement could be accepted on Tari's behalf without undue tension but the interweaving of participating villages beyond the clan must become even more intricate and binding. I suggest that the additional stages of ritual do just that and without much extra expense!

By Koger Pradhan's time (1910) the 3-year pattern had lengthened into four through the addition of a preliminary ritual to 'Show (or consecrate) The Buffalo' a few months before the burial of a piece of flesh from another village's victim began the old cycle; and also, to conclude the entire ritual, an officially unofficial visit to bring away and bury 'The Secret Flesh' from yet another sacrificing village.
The fact that these ritually interlocking villages were not necessarily tied by clan relationship or close voluntary association is underlined by the need for peace-pact exchange visits beforehand.

By another half-century had passed (1950-66) the 'showing of the Buffalo' had become of sufficient importance to stand alone for the first year of the cycle and a 2nd year 'Washing of the Buffalo's Feet' took its place a few months before 'The Bringing of the Flesh' (which had marked the beginning of the old Meriah ritual). In this way Kond interdependence was visibly and actively strengthened by the more complicated social involvement of the ritual after it was no longer of first importance as 'food' for the Earth Goddess. By the same argument, in the western region among the Kuttia Konds where the Earth Goddess remained paramount and outside interference was minimal, the 3-year cycle is still retained.

2. When the office of darni-keeper arose in Goomsur after Bura-worship and the abandonment of human sacrifice made the Jani's office redundant, the darni-keeper took over the lay responsibilities in ritual matters which had formerly been carried out by the baliikko (headman). Again in the Kuttia area where the Earth Goddess must still be considered as hungering for the human food, she can no longer have, there is no office of darni-keeper and the headman (there called Mabhi) still continues to play the lay leader's part in rituals celebrated by the Jani.

3. The reduction from 3 days and nights to a half-day visit by the various groups of flesh-bringers as guests of the sacrificing village may well be a matter of practical economy in the new pattern of increasing numbers involved. Koger Prodhan's account again shows a change half way between the two: Flesh-bringer parties arrive the evening before the sacrifice and the host-village has to 'keep on giving them boiled rice and meat curry to eat'. Each visiting group's essential action in anointing and feeding the buffalo-victim with choice human-style food remains the mark of their village's identification with the major ritual. From that point they are all united as one sacrificing throng whatever the timing.

The Bringa ritual would become unnecessary when the flesh-bringers no longer spent a night away from home, for its purpose had been to enlist the Earth Goddess's protection against any invaders, human, animal or of the spirit-world, who might attack while the menfolk were inevitably absent on her affairs for three nights, leaving their women, children, cattle and possessions unguarded. These security needs would be an added incentive to the economic reasons for reducing this period.

4. The central darni and the Meriah grove were equally important worship centres for the Earth Goddess. Local choice now operates as to which becomes the burial place for the strip of flesh brought by the flesh-bringers from the Kedu of other villages. Invariably it is first offered at the darni by the local priest, who may even cook it as a bitali portion. The increased use of the darni in the Goomsur area for worship offered to Bura God has led many villages there to bury their flesh in the grove now after offering it at the darni, for the old Meriah groves remain utterly the property of the Earth Goddess and the spirits of her former human victims.
5. Though the women of the celebrating village still hurl clods and stones at the 'flesh-takers' rushing away to their own villages, the later battle among these flesh-bringers within their own village has apparently been discontinued, as has its destructive continuation at their boys' dormitory. The potency of the victim's flesh at this point seems not only to have been connected with fertility and virility but perhaps with success and strength in warfare too. The instantaneous shout of triumph and the battles used to break out the moment the human flesh had been 'fed' to the Earth - the high moment of communion. Possibly the lads' dormitory here symbolises the potency of the coming generation both as future householders and warriors. This can only be surmised. The destruction of the lads' sleeping quarters might then sanction their freedom to go off to the girls' dormitories in appropriate villages (still under the temporary peace pact); and in any event, as soon as the 'mourning period for the victim's death was completed, the entire district would turn to feasting, drumming and dancing and a general slackening of the normal pattern of behaviour. The cessation of warfare as a Kond way of life, which followed under the East India Company's rule soon after these accounts were written, would end the need for the passing on of battle-potency.

6. This duty now falls to the 'new' office of daundi-keeper who, though a married adult, observes certain purity rules at all times along with fasting and sexual abstinence for a prescribed period before officiating at rituals.

7. In former times every village was contained inside its own stockade for protection. The procession would follow the slight curve of the house-fronts to top and lower entrances to the village. Most stockades in Goomsur have now been replaced simply by the upper and lower daundi stones, which are believed to have much the same protective function. Kedu processions (like other Kond ritual processions) therefore nowadays go to make offerings at those two dornies, symbolic of the invisible enclosure of the village.

8. (a) The recital of legends concerning the Earth Goddess and the origin of the Meriah is no longer a preliminary to the Kedu in Goomsur District, though abbreviated forms remain in the memories of the people and in the Meriah song. As would be expected, the case is different where the Earth Goddess is still supreme deity: e.g. the Kuttia Konds in the west retain the practice and it was also recorded in the northern area (Bard District).

   (b) The dialogue between headman (who had nurtured the victim), priest (who would make the token cut signalling his death) and the substitute-'victim' (seeking to vindicate himself) seems to have been a masterly attempt by the Konds to explain away their obvious feeling of guilt in taking human life when the victim had been so completely accepted into village life and family hospitality. This no longer applied when the victim was a buffalo yet the Kuttia Konds show how completely the buffalo becomes the human substitute by their songs to it, which are literally a buffalo-parallog to the rhetorical questions previously hurled at the human victim;
'Why do you cry?  
You may cry but you will not escape! 
We are sacrificing you like a human being,  
like a beloved wife and mother.  
Thus you are their substitute.  
You are like a silver and golden mother!'  

And even the expiatory parallel regarding the purchase of a human being:  
'Tyour master sold you.  
Let the sin from your anger lie on your master and not on us!'  

Again the difference is clear between the Goomsur Konds and those who  
still upheld the Earth Goddess: the latter are concerned to excuse  
their guilt now in not being able to provide her with human flesh and  
blood. Hence both the Kuttia Konds and those of the northern (Boad)  
area remind her in a special chant of the coming of the East India  
Company and the work of Macpherson and Campbell ("Mokadello Sahib" and  
"Klabon Sahib" as they were called in the north, or "Mukmol Sahib"  
and "Kemel Sahib" among the Kuttia) in abolishing human sacrifice:  
for on these alone should she lay the blame!  

9. Because the victim is no longer a human being and so does not  
become divine and in a sense 'related' after death (i.e. with the ability  
to make reprisals if slighted), it is entirely consistent with the Konds'  
pragmatic approach that the traditional mourning period of three days  
should be reduced to a mere token, though with its closing funeral  
feast still retained to fulfil the ritual requirement of a shared meal  
with all Kond participants and the spirit world.  

10. For the same reason the Duli buffalo retains its name, meaning  
the completion or final satisfaction in the transaction with the Pan  
procurer of a human victim. In the Kedu a so-called Duli buffalo was  
bought at the beginning just as any other buffalo may be bought, so  
the ever-practical Konds see no reason to buy yet a third buffalo for  
the feast; they slaughter the Duli instead. As the Duli exchange  
always took place on the day following the human victim's death, this  
becomes an additional reason why the 'funeral' feast is brought forward  

to that day instead of the normal third day in times of full mourning.  
This eating of the Duli buffalo instead of a third one was evidently  
common practice by Kogera Prodhan's time.  

Thus I believe that all these apparent discrepancies have their  
good and proper reasons within the continuing Kedu celebration, and that  
they do not change the underlying beliefs on which the ritual of human  
sacrifice was earlier founded.  

Observations from the Kuttia Kond Celebration of the Biha, 1955.  
The Kuttia Konds' desire to remain detached even from other Konds  
has resulted in their retaining certain customs and beliefs in closely  
traditional form over the years. This does not mean necessarily that
they represent original Kond belief and practice, for the Kuttia were probably but one people among a number of peoples who grew together to become the Kui lohu or Kond people. Moreover the religion of the Kuttia will have changed and developed over the centuries as any living religion must do, however deeply traditional the main tenets of its faith. Nevertheless, the fact that the Earth Goddess is still supreme in Kuttia belief, with Dura God relegated to a minor role, merits a closer look at their manner of celebrating the Buffalo Sacrifice; for all other accounts in recent years have been confined to the Konds of the Goomsur area, now devoted to Dura God even though still feeling compelled to stretch their 'new' belief sufficiently to offer this particular sacrifice to the Earth Goddess.

The following observations are therefore made from points in the Kuttia Kond Biha that either differ from or illuminate parallel stages in the Kedu of the eastern Konds.

The mala dupa, Kuttia objects used in human sacrifice, still play an important and sacred part in the Biha. The mala dupa retained at Batipadar were an old ritual axe, chain and leg-shackles; in Belagad, a ritual axe, rope, and — doubtless due to Gond involvement — a simple bronze cruse. The Kuttia believe these to date back to their earliest folk-hero, the woman Nirantali-Kapantali (the equivalent of Amali-Baeli in Goomsur) who came out of the earth and then brought these ritual objects out of the earth after her. They were found to be 'weeping' and sacrifice had therefore to be made to satisfy them. Now kept under the guardianship of the headman's family, they still 'weep' for the sacrifice to take place — but only, it seems, at the appropriate times. Similar articles were in use by other Kond groups of the Balliguda District, immediately east of the Kuttia, when the former became Christians in the late 1950's.
As former media of the regular offerings of human flesh to their parent Earth, the *mala dupa* are still considered to have power as channels of communication through which the morsel of buffalo flesh can not only be conveyed to the Earth but be enlarged en route through their good offices.

The Kuttia give two reasons for performing the Bhā: first, "Our ritual axes weep" in longing for the Bhā victim to be given as food to the Earth Goddess, who owns and sponsors these *mala dupa*. Secondly, the Jani and headman admit to the Earth Goddess their responsibility as a village for polluting her earth by using it for cultivation (despite their belief that she originally taught them how to cultivate and provided them with the necessary implements): "We cultivated your earth— we made it dirty! Take this buffalo and eat it!"

She is however to consider this buffalo as being a human victim, for immediately before the sacrifice they say: "In olden times we offered you a Meri, and now again we offer you a Meri!"

As is the common practice among Konds elsewhere, all the deities were invited to attend from the very beginning of the festival, but just before the victim's death, the 'gods from all directions' were reminded that their role was to be witnesses to the fact that the Kuttia had indeed made sacrifice to feed the Earth Goddess and that she was the prime object of the ritual. This is very much in line with Macpherson's reports of eastern Kond rituals in 1835-45, where all the most important of the other gods were requested to act as witnesses to the right performance of certain rituals but to remember to stand back when the sacrifice was actually offered, for it was not primarily for them.

The selection and preparation of the sacrificial stake in every Buffalo Sacrifice is of the utmost importance to all Konds. The
following Kuttia account is typical of other areas too, though with
freedom for slight local variations:

(a) Drummers lead the headman and strong young men to the jungle and
keep up their drumming continuously except during the prayer;
it announces to the divinities and neighbours what is taking place.
(b) The tree selected must very straight and perfect, must stand free
and fall free; it must not harbour creepers, dead branches, birds,
animals nor snakes.
(c) After its selection the headman throws a propitiatory handful of
rice at it and declares their intention of felling it for sacri-
ifice. As representative of the community he thus prevents repri-
sals from the local jungle and hill-spirits in a manner that the
Jani could not do, if he comes from another village.
(d) His three knocks on the tree-trunk followed by acute listening
are to test whether the Earth Goddess confirms their choice;
the stirrings of any wild creature would indicate the goddess' 
displeasure.
(e) After felling, the length of the stake is cut with the greatest
precision to equal the previous Kerial stake in that village.
(f) Relays of strong young men in pairs run with the heavy stake to
the village, exchanging their burden several times without pausing.
(g) The final pair circle the Kori twice and lay the stake, not
touching the earth, on a protective leafy bough or bamboo mat
very close on the eastern side of the last stake.
(h) The priest ensures by rubbing it and smelling his hands that no
corpses has been cremated or buried near it. Presumably this
would have been the corpse of a victim of tiger-kill, the most
feared form of death, which pollutes the whole community although
the corpse is cremated at its place of death in the jungle.
(See Chapter IV (c))
(i) One or more men shape and carve the stake carefully, working for
hours with axe and adze.
(j) They carve the uppermost quarter-length into 'wild buffalo-horns'
and the middle two quarters with two rings of zigzags or lozenges
or whatever is the traditional pattern for that village. A
knife may only be used for the intricate parts. Constant checks
are made to ensure an exact replica of the previous stake.
This form of horned stake is not found in the east, though each
village has its own pattern of zigzags and lozenges.
(k) Meanwhile the headman keeps the Earth Goddess informed through
prayer and asks for freedom from all troubles.
(l) The weeds had already been cleared from the foot of the old
stake 'so that the door of the earth may open, and so that no
termites might eat it' (the new stake).
(m) The hole was dug, measured to the exact diameter of the stake and
exactly quarter of its length in depth. This hole was publicly
examined to prove that no previous skulls were there; i.e. that
the spot had not been 'treated' previously.
(n) So close was the Earth Goddess that the headman in trance spoke
authoritatively as her; of pleasure in the choice of place, and
intent to bless them with abundance and good health.
(o) Only then was the stake set in place, cleansed with water and
painted with turmeric. The Kuttia do not appear to have used the
bronze emblems that are to be found further east. From the
records of the East India Company, the bronze peacocks (Goomsur)
or bulls (Boad) were then buried at the foot of the stake. This custom apparently continued after buffalo were substituted.

There is no mention in the early accounts of human sacrifice regarding peace-pacts between the flesh-bringing groups and the sacrificing village. This may or may not have taken place a few days before the sacrifice. Nor is it mentioned in the Kuttia Biha accounts which so closely reflect the earlier ritual; but the same principle can be seen to underlie the Batipadar priest's prayer at the darni immediately the drummed approach of a group of flesh-bringers is heard: "Our friends come to take part.... They do not mean to injure you... Let no quarrels arise! Let no axe-blows fall!" and at once good food is cooked and given to the guests, thus sealing the friendly aspect of their visit. In Goomsur since the flesh-bringers' visiting period has been shortened to a few hours on the (fasting) sacrificial day instead of their arriving two days previously, there is no shared meal until after they have taken the flesh home and returned the following day. Thus there would be much greater need of a strong peace-pact made in advance, before drink and excitement caused either side to forget the Earth Goddess' 'rule' that her festival must be carried through without quarrels.

The reported dialogue between Kuttia priest and Gond priest indicates that sambur (large deer) were probably the accepted victims for large-animal sacrifice where now the domestic buffalo is used. Wild buffalo would probably be too dangerous to catch unless killed immediately and the domesticated buffalo probably became available in the hills only after the coming of paddy-cultivation three or four centuries ago - and then not directly to the Kuttia, though Pans could obtain them from Oriya settlers or through eastern Fans.

There are several differences regarding the treatment of the flesh
of the buffalo. After the sacrifice a young man previously selected ran with the victim's head on his shoulder visiting every house in the village, and then placed it ceremonially beside the *darni* stones. This was formerly their practice with the human head, after which it must have been buried at the foot of the stake. There is no record of this house-to-house visit in the early Goomsur records, but always it is guarded with great care by senior members until safely disposed of, either by burial or cremation. Meanwhile the normal *bilitul* portion of liver was cooked by the *Jamš* in the Kuttia celebration and offered with the uncooked flesh at the *darni*. At this point the Kuttia seem to be treating the buffalo very much more as a normal sacrificial offering and not as a human sacrifice. The eastern Konds on the other hand, do not appear to cook the liver but still offer only the raw flesh. Also on the evening of the sacrifice, the Kuttia feast on the remaining flesh of the sacrificed buffalo. There is no account of what happened in human *meria* days, but no suggestion of cannibalism. The eastern Konds do not eat the buffalo-victim's remains, and never used to leave any flesh on the human victim's bones. The present Kuttia record does not state whether any period of mourning took place, but on the day following the sacrifice the buffalo flesh was distributed to visiting friends from other villages - as in a funeral feast. As elsewhere, Fans and Gahis must not touch the stake nor the victim until it is dead. They are nevertheless given a proper share of meat for their feast, for the sacrifice is 'for all the world'. They cook and eat quite separately.

The Belagad account makes particularly clear the Konds' attitude of acknowledged superiority not simply to Fans and Gahis but to the group of Gonds whose forebears had settled in Belagad about 300 years before and in whose paddy-fields this Kond sacrifice was taking place.
(i.e. beside old Kond darni stones), although the Kond village was a mile away. These Gonds were respected neighbours, by no means on the low social scale of Pans and Gahis, yet the Kuttia Jani says with obvious magnanimity: "This is our darni but you may make an offering here!" (i.e. It is all our land and our Earth Goddess, however long you have farmed here). Again at the close of the ritual the Konds' relationship with the Gonds is revealed in the Jani's bald statement: "You are a Gond; you cannot pray. Only a Kuttia can pray!" followed immediately by his gracious permission to the Gond priest to pray on this occasion - though only under Kond instruction:

"Now you must say: 'We made this sacrifice as our custom is. Let our children grow well! And don't bring trouble or disease! And let our grain grow well!"

and the Gond priest dutifully did as he was instructed.

Thus with the Kuttia as with the wider body of Konds, this ritual is of deep significance to them as a people - the people - of the Earth Goddess while at the same time they feel themselves to be singled out by it as being both different from and superior to 'all (the rest of) the world.'

Observations from Kogera Prodhan's Account of a Kedu Buffalo Sacrifice in the Mallikapori Muta of Goomsur, c.1910

Kogera's account, coming mid-way between the substitution of animal for human victims and the present day enactment of the rite, helps to throw light on the ways in which local communities adjusted themselves to the change; also through comparison with recent celebrations, it reveals the Konds' continuing adaptation to present thinking without changing their fundamental belief in the rite.

Kogera's accounts of Kond rituals can be fairly closely dated from his statement in the Preparation for Year 2 of the Kedu: that
mahua blooms are gathered, apparently freely, for the necessary liquor-distilling. Prohibition had come to the area by about 1913 after which time a special licence had to be obtained to distill liquor for rituals; it was not permitted otherwise. Yet Oliver Mllman, the missionary-educationalist, only began his first school under a tree in Mallikapori in the cold season of 1909-10. Thus it appears that between those years Kogera Prodhan must have learned to read and agreed to write these accounts of Kond beliefs for his teacher. His priestly family background causes him to give greater detail concerning acts particularly relevant to the priestly office; for example, the expression 'to bathe right over the head' is his graphic way of stressing the pre-ritual purification bath over against normal daily ablutions.

In 1910 despite the buffalo-substitute the ritual was still such a basic part of Kond life that no 'reason' was required for its repeated enactment. The village elders simply seized on one of their own group and he became host to the buffalo for that cycle of the ritual. Today in the same area some case of sickness in a family would be diagnosed as the Earth Goddess' 'touch' upon the sick man, indicating her requirement of ritual food. The diagnoses of most other sicknesses would however attribute them to the action of ancestors, other divinities, witchcraft or sorcery. The system thus gives latitude for the correct timing of the cycle to be observed within its wider network of inter-village Kedu relationships.

There has been a notable change in the deity addressed in the invocation during the past fifty years. Kogera's invocation, even in the newly added preliminary ritual of 'Showing the Buffalo' still was addressed directly to the Earth Goddess by various descriptive names - Goddess of Hardship, Goddess of Punishment, etc. Certainly
by 1950 the effect of Bura's supremacy, officially affirmed much earlier, had caused the prayer to be addressed to him even though the content was little changed.

Kogera's mention of 'the ritual dance for the burial of the buffalo' early in the celebrations of Year 2 and again in Year 3 when 'they perform the Kraha Dance' refers to the special dance-routine which is still performed at a 'great funeral' (i.e. a very costly festival which includes a number of traditional factors not considered essential for a 'small' funeral.) Thus in Kogera's time the buffalo was still considered as a human victim, a very important one. The dance itself ritualises a battle between several pairs of combatants dressed as females with skirts of kilted red sarees, women's blouses, beads, silver armlets and necklets but with one 'side' carrying traditional axes and the other bows and arrows, and all wearing wild-buffalo horns protruding from their cloth-bound heads as warriors did of old; sometimes too their faces are whitened. It has long been one of the functions of Pan musicians to provide the teams of funeral dancers and their accompanying drummers.

The small pen built over the dami to house the buffalo is of course a necessary adaptation to the animal sacrifice. It provides protection from all possible sources of pollution (e.g. Pana, etc.) at the critical period in the ritual. It was significant that when the writer attended a Keju in the same village in 1952 accompanied by her Pan teacher of the Kui language, the Pan (headmaster of the village school) had of necessity to remain well clear in the open raha, while she was invited to crowd inside the tiny pen with the Kond women, dami-keeper and others baiting the buffalo and jerking the satari's bell-rope and the wooden peacock-clappers. Presumably her position was similar to that of the Gonds in the Kuttia celebration at Belagad:
Buffalo-victim in the crowded dami-pen being mocked and slapped by the women pulling the bell-ropes of jungle-creeper and endlessly singing the Meriah song. Note the carved stake in left foreground and the peacock-clapper (top left) whose head and tail are worked by twine.
i.e. as a member of a people whom the Konds recognised as having values and rituals of their own, not equal in rights to them but suitable to accept their invitation in a limited way - presumably symbolic to them of yet another branch of 'all the world' for whom the Earth Goddess had bidden them alone to make sacrifice.

The foregoing accounts and observations on the Meria/Kedu ritual are only the first steps towards more detailed research for which there is neither time nor space in this preliminary study. To state but a few of the possible areas that would contribute to a fuller understanding of the Konds' purpose, and thus of their beliefs and values; a short-list can be found in the Appendix (No. TWO) stating key elements in the human Meria ritual which are not found in other Kond rites; along with it are the few additions made necessary by the substitution of a buffalo. The former items in particular merit further study, including, if possible, local elucidation by Kond informants. Further study is also necessary regarding their symbolic uses of certain objects such as eggs, grain-offerings (cooked and uncooked), and in particular blood, and many more; also their symbolic use of the colours black, white and red (including turmeric's orange-red); the congruences within which symbolic objects or actions are employed, and the inter-weaving of officiants and lay-members, Konds and non-Konds, in employing them; and so the areas of inquiry could continue, in the certainty of bringing to light much that would contribute toward an understanding of this people through their most central ritual celebration.

It is only with such a wholeness of approach - and where possible taking both eye-witness observation and local informants' views as the starting point in such a study - that error may hope to be avoided
by the outside observer. In presenting this present material, as far as it has gone, I hope not only to open up possibilities for future research, but to remove some misconceptions and misinterpretations that have already occurred.

Here mention must be made of F.G. Frazer's brief summary of Kond human sacrifice in *The Golden Bough* ¹ which until recently has formed almost the only discussion of Macpherson and Campbell's early material. From his study of the treatment of human victims before and after death, Frazer believed the Konds to have regarded the Meriah as divine in his own right, i.e. not simply becoming divine after his sacrificial death. He quotes Campbell as speaking of the Meriah's 'being regarded as something more than mortal', and Macpherson: 'A species of reverence, which it is not easy to distinguish from adoration, is paid to him.' Thus in Frazer's view, the intrinsic power ascribed to his blood, to his supposedly rain-producing tears (in one area only), and the value set on his spittle or the dried-off crumbs of turmeric paste from his brow, 'indicates that he was much more than a mere man sacrificed to propitiate a deity'.

I do not find in this a marked difference in meaning from the Kond attitude regarding their animal-victims; rather the difference lies in the degree of their reverence - in line with the 'world-wide' scope of the sacrifice - and of their hopes of its great efficacy. For instance, the droppings of a sacrificial animal-victim in other rituals as well as the Kedu are carefully collected and used for fertilising a field, with hope of special benefit.

Again, Frazer sees a difference in the half-portion of flesh that was offered at the darmi and the other half which was divided

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amongst household heads and buried by them in their fields, or the ashes of the burnt bones sometimes pasted on their granaries. The darni's half was 'certainly offered to the Earth Goddess', he says, but the division and use of the other half implies 'that to the body of the Meriah was ascribed a direct or intrinsic power of making the crops to grow, quite independently of the indirect efficacy which it might have to secure the good-will of the deity'. In making this quite basic difference in purpose between the two halves - which seems in no wise to be substantiated by the priestly prayers, and these usually are a sure guide to the purpose of Kond rituals - Frazer is overlooking the two-fold area of concern in this greatest of all their fertility rituals: first, fertility of the community and all livestock within its walls, the darni being both the symbolic community-centre and the sacred place originally associated with the Earth Goddess' presence; and secondly, fertility in the fields, without whose yield life cannot be maintained. Thus the two areas of the burial of the flesh appear to be the same in their need and purpose.

Frazer sums up his argument by suggesting that it is only in later times that the Meriah has come to be regarded 'rather as a victim offered to a deity than as himself an incarnate god', and that the misinterpretation has arisen through European writers 'habituated to the later idea of sacrifice as an offering made to a god for the purpose of conciliating his favour' and who therefore 'suppose that whenever a slaughter takes place, there must necessarily be a deity to whom the carnage is believed to be acceptable. Thus their preconceived ideas may unconsciously colour and warp their description of savage rites.'
Here I think that Frazer has allowed himself to be carried away by the warning he wishes to make. Closer attention to the verbatim dialogue, which was written down not by Macpherson himself but by his Kui-speaking assistant, Sundoro Singh, who was brought up among the Konds from his childhood, clearly shows it to be Kond insistence that the Earth Goddess requires her human food-offering; also that the victim was not a god, but would become divine as a reward for dying for the benefit of 'all the world' in this way.

When the victim (or his dramatic-substitute) reviles the company for putting him to death, the Earth Goddess herself comes upon the priest and orders him to tell the victim that she herself 'demands a sacrifice. It is necessary for all the world' if the tiger is not to kill, the snake to poison, fever and pain to afflict the people, and every known form of harm come upon them; but if she is fed and appeased, all will prosper with unimagined fertility. And 'when you (the victim) shall have given repose to the world, you will become a god, by the will of the gods.'

There is little evidence here that the Meriah was first considered a divinity by the Konds and only later came to be regarded as a victim. Moreover, all available versions of the myths of origin of the sacrifice are similar on this one point: that it began through the Earth Goddess' insistent demand for human flesh-food and her refusal to accept any animal substitute; and that she first 'taught' them exactly how to procure and kill the victims and offer the flesh. Only then would she keep her side of the bargain. Thus the Kuttia Kond priest's words:

'We used to offer you a (human) Meriah.
Again we offer you a Meriah!' (i.e. although a buffalo).

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1 Macpherson, Memorials of Service in India, p.123.
2 Ibid.
The Earth Goddess herself still comes to the ritual, they believe, even taking possession of the headman and others. There is no suggestion here that the victim is the goddess. The same attitude applies even in the Goomsur region: Kogera's priestly prayer calls on her to accept the flesh, to take the blood and be satisfied.

I suggest at the beginning of this chapter and again in the final chapter that several waves of migrants were pushed from the east coastal plain up into the hill-tracts under advancing Aryan pressures; that they were faced with the fierce hardship of learning to live in a jungled, rocky, dangerous and malaria-infested territory; that they were possibly met by warlike aboriginal groups as well as by other waves of migrants like themselves; and that the involved interdependence of the Meriah sacrificial ritual grew out of their great need for some uniting mechanism, with the Jand high-priesthood growing alongside to deal with this 'new' phenomenon among them. If that be so, then this ritual was not the most ancient form of their religion and is unlikely to have suffered such a great change as Frazer suggests in considering the central figure to have been first regarded as a deity and only later as a sacrificial victim. Indeed the very pressures of the hill-tract environment which possibly gave rise to the sacrifice had changed little down the centuries until the arrival of the East India Company's troops and the first written accounts.

Frazer did not have access to myths of origin nor other versions of the sacrifice beyond the accounts of Macpherson and Campbell, both in the mid-nineteenth century. Nor did he have personal knowledge of the Konda's attitude to sacrifice in his own time. Thus I believe that in cautioning European observers whose 'preconceived ideas may unconsciously colour and warp their descriptions of savage rites'
he has allowed himself to fall into the very snare which they have avoided. Other scholars, such as E.O. James 1 and Mircea Eliade 2 have accepted Frazer’s interpretation regarding the probable divinity of the Meriah; and after discussion with the late Professor James upon the subject, one of my own earlier studies 3 follows them.

Though the Meriah/Bedu is the central rite of the Konda, it is nevertheless but one among their wide diversity of ritual behaviour and must therefore be seen in relation to the rest. In the next chapter Konda rituals are classified within the framework suggested in chapter III (b) and certain examples are discussed in each section of this classification. These examples are not necessarily of any greater importance than all the remainder, which are to be found in the Appendix (Vol. II); they are simply typical examples of their classificatory group. Certain reasons for their selection are cited in each case.

1 E.O. James, Sacrifice and Sacrament, London, 1962, p.86.
3 B.M. Boal, Fire Is Easy, p.127.
October 3rd (V)

Cultural Practices in the Rural Setting

Celebrated in Butimadu, as in every other K.K. village, every 3rd year, the entire community visited the gungu in friendly, neighboring villages in the intervening 2 years.

A buffalo was slaughtered (2 at Bungu, i.e., at the site of the village, abandoned due to illness). All ritual took place in the present village but the actual killings were on the 3 sites.

2 days before:

Divination: (1) fell into trance at G. (2) guardian goddess came. B. said: "Do you have a caller or a caller..."

Nk. answered: "A mala dufu relics, the dera, the old sacrificial axe & 4 horns PUBS A woman sacrifices. Down the road!"

B. called all the people & said to them: "We have promised to sacrifice to you buffaloes, goats & chickens. Tomorrow the sacrifice will take place. Come & see it!"

Then he looked into his hands & called all the village men one by one.

They told him that they would offer him where.

Those offering a chicken said: "We offer for salvation!"

B. asked: "Of what colour? Black, white or brown?"

Answer: e.g., "He offers a white chicken in our house, as our ancestors did."

1 day before: Nk. went into the village very early, beating the drum & crying:

"Get up! Eat! Come & sacrifice! Why are you not dressing? You behave like apes? Today we fetch the buffalo; today we sacrifice!"

The village men rode naked millet, a sacrificial cake, & a soma soak was placed at the foot-platform of their houses, for protection from diseases.

Meanwhile:

B. went into trance before the derani:

He called the poor man selected to assist, looked into their hands & said: "If they have eaten, I have eaten it; if they have not eaten, I have eaten it, and then they declared it; assured them that if they should eat the stake, who strike the bamboo rattle, who carry the buffalo's head.

That day:

They offered sacrificial sacrifices to other deities, which household had remained for that day or now theyacles.

Early aft.

Ritual to bring the mala dufu relics from the Nk. house:

The Jani entered the house & recited: "In ancient days Niramali half brought the mala dufu out of the earth. At that time, they went to people sacrificed to them. Now they again, we shall sacrifice to them & bring them to the derani..."

We give them flesh to eat, only a small piece but it shall become as his as a plate. Take it with you to your parents.

A slip it to them!

Then:

He laid the relics (sea, chain 1 from rings) in the middle of the house & washed them carefully.

They lit an oily wick & laid it on them.

Next, they sacrificed a chicken, saying: "You were in the underworld; you were in a dark house. But you came out.

The earth to whom you once made offering shall bear this!"

They sprinkled the mala dufu blood & the Jani brought the relics in solemn procession to the derani. On the way they visited 3 other houses which had earlier staked the mala dufu.

The Jani circled the derani twice & laid the relics on the derani stone.

The sacrificed chicken & a gourd of nillet-beer were placed between the horns of the buffalo-stake from the last sacrifice, close by.

After that:

The appointed young man, escorted by drummers, went to the jungle to select & fall a tree-token for the new sacrificial stake.

Late aft.:

They returned & laid the post on bamboo mats, east of the old stake.

The Jani examined it minutely & spoke to it as though to a buffalo, beating it like a buffalo-victim.

Then:

He rubbed it with the relics of his hands & smelt them to ensure that a corpse had not been burnt or buried under the tree.

Then the trunk was measured & marked out exactly like the old stake.

Several mats shaped & carved it for some hours. Using an oil lamp after dark, working skillfully with axe & adze.

(The custom here is to carve not only horns but their edges & the side of the stake, decoratively then with rows of incisions & triangles; only the details were done with adze, & the work was constantly conversed to make sure it was a true copy of the old stake.)

Late at night:

Guests from the nearby village of Langamata (V.2) came to join in.

As the beating of the drums announced their approach, the Jani spoke to the derani: "Our friends come to take part in the feast to dance. They do not want to injure you, so do not bring them any sickness. Let no quarrel nor troubles arise!"

Let no quarrel (ritual-axe) blow fall!"

All the villagers went to meet the guests & ceremonially presented them with a mali & a big pot of nillet-beer in welcome.

Meanwhile:

In the village 'sacred' the young people were dividing the many offerings killed earlier, a filling a basket or leaf-dish for each household.
After midnight the sacrificial stake was ready. It was temporarily carried out of the village so that the work place could be tidied up. Then the stake was placed in the hole for the main stake immediately behind the old stake, & 2 other holes at the eastern axis of the street but about 6 m. beyond (these were for the 2 undecorated stakes for the other 2 buffaloes.)

Professor Nigam gave orders to establish that there were no skulls in the holes - doubleless the custom in Maritah times.

About 4 a.m. Some men carried the new stake once around the village, then placed it in its base in its hole.

The Janis washed it carefully & rubbed it with turmeric.

Then be placed 2 little heaps of millet on the stake from which a chicken & a piglet were supposed to eat.

Then the Jani sacrificed the chicken & let its blood drip on the stake.

He smashed the piglet's head on the stake which he rubbed with the remaining blood, meanwhile praying:

"Do not up this stake here. We have carved it with beauty.

We have hosted it. We wish to sacrifice the buffalo here!"

The posts were all set up without further ceremony.

Strongly woven rings of steel creeper were put round the stakes.

Soon after黎明 the buffaloes were tied to these.

During the time after being bought all night, the drum was silent in order not to alarm the animals.

not only the Janis & Divinah (from all the villages) but all the men, who were still arriving from the neighborhood teased & hated, the buffaloes from dawn until was time of sacrifice.

First the assembled Janis danced round them with bamboo rattles from time to time beating them with heavy clubs as they recited in a singsong voice the events of ancient times:

how Ururenpan-Kapantali had appeared out of the earth,
how Ururenpan-Funurangi & other people had followed her,
& here the first sacrifices had been made.

Then the guest-villagers sang mock & scornful songs while they beat the buffaloes, pulled at their genitals & shook their heads by their hands. Their songs went thus:

"You were in your master's house. There you cultivated rice, lentils & mustard-seed for your master. You pulled the cart for your master. Why did your master sell you? Why did you lose his house? Why did you lose his wife? We shall beat you! We shall kill you! Do not be angry! Let the sin from your master lie on your master. Do not on us! In ancient times Ururenpan-Kapantali taught the Ururenpan-Funurangi to sacrifice men. We did so too. But then came Mohunt Sabih & Renu Sabih & ordered us to kill you! Therefore we do so now. Let the sin not lie upon us but on the Sahibs! Our ritual-was weak & therefore we sacrifice you!"

New guests continued to arrive & the drummers marched constantly up & down the village square.

Everywhere groups of your people were dancing.

The sacrificial beasts were given a drink now & then or water was poured on them to keep them alive for sacrifice.

Afternoon:

When it was time for the sacrifice, the principal participants bathed carefully in turmeric water.

Then the buffaloes were leaned but long ropes were tied round neck & legs. They were pulled around the village with great bullocks & led to their places of sacrifice.

The buffalo that had been tied to the main stake was taken to the village & stake at the most great of the former times of Rantipadar.

Here the Jani again called on the Earth Goddess, went into trance & sprang up on the buffalo.

Then the cow was close-tied with horns & mouth to the stake, & killed.

The village people & guests fell upon the sacrificial victim

They caught blood in dishes, pots & a winnowing tray & cut off their

The guests at once rushed off to boil it down at their village dams.

After that the animal was cut up & a helper brought the head & a leg to the village, where the head & leg were the meals for everyone & the meat was

At evening the liver & a few small pieces of meat were cooked, then alone with bits of uncooked meat, they were laid before the dam.

The rest of the animals was eaten by everyone present.
The main day, then the buffalo is sacrificed, in the 1st day after the full moon in the (brise) month Bal named in 1956.

The buffalo was tied to the yapping pole. Some rice was put in a small leaf-cap & some in a pot.

Jani & Kajhi started to pray, & kept repeating faster drumming. They added, these fell into trance.

Jani gave greeting to Kajhi & then in opposite direction before throwing a handful of rice over pole & buffalo.

He beat the leaf-cap on the pole, saying: "This tree stands instead of the stake & in its gin & substitute", as the rice-flour can substitute for the millet-beer offered on feast day. He made the buffalo eat from the pot & beat its back.

Then they threw the rest of the rice-flour backwards over his head.

He rocked the buffalo: "A few days only, then we will kill you and the goddess will rise alive!"

The buffalo was taken back to V.2 near.

Meanwhile, in V.2, 3 leafy branches were made; for Khin, Gona & Fana.

N.K. went to local store a bunch articles for the Festival & also looked for chickens to buy for sacrifice.

Back in V.1, millet beer was ceremonially pressed (the Gods provided this millet for the V.1 main sacrifice.).

Youths made comba & tobacco-cases as presents for the circle.

& the circle cleared their ornaments ready for dancing.

Fridays - Young men of V.2 went out to cut a split bough & made a tree-shelter above the camp in V.2.

Sat. - The people ate very early, before sunrise; eating was taboo.

One afternoon, though all could chew tobacco, smoke & drink, the state drummers, Khaji & young men went to jungle to select a tree for the feast. It must be very straight:

- stand free & not touch another in its fall to earth
- have no creepers or tree near it
- have no dead branches
- have no birds nesting in it
- nor animal at its roots, nor snake.

The Khaji three a handful of rice against the selected tree saying: "You may next make a new buffalo sacrificial stake!

Nor we want to cut this tree!

Let us remain healthy and have no sicknesses!"

No beat three times with his staff & listened each time with his ear to the tree. Any noise in the crying of the redness, i.e. sudden hunger the tree's unsteadiness.

After following the tree, they measured precisely 4 arms in length, i.e. for 'long', 1/2 for the stem & 1/2 in the round.

Two men cut down the tree except at the Khaji's order.

Then 2 men next picked up the heavy stake & set off running.

Several necessary changes of carrier were made without stopping.

They circled the same twice then laid it down on a leafy branch.
During the forenoon, the buffalo was tied to the new stake.

The good priest beat the buffalo, as did the other Gods too (but not the lone who could not touch it).

Then,

(Meanwhile in the tan fild, a chicken & pig were sacrificed similarly and the buffalo was 'shown' there but not left tied up overnight in case of tigers. Instead it was tied temporarily in the demul booth.)

Late night

Jani & Majhi prayed again to several goddesses:

"O cultivated your earth, so may you grow!

Take this buffalo & eat it! Make our corn grow!

Don't bring sickness!

Make our y dig and water into its pot-encumbers!"

Early morning: Jani woke food # & told him:

"Since a long time ago we gave your forefathers these fields for cultivation. Now we will perform a sacrifice & tell the godess she will bless us.

Who mocked the buffalo, pulling by its horns.

They gave it a drink (khalu), brought branches for it to eat.

It poured water over it to keep it alive, & addressed it:

"You are a curved-horn castrated beast, a bad castrated beast! We say to you that in olden times Dukhal Sahib

Kesri Sahib gave you an sacrificial animal to us.

We va this to you in your house by holding your horns:

Ranga Goddess, Earth Goddess, Kuber Goddess, Jani Goddess

kanta a sacrificed:

Do you cry? We are binding you with ropes;

You may cry but you will not escape!

We are sacrificing you like a woman-being, like a beloved wife & mother. Thus you are their substitute.

You are like a silver & golden mother!"

They spoke again in this way:

"Your master enticed you from the chain & the yoke

and said you as an offering;

Do that this sin may not come upon us!"

Then

"We offer this beast to you (Earth Goddess)

Let our corn prosper! Protect our cattle!

Don't bring sickness on any of us!

And provide for our children!

During the ceremony the people referred the buffalo several times by:

either it leafy branches & pouring water over it against the beast.

Also the K.K. Jani & good priest poured turmeric water over it.

Early all

"If I, I arrived in V.I., with drum & all their children,

& with everyone dressed in all possible finery.

The Jani & Majhi had new loin cloths.

K.K. girls carried the special pot of beer & put it on the demul

In addition to drums, flutes & buffalo horns were blown (the latter are only blown on special occasions).

The young men collected money to buy nelum spirit, though already everyone was decidedly drunk.

Jani went to the demul & told the buffalo:

"I have not eaten any tiger or bear-killed meat & am not sure.

I am beating you now!

Do not cry, because if you cry many tigers & bears will come:

& a came home to the people:"

They tied all 4 feet of the buffalo (for safety but so it could walk) & put a rope round its neck too.

Then drove the buffalo up & down where they wished it to go.

(They did the same with the 2nd buffalo for the tan fields)

Then they took it to the God father's house.

His wife gave cakes & samosas to the buffalo

while the drum & instruments kept on playing incessantly.

All were running & leaping & trembling the animals as they went from house to house down the God street, & repeatedly turmeric water was thrown over it.

Finally they took the female buffalo to the Pan fields & danced with the other mare round the demul in V.3

A tied it to the carved Stick

Sacrificed the legal divers, who was in trance, rushed with a large buffalo to kill the buffalo. He was prevented by his hands & feet tied with cloth. (V.I. They were wearing simultaneously all the clothes they possessed, to mark the great festival.)
Afterwards immediately, they took a young chicken & dashed it on the buffalo's head.

The buffalo was being tied up & during the killing, several K.K. men went into trance. The K.K. man & Majhi went to bathe in the two blood-covered carriers.

While the buffalo was sacrificed in the pan fields, a young man brought the head to lay beside the last on the darni.

The saint dispersed immediately.

The Jani & Majhi went back to V.I. by V.I. youth & the circle carried skin & intentions to V.I on a stick.

Meanwhile the 2nd buffalo was sacrificed in the pan fields.

Afterwards a second man brought the head to lay beside the last on the darni.

The saint dispersed immediately.

The K.K. Jani & Majhi went to bathe in the two blood-covered carriers.

The remainder of the buffalo was cut into pieces. Some meat from the neck & the liver were taken to V.I. then with some blood & some ceremonial beer, these were laid down on the darni at V.I. with the words:

'Let us offer the buffalo here.'

Now we bring you, blood from another darni.

A little piece of meat was hung from the forked pole at the place of honor offerings inside the Jani's home, & a little wax was smeared on the darni.

Other meat was carried back to V.I. by V.I. youth.
Tuesday, March 25th

The K.K. Jani & one or two helpers went from V.1 to V.3 and turned the 2 buffalo heads to put their horns toward the stakes. They took a chicken & cock in their hands.

A lamp, a leaf-cup of millet & a leaf-cup of glowing charcoal & Sal resin were placed by the K.K. Jani in the car of the V.3 r.ka. They took the lamp & alms-drum to the threshold of the Gooda house. The drum & leaf-cup were given to the Jani & V.3 r.ka.

The Jani took the lamp & leaf-cup to the Gooda house. The Jani & V.3 r.ka. threw none of the milk into the alms-drum & alms. The Jani & V.3 r.ka. stayed near the Gooda house, so that the blood dropped on the leaf-cup & the alms-drum. The alms-drum was then stored away.

During this invocation the Jani held the chicken in his hand & made it eat millet. Then he killed it with the axe so that the blood dropped on to the millet & the alms-drum. The alms-drum was then stored away.

Wednesday

The festival ended.

The Jani of V.1 & head priest of V.3 went to the dembi (V.3) and threw a leaf-cup of millet & a pot of water. They then laid a piece of buffalo meat on the dembi, saying:

"Ur us all gods who came to this feast. May your houses go away to your dwellings. This is the last offering the feast is over. But if we perform another sacrifice, we shall call you. Then come again!"

They bound the water-jug of the buffalo to the horns of the stake. A the Jani said to the Good priest:

"You are a Good. You cannot pray; only a buffalo can pray. Now you just say: 'We made this sacrifice as the custom is. Let our children grow well! And don't bring us any trouble or diseases!' And let our corn grow well!""

and the Good priest did as he was ordered.
Evening

1 YEAR

THE

ACTIVITIES

DAY 1

The priest enters the household and calls in the priest.
The priest seeks the reason through trance.
If he says: "The Earth Goddess has touched the sick man. A buffalo must be 'shown' in the village Green,"
They begin to collect money from all the community
A buy items for the ritual: a small buffalo, rice, coconuts, a black chick, cow's milk, etc.
The appeal for and receive - government loans to distill spirits.
They collect the ingredients & distill large quantities.
Then they summon the priest to be able to 'show' the Earth Goddess to come to a community meeting.
Then when he arrives they settle his wages for the public performance of the ceremony from beginning to end (e.g. 5 years).
Through trance he discovers who is selected as (new) darti-keeper (d.k.).
During the trance priest speaks his name or groups his hand.
THE DARTI-KEEPING

DAY 2

Kim & community select the day well beforehand.
1 month prior to the ritual, the drummers beat continuously.
All the village keeps on dancing (even especially).
The darti-keeper's household (only) performs certain offerings.

ACTIVITIES

DAY 3

The drummers keep on beating the hollow drum.
D.K., priest & patient's male kin sit together in the yard.
They pour out a drink offering on the ground then drink together.
All the men go off to the jungle led by the drummers.
They cut 3 small trees & fashion them into stakes.
Then bring them to the yard & make crook holes near the top.
They dig holes for their erection at the 3 dartis.
The priest offers eggs & some rice at the central darti.
Then with helpers erects 1 stake, burying the eggs & rice beneath.
He repeats the offering & erects 2nd stake at the lower darti.
The people keep up a constant dancing & dancing throughout.

PRIEST & DARTI-KEEPER put on new clothes & join in a drinking party.

DAY 4

They tie a new cloth round the buffalo's neck.
All the men go off with it, dancing & prancing, to the spring, accompanied by the drummers, etc.
They all bathe at the spring (k bathe the buffalo).
Return to the central dartis & tether the buffalo at the stake.
Priest, d.k. & patient's male kin sit together at the dartis.
At the priest offers more eggs & rice as they pray.
The priest acts almost an eye in the eyelet hole in the central stake.
They pray & set apart an eye at upper & lower dartis likewise.
During this the priest suddenly makes off like a madman to the Grove.
All the people seize the buffalo & go beating & dancing after him.

The priest seeks to divine the unstable spot that requires the blood.
He repeatedly prances the ground with a sharp spear & finally finds it.
The patient's male kin hold the buffalo beside the spot while priest & darti-keeper squat a dip a hole with hard-wood.
They place eggs & rice in it while invoking Darti & former victims.
Then they fill in the hole & place a large stone on top.
All return to the central darti & drag the buffalo.
The priest sacrifices a pig at the central darti.
The men keep on drinking & giving liquor to the buffalo.
They put the drunken buffalo in the cattle-henry then they each ride on the pig's flesh.
The priest offers the hattle portions & eats his own meal.
All the men eat, then drink & dance throughout the night.

Foot note: even if you miss the priest money & rice & see his home.

1. Invocation: "O Earth God above! This day we are offering this buffalo in your name; let setting it apart. Do not give us fever or illnesses! Make our family prosperous for us! Watch over the village!"
OCCASION; 4 miles, 1 yr. later, exactly at the Basak season (i.e., early Paddy season, before main paddy crop)

TIME

ACTUAL

Preparations: All relatives are convened to raise money for the rites.

After obtaining permission from the village priest, they distil quantities of liquor.

All V.1 men gather to fix the date of the rites.

The ex-patient's kin summon the priest for that day.

EX-PATIENT'S KIN ALL REMAIN FASTING (ALSO PRIEST & AK.

The priest & ak. put on new clothes.

They pour out libation & all settle down to drink.

Then they consecrate oars in 2 places: one oar at the post at the foot of the raha (beside lower dam). The other at the post at the terrapin dam.

Then all the men & youths are instructed to bring the hollow bams drums as the ex-patient's kin place the buffalo to the spring.

With drums beating, all the men & youths go too.

They all bathe

Then bath the buffalo & wash its feet.

They tie a new cloth round its neck, also a thread necklace.

The priest & the man who had been 'caught' by the Goddess (i.e., the ex-patient) put on new clothes & thread necklaces.

Led by the hand, his kin bring the buffalo back; all the men, come & treat it as the upper & lower damo.

then they tie it to the central damo stake.

They immediately offer eggs, rice & a pie (sometimes also a chicken)

With invocation & a cool.

Morning: They put the buffalo in the cattle-lyre.

All the men drink liquor & cook rice & a pie flesh (a chicken).

The men feast & dance all night long, celebrating joyfully.

Next day but one: All the further hospitality they give money & rice to the priest & the kins.

They free the buffalo for another year.

THAT SAME YEAR 2 — DRINKING AWAY A PIECE OF FLESH

OCCASION: The sacrifice of the buffalo in chieftain village (v.2) in their associated group is one stage further on in its ritual than in v.1

TIME

ACTUAL

Know that V.2's buffalo is due to 'fall' that year, they go beforehand in friendship, taking liquor with them.

On the day of V.2's buffalo 'fall'

Call all their priest

& the damo-keeper carrying a brass pot (for the flesh).

men, women, young folk & children all get out for V.2.

The men carry sticks & battle axes for they try their utmost to obtain a morsel of flesh too.

After their arrival, V.2 men & priest hold the still-living buffalo & the priest thrusts his knife into its side (cutting out the ritual bits).

Then V.2 men push under the arms of the V.2 folk, back of a piece of flesh & fly away to bury it at their own Mariah Groove.

After sacrificing a pie in their (v.1) raha & the damo they end the ceremony (i.e., with a feast).

See fuller account of V.3 (below) Drinking Away Some Flesh.
FROM 3 –

THE FALL OF THE BUFFALO (in V.1)

OCCASION: From 6 athe to 1 year after 'The Washing of the Feet' & burning the piece of flesh from V.2's buffalo.

TIME ACTIONS
Prep: The kin-group responsible for beginning the ritual & all the other

men of V.1 sit in discussion (c) to fix the date & (b) to arrange

the money & rice election to buy the necessary items for the rite.

From that time there is drumming & dancing each evening.

When the preparations are complete, i.e. when they have bought

another buffalo, pigs, cocks, chickens & new clothes, they

request government permission to distil liquor & distil great quantities.

Only then do they seek out the same priest as before

to stay in the dead-hunter's house.

After his arrival the ex-patient's household perform prickers & taking morna.

All the men spend their time in drinking, drumming & dancing.

Meanwhile: Another village (V.3) has decided to bring away some flesh

from V.1's house.

Prep: Then the people of V.3 know there is to be a Kedi in V.1

they choose men to bring a piece of flesh to aid fertility in

their own area (i.e. by bringing the kedi ritual cycle). They

collect money, buy a piece of the ritual items & obtain a government permit to distil spirits.

1 month V.3 breaks up continuous drumming & dancing in raha.

Before hand 3 days before the kedi they call their priest.

& the d&k. perform prickers to his own house (only).

3 days before the Kedi

The V.3 'flesh-bringers' take money & a potful of liquor

& go on a friendly visit to V.1.

They give the liquor & money & say: "We have come to you so

that we may perform this entire ritual together without

quarrelling, & being of one heart."

V.1 is glad to reply: "Very well: if two will not such quarrels:

They drink the liquor together.

The men of V.3 return home.

(Day 3, part of V.1)

Priest V.3, d&k. fast throughout the day.

With such drumming, priest, d&k. & some of the men go to

a grove of growing bamboos in the jungle.

The priest selects the most 'worthy' bamboo

& a sentry a rice-offering round it for the spirits.

The bamboo is cut down but not trimmed,

& is brought to V.1 without crossing any running water.

It is placed on the ground near the central darti.

The priest sacrifices a pig at the darti.

They all drink & feed liquor to the buffalo.

The men prepare & cook the meat & rice.

The priest & d&k. only eat after seeing either the meat or sauce.

Then they all eat.

(Day 2)

The drumming & dancing continue.

All the men remain fasting.

The priest pours out a drink-offering

then drinks with the men who will accompany him to the hill.

On top they cut 2 large stakes & 6 or 7 small ones

& bring them back to the raha.

After returning, priest & d&k. bathe at the spring.

The priest offers raps, cock & rice at the darti & slays the cock.

The men prepare & cook the food, meanwhile drinking

liquor & giving it to the buffalo.

The priest eats first (after offering ritual portion).

Then everyone else eats.

(Day 3)

The men erect the taller of the 2 large stakes at the darti

& the other at the Meriah Grove (with the priest & d&k.).

They set up the smaller stakes as follows:

1 behind the d&k. 's house; 1 by the wall of the forest house &

1 by the wall of the tapost house; 1 near the darti for tying up

the buffalo, & 1 at the d&k. 's front door.

Then they build a little wooden buffalo pen at the darti.

They tie the (new drunken) buffalo inside

to protect it against the touch of outsiders.

From other ends they fashion clappers in the shape of birds.

These are pegged by pulling them attached to tail & neck.
The Kada: 1. The day begins.

Then all else has been done they make the sari:

- They take a knife and smooth off leaves from the bamboo, then make "shoes" from this green bamboo string.
- Over it with a red & white cloth, tying it to the pole.
- Fix the sari to the tip of the long bamboo.
- The d.k. priest put on new clothes.
- All the men on together to the spring to bathe.

Then return to the little buffalo-pen enclosing the darna.

Next:

- They dance the sari-pole & the buffalo.
- After they have bathed they bathe the buffalo.

After the priest has offered the sacrifice a pig at the darna.

He ties the live cook just beneath the sari.

They secure the sari on its tall bamboo pole to a rope wrapped with centres of bamboo.

Then tie little brass bells, deep-toned metal cow-bells, tinkling dancing bells & wooden cow-bells to a rope.

The buffalo-pole is fixed to the tip of the sari-pole & thrown down into the ground.

They all continue drinking.

The men cook rice & the pig flesh.

After the priest has offered the sari-pole & eaten, all the men feast together - though the buffalo fasts.

The priest, men, women & young people crowd inside & around the buffalo-pen at the darna.

They jerk the bird-clappers

& push & bathe the buffalo - women.

They do all this sitting or dancing around.

& even the women are drunk this occasion.

From dawnbreak to the completion of the Kada:

- They chant the kada songs.
- No-one male or female must have any food except liquor until the completion of the Kada.
- No-one must even clean their teeth.
- The priest offers rice at the central darna.
- The priest holds the bamboo pole.
- All the men gather for a brief conference. The following matters are laid down:
  - (a) No-one however drunk is to quarrel.
  - (b) Especially no quarrels with visiting "sash-bearers" from V.1, V.4, V.5 etc.
  - (c) "In all its aspects let our Kada be conducted in peace."

Then all the people of V.1 tidy themselves joyfully; they bathe & put on good clothes.

When all the necessaries for the sacrifice are ready the priest & d.k. put on new clothes & go to bathe at the spring, led by the drummers.

The sari-bearers & buffalo's attendants go too.

They return carrying saris-enter.

With this they bathe the buffalo the d.k.'s wife has already prepared & cooked a mixture of sweetened & rice & turmeric.

She smears this over the buffalo from head to tail.

- She feeds it with specially prepared 'cakes' & cooked rice with hill-lentils as relish.

The priest, d.k. & others go inside the pen & offer rice & eggs at the darna.

The rest of the village keeps on dancing outside the pen.
The V.3 priest & men have prepared their own paterai
with the same ritual, sacrificing their own pig & triing its entrails to their bell-rope.

They have anointing & alms the ibar dance.

The whole V.3 community fasts not even cleaning their teeth.
The men all drink great quantities of liquor.

Their priest, d.k. a 'flesh-bringers' rather together.

Two clink up the stake & untie the paterai-pole.

Led by drums, they take the paterai to bathe at the spring.

They all return to their central docani.

In time V.3

All return to the parish church.

Then V.1

The V.3 group continues dancing on the hill.
either slightly separate or by V.1 docani with its own
docani-keeper's wife has finished assisting the victim
V.3 men send their d.k.'s wife & friends to the pen.

They cut the buffalo with the 'nake', rice & lentils, & anoint it from head to tail with oil, & turmeric.

Then they remain in the pen with V.1 celebrants

singing, dancing, jerking the clappers & bell-rope & baton & pushing the buffalo.

The priest & d.k. dig a hole at the foot of the post for the offerings.

The priest first puts poppy chaff into the hole - sometimes also

back of the pal tree & thatching grass.

Then with invocation to Herat God he puts in Knox & rice.

The drummers quickens & reaches a crescendo.

He plunges the sacrificial knife through the ribs of the
live buffalo & cuts out a bit of its liver.

He offers this with the sacrificial prayer.

Then with speed & dexterity he cuts off a hoof, an ear, a
horn, its tail & tempo & places them all in the hole.

That done, he must readily slash flesh from the still breathing
victim & give it to the 'flesh-bringers' from V.3, V.4, V.5 etc.

They each drop it in their brass pots, map it up with leaves

& rush over, running & leaping.

while V.1 set then with stones as in a fierce marrel

V.3(d.k. V.4, V.5 etc.) receive & drum, leap & dance all the way home.

They place the flesh beside their own central docani.

The priest sacrifices a chicken & one to the Dari God.

Then they take the whole flesh to their Grove

before the priest & d.k. bury it with invocation.

But at the docani the priest sacrifices another pig & prave.

Then V.3 men drink, cut up & cook the pig-flesh
& after the priest makes the batica offering & rats his portion

the men greatly raise freckles & dancing till blackout.
**PHASE 3: SANDBAH.** "THE FALL OF THE BUFFALO" IN V.I.

### DAY 1

**ACTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.00</td>
<td>The Farn &amp; Gahie drive away the carcass to eat elsewhere. Priest &amp; M.A. carefully fill up the hollow at the grave. All dance back to the durmi &amp; re-erect the netari. The priest sacrifices a chicken &amp; sir there. Then the men drink, eat &amp; cook the meat. After the priest has offered the hitali portion &amp; eaten, all V.I. men &amp; all 'flesh-eaters' enjoy a good feast. They spend the night in drinking, dancing &amp; feasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.00</td>
<td>The priest &amp; all V.I. sacrificed the large fall buffalo. Every householder shares out the meat &amp; their wives cook it. The priest offers further rice &amp; corn at the durmi. Another day, 5 night, same. music &amp; feasting. The priest offers a little rice at the durmi then he himself offers the netari-pole from the aisle there. The entire community help to carry it in procession to the lower &amp; upper durmi, then gather at the lower durmi. The priest blesses a round of 'little sisters', calls on the spirits then arranges the people coming westwards. The women &amp; children return home. The hollow-drum lead the others further down the track to disentangle the netari-pole. At the chosen place they lay it on the ground; the priest offers a chick &amp; rice, then cutting the children's throat, smears blood on the pole. They change the pole &amp; netari into fragments, first taking over the cloth tied to it. They keep these for later years when it will be their turn to bring flesh from another village. Then all the men go to bathe &amp; return home. The priest receives hospitality for a couple more days then they say his name &amp; rice &amp; leave his home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DAY 2

**"THE SATARI STRIP OF FLESH" (in V.I.)**

**LOCATION:** When they hear of a buffalo due to 'Fall' in another village.

**TIME**: V.I. men call their priest. Led by the hollow drums they cut & fetch another hamshe. Then that 'fell' chosen satari with the (previous) clothes & go to bring some flesh from that other village.

### DAY 3

**"THE NEGIR (or STOGON) STRIP"**

They hear at which village yet another buffalo will 'Fall'. When these men who are due to bring flesh have got their portions & dashed off home, V.I. men go secretly, bring a piece & bury it in V.I. In this way all the parts of the Satari are completed.

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1. **Rahi song**: "Bo shilali, back to us! O Dundoli, back to us! The land was shaking, swaying so. When it was sinking right up to the knee-cap. When it was sinking right up to the limbless. O Donga! back to us! O Patang Kura! back to us! From your forefinger, from your ring-finger. Giving your blood (we pray!), shedding your blood (we pray!) You stilled the earth, you stilled the land. As our fathers' sisters' kin you come; As our elder sister's kin you come; Eat the strips of the she-buffalo; Eat the strips of the castrated buffalo; Eat those baked cakes! Eat those fried cakes: ....... etc."

2. **Priest's prayer as he thrusts in the sacrificial knife**: "Mother Goddess! Land Goddess! Drink blood! Drink here!"
CHAPTER IV

CONSERVATION AND CHANGE IN KOND RITUAL PRACTICES
The following examples of Kond rituals in the Goomsur District during the 1960's show continuing co-operation for the manipulating of mystical power in order to increase or restore strength and well-being at the levels of *liuta*, village, kin group or household. These examples follow the fourfold classification suggested in the previous chapter III (b) and are compared with parallel accounts, where available, by Kogera Prodhan fifty years earlier. All the rituals presented in this chapter both Kogera's and the recent versions, come from the Mallikapori village-group, roughly a mile south of the Oriya government post of Goomsur-Udayagiri and about a similar distance east of the Baptist Mission. In this area there is now the highest level of education and the greatest contact with the world beyond the Kond Hills.

See Vol. I back pocket for an Introductory Table of the major Kond rituals practised today, also for Tables numbered A to H giving details of the rituals discussed in the text below. Table J in the back pocket provides a calendar of seasonal rituals alongside seasonal economic activities and available food.

Accounts of all rituals not discussed in this chapter below will be found in Vol. II Appendix along with their earlier parallels given by Kogera Prodhan and still earlier accounts by Macpherson.

(a) Rituals of Ordered Relationship Between God, Man and the Land

The Konds follow well over a dozen agricultural rituals which are calendrical in the sense that the Kui calendar follows the cultivation processes: ploughing, paddy-sowing, transplanting, weeding, forming of grain in the ear, ripening, reaping and threshing all having their season, along with other crops or activities in the remaining months: e.g. lentil harvest, mango season, etc. The performance of the cultivation rituals connected with these seasons is the prerogative of a
variety of lay officials. The set of harvest rituals from the paddy-growing cycle have been selected for the following reasons: they follow each other in such rapid succession as to make up a single unit while at the same time illustrating the variety of persons who upon specific occasions fulfil the priestly function for their own groups; also because Kogera's accounts of fifty years before are available for comparison; and because these paddy rituals illustrate the Konds' ability to adopt this agricultural practice of their Hindu neighbours but apply to it their own systematic theology. For reasons set out in Chapter VI, these rituals are probably not much more than 300 years old.

(b) **Rituals Seeking the Blessing and Co-operation of the Ancestors**

This group of rituals varies from ancestor-interest in matters relating to other clans, to the village's founding fathers, or to each separate clan. The annual Bullock Sacrifice is the example taken here because it is obligatory upon every Kond household and expresses particularly clearly the ambivalent love-hate - or better, respect-disrespect - attitude of the Konds towards these omnipresent and omniscient members of their family.

(c) **Rituals to Guard Against Diminishment Due to Pollution Offences.**

The vast array of pollution situations stretch from small household avoidance to cases of incest that pollute the earth throughout the whole area and all the people on it. At the level of the village group one of the most common pollution situations occurs when a member of the community is killed by one of the 'Unripe Deaths', i.e. death before due time by the misadventure of tiger-maul, death in childbirth, or by hanging, by falling from a tree or drowning. So great is the result-
ing pollution that the entire village is placed in strict isolation until, traditionally, a whole month of daily purification rituals are fulfilled. The time has now been halved in general usage. Purification of the village community after a death by tiger-maul is selected for description here because the Konds fear this form of pollution danger more than any other of these common disasters - pollution from the even greater danger, that of incest, being very rare indeed.

(d) Rituals in Life-Destroying Situations:
(I) Due to Disturbed Spirits

These are the group of spirits traditionally ranked next in importance to Bura and Tari. They have dominion over one particular element or area of life, such as the God of Increase, of Boundaries, of War, of Hunting etc. They are not limited to a particular location as are the lesser divinities associated each with their own springs, villages, hills, etc. Though all these were officially superseded by the worship of Bura God in the Goomsur District, they remain present and are therefore still invoked upon occasion. The Lamentation Ritual is discussed here as it illustrates Goomsur's changing stages of belief though continuance of the practice.

Rituals in Life-Destroying Situations:
(II) Due to Man's Ill-Will

This is usually believed to arise from the evil intent of some member of the victim's family. From among a variety of forms of witchcraft and sorcery, Evil Eye is described here for suspected cases of it are common among the Konds. Various methods by which the priest ritually returns the evil to the sender are discussed for the same reason and because several elements common to other areas of Kond ritual are here used with different purposes.

The selected rituals within these four classes will now be presented.
Rituals of Ordered Relationship Between God, Man and the Land

Mumford affirms that "the original purpose and meaning of ritual was to create order and meaning where none existed; to affirm them when they had been achieved; to restore them when they were lost." If my reading of the situation among the Konds be correct, then their development of the Meriah sacrifice was certainly to create order and meaning where none existed. The set of rituals now to be considered belongs to Mumford's second group: rituals which affirm that order and meaning when it has been achieved. By constant and exact repetition of certain ritual acts connected with the seasons of cultivation and stages of growth, the Goomsur Konds reaffirm and celebrate the ordered relationship between their group, their God and their produce-bearing land. The situations giving rise to these rituals are clear to the whole community, as is the timing and the actions necessary for right celebration. Hence the services of a professional priest are not required for there are no problematic situations to be resolved.

The predominant ritual actions and materials in this group are those most regularly used in Kond practices: prior purification, a little uncooked rice, chicken's blood, an egg, and the bitali offering. The necessary level of purification is achieved through the celebrants' fasting (involving not only food but sexual abstinence for two or three days previously), a ritual bath, then gruhka and takinga maspa purification ceremonies. Uncooked rice maintains its purity over against the pollution introduced by cooking. (This will be discussed in more detail in section (c) below). Algu rice is used for these offerings as it is obtained from paddy without the normal triple-

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boiling process. Chicken's blood is a necessary part of almost every Kond sacrifice even when larger animals are the chief victims. The Kuttia use pigeons for this purpose, a practice that may have been common throughout the hills before the days of the domestic chicken. The normal way of sacrificing, whether it be chicken, goat or pig, is to sever its head from its body with one swift stroke of the long, slightly curved sacrificial knife. The head is allowed to drop and the life-blood is swiftly poured from the neck over the other offerings - the verb has a meaning between smeared and sprinkled. Blood so used is at the very heart of Kond ritual. Only in the Kedu, or formerly in the human sacrifice, were pieces of flesh carried off to be buried. This could have been a matter of convenience or necessity, for these pieces of flesh were sometimes carried considerable distances through the heat of the afternoon. With it carefully wrapped in leaves there was some hope of reaching the home village while the blood was still reasonably moist and 'living', whereas small amounts of blood alone would have dried up beyond recall. 'Without the shedding of (human) blood on the ground', say the Konds, 'there is no well-being' (i.e. no fertility and good health of family and fields). Following the same symbolism, red is the favourite colour for girls and young women. It is the main colour in the tribal cloth, woven to the traditional pattern by Fans, and even though that is now too costly to be common, cheaper plain red saris are worn particularly by girls of marriageable age at all festivities (wound round the body, not worn in the graceful folds of the plains). As possible marriage arrangements are always in the air at large festivities such as weddings, funerals and the Kedu - all these involving many guests from other villages - the reason for the fertility and well-being motif is not far to seek. At the traditional death dance for an important funeral, the Fan dancing team dance out
(Top) An unmarried girl wearing the Kond cloth and traditional silver ornaments.

(Below) Ban musicians and team for the funeral battle-dance - the dance team dressed as women but with warriors' wild buffalo horn head-gear and war weapons.
their mock battle with warriors' turbans of wild buffalo horns yet
dressed as women, with red saris kilted from the waist: 'the blood is
the life' at war with death-dealing forces.

In Kogera's time more than today, the chicken's feathers were
plucked out to add point, it seems, to the phrases of the invocation.
The moment of sacrifice comes at the final peroration.

Though the chicken as a prolific provider of eggs has especially
valuable blood to offer, the egg itself is a highly important element
in Kond ritual. It serves in a variety of situations: it is used in
abundance at all stages of Kedu Buffalo Sacrifice and is essential in
the calendrical agricultural rites, often closely connected with the
davri, also in all rites whose purpose is to drive off disease-bringing
spirits - the Kuttia declaring that a broken egg-shell is the measuring
pot of the Smallpox Goddess. But it is not apparently used in death
rituals, whether for normal or for 'Unripe Deaths' (see Ritual F in
back pocket, also Appendix Vol. II), nor in rituals directly offered
to the ancestors - though as the agent of divination, an egg is used
one year beforehand to find out whether the whole set of village-
ancestors are willing to move to a new site. In the same way a (good)
divining egg is used in early pregnancy to know whether a live baby
will be born or not, the necessary sign being provided through the
destruction or safe preservation of this good egg over a period of
twenty-four hours. Again that function is confined to divination,
for eggs are not used any further in the various pregnancy and birth
rituals. In the Ritual for the Hill God (see Appendix Vol. II) which
in some measure became associated with the War God after warfare was
discontinued, not just one but twelve good eggs are offered, possibly
with a strong emphasis on creativity and new birth to offset the
inevitable deaths among young virile warriors. Rotten eggs, too, have
their function. Buried in the ground they can reach out to catch the practitioner of Evil Eye as he inadvertently steps over them, but they are evidently not efficacious against the black mysteries of witchcraft. A different form of the same idea occurs in one of the Kond myths of creation common in the Mallikapori area, which begins: 'When the world was hatched out....', and from which may be argued a cosmogonic interpretation of the egg. But on none of these occasions does the egg stand in isolation; always it must be seen in the context of each ritual. It may simply be noted at this point that whatever additional meanings be included, the sound egg is the constant representative and reminder of new birth or rebirth. In contradistinction to this creative function, the rotten egg has an excluding or pushing off action, seen for instance in section (a), when someone is suffering from the effects of Evil Eye.

Some Comments on the Harvest Rituals

(1) Ritual for Reaping (See A(i) & A(ii) in the back pocket)

There is little difference between the two accounts. All essential actions and symbols are to be found in both. Although the 1910 version begins in the paddy field, it is probable that the purification sub-ceremonies of gruhka and tekinga maspa were prior conditions, just as they are in the later version (A(ii) 1 & 2); for in this ceremony the head of whichever household happens to own the traditionally selected field, acts as temporary priest not only for his immediate family who work the field, but in token of his wider community. Inherited seniority in that family holds good however young the representative head (see photograph). He receives no assistance from the heads of associated families, for on his paddy embankment alone is the ancient sacrificial spot recognised alike by the living and the spirit world. (A(ii) 8 & 9).
Young head of family holding an egg and preparing to sacrifice a chicken (tied to pole) to fulfil the village's annual requirement.
Kogera's phrase 'to throw down' the bitali portion of the (cooked) food-offering indicates rather its firm and definite placing on the spot, beyond all touch, for the use and enjoyment of the deity; it does not suggest any careless slinging of the food at the spot. The liver is considered to be the best meat in any animal. It is a deep, rich blood-colour and has no bones, fat nor gristle to make it a grudging offering or to detract from its solid perfection as tasty meat. Though the divinity receives only a small token portion, the remainder is eaten only by the celebrant.

The difference of fifty years is more marked in the two invocations. Both appear to be brief in these accounts but many phrases and clusters of phrases would of course be repeated ad nauseam at high gabbled speed. In this example as in Kogera's other invocations, there are highly colourful picture-phrases such as the 'red' 'rosy' (i.e. ripened) paddy-grain, a symbol of fertility; life-giving both for man's immediate well-being and as next year's seed for future harvests. There are also occasional words that cannot be translated by the non-priest. The invocations of the 1960 era are non-priestly condensations of what the priest says, hence more understandable but much less accurate through being 'edited' by other participants in the community.

Kogera's invocation here reveals something of the ambiguity in which worshippers evidently still found themselves in the Goomsur District. Necessarily addressing Bura God now as Creator and Provider of all things, covert references to the Earth Goddess and the former mode of address are still evident. In the first place there is ambivalence of sex in the deity addressed: 'Bura God', the great masculine deity, is also addressed in uncharacteristic Hindu terms as 'Losmi-di' (presumably Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity). I have
never heard of this form of address from anyone else; it certainly is not in use now. How much this ambivalence between male and female principles in the god-head is due to Kogera's contacts with Hindus in the nearby settlement of G. Udayagiri cannot be determined, but it is not unknown in other countries to find a lack of clarity regarding the sex of the High God among fairly remote tribal peoples. ¹ His later petition that the land may not be unstable nor cause any 'sinking up to the thigh' is a clear reference to the Earth Goddess myth regarding the origin not simply of blood-sacrifices but of human blood if the yield is to be 'so great as to snap the carrying-pole'.

The 1960 invocation on the other hand, is so extraordinarily innocent of any such ambiguities or references that it reflects the proximity of this village to the Mission, which was only just beginning work in Kogera's time and had no converts to Christianity. A parallel invocation from further away would doubtless be more faithful even now to traditional belief. Both invocations, however, if heard 'live', would reveal the intense delight in balance phrase and rich repetition and, as throughout the whole ritual process, the satisfaction of right order in action and word, through which alone the mystical creative force may be appropriated for the well-being of the worshipping community.

(ii) The Ritual of the Empty Ear (See B(i) & B(ii))

Again the essential symbols and actions have remained the same over the half-century though an elaboration is noticeable. In 1910 one central darni alone seems to have been the cult site (B(i)6) but by 1960 (and considerably earlier) an upper and lower darni had been added to each village although the central darni remained as the main

¹ Kogera displays this same ambiguity in his graphic and beautiful myth accounting for the presence of the delectable Wine-Palm Tree in the Kond hills. In that he addresses God quite impartially as "O Father/Sir!" and "O Mother/Woman!" (See Vol. II Appendix)
focus of worship. These two additional *darnis* were perhaps the result of the gradual rotting away of the defence stockade which had surrounded every village. This had become less necessary after war raids were abolished, also the open terrain in the east, particularly around the Mallikapori cluster of villages, made the incursions of tigers and leopards less frequent. Moreover, the *darni* stones themselves represented supernatural protection against wild beasts for only under adverse demonic pressures would wild beasts enter confined spaces such as the village *reha*, and the guardian power residing in the upper and lower *darni*, if properly acknowledged, could be stronger than they and forestall their evil attack.

In accordance with this change (which may be another evidence of Kond ability to adapt the forms of its religion to changing circumstances without in any way threatening its own beliefs) small practical changes in ritual action were necessary: in the later account, two long bamboo poles held up the *Sisa* ears, one at the upper and one at the lower *darni*, to attract the attention of the god and guide his arrival. The sacrifice continued to be performed, however, at the central *darni* and the blood-offering made there.

In this ritual the lay *darni*-keeper is the officiant representing the community though other householders are close at hand in a supporting role, making a cooking-fire right outside his house (i.e. beside the central *darni*), cooking the bulk of the rice and then the sacrificial meat - except for the *bitali* portion.

The same differences can be seen in a comparison of the two invocations as was seen in the preceding ritual: nearly Christian influence has again probably given rise to the mild orthodoxy of the 1960 prayer, addressed of course to Bura God. Kogera's prayer, though not addressing the Earth Goddess by name, is still strongly related to her in her
role of Darni Goddess, Founder- Ancestor- Goddess, for it is offered at
the central darni, the place still closely associated with her divine
demand for human blood. In contrast, his other two harvest prayers
at reaping (A(i)) & threshing (G(i)) are clearly addressed to Bura God.
From this it may be inferred that offerings made outside the village
in the paddy-fields are within the sphere of Bura God's activities as
Creator God of Light, while those within the reha at the darni, the
centre of village life and village worship, in 1910 are still close
in thought to the Earth Goddess: she can after all be identified in
both her divine form, as Darni Goddess previously expecting human food
at this time, and her human form as Amali-Baeli, the first voluntary
victim-ancestor or Jakeri. His prayer indicates the four ways in
which small amounts of paddy-grain might inadvertently have been
'threshed' and the ears made empty before the proper celebration of
this ritual: by vermin, by birds, by sheaf-payment to hired help on
the harvest-field, or by theft - all equally dangerous to the community
if not made clear to the deity. The prayer-reference to the bringing
home of the night-watchmen's huts and all that had gone into their
making, is a sign that reaping is now at an end in the local fields,
for these temporary huts are to guard the ripening crops against
predators, human and animal. The darni-keeper is in fact performing
this ritual while the reapers complete their work in the last harvest
field, thus many basket-loads of paddy have already been carried to
the threshing-floor.

In Kogera's time this Sisa ritual also involved interaction with
the representatives of other villages in the Mata group. The gift
of a handful of ears of paddy along with salt and tobacco to households
of the celebrating village and to representatives of other villages
within their Mata may be a token re-statement of the strong bonds
causing 'open house' to be kept by any and all members of the associated villages within the luta. The 'Hungry Season' which begins in May or June would already have been alleviated by a three or four week harvest-season of maize and a little 'dry-rice' harvested in September and October, but not fully broken until the harvesting of this luta paddy crop. During all that time hospitality, though obligatory, is very difficult in practice. Only when the main harvest is safely gathered in does the community relax in the knowledge that traditional social obligations can continue as they should. Even then there seems to be a transition period between want and plenty which is perhaps guarded by the taboo against giving grain from the village (i.e. removing old rice left from the previous year's harvest or new rice from the earlier reaped but inferior dry-rice fields).

(iii) Threshing Floor Ritual (See C(i) & C(ii))

The grouping of households who share a threshing floor is a matter of local convenience and availability. One such floor would always be on a sun-baked paddy-field close to the village, smoothed and hardened through gruhka; but obviously more distant 'floor-centres' must be set up. Representative householders participating in a particular floor build a watchmen's hut on it to guard against (Pan) thieves. On the given day each household head prepares for exactly the same ritual as his associates on the same floor: he and his wife must observe the 'priestly' taboo of fasting, regarding both food and sexual intercourse, also the casting out of their used cooking pots and replacement with new, then an extra-thorough purifying bath at the spring.

When the invocation is reached, it will be seen again that Kogera's is in the highly colourful and rhythmic traditional style and includes
many allusions common to his other prayer: gold and silver are incomer ideas probably associated with the rajahs for many centuries and are used as adjectives describing things of very high value - of which indeed the threshing-floor is a symbol. 1 The need for God's guardianship of their crops against all comers - from birds at seed-time right through to human thieves at storing time - is contrasted with the owners' physical frailty and need of sleep (the time when thieves have often been known to reap a whole field). The steady trampling of these foot-threshers requires the particular petition reminiscent of the Meriah Song: that the ground will remain firm and not open to absorb them 'up to the thigh'. The oft-reiterated request for a bountiful yield must be far older than Kond paddy-cultivation, from the days when millet was the staple for all as it still is for the more remote; but this prayer has now gained a nineteenth century addition arising presumably from their close observation that the droppings of the East India Company's cavalry horses and baggage elephants were superior to other dung as a fertilising agent.

As soon as each family head has offered the bitali portion, (C (i)17-19) individual representation ends in drinking and eating in cheery fellowship with concelebrants on the joint threshing floor. Meanwhile the women are preparing the grain-storage bins (C(ii)23). Termite earth is not only fine-grained, so making excellent 'cement', but the Konds believe it to be one of the four elements necessary for man's continuance and well-being. The highly irritant marori leaves on the other hand, are a virulent antidote to any possible Evil Eyed glance. Thus each family's food supply is made secure.

1 In the Lero, Bad Humour Song (See G(i) in the back pocket) Kogera similarly indicates how precious was Bura God's only son by describing him as 'a golden child, a silver child'.

Popkondi - The Day of Scattering (See D(i) & D(ii))

*Popkondi* is an archaic form of the Infinitive meaning 'to scatter'; it is also the Verbal Noun (archaic) meaning 'The Scattering'.

After the main threshing is over, sensitivity toward the fieldless poor within the community (D(ii) 3 & 4) and (D(i) 2) enables even the latter to carry home their basketful, rejoicing, from the liberal amount left for them to glean from the floor. But in case all this jollity should appear to God as unjustifiable pride in man's achievement - to the Konds a dangerous thought - a special petition is offered that God will understand the situation and their reasons for revelry. To fail in celebration would, they feel, go against the wish of gods and spirits alike.

D(ii) Not only do the poor receive a free gift of paddy from their better-circumstanced neighbours but on the final day the threshing floor becomes the gathering place for the entire community. (D(i) 1) and (D(ii) 1) In the afternoon obligations are fulfilled when field-owning Konds pay their annual dues in grain to the herdsmen, smiths and potters as well as any other outstanding debts; the children are feasted, sitting in rows on the now cleared and swept floor; and then at night with the drink flowing, the drums beating and the young people wearing all their family finery, the threshing floor becomes dance hall. Thus the fulfilled cycle of seed-time and harvest reaches full celebration.

So the taboos safeguarding the village are lifted (D(ii) 5) and people may move about freely beyond the village boundary, for until the completion of the ritual - as with all rituals - no one may go off on his own ploys. To do so would endanger not just that individual through the deities' wrath, but would provide a dangerous crack in group solidarity.
Rituals Seeking the Blessing and Co-operation of the Ancestors

The Kui people have no doctrine of souls, for a doctrine presupposes a view that is taught. It is possible to deduce, however, from their social and religious behaviour an awareness of (an) aspect of human personality which has the power to continue in some way after physical death, or even to leave the body for short periods during life - in sleep, trance or dream. Dreams are largely believed to be true, for they are the wanderings of this part of one's personality, with an ability to enter into actual events. All Kui men, women and children are believed to possess this kind of soul.¹

Dinga Pemu as God of the Hereafter, with a territory to which the human soul must go and be judged, to have been misguided by informants from the Hindu-Oriya area on the north-east borders. Macpherson, pp.92-93).

The ancestor presence is believed to be so close a part of life that it scarcely needs to be mentioned. "Wherever I go," said one educated man, "the family ancestors go too - even to Calcutta (synonymous with Timbuctoo to him). "They go to befriend and help me and to keep me in community. But it is essential to keep up ritual observances or they'll try to destroy me by fever or some mishap."

Recently-dead ancestors who were reasonably satisfied with their living kin's observance of death rites do not attempt to re-enter this life in violent ways. They are believed to carry on their previous daily work of wood-cutting and working the family hill plots or paddy fields, but all in a shadowy manner. Of greater seniority and experience than the living, they are kept in right relationship with their kin both by annual celebration and by respectful remembrance-gifts of

tobacco or their favourite food. Older than all the living elders, they receive the first drink at every libation poured prior either to ritual sacrifice or social drinking parties. At this point they are corporately identified with the founder of the village. Older members of the family are understandably the most faithful in these observances, being the ones most likely to join them before long. The ancestors are believed to take a keen interest in the social and religious activities as well as the health of their living kin, the visible tokens of respect which they demand are reciprocated through their increasing the well-being of their descendants. This reciprocal relationship is held to be particularly true with regard to the hill plots and fields in which the householder and his family toil to produce food, for these are owed to the ancestors who fashioned them and are simply held in trust by the living, to be passed on in good condition to the family-yet-to-come.

Ancestors, however, are as unpredictable in death as in life. They have their needs and difficulties in their shade-existence which they must make known to their living kin if they are to be rectified: thus arise the otherwise inexplicable calamities which come upon the living and which priest or diviner diagnoses as the work of an insecure, angry or frustrated ancestor. The exact cause would also be stated: perhaps disapproval of some new plan which the living are adopting without due consultation; or perhaps the need of a new bullock to replace his shade-bullock for the shade-ploughing season. Costly sacrifice must be offered to avert further disasters, for though the ancestors grow weaker by neglect they also grow more hostile. One leading Kond pointed out the extent to which this belief is open to abuse. For example, the priest may be bribed to demand both high fees and a costly animal sacrifice from the man whose fine cattle or
other form of riches the briber has long envied. By taking advantage of his misfortunes, an enemy's wealth may be consistently reduced in this way.

It must surely be in their capacity as sources of potential danger to their descendants that ancestor rituals incorporate the four symbolic elements which occur in rituals associated with two other areas imperilling life: first, those rituals which desperately seek to halt and drive out the destructive activities of all the disease-bringing deities such as smallpox and the many other fevers; and secondly, the reversal rituals directed against 'evil-eyed' sorcerers. The four elements used on these occasions are: fine red earth from a termite hill, flour (formerly ground millet but now rice-flour), soot, and yellow and 'red' turmeric. (The latter is an element in its own right in many Kond rituals; its normal function is to be mixed in powdered form with oil then smeared or anointed over the animal victim, as with the human Meriah earlier. The celebrant or other key members may similarly anoint themselves.)

In rituals involving the whole village, the four elements mentioned above are usually offered in leaf-cups which each householder places with reverence in the central offering-basket. But in ancestor rituals the four elements have a different function, as will be seen below in the Bullock Sacrifice.

The symbolic significance of these elements is in process of being forgotten, especially by eastern Konds who incline simply to do what their forebears did, considering that to be a good and sufficient reason. The Kuttia Konda, however, are quite clear on the matter. The four elements of millet-flour, red termite-earth, soot and turmeric when used in this symbolic way are the materials from which man is
created or fashioned before being born of a mother into the kin-
group again. In fact, the Kuttia affirmed to Professor Higgemeyer:

'If too much red is used, the person is an Oriya;
If too much black, he becomes a Kond;
If too much white, a European.'

Thus, he commented, the Konds are never astonished at anything;
they can always find a plausible reason for it. In this way, they
are able to incorporate all new things into their own philosophy
without strain.

Ancestors do not suffer human limitations of mobility, though in
order to return to the fuller and more desirable state of the living
they may seek rebirth into their kin group. When a baby begins to
show decided personality characteristics (probably about six months),
he arouses speculation as to whose spirit may have re-entered the
living world at his birth, either temperament or physical features
being the guide. The priest then makes the age-old test which has
remained the same from the earliest observation of Kond customs:
 viz. the first report written by a Telugu member of the Hon. Mr. Stev-
son's staff during his first visit to the Konds in 1836:

'Six months after, on a fixed day...killing a hog, and procuring
liquor, they make baji (feast). They wash the feet of the child.
The Jani being come, he ties a cord from the half to the point
of a sickle; they divine by means of it. Having assembled the
Petirula 3 (literally ancestors, but here denoting household
images, or gods) they put rice on the sickle. As the names (of
the ancestors? or family?) are repeated in order each time the
rice is put on, that name is chosen on the mention of which the
sickle moves, and is given to the child. They then drink liquors,
and eat baji. They give rice and flesh to the Jani.'

1 Hermann Higgemeyer, Kuttia Kond: Dschungel-Bauern in Crissa,
Froebenius-Instituts an der Johann Wolfgang - Goethe - Universitat,
Frankfurt am Main, 1964, p.143.
2 From the writer's personal conversations with Professor Higgemeyer.
3 'lu' is here the Telugu plural added to the Kui word.
4 The Madras Journal of Literature and Science, No.16, July 1837, pp.39-40
The priest’s invocation not included in that early account is as follows:

‘If it is true that the grandfather’s spirit has come to this child,
Let it (the sickle or knife) dance!
Let it fling about!
But if the grandfather’s spirit has not come,
Let it be utterly silent!’

If the knife moves and the grain falls off, when they sacrifice a chicken to the ancestor and the name is ceremonially given, the priest says:

‘Let him be like his grandfather!
Let him grow!
Let him be a good man!
Let him be this kind of person’ (with great emphasis of voice, and arms stretched to fullest extent.)

The Bullock Sacrifice, made at least annually by every Kond household to their ancestors, is by far the most costly of the regular sacrificial expenses in each family. Its utterly obligatory nature reveals the key position held by the ancestors in the Kond world-view.

This is the only occasion in Kond ritual when the victim is a bullock, and it is impossible to determine what makes this the necessary victim. The Konds’ evident unease at killing this animal, sacred to all Hindus, is reflected in their priests’ refusal to officiate (See B(i), introductory paragraph). No such scruples are felt by Ban officiants, nor evidently by Kond casuistry when it is a Ban hand that does the deed. The fact of the bullock as victim indicates that in this form at least, the ritual cannot be more than three or four hundred years old. Perhaps it was the incoming of paddy techniques, strange to the ancestors, that led to their offering the ‘new’ animal along with its new associations in an attempt to appease disgruntled ancestor spirits whose former ways of cultivation were being pushed aside. Before that time the ancestors were probably offered a goat,
as in the ritual for the Clan Ancestor-deities or Siri Venga (See Vol. II Appendix). The fact that the latter is falling into disuse - being observed in this area only by the most devout, and at intervals of several years - may indicate it as the forerunner of the Bullock Sacrifice. At whatever season the Siri Venga was originally observed, the ploughing bullock is now felt to be the obligatory victim just before the main (paddy) paddy harvest. I was told that it is 'to drive the ancestors away for fear that ancestor-spirits will destroy the crop, and sometimes also because they have brought fever,' i.e. as a signal that they require attention and food. Thus, as the Bullock Ritual became the norm, a corresponding decline in the Siri Venga Ritual was to be expected. The words siri venga are ancient Kui, meaning 'root-divinities' in the sense of being at the root of the family tree, so this may also be associated in the Kond mind with the Earth Goddess who, in her human form, was also root-founder member of the Konds. If so it is not surprising that the 'newer' Bullock Ritual is replacing the older form alongside replacement of the Earth Goddess by Bura worship in the Goomsur area. 'Only ultra-conservative Konds still observe the Siri Venga Ritual', I was told, 'and that not often' - perhaps those families which have never been quite easy in their minds about ceasing to worship their first Founder.

Some Comments on the Bullock Sacrifice (See B(i) & B(ii))

The two accounts of the Bullock Sacrifice presented here, one by Kogera Frodhan and the other of the present day, are similar in all significant features though comparison throws up several points of interest.

All the most stringent forms of purification are undertaken before calling the ancestors to attend the ritual. The entire
household observes a total fast until nightfall on the day of preparation, avoiding even cleaning their teeth because of its accompanying sluicing of the mouth with water. The housewife purifies the floor by gruhka, rubbing cow-dung over fine soil from a termite hill. Having cast out her used earthenware cooking pots and other expendable kitchen utensils (tekinga maspa) she replaces them with new ones; she and the other women of the house wash all the household clothing at the spring and take their own baths. The household head meanwhile, along with his younger brothers (probably in adjoining houses) and the priest have all put potter's clay on their heads early that morning - the finest traditional shampoo for their oil-absorbed hair. This clay remains there while they carry out other aspects of their ritual preparation. It dries hard and white, the colour of purity. Only in the late afternoon do they take their baths, and when night falls (E(i) 9 and (ii) 21) and the day itself is no longer light and 'pure' may they break their fast, and then only with a vegetable not a meat meal.

The bow and arrow (E(ii) 22) made from Paeri creeper are presumably for the ancestors in hunting as of yore. Kogera seems accidentally to have omitted the making of the bow, for he mentions earlier that the householder cuts the necessary Paeri creeper from the jungle. Sal branches (E(i) 11 and E(ii) 11 & 13) were ritually used (and still are occasionally) to attract the attention of gods and spirits, hence their being hoisted on to the most suitable high spot above the front door. The Paeri leaves are of course required as always for leaf-plates or leaf-bowls for the food offerings, etc.

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1 See Vol. II Appendix for the ritual performance of Gruhka and Tekinga Maspa.
There is some local variation in the amount of time over which this ritual is spread: it may be two days and nights or only a little over one day and night, but the essential actions are the same.

Kogeru states in words what is implicit in the later account, that in dabbing the rice-flour paste and blood on the beams, door-posts, etc. the man works from the centre of the house towards the front and the woman towards the back of the house. These two halves of the house, though not divided visibly have 'male' and 'female', or pure and impure implications. The back reha (or seasonally, garden plot) is known by the word okuli, the back door is the okuli door and the common term for menstruation is 'to become okuli'. For a menstruating woman to come out of her front door into the front reha pollutes it and the dermi in it; the same rule applies to her in the month following the birth of a child. Corpses of either sex are polluting and therefore are carried out by the okuli door and round the back of the village to the cremation ground, also see the note on cooking outside at the back after tiger-kill has polluted the whole village. (P(ii) in the back pocket).

In the phrases of the song to call the ancestors (E(ii) 29 & 34) 'Nare-naaa' is the Kond equivalent of the English 'lah-lah' sung to a tune without words.

Although the whole of the house-building is involved in this ritual, the simple phrase 'the middle room' veils its importance to 'outsiders' but conveys a wealth of meaning to the Kond. (See E(i) 17, 19, 27, 30 & E(ii) 27ff, 44). Physically this 'room' is little more than a dark windowless angled-entry to the cooking area, but there in perpetual shadow dwell the ancestors, whether symbolised by the bronze clan-emblem, some unusual object (such as the tiny pot doll 'Made in Japan' and mentioned in Chapter V) or in the case of young
Ground plan of well-to-do Kond home (2 storage bins). Others are smaller. Above the cook-room section is a plank-platform for storage poles, etc.

Main room of a Kond house shared with the cattle. Note the strong outer wall-planks and doorpost (right). No furniture.
couples setting up their first home, by a round stone. These ancestor emblems are utterly private property to those concerned, kept so sacred from either discussion or prying eyes that the bronzes remained unknown from the time of the very first report by Stevenson in 1836 until the Konds suddenly cast them out in 1955.  

So Stevenson reports that to represent these Retri - or ancestor-deities

'...they make in brass figures of elephants, peacocks, dolls (human figures), fishes, these and the like, and keep them in their houses. If affliction happens to anyone belonging to the household or if the country cutaneous eruptions break out on any of them, or if the anniversary of an ancestor's death occur, they put rice into milk, and mingling turmeric with it, they sprinkle the mixture on these images, and killing fowls and sheep (i.e. goats), they cause worship to be made by the Jani; and making ba.1i. they cause libations to be made by the Jani; and making ba.1i., they prepare feasts to be eaten.'

Closest to the 'ancestors' place' is stored the seed-paddy for next year's sowing, while the main paddy storage bins, reaching almost to the low roof, are in front of them forming the barrier dividing the public room from the private part of the house. It is clear from the elaborate method of calling them to their feast that though 'the middle room' is the ancestors' home, they are not continually immanent any more than are other divinities in the places associated with their worship. It would seem, in fact, that their absence is sought at such times as they may be feeling ill-used or fretful against the living. Though they receive libation liquor on the frequent occasions of community drinking, they are especially provided with water to drink at this Bullock Sacrifice (also at a death in the family, when water-pots are placed on the roof for them), for "ancestors are known

1 See Chapter V (d) for a full discussion of these bronze emblems.

2 I suggest here that Stevenson's Telugu informant mistook the thickish white rice-water for milk, for the latter is uncharacteristic of the Konds.

3 His informants confess to uncertainty of the exact meaning of the term 'ba.1i'; whether it were a food or an occasion. Ba.1i is in fact the term for a celebratory meal together.

4 Madras Journal, p.41.
to be always thirsty". It is not clear why water quenches their thirst for it is not a drink to which the living Kond is at all addicted; his dislike of it, in fact, forms a major hazard to a sick Kond in hospital who may be required to co-operate with modern drug-usage by drinking water copiously.

As in any ritual where there are possibly evil influences as well as the surplus sacred material to be removed at the end, a Poha sub-ceremony follows (See Vol. II Appendix). So that all may be completed in an orderly and therefore safe fashion, such elements are normally 'swept' or carried about half a mile down the main track away from the village - though towards the next one! With ancestor rituals, however, the track to the cremation ground is the obvious practical choice, for ancestors are concerned only with their own kin and village; not with others.
Rituals to Guard Against Diminishment of the Group Through Pollution Offences

Calendrical rituals calling upon the aid of the deity to maintain the given order in Kond society have been discussed, and the central position of the ancestors recognised, without whose approval no decision can be made nor new work begun. In looking now at Kond ideas regarding pollution, we find a vast network of sanctions and avoidances by which transgressors are purified and reintegrated and order is again created where anomaly or 'infection' had intruded.

It would be wellnigh impossible to state all the minor observances of the ordinary Kond concerned with avoiding pollution as he goes about his daily life and work. To take one process alone, that of the preparation and consumption of the morning meal, Kond actions closely follow the line of reasoning described by Mary Douglas. 1 The Kond woman of the house must first finish all defiling work: she collects the manure with her left hand from the cattle section of the house and carries it by special basket to the paddy field; as she, or any member of the house, goes to the hillside to defaecate - men to one area and women to another - the normal rule of greeting members of the community is completely in abeyance; the 'polluted' member is treated as 'not there' and thus does not defile others. On her return the same folk would meet her as though for the first time that morning, with normal cordiality. This is a typical method of coping with a minor temporary pollution anomaly - the negative way of ignoring it and so preventing its upsetting the regular morning programme's orderliness.

After taking her bath she is purified for her cooking. Cooked food is liable to pass on pollution, so when her husband comes in to

eat, though he purifies himself by washing his right hand in running (poured) water, he nevertheless becomes to some extent polluted by the act of eating. Hence he must not touch, and so defile, his server-wife's hand, nor must he allow the hand-eaten food to touch any further up than the lower two joints of his right hand. Moreover, his pollution would be greatly increased if his handful of rice touched his lips instead of being tossed into his mouth, for his own saliva would seriously pollute his hand - as it would also pollute any drinking cup, etc. At times of menstruation his wife is prevented by strong taboo from cooking for her household or approaching their eating vessels. Traditionally she must sleep in an outhouse, purifying her mat and all her clothes before returning indoors. During that time, her husband must cook for himself if there is no daughter, the pollution taboo being stronger than the normal sex-work classification. And so it goes on throughout the day's observances.

By Mary Douglas' reasoning the cooking of food, as well as being extremely permeable to pollution, is seen as the beginning of ingestion; so cooking becomes as susceptible to pollution as does eating. This attitude is particularly so, she maintains, when the external boundaries of the social system are under pressure. In this case the non-Kond blacksmith has tempered the hoe and sickle blade used in the cultivation of that rice, non-Kond labour was probably employed in the fields, and certainly all the grain is stored in containers woven by Pan basket-makers. Thus before Konds can admit it into their bodies, some clear symbolic break is necessary.

1 Ibid.
The process of cooking provides that break - so long as it is done by unpolluted Kond hands; hence the taboo on cooking during menstruation. This probably is the reason, too, why men-heads of households do all the ritual cooking, for the women-heads would not all be available on any specific ritual occasion. Thus once more we see the Konds attempting to create and maintain the separateness of their own Kond people in the face of their necessary interdependence on other peoples.

In addition to day-to-day observances there are some of greater and more lasting complexity when dangerously polluted situations cannot be avoided. The stages of pregnancy, birth and death are foremost among these and affect both lineage group and village. There may also be the wilful breaking of a taboo, as, for instance, when a Kond girl runs off to marry a non-Kond. Excommunication is the only way of reordering the broken unity within the group unless and until she returns alone and her whole clan is willing to go through the purification ritual necessary for her readmission (See Vol. II Appendix). Never would this be possible for her non-Kond ex-husband for he is the 'uncleaness' which must be excluded if this dangerous situation is to be controlled, the unity of orderliness to be restored, and the people kept 'whole' and 'of one heart'. For only as a strongly united community can they fulfill their religious and social obligations through which that mysterious force operative in the universe will work for them rather than against them. Part (C) of the Introductory Table (see back pocket) shows the major ritual occasions whose purpose is to restore the family or community from the results of pollution, involuntary or willed.

Apart from incest which pollutes the whole area - Kond and non-Kond alike - and whose only 'cure' was the death (formerly) of the offenders, or exiled excommunication nowadays, the Sidi Saki, or
Unripe Deaths (i.e. unforeseen and before due time) are the most dangerous form of pollution that can affect a village. Of these, death by tiger-kill is the greatest; and the rituals that follow to purify the community must surely be amongst the oldest of all Kond rituals. The following are the beliefs and fears still in the 1960's.

'Kui people desperately fear an Unripe Death because they invariably believe that every spirit-god, every ritual emblem and every ancestor have joined together to 'eat right inside them' - whereas normal deaths only affect one's own kin-ancestors who may be kept in right relationship through regular attention. The bereaved family in an Unripe Death are even more fearful than the rest, but the whole community is vitally affected and compelled to act together. This is customary law and must be observed.'

Or again:

'Unripe Deaths are considered to have highly dangerous consequences for the living members of both kin and community. Death through becoming 'Tiger-Food' is the most feared of all. Death in childbirth or in the month of birth-pollution ranks second. Death by hanging, drowning, falling from a tree or (a recent addition) by murder ranks only slightly less fearsome. All these forms of death pollute the dami and thus the whole community. They result in restless, unsettled ancestor-spirits, unacceptable to the main ancestor group, who are envious both of the living and of the 'settled' dead. Such spirits are desperate to claw someone else into joining them in their unbearable loneliness.'

'All these forms of Unripe Death result in an inheritable condition whereby the blood can 'jump' within the family. Thus murdering becomes an inherited trait within the murderer's kin, and being a victim becomes a similarly inherited trait within the victim's kin. It is Kui belief, however, that the trait may miss a generation and suddenly re-appear.'

When discussing initiation rites, Mary Douglas stresses that the most dangerous phase concerns rituals of segregation. 1 The Konds do not have any elaborate initiation rituals for either sex at puberty, but in other areas of life they fully subscribe to this view regarding the dangers of rituals of segregation. For example, tiger-kill is

1 M. Douglas, Purity and Danger, p. 96.
regarded not just as the death of one individual but the potential death of the community, isolating it from all other communities until the long purification ritual is completed. They reason that tigers do not normally kill men for food; they are in fact friendly toward man in leaving him half their animal-kill - a misconception of the tiger's habit of eating half of its kill the first evening with the intention of returning to finish its victim the following night. (The fact that some Kond village has meanwhile gratefully accepted its 'share' of course precipitates a further killing.) It is when destructive spirits enter the tiger or a malicious human enemy with the gift of tiger-transformation works in this way that the harm begins; and with the first death the community has begun a downward path towards extermination unless this terrifying pollution be overcome.

The comparatively frequent occurrence of a series of kills in the same district (by some old or injured tiger no longer able to catch swifter game) lends credence to this belief: as for instance, the man-eater that took a victim every second night for a week within a three-mile area before its hillside lair was surrounded by a combined operation involving all the guns and axes in the district. Two of its victims were young nursing mothers, so in addition to themselves, not only were two breast-fed infants likely to die in this community that traditionally refuses cows' milk, but the young mothers' potential families were wiped out. Thus the number 'killed' was already far greater than the three or four corpses. It was indeed death-dealing to the community.

The serious nature of the event demands the most powerful ritual involving both purification and rebirth. Until this is satisfactorily achieved, the 'infected' village must remain in quarantine from all other communities, staying strictly within its village boundaries.
One step beyond that would not only turn the rash member into the next victim but would start another new line of 'infected blood'.

Underlying all the elaborations of Unripe Death rituals lies their stated conviction that in those serious cases of pollution 'the blood jumps'; i.e. others in the group have become infected with certain death by tiger-kill. Moreover, this means utter death, without benefit of remaining in ancestor relationship. Receiving no funerary benediction from the living, the victim's spirit remains in terrible isolation for the rest of its normal life-span (or as long as people remember it) then bereft alike of companionship with the living or of spirit-fellowship in the world of the respectably dead, it is extinguished. As it prowls around, seeking only to draw some known member of the village, preferably of its kin, into the hollow companionship of a similar death, it is not surprising that its 'cries' can still strike terror in educated Kond men in broad daylight.

The background to the Kond belief regarding Unripe Deaths was discussed earlier (Chapter III (b)): that an ancestor who previously died in that manner has now committed fratricide, and though the whole community is placed under pollution danger, its most extreme form falls upon the victim's kin, on whom 'the blood jumps' sooner or later. Especially is the next-of-kin held to be in danger. So strong is this belief, and one's helplessness in the face of it, that it may result in what western thinking would term suicide. A typical occasion occurred when a young fellow hanged himself from the tree from which his father was found hanged. His father's spirit called strongly to him from the branch where it was now residing, and the blood jumped. Christians and non-Christians alike in the village accepted its inevitability.
The detailed belief concerning death from tiger-maul is as follows:

'Anyone eaten by a tiger becomes a bagoléenju-spirit (female: bagoléeri) and prows around astride the back of the man-eater. He/she usually lives in the deepest jungle or in the land-erosion ravines or the steepest river banks or the place where the victim was cremated (i.e. where the death happened). They are given no funeral festivities and none of the normal food offerings and attention from their family; so as a rule they live near tall Broha-fir trees and eat its tiny seeds - the half-eaten fruit can often be seen on the ground as proof. They may also eat wild mangoes and other jungle fruit.

A bagoléenju is known to make a loud cry, calling out again and again: "Keese-law! Keese-law!" When his long, loud wail is heard, on hill passes or in the deep forest, not usually close to the village, men run for safety, saying: "Hark! The bagoléenju is crying. He will seize and devour me!" It is a terrifying thought because he is on the swift back of a tiger and he can claw people too. "If he devours one of our family," they say, "the blood jumps to another of direct lineage so that he too will become a victim sooner or later."

Unfortunately Kogera Frodhan does not include births and deaths in his accounts of rituals, but Stevenson's earliest report in 1836 states:

'Should a tiger carry off anyone, they throw out of doors all the (preserved) flesh belonging to him, and all the people of the village, not excepting children, quit their homes. The Jarni being come, with two rods of the Tumosea tree (Acacia arabica), he plants these in the earth; and then bringing one rod of the Conda-tamara (smilax macrophylla) tree, he places it transverse-ly across the other two. The Jarni, performing some incantation, sprinkles water on them. Beginning with the children, as these and the people pass through the passage so formed, the Jarni sprinkles water on them all. Afterwards the whole of them go to their houses, without looking behind them.'

He omits to mention that the pollution period apparently lasted for one month during which time the ritual had to be repeated daily.

Some comments on the Tiger-Food Form of Unripe Death (See F(ii). No F(i) is available.)

This ritual is involved all the way through in symbolism connect-
ed with death and re-birth. When both the general and the particular

1 Madras Journal, p.40
preparation is completed, the priest's symbolic sweeping movements - holding the live chicken's legs in one hand and the pig's hind legs in the other - 'sweep' the village empty of all human beings, living or ancestral. He gathers them just above the village, i.e. he sweeps them all out beyond the upper darm that marks the boundary of the living area, sweeping the evil out with them too. (cp. the Smallpox Pohā and other Pohā occasions (See Vol. II Appendix), when with the same arm-movements and holding a chicken, the priest accompanied by elders sweeps the evil disease-bringing spirits away down the main track). In these Unripe Death rituals a representative group even of heads of households cannot act on behalf of the village for its purification; every member, living and dead, must go, for all are so strongly polluted. The village must be totally emptied and the community cleansed before domestic life can be safely resumed.

When the red colouring is used nowadays it seems to be immaterial whether it comes from natural sources or from the market or Oriya store. Its importance is in its redness and in its becoming in essence the actual blood-pollution which can be sucked out of each infected person. Here 'blood' appears to symbolise the killing agent. It is the blood that 'jumps'; the tiger is merely the instrument of this death-dealing blood. After sucking up the prepared red mixture, the amount the priest spits out into the dish must surely be minimal if he is still able to produce 'the blood' from each person's forehead in the veska (sucking out) sub-ceremony.

Flowing water is always associated with carrying away some situation or object. The pregnant woman (i.e. suffering pollution danger) will not cross it for fear it causes her unborn child 'to flow away like the water'. On the other hand, at the earliest of her pregnancy rituals to safeguard the foetus, after the priest had tied
a gourd-seed necklace round her throat, she had been made to stand astride running water (i.e. form an arch over it) while he allowed one egg to be carried away by the water, another egg being placed in a thorn bush on the bank for 24 hours. By its continued existence or not the following day her chances of bearing a live baby are assessed.

That part of the tiger-kill ritual which takes place at the running water is surely a ritual of re-birth, for every man, woman and child in the community is 'dead' in pollution. With yellow turmeric (one of the four ingredients in man) staining the thread of his gourd-seed necklace, each is sprinkled with living running water, then enters the water and passes through the life-embued arch (for the thorn bushes and bamboo must be cut from living plants that same morning). Calling on all gods, spirits and ancestors, he leaves one state and passes, like a baby from the womb, through this encircling life-gate and is immediately drawn from his momentary individualism into an awareness of his fellowmen as he joins them on the bank. From the youngest to the eldest the same ritual is followed, for everyone is under the death-dealing power and there must be no gaps or missing links in the ranks. It is at this point that the priest sucks out the infection of the dead man's 'jumped blood' from each one. He does this from three places on each one's forehead, a symbolic number of sufficiency in Kond thinking, as in the three sets of Amni stones in each village. Through voluntarily polluting his lips, the priest channels the evil from within each person, then by spitting it out on that first day he begins the long task of disposing of it, which traditionally took a full month of daily operations.

It is only after this, when the reversal process has begun, that the 'newly born' go to take their bath, a further purification, and are
then able to return to their 'empty' village and homes. Emphasising the taboo on cooking - which for a whole month must have been a sore trial to their food-bringing kinsmen from other villages - they next perform the tekinga maspa sub-ceremony, spending the month (or less now) without even the presence of cooking pots in the house; for these, more than any other household utensil, are polluted by 'infection' through their continual contact with cooked food. There is no cooking even of the liver of the pig and chicken sacrificial victims. They become 'whole offerings', carried away by the running water. It is significant that pigs are never sacrificed in the calendrical agricultural rituals, nor are they ever offered to the ancestors. The pig is the unclean animal sacrificed in rituals which involve purification from some uncleanness in order to return to the norm, as opposed to purification in order to rise above the norm for special ritual purposes.

Repeating this first day's programme daily, with the exception of the sacrifices and of the tekinga maspa which of course could not be repeated, the whole community remains in complete isolation: each member wearing his seed-necklace stays within the confines of the reha, abandoning all hill and field work. Invisible barriers enclose the boundaries and the village is literally dead to the world, only to be fully reborn when the time is fulfilled.

When that day arrives, not only is the entire ritual observed, complete with sacrificed pig and chicken, but another of the ingredients in the making of man is introduced in the (red) termite hill from which yet another form of arch is cut. Each member enters in turn, again invoking all the deities, and emerges from this 'womb' a new-born creature. Immediately the men can pick up their idle axes, a mark of their freedom to go out and work on the hills and in the jungle,
far beyond the confinement of the past month. Even so, the whole world of mystical force must be clearly informed of this change of status if the people are to go about in safety. And so the final drama is acted out: the challenge to the tiger goes unanswered ("Not surprising," said one Kond, "we shout so loudly!") and, as the priest affirms, the life-generating power of the thread-necklace wins the day. The whole of that final ceremony is a statement of the victorious power of life over the destroyer-death - though safety-first prayers to the ancestors, who first made the hill-plots one goes out so dangerously to cultivate, all help "to keep one in community".
Rituals in Life-Destroying Situations

I Due to Disturbed Spirits

From Macpherson's writings it is clear that before a ritual took place, the myth behind it was re-told or even acted out in the presence of all the people. The reason for its re-enactment was thus not simply affirmed but ratified and renewed by and for that group - of course with their ancestral presence too. Over the past century this formerly integral part of the ritual seems gradually to have fallen into disuse in the Goomsur District, hastened no doubt by the difficulty of relating myths that must often have been connected with the Earth Goddess while at the same time the people were seeking to worship Dura God.

Before Goomsur moved to this rather more monotheistic position certain other gods were of high importance each in their own particular spheres. These are still remembered today in invocations that call upon all the gods, individually by name and sphere, to attend, to bless or to act witness to the Konds' ritual fulfilment of the requirements of one particular god in the group. Macpherson's list of them 1 accords largely with my present day records (except for his detailed description of Dinga Penu's realm in judging the dead, as mentioned earlier) 2. Under Dura and Tari the most important gods were Piju Penu, the God of Rain; Burbi Penu, the god of first fruits and new vegetation; Piteri Penu, the God of Increase, whose responsibility it was to send grain of every kind; Kambu Penu, the God of Hunting; Loha Penu, God of War, or more literally, God of Iron; and Sardi Penu, God of Boundaries. In addition to these are the local deities or

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1 Macpherson, Memorials, pp.89-91
2 I did not see Macpherson's list until more than a decade after I had compiled my own list.
guardians who are deeply involved in all that concerns their locality but who are geographically limited to their own particular sphere. Chief among this latter group are Naju Penu, the village god; Soru Penu, the (local) hill god; Jori Penu, the god of the river or stream; Suga Penu, the god of the spring; Gossa Penu, the god of the jungle; Kuti Penu, the god of any land-erosion ravine; and Bora Penu, the god of wild new fruits. The number of these could continue indefinitely as everything in nature, like every human being, has its own tutelary.

In addition to these divinities each with their comprehensible area of operation within the over all Bura-Tari order of creation, are a set not mentioned by Macpherson, the Bironga-Maulaka. These evil demons (masculine) are always mentioned in the plural and never under any circumstances do they work for man's well-being. They are often associated with the onslaught of death, probably in alliance with witchcraft. 'If anyone is attacked by them, he immediately produces symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting and quickly dies' say the Kui people fearfully. (Many die very quickly this way, from dehydration). They are believed to be responsible for Cholera, T.B. and Sonne dysentery. Smallpox on the other hand is regarded as the evil work of a foreign (Indian) incomer goddess, an evil old woman. Her foreign origin is probably an accurate memory of some time long past when the disease arrived in epidemic proportions from the plains and doubtless caused a fearful death-toll. Until two or three years ago it was endemic amongst the Konds, rising to serious epidemics at intervals, usually about March. During a widespread epidemic in the late 1950's sixty deaths were recorded in one village alone in addition to many there suffering blindness and severe debility from it. The common belief in the past decade was expressed in exactly the same words as were used to Macpherson well over a century earlier: that she is 'the
sower of seed over the body and the seed sprouts' (into pustules). For this reason she is also associated with typhoid, when 'she sows the seed (rash) under the skin'. Both these diseases reach their annual peak in the seed-sowing season, thus the association of ideas with her evil cultivation of 'seed-diseases'. These include cowpox, for animals are as subject as man to the whims of the various deities.

Though this goddess has received the Kui name, Dumaleri Penu, she is the only divinity to be addressed for purposes of invocation by as many additional foreign versions of her name as can be assembled: Takureni, Musama, etc. from other parts of India, for she is the Smallpox Goddess of all peoples, they say, not just of the Konds - a role quite distinct from other Kond divinities. Judging by the invocation addressed to her in Kogera's account of the Poha Ritual to remove sickness, especially smallpox (see Vol. II Appendix), she is certainly not flattered nor cajoled:

'Dumaleri-Sauteri!
Unstable One! Insane One!
Stuttering Female! Dumb Female!
Black One! One with Pitted Sores!
Smallpox Worker!
Female Dung-Beetle! Female Centipede!
Don't give fever.......

She is at times associated in some vague way with the Earth Goddess. The Kutta Konds say that she is an elder sister of the Earth Goddess, nevertheless emphasising her foreignness by stating that 'she sits on a chair and reads books' (i.e. belongs to a strange people); and also in the way they address her:

'O Darwa Pimu, Kama Pimu!
Musama, Takureni!
You are living in Berhampur (or Chatrapur - both on the plains - or Balliguda, an Oriya government centre)
You have gold and silver ornaments.'

and in their important ritual, the Feast of New Wine, her food-offering
is placed on a seat like a chair, on which is placed a book in Oriya script.

Though most of these divinities are not evilly disposed as are the smallpox Goddess and the Bironga-Maulaka, they are all liable to withdraw their blessings. Their particular ritual must then be performed to encourage a return of their favour. Such a case is the Lero Enda or Bad-Humour Dance, 'a lament in God's presence' at times of desperate drought when the monsoon rains have utterly failed and famine lies ahead of the whole Kond world.

Some Comments on the Lero Enda, Bad-Humour Dance (See G(i) & G(ii))

The discovery of Kogera's version of this dance as performed c. 1910 casts much light on my slender version of fifty years later. Nevertheless certain allusions only became clear after reading Elwin's recording of a Kond myth describing the Earth Goddess' anger at the Konds' refusal to sacrifice human beings when she first requested it.

Here is the myth:

From the oral literature of the Konds of Kesaraguda, Ganjam District:

Darni Finnu demanded food in sacrifice and they offered her everything they could find, but she refused it all. She said 'The only thing I want is a human being'. When the Konds heard this, they felt very bad about it and said, 'We will die but we will not give you human beings.' And they took no more notice of Darni Finnu.

But she, being angry, caused famine to come upon them and whatever grain they sowed remained infertile in the fields. No rain fell and even the fruits and roots of the jungle dried up. The people finished all their old grain and then had to eat leaves and grass as well. Then the people had to live on water, but Darni Finnu dried up the lakes and the rivers.

Then at last, in despair, the people went to Darni Finnu and promised to give her whatever she wanted, even if it was their own children... Darni Finnu was pleased and sent rain and the leaves became green again and the crops grew.

***** (A Lohar (blacksmith) boy is sacrificed)*****

1 from personal discussion with Professor Miggemeyer.
The goddess was pleased and gave the people good crops and the harvests continued to be good, until Mokmal Sahib and Kiremal Sahib stopped the sacrifices.

In other parts of the Kond country Mukri Sahib, Kiremal Sahib and Tool Sahib stopped the sacrifices because they said that the numbers of people in the world was being too quickly diminished by them.

Collected and quoted by Verrier Elwin.

Putting the three narratives together I suggest that the Lero Ritual was formerly addressed not to Bura but to the Earth Goddess. Her 'bad humour' in totally withholding rain, as described in the myth, was causing all the wild fruits to shrivel, including the mahua-wine flower and the wild mango, mentioned in the song, and both of which became the staple food in the early part of the Hungry Season - the same time that the monsoon should arrive. When the desperate people in the myth ate leaves and grass, she dried these up; and when only water was left for them to live on, she dried up the ponds and rivers. These actions of hers are all mentioned in the Lero Song. And the reason for this disaster in the myth was to force the Konds to give her human victims for her food.

When the Goomsur Konds turned from her to worship Bura they were presumably faced for the first time with the universal problem of evil if a good God is acknowledged as supreme: Bura was God of Light, Creator and Sustainer - and yet these times of desperate drought could still occur. How were they to interpret this within their new theological framework? (This was a much greater problem than smallpox, the other great scourge, for at no time was that attributed to a Kond deity.)

1 Macpherson and Campbell
2 More officers of the East India Company.
Kogera's account of the Lero Bad Humour ritual—half way between the 'then' of Goomsur's decision and the 'now' of the present day's fading memory—probably supplies the answer. Disastrous drought is indeed attributed to Bura God, as their theological reasoning demanded, not however arising from any evil intent on his part but because his mind was totally taken up by the greatest disaster that could happen to anyone: the death of his son. The bonds are in effect saying how fully they understand and sympathise, for the disaster is of such magnitude and long-term importance to the male line concerned that in his anguish he cannot take in other people's needs.

The whole Muta is involved in one corporate performance of this ritual, not, as for some rituals, in parallel but separate performances in each village. The goat-victim is thus paid for in part by every household in the Muta. This wider unity stresses the importance, indeed the desperation that lies behind this ritual. Despite the breadth of its application, it is performed by laymen once the diviner-priest has interpreted the situation through trance. Each year the whole community is on edge in those weeks of late May and early June, well aware that with the adequacy or failure of the coming monsoon, the future year is about to declare itself as one of plenty or of suffering and death—for starvation goes hand in hand with increase of disease. Even more aware is the priest, seeking instinctively to read the signs of the times. Long before the first monsoon clouds begin to gather each afternoon over the southern hills, his sensitivity to the activities of birds and insects and the general 'feel' of the season help him to determine whether or not the ritual is necessary to bring on the monsoon before the shrivelling paddy-seedlings in the nursery beds wither right away; for the seed is sown several weeks before the monsoon arrives, "when the Kuh-koo-bird calls", and the
seedlings must be transplanted into the deep wet mud of the paddy fields at just the right height, or perish with total loss of the carefully hoarded seed-grain. Hence when he is called to the gathering of mata-elders, he may already be in such a condition of sensitivity to the presence of the spirit-world, that he is caught up into trance (G(ii)2) instead of needing the aid of rhythmic drumming and movement which precede self-imposed trance.

During the dancing-group’s progress through the various villages and hamlets, in Kogera’s account they receive rice from each household (G(i)14(c)) and a chicken from each village. (G(i)16). Fifty years later this had changed to rice and money (G(ii)12). This is not, I suggest, a change of much symbolic importance but rather a practical adaptation to the fact that just after Kogera’s time, liquor could no longer be freely brewed and became a very expensive item. Nevertheless, considerable quantities would be highly necessary to the bands of young men not only dancing continuously and with great vigour over a considerable area but singing endlessly as they danced - and all this at the height of the hot season, even though performed either at night or early dawn. The break in the song and dance when the darsi-keeper’s wife sprinkles water on them (G(i)14(f) & (G(ii)14) is both imitative of rain - from which they rush for shelter - and also in her use of the winnowing tray, a hint of the hoped-for harvest to come.
Rituals in Life-Destroying Situations

II Due to Man's Ill-Will

The background of tension within the closed group - usually the kin group - which gives rise to violent, though secret, anti-social behaviour has been discussed earlier (Chap. III (b)). It manifests itself in the five different forms of witchcraft, sorcery, Evil Eye, Curses and Tiger-transformation (Mleepa). Though both witchcraft and sorcery are believed to be caused by similar circumstances, the Konds sometimes make a distinction between the invisible nature of witchcraft over against sorcery's use of material objects or set actions, probably accompanied by ritual words. (The parallel use of material objects and spoken phrases for warding off thieves or for protection against other forms of evil is not regarded by the Konds as in any way anti-social, so does not fall within this category).

Macpherson and the other early visitors to the Kond hills have little to report on this subject. They refer chiefly to Tiger-transformation, and that in connection with its supposed origins: first through the gift of the Earth Goddess and then, to prevent her bribing the Konds with the promise of instruction in the art, through the gift of Dura God himself. So deeply feared by the Konds are the evil arts of witchcraft and sorcery that their silence is not surprising, for the terms are never spoken lightly nor discussed without a context.

When misfortunes arise which cause them to suspect that ill-wishing individuals are misusing mystical power to achieve their own ends, anyone behaving strangely or any social misfit is immediately suspected. Those whose physical defects give them a fearful appearance or who have a particularly penetrating glance, "like a red cataract in the eye" said one medical worker, are equally liable to
be accused. Particularly in cases of witchcraft that rare sight, a fat Kui man, would at once be the prime suspect, "for has he not grown sleek on his victims?"

There appear to be two distinct levels in the treatment, dependent to some extent upon the recovery or death of the victim. The suspect is brought before the elders, either by force or by "calling him kindly" (without arousing suspicion). The elders seize him, saying ritually: "May he be cleansed!" and pour water over his head, allowing it to drip on to his feet; or else they give him a little rice-gruel and compel him to feed the patient with the remainder of his own portion. This is "to take back the witchcraft" to himself. But if the patient dies - possibly even if he does not - the suspect, of either sex, is beaten severely (the verb is that of a blacksmith pounding metal) and driven from the village along with his household. Alternatively, an "accidental" death takes place in the jungle. Either way is regarded as necessary for the safeguarding of the community who also see death as the only possible "healing" treatment for the witch. ¹

Sorcerers on the other hand, may be sought out by the priest through trance (possibly the same priest may have aided the sorcerer in the first place!) The community castigates the accused in the strongest terms, threatening death or expulsion from among them if ever they repeat their evil practice. Even then all weaker members of the community, such as children and pregnant women, will be warned to avoid them in future, for the community immediately closes its ranks to protect all victims or possible victims and to enforce sanctions on the suspect.

A typical case of this kind occurred in support of a sick widow:

'a diabetic woman with symptoms of excessive urination had dreamed that two men of her village "were murderously angry with her". Helpless, she "saw" them collect her hair, earth from her foot-print and from her place of urination. The cure for her was three-fold: the priest made medicine to overcome the sorcerer's magic; the council of village elders heard her case and dealt with the two men; and she went to hospital for treatment of what she considered to be the symptoms of this evil transaction, but which scientific medicine might consider to be the whole disease.' ²

¹ Boal, Fire is Easy, p.153.
The most common form of these life-destroying situations is however believed to result from Evil Eye. (See H(i) & H(ii)). This is always associated with feverish illness, as Kogera's account also mentions. Until the mid-1960's almost every inhabitant of the Kond Hills was subject chronically to bouts of malaria, often accompanied by sudden rigors. The frequency with which Evil Eye was suspected is thus not surprising. In certain villages especially, cerebral malaria, carried by the anophales mosquito, caused sudden death among infants and young children to such an extent that most Kond babies were 'immunised' by the priest; he tied on to their upper arm the stone of the inedible Gonju-date, securing it with the mother's hair. The highly caustic nature of this preventive medicine was believed to reach out to any ill-wisher causing him blindness in his 'evil eye'. The Gonju is so highly irritant that it can cause a second degree burn to tender skin and does cause blindness to children playing with it and inadvertently rubbing the juice into their eyes.

Some Comments on the Ritual for Reversing Evil Eye.

As recently as in the 1966 version, Evil Eye is attributed to a metaphorical arrow shot by the sorcerer at his victim. It 'catches' or takes hold of his spirit giving him an acute attack of malaria. Being important in warfare and hunting, arrows naturally played a significant part in Kond ritual in the days of their common use in Goomsur District, and still do among the Kuttia Konds and their neighbour-Konds in the westerly hills. The ritual shooting of an arrow, however, normally has the power to effect recovery and restoration, not evil; so this use by the sorcerer is a reversal of their shooting role. They had other uses, too. Kogera's myth regarding Bura God's gift of the sago-palm-wine tree to the Konds concludes by
describing Bura God's added gift of the divining arrow (See Vol. II Appendix). Before that, Macpherson states many times that Bura is also God of Light, God of the Sun - and indeed residual references to him as such can still be heard nowadays. Thus it may well be that the connection between Bura and arrows has been retained from a much wider and earlier source. Elwin reports that the Saoras, non-Dravidian neighbours of the Konda, also make ritual use of arrows 'and the implication was that the Sun God himself was doing it' (i.e. shooting an arrow to 'order the dead not to trouble the (sick) child again; if they did they would be punished by marking-nut juice' (Conju)).

Many centuries earlier Phoebus, God of the Sun in Greek mythology was associated with the shooting of swift arrows. There were close links between North India and the Greeks for three or four centuries after the death of Alexander the Great: and it was during this period that Asoka's Empire swept from the north over almost the whole of India, particularly into the area now called Orissa. This will be discussed in greater detail in the final chapter; sufficient to indicate here a widespread connection between the God of the Sun and the shooting of arrows for ritual purposes.

Divination is a necessary prelude to countering Evil Eye. Kogera's account (H(ii)5-9) gives a variation in the usual sickle method of divination with rice-grains. He balances the grain on a suspended stone, with the same end in view. The priest's indication of a certain direction in which the ritual must be performed (H(ii)4) suggests that he had some inkling of the culprit's whereabouts, for the whole purpose of the ritual is to lay an invisible trap which the culprit cannot avoid. Branches, twigs or berries of the Murri bush are very commonly used as protection against sorcerers, thieves and evil-doers in general. The sap and berry-juice is highly

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1 Elwin, The Religion of an Indian Tribe, p.271
irritant, so whether the words are spoken or not, the symbol 'says':
'May his/her eyes be destroyed!' The four elements of earth, rice, turmeric and soot, necessary for the creating of men, are given as offerings (H(i)11 & (ii)a, 7 & 8), for to have one's spirit 'caught' and lifted out of the body is the beginning of a terminal illness. Full recreation or rebirth is necessary if the fever-sufferer is to become whole again. This perhaps is the significance of the new-laid egg from a newly-laying hen, while the rotten eggs buried under the path will reach out as he walks over them, so bearing the evil back to its sender. The tying of thread round both the Murri chips and the clay figures also has a restraining effect along with the invocation restricting the evil from going again to the patient and, in Kogera's version especially, in packaging it for immediate despatch to the perpetrator.

The red dye (H(ii)a, 7) perhaps gives life to the otherwise lifeless clay figures for red represents blood, the blood that is the life, the basic tenet of Kond belief. Similarly, a chicken's life-blood is sprinkled over them too, though the external blackness of the chicken is a symbol used in all the rituals concerned with driving out disease, evil and misfortune. To return home without looking back (H(ii)a, 20) is an action closely associated with new birth. It occurs in all pregnancy rituals.

The counter-curse receives added power through the addition of the seven caustic Gonju-date stones (H(ii)c, 1). Here, as on so many occasions, the intention is believed to be as powerful as fact. This is illustrated again in (H(ii)e, 4) when priest and householder secretly and silently 'think the invocation' squatting beside the ill-wisher's door, burying the egg and Gonju at his very threshold.
The redness of the Gonju flowers (H(ii)d, i) doubtless adds power to the blindness-wish inherent in the counter-curse.

Swinging the piglet over the patient is a common action of the priest in driving away an evil attack (See Poha in Appendix), but in this case the pig becomes a particularly powerful vehicle of the evil on its return journey to the ill-wisher.

Comparison of these and other Kond rituals as recorded by Kogera Prodhan with those recorded by the writer after a fifty years' interval suggests that the similarities are greater than the differences. (See Vol. II Appendix for all remaining rituals). Perhaps the most striking difference (apart from the addition of an extra phase in the Kedu Buffalo Sacrifice, as already noted) is to be found in the content of the prayers. Kogera's are much more direct and powerful in phrasing, couched in highly idiomatic terms and much less often directed to Dura God alone than are the more recent prayers. It is difficult to tell exactly how much is due to the fifty-year interval because three other variables are involved: Kogera was a Kond of the Konds, in living contact with local ritual behaviour, whereas I was an expatriate observer, seeing at best only a part of any ritual celebration. Secondly, Kogera was of the priestly family and would have opportunity to know in detail exactly which deities were to be invoked and invited as primary and as secondary attenders at each ritual, also the correct phrasing of the resulting petitions; fifty years later, my informants in that same village were almost all Christians, some of them Pans. Thirdly, in Kogera's time the Mallikapor group of villages was only just hearing for the first time the strange Christian message, and no Konds were amongst those baptized until after the time that his notebook was most prob-
ably written. In my time, fifty years later, the largest local-church membership was in that Mallikapori group of villages (though mainly of Pans) and there was much coming and going between them and the mission centre with its hospital and Middle School only a mile away.

Taking all these factors into consideration, Kogera's accounts display a greater ambivalence between the worship of Bura as supreme deity and a persisting awareness of the powers of the Earth Goddess to bring disaster at any time she wills. This ambivalence, in part at least, must surely be due to its comparative closeness to the long centuries when she had ruled supreme.

It would have been yet more revealing had there been a second note-book of Kogera's concerning such matters as birth and death, especially the Unripe Deaths. This may yet be discovered; but even though it should not exist, these recorded rituals of his contain much more that could be revealed through further study. As with the Meriah/Kedu rite, the purpose of this present study is to provide the necessary preliminary background to all the recorded rituals of the three historic periods. Further research could follow the lines suggested toward the close of the Meriah/Kedu section (III(d)). Additional areas might be those relating to the elements and symbolic actions used in rituals for sickness and disease, particularly the differences in the symbolic uses of objects or actions when the sickness is believed to be due not to angered divinities but to ill-wishing fellow-members of the community employing sorcery and witchcraft.

These topics, however, must be left for subsequent research, for it is now necessary to look at the establishment and growth of the Church over against this general background to the traditional beliefs of the Konds and their ritual processes supporting their views.


Please fill our questionnaires.
and you have shown an high response.
will have your hand composition.

1. INFORMATION:

CHOONTH. This door not apply to the younger folk.
when not with their parents, trusting only from the head downwards.

march down the field of the call-down, and homogenize and their alera.

No. 1. Goos down to the field of the call-down, and homogenize and their alera.
Is there any time to the story down to the call-down, and homogenize and their alera.

2. After that, all the men

went on the lower border.

cooked rice in a little bucket.
cook rice in a little bucket.

11. The earth is the position of the sacred section.
10. The earth is the position of the sacred section.
9. The earth is the position of the sacred section.
8. The earth is the position of the sacred section.
7. The earth is the position of the sacred section.
6. The earth is the position of the sacred section.
5. The earth is the position of the sacred section.
4. The earth is the position of the sacred section.
1. INVESTIGATION

MAI LAKA - THRESHING FLOOR MUSICAL (c.1910)

TIMELINE:

1. After preparing all the paddy, the ritual on the threshing floor begins.
2. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
3. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
4. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
5. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
6. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
7. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
8. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
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10. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
11. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
12. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
13. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
14. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
15. The specialists perform the ritual actions.

SPECIALISTS & THEIR ACTIONS

1. The specialists put the grain basket on the threshing floor.
2. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
3. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
4. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
5. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
6. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
7. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
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10. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
11. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
12. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
13. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
14. The specialists perform the ritual actions.
15. The specialists perform the ritual actions.

OTHERS INVOLVED

1. The threshers put the grain basket on the threshing floor.
2. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
3. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
4. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
5. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
6. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
7. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
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9. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
10. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
11. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
12. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
13. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
14. The threshers perform the ritual actions.
15. The threshers perform the ritual actions.

RECORDED: 1990

TEXT:

'When we are sleeping, when we are full of weariness,

Come quickly! Come at once! In the grain-bush, in the grain-bush,
We shall tread it, it, it, right up to the third!'

Let it not be up to the third!

Let it yield an excess of food!

Because the smaller grain-basket is proud,
Because the smaller grain-basket is proud,

Do not be polluted: do not be polluted:

Let it yield an excess of food!

Because the smaller grain-basket is proud,
Because the smaller grain-basket is proud,

Do not be polluted: do not be polluted:

Let it yield an excess of food!

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Do not be polluted: do not be polluted:

Let it yield an excess of food!

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Because the smaller grain-basket is proud,

Do not be polluted: do not be polluted:

Let it yield an excess of food!

Because the smaller grain-basket is proud,
Because the smaller grain-basket is proud,

Do not be polluted: do not be polluted:

Let it yield an excess of food!
when their heart content.

and saw it in the fields. Both the woman and the men can now

from then onwards, the women are allowed to enter the paddy in the early

for the women, and the men, to proceed to the threshing-floor.

the hanger, shall be staples of the former.

and the men will.

You will see how the women are allowed to enter the paddy in the early

and the men, to proceed to the threshing-floor.

the hanger, shall be staples of the former.

and the men will.

You will see how the women are allowed to enter the paddy in the early

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and the men, to proceed to the threshing-floor.

the hanger, shall be staples of the former.

and the men will.

You will see how the women are allowed to enter the paddy in the early
They gave the winnowing tray, the dance and the cattle-bells. The dance, the cattle-bells.

I. THE OFFICIALS & THEIR ACTIONS


A. The officials have a big problem.
B. The officials have a lot of work.

1. The officials are having a meeting.
2. They are discussing the problem.
3. They are trying to solve the problem.

II. THE OTHERS & THEIR ACTIONS


A. The people of the village.
B. The people of the village.

1. They are having a meeting.
2. They are discussing the problem.
3. They are trying to solve the problem.

3. They are feeling angry.
4. They are feeling sad.
5. They are feeling happy.
6. They are feeling nutrition.

... and so on.
LERO EN'DA - THE BAD HUMOUR DANCE (1966)

'This is a lament in God's presence.'

TIMK: 'In a year when no rain falls on the land.'

SPECIALIST & HIS ACTIONS

1. The people of the village

A. Call in the diviner-priest.

B. Go into a state of self-imposed trance or else he is caught up in trance by the spirits.

2. So he informs the people: "If you do the Lero Dance, the rains will come."

3. So all the young men of that village gather.

4. They divide into 2 or 3 small groups.

5. They sing: They ring their bells as they dance along, while they dance, they collect rice from every village.

6. When they enter a village they do the Lero Dance at each door, every household gives them rice and money, which one of their group carries.

7. When they arrive at the diviner-keeper's house and dance at his door, the diviner's wife brings out water in a winnowing tray & throws it over them. They shout: "Rain has fallen! Rain has fallen!"

8. They shout it loud as they dance & rush into one of the houses for cover.

9. After they all go along the track a little way they pray: "Let the rain come!"

10. They sacrifice the goat, cook rice & meat.

11. They drink liquor & have a meal together;

12. Then all return to their homes at dawn.
TIME: "When a man has fever, even only a little, with a slight cough, a chill, and a cold for a few days, if he is febrile, then it is due to the evil eye."  

OTHER SPECIAL ACTIONS:  
When a man has fever, even only a little, with a slight cough, a chill, and a cold for a few days, if he is febrile, then it is due to the evil eye. 

I. Invocation:  
"In that manner they perform the counter-curse:"  
1. When he comes home.  
2. A he sleep, or his own home.  
3. After wards the household.  
4. Ties creeper—twine round a stone, and, placing a few grains of rice on the stone,  
5. He causes the stone to sway.  
6. If the divination (rice) falls off, he says it is the counter-curse, and he will perform a ritual on the path.  
7. The priest comes along (the path) holding the egg in his hand, and, swinging it round in circles,  
8. Praying, he digs a hole and buries the egg in the path.  
9. Then he comes home.  
10. A he will perform a ritual on the path, or if the divination (rice) falls off, he says it is due to the evil eye.  
11. He causes the stone to sway.  
12. He pours the broken rice used for divining on a winnowing tray.  
13. Holding the egg in his hand, he causes the stone to sway.  
14. He brings his divining rice, and comes to take part in divination.  
15. He puts the divining rice on the path, in the corner.  
16. The priest comes along (the path) holding the egg in his hand,  
17. He pours the broken rice used for divining on a winnowing tray.  
18. He causes the stone to sway.  
19. He says it is the counter-curse, and he will perform a ritual on the path.  
20. A he sleep, or his own home.
INVOCATION

1. After the priest, the patient and the patient's family, without looking back, enter the house.
   
2. The priest, with the patient and the patient's family, enters the house.
   
3. The priest invites the patient and the patient's family into the house.
   
4. The priest invites the patient and the patient's family into the house.
   
5. The priest, with the patient and the patient's family, leaves the house.
   
6. The priest, with the patient and the patient's family, enters the house.
   
7. The priest, with the patient and the patient's family, leaves the house.
   
8. The priest, with the patient and the patient's family, enters the house.
   
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14. The priest, with the patient and the patient's family, enters the house.
   
15. The priest, with the patient and the patient's family, leaves the house.

OTHER ACTIONS

1. The household enters the house.

2. The household leaves the house.

3. The household enters the house.

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140. The household leaves the house.
### Rituals of Ordered Relationship Between God, Man & the Land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rituals</th>
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<th>B 1 2 3 4 5</th>
<th>C 1 2 3 4 5</th>
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### Rituals Seeking the Blessing & Cooperation

#### (c) of the Clan's Ancestors

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<th>Rituals</th>
<th>A 1 2 3 4 5</th>
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<td>Bringing the Household Gods</td>
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<td>Bringing in the Spider</td>
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#### (d) of the Clan or Village's Founding Fathers

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<td>Removal of a Household</td>
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<td>Changing the Burial Keeper</td>
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#### (e) of the Clan's Ancestors in Matters Involving Other Clans

<table>
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<td>✔</td>
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<td>SEASON</td>
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<td>SEASON'S ACTIVITIES</td>
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<td>Late April-May</td>
<td>'Casting Out the Hoes' &amp; 'Festival Ritual'. Whole community involved.</td>
<td>All participate; 'to bring out the seed-grain'.</td>
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<td>late May</td>
<td>'Mango Time' Very hot.</td>
<td>Men: Sowing seed-paddy in stream-fed nursery beds.</td>
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<td>Heavy thunder showers</td>
<td>Hunting hares and deer and trapping wild boar.</td>
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<td>End of May</td>
<td>'early June Height of hot weather &amp; thunder showers.'</td>
<td>Both: Prepare &amp; plant turmeric tubers; cover with leafy branches.</td>
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<td>Men: Sow dry-rice, also millet &amp; pulses in hill-plots.</td>
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<td>Plough dry (rain irrigated) paddy fields as soon as a good shower comes.</td>
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<td>Herb-boys: begin collective herding of village's cattle &amp; goats.</td>
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<td>Women: Laborious preparation of previous year's mango-kernels - pounded, soaked &amp; cooked.</td>
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<td>Men: Plough wet-paddy fields.</td>
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<td>Form work-parties to cut timber for re-roofing, &amp; fencing; also gather reeds/grasses for re-thatching (one side of roof annually).</td>
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<td>Tasks depend on frequency of showers softening hard earth.</td>
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<td>Men: Triple-plough paddy seed-beds into soft mud.</td>
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<td>Rest of seed-paddy steeped for 24 hrs then placed in baskets &amp; covered with leaves for 3 days to germinate. After germination men sow it in seed-beds.</td>
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<td>Build strongly-plaited fence round 'nurseries'. Make back-garden plots, temporarily fenced &amp; sow maize, ginger, chilies, ground-nuts, 'vegges. Sow mustard &amp; linseed on panga near village.</td>
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</table>

**Diet**
- Poor families: Pounded mango-kernel 'cakes' supplement grains. Wild fruits - green & ripe mangoes, mahua, wild dates, etc. & edible leaves collected.
- Meals reduced from 2 to 1 per day for the poor; snacks of anything available.
- If bad harvest previous year, adults may eat on alternate days only; try to feed chn daily. When all food ended, pith of palm-tree trunk is dried & pounded. Unpleasant.
| Monsoon rains should arrive. (End of June if total drought) | Men: Level the Buda (stream-irrigated) paddy fields & reinforce embankments, then triple-plough. **Entire district participates. But if rains come:**
|---|---|
| Iron God Ritual & Lero Lamentation Dance | **Women:** in kin-gps & pre-arranged teams, pull paddy-seedlings from seed-beds, tie in bundles, then transplant in paddy-fields, moving backwards in a row. (Hard work: solo-singer with yodel-chorus helps team-spirit.)
| **All:** Blessing sought on all transplanted fields.
| Mid-Wet Season Ritual | **Women:** start weeding early fields as finish transplanting Buda fields; song-yodel. Tend gardens.
| **All village participates. Blessing on growth of all fields, panga-plots & hill-plots.**
| Births Ritual | **Both:** Maize heads broken off as they ripen; bunches hung to dry on bamboo pole under roof.
| **Men:** seek to safeguard growing paddy from grain-rust & any other attacking evils.
| Afflictions Ritual | **All:** offer firstfruits to free crops for eating.
| **Men:** seek to protect new-forming grain in the ear from grain-rust, plagues of locusts & other insects.
| Mid-Wet Season Ritual | **Both:** harvest ragi & millet. Build small granary on nanga & thresh there. Only take grain home. Dry-rice (on panga) harvested as it ripens, but threshed at home.
| Bori Ritual | **Women:** store ragi in baskets 2-3 days, then thresh & grind it, but boil, dry & pound millet & rice.
| **Men:** harvest ragi & millet. Build small granary on nanga & thresh there. Only take grain home. Dry-rice (on panga) harvested as it ripens, but threshed at home.
| **Ragi flour mixed with rice for main meal or eaten as cakes. Millet & dry-rice reaped & eaten as available.** | New produce eaten after Births ritual. Maize baked in ashes or boiled as basic diet; also dried.** |
Nov. (cold) - Early Dec.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early Dec. (cold)</td>
<td>cool season</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Dec. (to early Jan)</td>
<td>Sisa Ritual, Threshing-Floor Ritual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>The Day of Scattering</td>
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</table>

**Men:** Wood-cutting bands work on jungle-clad hills.
**Both:** in sex-groups, carry home & stack firewood.

**Both:** harvest 'early paddy'.
**Selected owners** must reap those fields that same day.
**Both:** reap the various levels of fields as they ripen.

**Men:** prepare & re-level the threshing floor, (often a paddy field), build wattle & thatch shed for watchmen to guard the grain. Several households share one threshing floor, but keep paddy separate.

**Women:** plaster threshing floor with mud & cowdung.
**Both:** continue harvesting with kin - or organised work-groups until all is gathered in.

**Men:** empty the grain from some ears, with thanksgiving.
Each householder, with own kin, makes a bitali offering.
**Men:** thresh the paddy, trampling it with their feet, & winnow the chaff from the grain.

**Women:** re-plaster huge grain-storage bin with special termite soil. Groups go to 
"collect Mabori leaves to re-line the bin."
"carry home the grain & pour into bin"
"gather up straw & put on storage platform for the cattle ( & leave some grain for poor gleaners)."

**Men:** make payments, return loans etc. (in rice).
**All** dance on threshing floor, with drums (much liquor for men)
**Both:** small-grain lentils harvested on panga & beaten with sticks to free the grain.

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**Early rice available.**
**Vegetables continue:**
snake-gourd, pumpkins, cucumber.
All types of rice now available.
Food taboos observed until all paddy stored:

**Harvest food taboos lifted.**
Jan - Feb.  
(cold)  
Keny rituals in many places.  

*On High* Marriages  
Hill-Lentil Ritual  

Feb.  
Late Feb. - Mar.  
Very dry, warmer  
Toddy Palm Ritual 
& drinking parties.  

March  
(Smallpox season)  
March-early April  
"Mahan time"  
(hot)  
District Poha Ritual  
for smallpox, chicken pox & cowpox  

2 meals daily of rice or rice-soup, with small portion of lentils or veges, or just salt.  
Feb-Mar: palm-wine abundant for men.  
Women may take a very little, only during heavy hill-work.  

A little mahua  
(Dassia latifolia) may be eaten outside village boundary.  

Note: In addition to seasonal celebrations, rituals are performed as required for ill-health, misfortune, pregnancy, birth, death, and against Evil Eye, sorcery, witchcraft, etc. Also in addition to the above activities, Kond women are daily occupied in their regular household tasks.